## EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



Easter Sunday

MARCH • 31 • 2024

#### **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

### **EASTER**

"Christ is the one in whom life and the new creation, the beginning again of our lives and all of creation, is assured. Our Easter calling is to let him live in us, to embrace by faith his new life, to let it take hold of us, to participate in him and his resurrection for the life of the whole world. In this way we are born again (John 3:3); we are made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

...The message of Easter is that the way of being in Jesus, the way of living the new resurrected life is through participation. This message is very different than the message I all too frequently hear about Easter day. I hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of intellectual evidence: Believe the facts and that will transform your life. I also hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of emotion: Feel God. Feel forgiveness. ... But the emphasis of the early church fathers and the ancient church is knowing God through the way of participation. We participate in Christ by living the life of our baptism into his death and resurrection. This is a daily, existential, moment-by-moment experience as we choose in this or that situation to die to the sins for which Christ died and choose the life of the Spirit for which Christ was raised to new life."5

Easter is a fifty-day period in the church calendar that lasts from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday (the celebration of God's sending of the Holy Spirit). This fifty day period is not merely meant to be an extended celebration – although it is that. But, as lent was a time of preparation for new Christians to join the church, Easter was a time of continued education of those newly welcomed Christians. This instruction was intended to be a teaching of "mystagogy" – a leading through the mysteries, chiefly the mystery of the sacraments.

Thus, Easter became a time for Christians to learn the pattern of baptism and to learn the expectation and celebration of the Eucharist (what we refer to as Communion). We are to continue in this baptismal pattern – of dying to sin and living to Christ. We too are called to live into that pattern of repentance and faith – to become more and more like Christ in our journey as His disciples.

During this Easter season, may we learn better what it means to PRACTICE our faith by paying attention to our sins, turning from them, and then turning toward our Life and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 Robert E. Webber, Ancient Future Time

### REFLECTIONS

The point of the resurrection...is that the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die...What you do with your body in the present matters because God has a great future in store for it...What you do in the present —by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself—will last into God's future. These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly, a little more bearable, until the day when we leave it behind altogether (as the hymn so mistakenly puts it...). They are part of what we may call building for God's kingdom.

### - N.T. Wright

I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.

### - Charles Colson

The resurrection is not an isolated supernatural oddity proving how powerful, if apparently arbitrary, God can be when he wants to. Nor is it at all a way of showing that there is indeed a heaven awaiting us after death. It is the decisive event demonstrating that God's kingdom really has been launched on earth as it is in heaven.

### N.T. Wright

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

Adapted from Psalm 18:46, 39 ESV

Leader: The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the

God of my salvation.

People: For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and

sing to your name.

Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

## **Explanation of Flowering the Cross**

During the opening song, we invite children or those who wish to remember a deceased loved one come forward and place a flower on the cross. If you did not bring one, there are extra flowers in the back.

The flowering of the cross is a tradition in the church that dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, in which members of the church transform the cross with decorative flowers. In doing so, Christians are testifying to the fact that the suffering and death of the cross are the beginning of new life. That in Christ's death and subsequent resurrection, sin and death have been defeated. And that all who are united to him by faith will be raised with him when he comes again.

## \*SONG

## Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Words by Charles Wesley and music by Samuel Arnold © Words and music: public domain

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia Sing ye heavens and earth reply, Alleluia

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia Where O death is now thy sting? Alleluia Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia Death in vain forbids Him rise, Alleluia Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia Following our exalted Head, Alleluia Made like Him, like Him we rise, Alleluia Ours the cross the grave the skies, Alleluia

## PRAYER OF ADORATION

### FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 25:6-9

- [6] On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
- [7] And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.
- [8] He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.
- [9] It will be said on that day,

"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

## **SECOND SCRIPTURE READING**

Mark 16:1-8

[1] When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. [2] And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. [3] And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" [4] And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. [5] And

entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. [6] And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. [7] But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." [8] And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise be to you, Lord Christ.

