



ADVENT HOUSTON

VESPERS SERVICE

June 19, 2022

The season after Pentecost Sunday and leading up to Advent is referred to as Ordinary Time. It does not mean the time is boring and mundane, but rather “Ordinary” refers to the “ordinal” way that the church calendar counts the Sundays from Pentecost until the Season of Advent. Historically the church has used this time to more fully flesh out Christ’s work in the lives of her people, in the church as a whole, or in Christ’s Kingdom over all the earth. Robert Webber writes that during Ordinary Time,

Many worship traditions follow lectionaries that highlight the work of the Spirit in the mission of the church in the world. Other churches organize their worship life around a lectio continua, continuous readings from a given section of Scripture. Some worship traditions have also called this season ‘Kingdomtime,’ focusing on the kingdom of God that is present now and the one that will be realized in more profound ways in the future....

[Thus] the various Sundays are not connected by a particular theme. In Advent we await the coming of Christ; during Christmas, we celebrate his arrival; and at Epiphany, we proclaim that Christ is manifested to the world as Savior. During Lent, we prepare for the death; in Holy Week, we reenact his death; then in Easter, we celebrate his resurrection and complete the Easter cycle with the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit. But in the nonfestive season of the church year, there is no unified theme that ties the Sundays together.

At Advent Houston, we want to use this “nonfestive” season to focus on our particular mission in this particular time and place that God has for particular individuals like us. We want to minister to one another in the distinct ways that we need to hear the good news of what Jesus has done, and we want to practice our faith in light of the truth that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

WHAT IS A VESPERS SERVICE?

Vespers comes from the Latin word for "evening." A Vespers service is a traditional prayer service at the hour of sunset. Traditionally, it is characterized by frequent readings of scripture, time for contemplation, and prayer.

We at Advent Houston invite you to use this Vespers service to slow down, to worship with us, and to savor our God. You can expect more subdued music, several readings of scripture, a short homily, and communion.

Reflection

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”

-**G.K. Chesterton**, *What's Wrong with the World*

“The glory of God is a man fully alive”

-**Tertullian**

“Rabbi, begone! Thy powers
Bring loss to us and ours.
Our ways are not as Thine.
Thou lovest men, we—swine.
Oh, get you hence, Omnipotence,
And take this fool of Thine!
His soul? What care we for his soul?
What good to us that Thou hast made him whole,
Since we have lost our swine?”

-**John Oxenham**, *Bees in Amber*

*Call to Worship – From Psalm 42; John 4; Isaiah 55

Leader: As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

**People: My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.**

When shall I come and appear before God?

Leader: Jesus said, "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

**People: Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!**

*Song – Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee
Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea!
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Prayer of Adoration

Book of Common Prayer

Leader: Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

People: We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

Leader: We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

People: We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Leader: Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

First Scripture Lesson

1 Kings 19:1-15

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my

life, to take it away." 15 And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: Thanks be to God.

Second Scripture Lesson

Galatians 3:23-29

23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: Thanks be to God.

Children's Lesson

Children are invited forward at this time for a brief lesson.

*Song – Psalm 130 (I Will Wait for You)

Out of the depths I cry to You
In darkest places I will call
Incline your ear to me anew
And hear my cry for mercy Lord

Were You to count my sinful ways
How could I come before your throne?
Yet full forgiveness meets my gaze
I stand redeemed by grace alone

chorus 1

I will wait for You, I will wait for You
On your Word I will rely
And I will wait for You, surely wait for You
'Til my soul is satisfied

So put your hope in God alone
Take courage in his power to save
Completely and forever won
By Christ emerging from the grave

chorus 1

Now He has come to make a way
And God Himself has paid the price
That all who trust in Him today
Find healing in his sacrifice
That all who trust in Him today
Find healing in his sacrifice

chorus 2

I will wait for You, I will wait for You
Through the storm and through the night

I will wait for You, surely wait for You
For your love is my delight

I will wait for You, I will wait for You
On your Word I will rely
And I will wait for You, surely wait for You
'Til my soul is satisfied

Prayers of the People

People: O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Leader continues to intercede on behalf of the community,
the Church, and the world.*

Leader: We pray all of this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, saying...

**People: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Third Scripture Lesson

Luke 8:26-39

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes,[a] which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus[b] had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed[c] man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

Leader: The Gospel of the LORD

People: Praise be to you, LORD Christ.

