

# ADVENT HOUSTON

## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022

## ADVENT

The season of Advent is the four-week period of preparation for and anticipation of the arrival of the Light of the World, which the Church celebrates at Christmas. The word "advent" literally means arrival. And during the season of Advent we focus on three different arrivals of Jesus Christ. First, we pay attention to Jesus's arrival as a baby born in Bethlehem—as the God-man himself in our world. Second, we focus on his return at the end of time when he promises to wipe away every tear from our eyes. Finally, we focus on his "intermediate entrance into our own lives."<sup>11</sup>

Bobby Gross, an author of the book entitled *Living The Christian Year*, has this to say about Advent:

Advent is a season for waiting; we wait for the coming of God. We need him to come. Our world is messed up and we are messed up. We lament our condition and long for God to set things right, to make us better. So we pray and watch for signs of his presence.... In the midst of hardship and disappointment, we continue to wait. We wait in hope. We believe that something is happening in our world, something is taking shape in our lives, something large, light-filled and life giving. Even in December's lengthening darkness, this seed of joyful hope grows within us. <sup>12</sup>

In the season of Advent, we acknowledge the tension that pervades our lives throughout the whole of the year. During these four weeks, we celebrate the arrival two thousand years ago of our savior, Jesus Christ and his second, promised arrival that is still to come. We, like our brothers and sisters before us, cannot do anything to hasten Jesus' coming, as much as we long for that day. All we can do is prepare for it and live patiently knowing that he has come already and he will come again. During Advent, we practice the patience of the prophets who longed for the LORD to make his people holy. We celebrate what God is already doing in the world, and we wait with expectancy for His work to be made complete!

Thus, the season of Advent is a time for us to eschew the busyness of our day-to-day lives and to remind ourselves of the truth that we so frequently forget: we are a dependent people who worship a faithful God. He is a God who has promised redemption of all things. He has promised that though there is darkness now, one day, someday, we will no longer need the sun itself because the radiance of his glory is all the light that we will need. So, in Advent, we wait, but we do so with expectancy. We practice patience. We look forward to our God's coming in hope.

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<sup>11</sup> Gross, Bobby, *Living the Christian Year*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 37.

## REFLECTION

### **MAGNIFICAT TRANSLATION FROM THE MESSAGE, by Eugene Peterson**

"And Mary said,  
I'm bursting with God-news;  
I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.  
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—  
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!  
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,  
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.  
His mercy flows in wave after wave  
on those who are in awe before him.  
He bared his arm and showed his strength,  
scattered the bluffing braggarts.  
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,  
pulled victims out of the mud.  
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;  
the callous rich were left out in the cold.  
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;  
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.  
It's exactly what he promised,  
beginning with Abraham and right up to now." Luke 1:46-55

"No one should be afraid, if he had tough times growing up or is miserable and despised.... It is not a bad omen. Look at Mary's example. And look what God made out of her! ... Her renown and her honor will remain among many until the end of the world: for no one can preach Christ without speaking of his mother." – **Martin Luther**

# SERVICE OF THE WORD

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## \*Call to Worship – From Psalm 96 & Isaiah 9

Leader: Oh sing to the LORD a new song;  
Sing to the LORD, all the earth!

**People: Declare his glory among the nations,  
His marvelous works among all the peoples!**

Leader: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

**People: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given!**

## \*Song – O Come O Come Emmanuel

### Verse 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear

### Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

### Verse 2

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grace

*Refrain*

### Verse 3

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight

*Refrain*

### Verse 4

O Come Thou key of David come  
And open wide our heavenly home  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
And close the path to misery

*Refrain*

## Verse 5

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
All people in one heart and mind  
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease  
Fill all the world with heaven's peace

*Refrain*

## First Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

- [2] The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.
- [3] You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- [4] For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- [5] For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
- [6] For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- [7] Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (ESV)

Leader: The word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

[26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

[34] And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

[35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

### \*Song – O Holy Night

#### Verse 1

O holy night the stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn

#### Chorus 1

Fall on your knees  
O hear the angel voices  
O night divine  
O night when Christ was born  
O night divine  
O night, O night divine