### \*SONG

## Come People of the Risen King

Words and music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, and Stuart Townend © 2007 Thankyou Music

### Verse 1

Come people of the Risen King
Who delight to bring Him praise
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in

#### Chorus

Rejoice rejoice let ev'ry tongue rejoice One heart one voice O Church of Christ rejoice

### Verse 2

Come those whose joy is morning sun And those weeping through the night Come those who tell of battles won And those struggling in the fight For His perfect love will never change And His mercies never cease But follow us through all our days With the certain hope of peace

Chorus

### Verse 3

Come young and old from ev'ry land Men and women of the faith Come those with full or empty hands Find the riches of His grace Over all the world His people sing Shore to shore we hear them call The truth that cries through ev'ry age Our God is all in all Chorus x2

### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostles Creed

Leader: Christian, what is it that you believe?

ALL: I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He 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 the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

Wayside Presbyterian Church, Signal Mountain, TN

ALL: Holy Father, we confess that we may approach you with our mouths and our lips, when our hearts are not in worship. We confess that we offer to you that which costs us little. Though you are a great King, we often bring to you the leftovers of

our time, energy, gifts, and worship. We have neglected your commands when it is inconvenient for us to keep them. We have ignored your laws when it causes us to lose our ease. We have disregarded our neighbors' needs, and wondered aloud why other people do not meet our needs. O Father, have mercy on us! Forgive us of our many debts! Cleanse us and give us the mind and heart of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. In His name, and for His sake, we come to you. Amen.

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 25:19 (ESV)

Leader: Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might

save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be

glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Almighty God have mercy upon 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.

People: Amen

## \*DOXOLOGY

Words by Thomas Ken and music by Louis Bourgeois

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Praise God from whom all blessings flow Praise Him all creatures here below Praise Him above ye heavenly host Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Amen

There is no Adventurers today. Adventurers will resume next Sunday

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Easter Collect from the Church of England

Leader: God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the

chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in

our Savior Jesus Christ.

# Leader Intercedes for the world, Church, and the needs of 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.

### SERMON READING

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

[1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. (ESV)

Leader: The word of the LORD. **People:** Thanks be to God.

### **SERMON**

"A New Thing"

Rev. Taylor Leachman



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: Alleluia. Christ is risen.

People: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Leader: May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you!

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We are glad to have you worship with us today. Please sign-in on the 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 chanel

## SERVICE OF THE TABLE

### FIRST COMMUNION

We invite the officers of Presbyterian Church in America, parents and godparents, and our first communion celebrants, *Gillian Leachman* and *Mary Claire Shields* to come forward.

The officers, parents, and godparents lay hands on the candidates.

Leader: Almighty God, we thank you that you have made Gillian and

Mary Claire in your image. Your Spirit has made them, and your breath gives them life. You have plans for their welfare, Father, to give them a future and a hope. We thank you Lord for your steadfast love and your wondrous works to all of us, but particularly we thank you for your loving kindness toward

Gillian and Mary Claire. We thank you that they have confessed that they love you because you have first loved them, and that they have responded to your grace by faith.

People: Amen.

Leader: So, as they continue in this pilgrimage of faith, now joining

your table, we ask that you would strengthen Gillian and Mary Claire, O Lord, with your Holy Spirit; empower them for your

service; and sustain them all the days of their life.

People: Amen.

Leader: Father God, let your fatherly hand ever be upon Gillian and

Mary Claire; let your Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of your Holy Word, that they may faithfully serve you in this life, and joyfully dwell with

vou in the life to come.

People: Amen.

### **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 to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Leader: And now we give you thanks because in his victory over the

grave a new age has dawned, the long reign of sin is ended, a broken world is being renewed and humanity is

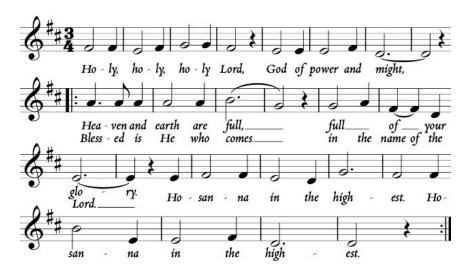
once again made whole.

