
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

JANUARY • 14 • 2024

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.

EPIPHANY

The season of Epiphany is a time of enlightenment. The word Epiphany comes from the a Greek word meaning “to bring of light.” The season is a five to nine week period celebrating and remembering the time that God manifested Jesus as the Son of God as the Savior to and for the world.

During Christmas we joyfully celebrated the coming of [the] light in the birth of Jesus. Now the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6 brings this theme to culmination - the light of Christ made manifest to the whole world as symbolized by the Gentile Magi from the East. Thus the day of Epiphany and the season that follows complete what is sometimes called in the liturgical year the Cycle of Light.

Twenty centuries after the birth and ministry of Jesus, we can take it for granted that Jesus was not just the Anointed One for Israel, but that He was the promised Messiah (meaning anointed one) that would bring salvation to all peoples, all tribes, and all nations. So, the season of Epiphany is a time when we remember that Jesus was made manifest to the Wise Men who came to worship him. It is a time when we remember that manifests his ministry and power to the world around him. And it is a time when we begin to more fully contemplate what it means for us to participate in extending his light to the nations. Allow for this season, to be a time when you think more about how you might be able to make Jesus’ story manifest in your own life and to the lives of others.

*Robert E. Webber, Ancient Future Time

REFLECTIONS

“Christian discipleship cannot be reduced to a mere intellectual acquiescence. It demands more than lip service, more than attendance at worship and the functions of the church. It is a call to action. For as Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it’ (Matt. 16:24-25). Spirituality is Christ living his life in us and through us.”

- **Robert E. Webber**

“We who have seen the light of Christ are obliged, by the greatness of the grace that has been given us, to make known the presence of the Savior to the ends of the earth...not only by preaching the glad tidings of His coming; but above all by revealing Him in our lives.... Every day our mortal lives must be His manifestation, His divine Epiphany, in the world which He has created and redeemed”

- **Thomas Merton**

Prayer: Open my eyes, O God, that I may see more of your glory as revealed in your Son, and soften my heart that I might trust more deeply in the fullness of your grace and truth. Amen

- **From Living the Christian Year**

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 139:1-4; ESV

Leader: O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

People: You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Leader: Even before a word is on my tongue

People: Behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.

*SONG

Praise to the Lord the Almighty

Words by Joachim Neander and music from "Lobe den Herren"

© Words and Music: Public Domain

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation
All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near
Praise Him in glad adoration

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth
Hast thou not seen, how thy desires all have been
Granted in what He ordaineth

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee
Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do!
If with his love he befriend thee

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him
Let the amen sound from His people again
Gladly for all we adore Him

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

John 1:43-51

[43] The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." [44] Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. [45] Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." [46] Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." [47] Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" [48] Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." [49] Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" [50] Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." [51] And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the LORD

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

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 2:14-19

[14] For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility [15] by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, [16] and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. [17] And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. [18] For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*SONG

Heal Us

Words by William Cowper (alt Twit), Music by Kevin Twit and Lucas Morton
© 2015 Kevin Twit Music and Lucas Morton Music

Chorus

Heal us, Emmanuel, here we are
We long to feel Thy touch
Deep wounded souls to Thee we fly
O Savior hear our cry

Verse 1

Our faith is feeble, we confess
We faintly trust Thy word
But will You pity us the less?
Be that far from You Lord!

Chorus

Verse 2

Remember him who once applied
With trembling for relief
“Lord, I believe,” with tears he cried
“O help my unbelief!”

Chorus

Verse 3

She, too, who touched you in the press
And healing virtue stole
Was answered, “Daughter, go in peace
Thy faith has made thee whole.”

Chorus

Verse 4

Like her, with hopes and fears we come
To touch You if we may
O send us not despairing home
Send none unhealed away

Chorus x2

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

From the *Church of North India and Pakistan, Plan of Church Union, 1965*)

Leader: Christian, what is it that you believe?