## Verse 2

Truly He taught us to love one another  
His law is love and His gospel is peace  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression shall cease  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we  
Let all within us praise His holy name

## Chorus 2

Christ is the Lord  
O praise His name forever  
His power and glory  
Evermore proclaim  
His power and glory  
Evermore proclaim

## \*Affirmation of Faith

## Apostles Creed

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

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

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: **I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell\*.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: **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.**

\* Christ's 'descent into hell' occurred in His death and burial, the Father's wrath toward sin being poured out on him in our place, so we would never have to taste His wrath.

\*\* By 'catholic,' we mean the universal church made up of all Christians who are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

## Confession of Sin

(Christ Central Church, NC)

**ALL:**           **Wonderful Counselor, we admit we pursue rival wonders and replacement counselors.**

*Silence*

**ALL:**           **Mighty God, we acknowledge we wrongly view You as weak and ourselves as mighty.**

*Silence*

**ALL:**           **Everlasting Father, we confess we act like unwanted orphans rather than loved children.**

*Silence*

**ALL:**           **Prince of Peace, we own the fact we are often at war with You, ourselves, and others.**

*Silence*

## \*Assurance of Pardon

**Titus 2:11**

Leader:       For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

Leader:       May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Third Scripture Lesson

**Luke 1:39-56**

[39] In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, [40] and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. [41] And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, [42] and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! [43] And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44] For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. [45] And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

[46] And Mary said,

          "My soul magnifies the Lord,  
[47] and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
[48] for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
          For behold, from now on all generations will call me  
          blessed;

- [49] for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.
- [50] And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.
- [51] He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
- [52] he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;
- [53] he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.
- [54] He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,
- [55] as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

[56] And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

## **\*Song – Magnificat**

### **[Verse]**

My soul magnifies the Lord  
My spirit rejoices in God  
My soul magnifies the Lord  
My spirit rejoices in God

### **[Chorus]**

For He who is mighty  
Has done great things for me  
Holy holy  
Holy holy  
Holy holy  
Is His name

## Prayers of the People

(Collect from Book of Common Prayer)

**ALL:** God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name.

Leader: And so, with all of your people, throughout time and throughout the world we pray the prayer that the Light of the World taught us to pray, saying

**ALL:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

*Leader Intercedes*

**ALL:** Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

*Leader Intercedes*

**ALL:** Give us this day our daily bread.

*Leader Intercedes*

**ALL:** Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

*Leader Intercedes*

**ALL:** Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

*Leader Intercedes*

**ALL:** For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. AMEN.

[26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

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[35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

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Leader: The Gospel of the LORD.

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

## **Homily**

**Rev. Taylor Leachman**

"Mothers of Jesus: Mary"

## **Passing of the Peace**

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

**People: And also with you!**

## Announcements

WE'RE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU WORSHIP WITH US. PLEASE SIGN IN SO WE HAVE A RECORD OF YOUR ATTENDANCE.

OPTION 1: TAKE THE BLUE SIGN-IN PAD FROM UNDER THE SEAT AT THE END OF THE ROW AND RECORD YOUR INFORMATION THERE.

OPTION 2: SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA AND FILL OUT THE FORM THERE. YOU MAY ALSO DO THIS AFTER THE SERVICE.



## 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](https://adventpres.org/give). YOU CAN ALSO SCAN THIS QR CODE OR PLACE A GIFT IN THE OFFERING BASKET TOWARD THE ENTRANCE OF THE SANCTUARY.