Homily

Rev. Taylor Leachman

Passing of the Peace

Leader: The Peace of the LORD be always with you.

People: And also with you!

*Affirmation of Faith

Apostles Creed

(The Apostles Creed is one of the earliest creeds of the church with elements of its current form being traced to 100A.D..)

ALL: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Jesus truly died - he descended to the realm of death*

***that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places*

Confession of Sin

Based on the Ten Commandments

ALL: Lord, we have been a stiff-necked people who love unfaithfulness. We have loved other gods before you and have become their servants. We have not worshiped you in Spirit and in truth, and so we have mocked your glory. We have used your name in vain and profaned your reputation on earth. We have desecrated the Lord's Day because we have not trusted you to give us rest. We have not honored our fathers and mothers, and so we have proved ourselves rebels. We have hated our neighbors and murdered them in our hearts. We have made adulterers of ourselves in the lust of our eyes or in the deeds of our flesh. We have stolen honor and wealth and privileges that are not ours. We have lied and falsely accused for we have loved gossip more than truth. We have coveted blessings you wisely and righteously gave to others. O LORD, have mercy on us for we have not kept your good and holy law. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us all our sins. Renew us and lead us by your Holy Spirit so that we may delight in your law and walk joyfully in your ways to the glory of your holy name.

(adapted from Green Lake PCA, Seattle)

*Assurance of Pardon

Adapted from Psalm 34

Leader: I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

People: Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

Leader: This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

People: The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Leader: Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

People: Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.

Leader: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Celebration of Holy Communion

People: We do not presume to come to this, Your Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your Table. But you are the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Leader: The LORD be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the LORD.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the LORD, our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is very good and right, our duty and privilege, to at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify your glorious Name; evermore praising you, and saying...

People:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
Hea - ven and earth are full, full of your
Bless - ed is He who comes in the name of the
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho -
san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution

Leader: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Chris will come again.

Leader: Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.

People: Therefore, let us keep the feast.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the LORD, our God.

*We serve both wine and grape juice for communion.
Grape juice is available in the middle of the communion trays while wine is available on the edge.
All communion bread is gluten free.*

Tithes & Offerings

All giving is a response to God's generosity to you in all aspects of life, but particularly through the person and work of Jesus. If you are not sure what you think about Jesus or Christianity, or if you are a guest, we would invite you to refrain from giving at this time.

Online giving is available at adventpres.org/give. You can also scan this QR code or place a gift in the offering basket toward the entrance of the sanctuary.



Communion Song – Psalm 34 (Taste and See)

I sought the Lord, and He answered me
And delivered me from every fear
Those who look on Him are radiant
They'll never be ashamed, they'll never be ashamed

This poor man cried and the Lord heard me
And saved me from my enemies
The Son of God surrounds his saints
He will deliver them, He will deliver them

chorus

Magnify the Lord with me, come exalt his name together
Glorify the Lord with me, come exalt his name forever

O taste and see that the Lord is good
O blessed is he who hides in Him
O fear the Lord O all you saints
He'll give you everything, He'll give you everything

chorus

Let us bless the Lord every day and night
Never ending praise, may our incense rise (x3)

chorus

*Song – Before The Throne

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me
My name is graven on his hands
My name is written on his heart
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
To look on Him and pardon me

Behold Him there, the risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless righteousness
The great unchangeable I AM
The King of glory and of grace
One with Himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by his blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Savior and my God
With Christ my Savior and my God

*Closing Prayer of Thanksgiving and Mission

*Benediction

Leader: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Announcements



SAVE THE DATE!

We will officially launch our regular Sunday Worship on August 21. We will have four weeks of preparatory services beginning July 24—which are open to all but will not be publicly advertised.

Please check out our events page at adventpres.org/events or scan the listed QR code.



Newsletter Sign-Up



If you are interested in knowing more about Advent, scan the QR Code here to sign-up for our once a month newsletter.

You can also click the option to sign-up for our prayer email—to continue praying with and for us.

Media Release

Advent Houston shares photos taken at our events in our monthly newsletters, on our website, or on social media for the purpose of promoting and highlighting the church's mission. By being present, you consent to being photographed and having these photos shared. For individuals who are not comfortable being visible in a shared photograph, please notify the church at admin@adventpres.org to opt out of the media release.

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