
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

18th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 21

OCTOBER • 1 • 2023

WELCOME TO ADVENT!

Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” Many of us have a temptation to believe that we can live a good enough life or do the right things to make our way to God. We think that if we do enough of the right types of things, then God will allow us into His home. But the Bible tells us again and again that we are never the first movers in this relationship. God is always the initiator. He spoke all things into being; He created; and He pursues. He is the one who arrives. And we see this in the first advent of God.

John begins his gospel by saying, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (ESV). God the Son came to us in the first advent: what the church calls the incarnation. He didn’t wait for us to try and make our way to his heavenly abode. He didn’t stand above us to lecture us or condemn us. He came to us. In fact, he became one of us, taking on flesh, pain, sorrows, and death.

And God hasn’t stopped there. After Jesus came into this world to inaugurate the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven, after he died on the cross to atone for our sins, and after he was raised from the dead to defeat sin and death, He ascended to heaven to assume the throne. Scripture tells us that he will come again. And when he comes again, he is bringing the new heavens and the new earth with him.

It is in this second advent, that Jesus promises to make all things new. Though he has already dealt with sin and death, it isn’t until he comes again that death will be eradicated.

ADVENT | CHRISTMAS | EPIPHANY | LENT | EASTER | PENTECOST | ORDINARY

PENTECOST

“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.

REFLECTIONS

"The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness."

— **William Blake**

"We desperately need the church for love, for maturity and preparedness, for spiritual care. It is arrogant, rebellious, self-reliant, God-indicting pride to conclude that the church is an optional extra to the Christian life. We need everything God designs for us. Everything. To reject what God designs for His glory and our good is spiritual suicide. To reject the church is to take your own spiritual life."

— **Thabiti Anyabwile**

"Christ's love towards us, and not our love towards Christ, is the true ground of expectation, and true foundation of hope."

— **J.C. Ryle**

But, as we wait for him to come again, we wait with hope. And as we wait, we live in light of that hope - praying for and acting in the knowledge that God's Kingdom will come in bits and pieces even now, offering us glimpses of the way that it is supposed to be, the way it will ultimately be.

In the middle of these two advents of Christ, there is a third advent. There is the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us, to help us to remember all that he taught and accomplished (John 14:26), and to help us as we follow him by faith. And Jesus tells us to follow him in the same way that he himself came. We are to leave our own comforts and to come into the places that he has called us. And so, in that way, we want to take the example of Christ's first coming to enter into the lives of our community. We want to bear witness to the coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness in the future. And, we want to minister as the mouthpiece, the hands, and the feet of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21).

So, Advent Houston is a **coming** of a group of Christians to the Texas Medical Center, to Rice University, and to the surrounding neighborhoods to embrace, embody, and extend the grace of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We are so glad that you are here with us!

SERVICE OF THE WORD

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 25:1-5 (ESV)

Leader: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust;
People: **Let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.**

Leader: Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
People: **Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

Leader: Lead me in your truth and teach me,
People: **For you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.**

*SONG

Come Thou Fount

Words by Robert Robinson and music by John Wyeth

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Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise mine Ebenezer
Hither by Thy help I'm come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wand'ring from the fold of God
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy grace Lord like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart Lord take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above

Prone to wander Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart Lord take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST READING

Exodus 24:3-11

³ Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." ⁴ And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹ And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD..

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the LORD.

People: **Praise be to you, Lord, Christ.**

*SONG

Psalm 130 (I Will Wait)

Words and music by Jordan Kauflin, Keith Getty, Matthew Merker, and Stuart Townend
© 2018 Getty Music Publishing

Verse 1

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

Verse 2

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
I will wait for You, Surely wait for You
Till my soul is satisfied

Verse 3

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

Verse 4

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

Chorus 1

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Hippolytus' Baptismal Creed Version 1 (responses as "I")

Hippolytus was a theologian and bishop around Rome. He was martyred on August 12, 235

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

People: **I believe**

Leader: Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead?

People: **I believe**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy church, and the resurrection of the body?

People: **I believe**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader: Let us confess our sin against God and neighbor.

People: Because of the way I have treated You.

Silence

People: Because of the way I have treated myself

Silence

People: Because of the way I have treated others.

Silence

People: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Ephesians 2:4-5 (ESV)

Leader: But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

*GLORIA PATRI

Author unknown

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be
World without end
Amen, amen

ADVENTURERS

All children, 1st through 5th grades, are invited to go to Adventurers, for a children's lesson and activity time during the sermon. The Adventurers will be escorted back to the Chapel during the Passing of the Peace.

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Collect for Week Closest to October 5 from Book of Common Prayer.

Leader: Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Leader intercedes in prayer on behalf of the world, the Church, and our congregation.

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.**

- 32** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- ² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- ³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
- ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*
- ⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.
- ⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*
- ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- ⁹ Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.
- ¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.
- ¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



Do you have a question about today's sermon? If so, click on the QR code for discussion at the next Question & Discussion time.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

- Leader: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
since as members of his body you are called to peace.
Therefore, may the peace of the Lord be always with you.
- People: **And also with you!**

RETURN OF ADVENTURERS

During the Passing of the Peace, the teachers will bring the Adventurers back to the Chapel.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are glad to have you worship with us today. Please sign in so we have a record of your attendance. Sign-in on the blue pad located near the center aisle and record your information there.