## Song – Labor of Love

### Verses 1-2

It was not a silent night  
There was blood on the ground  
You could hear a woman cry  
In the alleyway that night  
On the streets of David's town

And the stable was not clean  
And the cobblestones were cold  
And little Mary full of grace  
With the tears upon her face  
Had no mother's hand to hold

### Chorus

It was a labor of pain  
It was a cold sky above  
But for the girl on the ground in the dark  
Every beat of her beautiful heart  
Was a labor of love

### Verse 3

Noble Joseph by her side  
His callused hands and weary eyes  
There were no midwives to be found  
On the streets of David's town  
In the middle of the night

### Bridge

So he held her and he prayed  
Shafts of moonlight on his face  
But the baby in her womb  
He was the Maker of the moon  
He was the Author of the faith  
That could make the mountains move  
*Chorus*

### Ending

For little Mary full of grace  
With the tears upon her face  
It was a labor of love

## Prayer of Adoration

Leader: Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise  
for Jesus Christ our Lord:  
for he was the Word before all creation.  
Through him all things come to be;  
not one thing has its being but through him.  
His life is the light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness cannot overpower.  
...

*Leader continues praying as they feel led.*

### \*Fourth Scripture Reading

**Luke 2:1-20**

[1] In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. [2] This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. [3] And all went to be registered, each to his own town. [4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [5] to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. [10] And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is  
pleased!"

[15] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." [16] And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. [17] And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. [18] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds

returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

### \*Gospel Acclamation

Leader: Alleluia, Alleluia  
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
And we have seen His glory.

**People: Alleluia**

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **PRAYER FOR 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.

## Lights Dim & Children Come Forward with Candlelights

### \*Song – Silent Night

#### Verse 1

Silent night holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child  
Holy Infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

#### Verse 2

Silent night holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born  
Christ the Savior is born

#### Verse 3

Silent night holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord at Thy birth

### \*Closing Song – O Come All Ye Faithful

#### Verse 1

O come all ye faithful  
Joyful and triumphant  
O come ye O come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of angels

#### Chorus

O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord

#### Verse 2

Sing choirs of angels  
Sing in exultation  
O sing all ye bright

Hosts of heav'n above  
Glory to God all  
Glory in the highest

**Verse 3**

Yea Lord we greet Thee  
Born this happy morning  
Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n  
Word of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing

**\*Benediction (Book of Common Prayer)**

Leader: May the Father, who has loved the eternal Son from before the foundation of the world, shed that love upon you his children.

**People: Amen.**

Leader: May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace.

**People: Amen.**

Leader: May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

**People: Amen.**

Leader: And the blessing of God Almighty,  
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
Be among you and remain with you always.

# Announcements



## CHRISTMAS DAY

*Tomorrow*

Mark your calendars for our Christmas Day service on Sunday (tomorrow), December 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. There will not be childcare, but it is a family-friendly service!



## MEMBERSHIP CLASS

*January 27<sup>th</sup>*

Interested in church membership? Our next membership class will be held at the Leachman's on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Come and hear "All About Advent". More details to follow.



**NEXT DISCUSSION: January 29<sup>th</sup>**



# INTERNAL GIVING - 2022 CY

2022 Budgeted  
Goal:

**\$146,666**

Budgeted to Date:

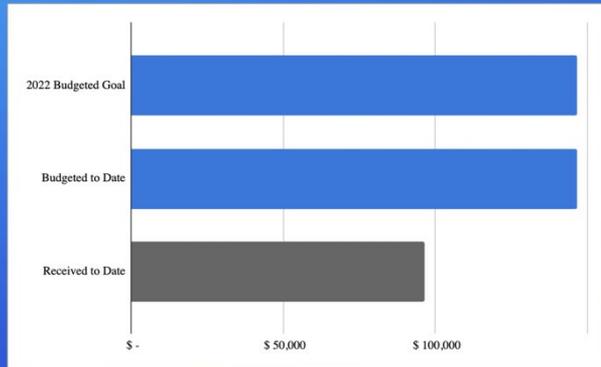
**\$146,666**

Received to Date:

**\$96,514**

2022/23 Expense  
Budget:

**\$427,000**



## 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](mailto:admin@adventpres.org) to opt out of the media release.

## Advent Presbyterian Church of Houston

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[adventpres.org](http://adventpres.org)

ADVENT'S HOUSTON EXISTS TO **EMBRACE, EMBODY, AND EXTEND** THE GRACE OF JESUS TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE UNIVERSITY, AND THE GREATER WEST UNIVERSITY AREA.