ALL: We hold the faith which the church has ever held in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, in whom alone men are saved by grace through faith, and in accordance with the revelation of God which he made, being himself God incarnate, it worships one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the inspired word of God, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as the supreme and decisive standard of faith, and acknowledges that the church must always be ready to correct and reform itself in accordance with the teaching of those Scriptures as the Holy spirit shall reveal it.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Confession of Sin from Wayside Presbyterian Church, Signal Mountain, TN

ALL: Lord, though you should guide us, we inform ourselves;
though you should rule us, we control ourselves;
though you should fulfill us, we console ourselves.
We think your truth too high, your will too hard,
your power too remote, your love too free. But they are not!
And without them, we are of all people most miserable.
Now heal our confused minds with your word,
heal our divided wills with your law,
heal our troubled consciences with your love,
heal our anxious hearts with your presence,
all for the sake of your Son,
who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Adapted from *Heidelberg Catechism*, 4.056

- Leader:** Hear the good news!
For the sake of Christ's reconciling work, God will no more remember our sins or the sinfulness with which we have to struggle throughout our lives.
- People:** **God graciously imparts to us the righteousness of Christ so that we may never come into condemnation.**

***Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)**

Words: Luke 2:29-32; Music: LAND OF REST, American Folk Melody
Arranged by David Lutes, 2010

Lord, bid your servant go in peace,
Your word is now fulfilled.
These eyes have seen salvation's dawn,
This child so long foretold

This is the Savior of the world
The Gentile's promised light
God's glory dwelling in our midst
The joy of Israel

ADVENTURERS

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002), for this week in Epiphany.

Leader: O God,
you spoke your word
and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ.
Fill all creation with that word again,
so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations
and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples,
we may become one living body,
your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.

*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.**

SERMON SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 6:1-8

[1] When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, [2] the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. [3] Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." [4] The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. [7] So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." [8] But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

"The Origins Story: Noah"



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: All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, go and be reconciled with one another.

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 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 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: All honor and praise be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst.

In the coming of the magi the King of all the world was revealed to the nations. In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Savior sent to redeem us. In the water made wine the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast. Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

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 -
Lord. san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

All: Alleluia

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-communicating 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

Psalm 34 (Oh Taste and See)

Words and music by Isaac Wardell, Paul Zach, and Wendell Kimbrough

© 2017 Wendell K Songs

Verse 1

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

Verse 2

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

Verse 3

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

Bridge

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

Chorus x2

***CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

Adapted from "faithandworship.com," Prayers for Epiphany

Leader: We pray for confidence to share your Word with others and for the opportunity to proclaim it. Forgive our reluctance, our timidity.

We pray for wisdom to know what should be said and the moment in which to say it. Forgive our reticence, our anxiety.

We pray for knowledge of the fullness of your Grace and the willingness to live it. Forgive our ignorance, our self-reliance.

Be the center of all we are. The Light by which we walk. The blessing we bring to others. Through Jesus Christ alone we ask.
Amen

*SONG

The Blessing

Words and music by Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, and Steven Furtick
© 2020 Capitol CMG Paragon

Verse 1

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace
Repeat

Chorus

Amen, amen, amen
Repeat x3

Bridge

May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children and their children

May His presence go before you
And behind you and beside you
All around you and within you
He is with you
He is with you

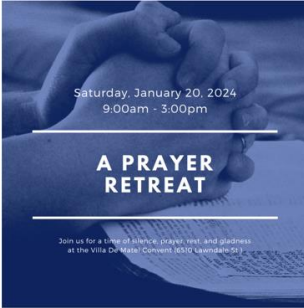
In the morning, in the evening
In your coming and your going
In your weeping and rejoicing
He is for you
He is for you

He is for you, He is for you
He is for you, He is for you
He is for you, He is for you

Chorus

Amen, amen, amen
Repeat x2

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PRAYER RETREAT

Saturday, Jan. 20th at the Villa De Matel Convent

When was the last time you spent a few hours in quiet prayer? Come and join your Advent family in experiencing a time of prayer at a local haven within our city. The event is free.

Register at AdventPres.org/Events.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, Feb. 4th 12:00 – 1:00 P.M.

Join us for our second annual Congregational Meeting. All are welcome to attend.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Multi-purpose Room



NEW PARISH GROUPS ARE COMING

Interested in being more connected at Advent Houston? Join a Parish Group!

Click the QR code, complete the form.



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

2617 BISSONNET ST. SUITE 200, #208
HOUSTON, TX 77005



ADVENT HOUSTON EXISTS TO EMBRACE,
EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
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