OFFERTORY & PRIVATE PRAYER

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 near the entrance of the chapel.



SERVICE OF THE TABLE

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

ALL: We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant and great mercies. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord, who always delights in showing mercy. Nourish us, therefore, gracious Lord, so that in partaking of this sacrament of your son Jesus Christ, we may walk in newness of life, grow into his likeness, and evermore dwell in him, and he in us. 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 Lord our God.

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

Leader: It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy, at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise, holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word; through him you have created all things from the beginning, and formed us in your own image.

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin, giving him to be born of a woman and to die upon the cross; you raised him from the dead and exalted him to your right hand on high.

Through him you have sent upon us your holy and life-giving Spirit, and made us a people for your own possession.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and singing:

ALL:

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: According to Jesus' commandment:

People: **We remember his death,**
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory.

COMMUNION AT ADVENT

Advent welcomes all baptized Christians to participate in the Lord's table. This includes all Christians, whether members at Advent or at another church. Children who have been baptized and admitted to the table by the elders of this church or the leadership of another church are also welcome to the table.

If you're still investigating Christianity, not sure what you believe, or simply choose not to participate, you may either remain in your seat or come forward, cross your arms over your chest, and receive a blessing. Feel free to use the prayers printed in the bulletin below. Non-communing children are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing while their parents receive communion.

ABOUT THE ELEMENTS

- We serve both wine and grape juice for communion.
- Grape juice is available in the center of the communion trays; wine is available along the edge.
- All communion bread is gluten free.



PRAYER FOR THOSE SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me the ability to follow you no matter what it might cost me. Give me an understanding for you that is coherent, convincing, and leads to the life that you promise. Amen. A prayer of belief: A prayer for those struggling against sin: A prayer for covenant children who have not yet made a profession of faith:

PRAYER OF BELIEF

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever believed, but through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead and are now representing me at the Father's right hand in heaven, I turn from my sins and receive you as my savior. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THOSE STRUGGLING AGAINST SIN

Lord Jesus, give me the ability to see in you the fulfillment of all my needs and desires, and help me to turn from every false source of satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely to me, and run with perseverance the race that you have set before me, looking only to you, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT YET MADE A PROFESSION OF FAITH

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow up in a Christian family where I am surrounded by the good news of the gospel. Help me to grow in my understanding of who you are and what you have done for me on the cross. Help me learn what it means for me to turn from my sins and trust in you alone for my salvation. Teach me what it means to follow you as one of your disciples. Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, and Michael Farren
© 2018 CityAlight Music

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy my righteousness and freedom
My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine
Yet not I but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side the Savior he will stay
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need his power is displayed
To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley he will lead
Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome
Yet not I but through Christ in me

No fate I dread I know I am forgiven
The future sure the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And he was raised to overthrow the grave
To this I hold my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free
Yet not I but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For he has said that he will bring me home
And day by day I know he will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to him
When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I but through Christ in me

When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I but through Christ in me
Yet not I but through Christ in me

***CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

***BENEDICTION (May the Peace)**

Words and Music by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty
© 2005 Thankyou Music

Verse 1

May the peace of God our heav'nly Father
And the grace of Christ the risen Son
And the fellowship of God the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within His love

Chorus

And to Him be praise for His glorious reign
From the depths of earth to the heights of heav'n
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain
Christ eternal the King of kings

Verse 2

May this peace which passes understanding
And this grace which makes us what we are
And this fellowship of His communion
Make us one in spirit and in heart

Chorus

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Let us know how you would like to be involved on Sundays. There are lots of behind the scene as well as onstage opportunities. Click the QR code and complete the short form.



LUNCH FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

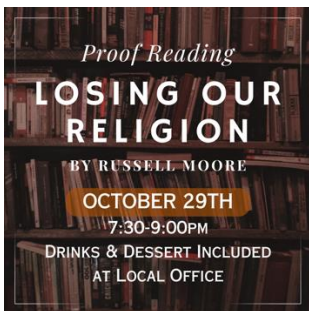
Oct. 8th - After Worship

Calling all college students ... join Advent's monthly lunch for undergrad, graduate & medical students. Click on the QR code & RSVP, so we can have a good headcount. Invite a friend to meet your friends.



SOCCER PICK-UP GAMES

Beginning Friday, October 20th, we are going to be putting on a monthly pick-up soccer game for the families of medical sojourners as an opportunity to have fun, run around, meet people and have a meal. If you are interested in helping us put this together email "mission@adventpres.org."



PROOF READING - DATE CHANGE

Oct. 29th - 7:30 - 9:00 P.M.

Join us as we discuss the book *Losing Our Religion* by Russell Moore. Come if you read the entire book or just the back cover. Come join in the discussion or just listen. Invite a friend to accompany you. We'll meet at Local Office, 2617 Bissonnet, Suite 200 (above Cavo Coffee).

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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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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