And therefore, we join our voices with angels and archangels

and the rest of your creation, forever praising you

and *singing* 

### ALL:



## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

ALL: Your death, O Christ, we proclaim. Your resurrection we affirm with joy.

Your coming we await with hope.
Glory be to you, Lord Jesus. Alleluia!

Leader: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon

these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ and

with your church in all the world.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and

forever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia

Leader: These gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in

remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your

hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

## 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 aluten 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.

### His Heart Beats

### **COMMUNION SONG**

Words by Andrew Peterson and Ben Shive and music by Ben Shive © 2018 Junkbox Music

### Verse 1

His heart beats, his blood begins to flow Waking up what was dead a moment ago And his heart beats, now everything is changed 'Cause the blood that brought us peace with God Is racing through his veins And his heart beats, his heart beats

### Verse 2

He breathes in, his living lungs expand
The heavy air surrounding death turns to breath again
He breathes out, He is Word and flesh once more
The Lamb Of God, slain for us, is a lion ready to roar
And his heart beats

### **Pre-Chorus**

So crown him the Lord of Life Crown him the Lord of Love Crown him the Lord of All

### Chorus 1

He took one breath and put death to death Where is your sting, O grave How grave is your defeat I know, I know his heart beats

### Verse 3

He rises, glorified in flesh, clothed in immortality
The first-born from the dead
He rises, and his work's already done, so he's resting
As he rises to reclaim the bride he won
And his heart beats

Pre-chorus, Chorus 1

## **Bridge**

The last enemy to be destroyed is death
The last enemy to be destroyed is death
He must reign until no enemy is left
The last enemy to be destroyed
To be destroyed is death

### Verse 4

His heart beats, He will never die again I know that death no longer has dominion over him So my heart beats with the rhythm of the saints As I look for the seeds the King has sown To burst up from their graves

### Chorus 2

I know, I know he took one breath And put death to death Where is your sting, O grave How grave is your defeat I know, I know he took one breath And put death to death Where is your sting, O grave How grave is your defeat How great, how great is his victory

### **Ending**

I know, I know his heart beats His heart beats I know, I know his heart beats, His heart beats

## \*SONG

## O Praise the Name (Anástasis)

Words and Music by Marty Sampson, Benjamin Hastings, and Dean Ussher © 2015 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia

#### Verse 1

I cast my mind to Calvary Where Jesus bled and died for me I see His wounds His hands His feet My Savior on that cursed tree

### Verse 2

His body bound and drenched in tears They laid Him down in Joseph's tomb The entrance sealed by heavy stone Messiah still and all alone

### Chorus

O praise the Name of the Lord our God O praise His Name forevermore For endless days we will sing Your praise Oh Lord oh Lord our God

### Verse 3

Then on the third at break of dawn
The Son of heaven rose again
O trampled death where is your sting
The angels roar for Christ the King
Chorus

### Verse 4

He shall return in robes of white
The blazing sun shall pierce the night
And I will rise among the saints
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face
Chorus x2

## \*CLOSING PRAYER

## \*BENEDICTION

Adapted from Hebrews 13:20-21

Leader: Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our

Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord!

ALL: AMEN.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**



### WORSHIP AT HILLEL ON APRIL 7TH

Sunday, April 7<sup>st</sup>, 10 A.M.

The Weekley Family YMCA has an event on the 7<sup>th</sup> and they need their entire facility. Hillel has once again allowed us to use their building for our Sunday morning services. Join your Advent family as we worship at Hillel.

Location: Houston Hillel, 1700 Bissonnet St.



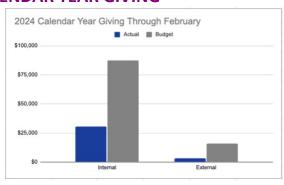
## STARTING APRIL 14<sup>TH</sup> ... 9:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 AM WORSHIP

Advent will start a 6-week Sunday school course, led by Will McKee.

Location: 9:30 Sunday School – Multi-purpose Room

10:30 Worship – Gymnasium Childcare will be provided during Sunday school.

### **2024 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING**



### **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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