
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Fourth Sunday of Easter

APRIL • 21 • 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.

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

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

“While other worldviews lead us to sit in the midst of life’s joys, foreseeing the coming sorrows, Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of this world’s sorrows, tasting the coming joy.”

— **Timothy Keller**

“Jesus, the good shepherd, will not travel at such a rate as to overdrive the lambs. He has tender consideration for the poor and needy. Kings usually look to the interests of the great and the rich, but in the kingdom of our Great Shepherd He cares most for the poor... The weaklings and the sickly of the flock are the special objects of the Savior’s care”

— **Charles Spurgeon**

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 23 (ESV)

Leader: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

People: **He makes me lie down in green pastures.**

Leader: He leads me beside still waters.

People: **He restores my soul.**

Leader: He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

People: **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,**

Leader for you are with me;

People: **your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

Leader: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

People: **You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

Leader: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

People: **And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

*SONG

Praise to the Lord the Almighty

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

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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 over all things
So wondrously reigneth
Shelters thee under His wings
Yea so gently sustaineth
Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever 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

1 John 3:16-24

[16] By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. [17] But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? [18] Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

[19] By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; [20] for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. [21] Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; [22] and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. [23] And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. [24] Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 10:11-18

[11] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12] He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. [13] He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. [14] I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. [17] For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. [18] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

*SONG

Blessed

Words and music by Andi Rozier, Jason Ingram, Jud Harris, and Vanessa Dalrymple

© All Essential Music

Verse 1

Blessed are the poor in spirit
Blessed are the ones in need
For every thirst and every hunger
You are everything
Blessed are the worn and weary
Blessed are the ones who grieve
And every moment unexpected
You are everything

Chorus

To seek You is to find You
And to know You is to want You
And I want nothing more than You
To see You is to love You
And I can't believe I get to
And I want nothing more than You

Verse 2

Blessed is the mercy giver
Blessed is the way of peace
I will trust Your heart and head
You are everything
Yes I will trust Your heart and head
You are everything
Chorus

Bridge

Take this world, give me Jesus
Take this life, give me Yours
In every season, You are the blessing
Jesus You are my reward
Repeat
Chorus

Ending

Oh and I want nothing more than You
Oh I want nothing more than You

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Adapted from the *Holiness Manifesto*, a Declaring created by representatives of ten holiness denominations in 2006

Leader: We believe God is holy and calls us to be a holy people:
ALL: God, who is holy, has abundant and steadfast love for us.

**God's holy love is revealed to us in the life and teachings,
death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

God continues to work, giving life, hope and salvation through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, drawing us into God's own holy, loving life.

God transforms us, delivering us from sin, idolatry, bondage, and self-centeredness to love and serve God, others, and to be stewards of creation.

Thus, we are renewed in the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Leader: We believe holiness is a gift from God and a response to his love, renewing and transforming, personal and communal, ethical and missional.

ALL: **The people of God follow Jesus Christ in engaging all the cultures of the world and drawing all peoples to God.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Anonymous Source

Leader: Let us make confession to God the Lord, and let everyone acknowledge with me their sins against God and their neighbor.

ALL **Father in heaven, we thank you for the freedom you have given us through the life, death and resurrection of your Son. But we confess today that we often live like slaves.**

Instead of living like you delight in us, we avoid you in shame and guilt.

Instead of receiving your favor as a gift, we try to earn it with our efforts.

Instead of accepting your freedom, we prefer our chains.

Instead of pursuing your purposes, we cling to our short-sighted agendas.

Forgive us. Embrace us. Cleanse us. Heal us. We ask this in Jesus' name.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 3:16a (ESV)

Leader: By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us.

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**

*GLORIA PATRI

Anonymous

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

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

Collect for 4th Sunday in Easter; *Book of Common Prayer*.

Leader: O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people, grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

*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

Acts 4:5-14

[5] On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, [6] with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. [7] And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” [8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, [9] if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, [10] let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. [11] This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. [12] And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

[13] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. [14] But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. (ESV)

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

SERMON

An Easter State of Mind: “Speaking Boldly”

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: 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: 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:

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

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-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

Words and music by Rend Collective

© 2004 Thankyou Music

Boldly I Approach

Verse 1

By grace alone somehow I stand
Where even angels fear to tread
Invited by redeeming love
Before the throne of God above
He pulls me close with nail-scarred hands
Into His everlasting arms

Verse 2

When condemnation grips my heart
And Satan tempts me to despair
I hear the voice that scatters fear
The Great I Am the Lord is here
O praise the One who fights for me
And shields my soul eternally

Chorus

Boldly I approach Your throne
Blameless now I'm running home
By Your blood I come welcomed as Your own
Into the arms of majesty

Verse 3

Behold the bright and risen Son
More beauty than this world has known
I'm face to face with Love Himself
His perfect spotless righteousness
A thousand years a thousand tongues
Are not enough to sing His praise

Chorus

Bridge

This is the art of celebration
Knowing we're free from condemnation
O praise the One, praise the One
Who made an end to all my sin

Chorus

*SONG

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Words by Edward Perronet and John Rippon and music by Oliver Holden

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All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race
Ye ransomed from the fall
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all

Let ev'ry kindred ev'ry tribe
On this terrestrial ball
To Him all majesty ascribe
And crown Him Lord of all
To Him all majesty ascribe
And crown Him Lord of all

O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all

*CLOSING PRAYER

*BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24-26

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to
you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

ALL: AMEN.

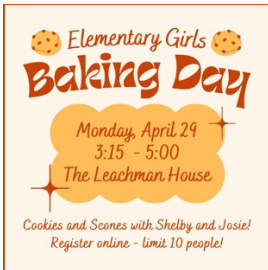
ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR - Job Opportunity

Do you or someone you know have a heart for Children's Ministry? Want to make a life-long difference in a child's life? Join Team Advent! Enjoy flexible work schedule while creating & promoting program and relational pathways for children's discipleship. Applicant need not be an Advent Member or even regular attender to apply.

Job Description at adventpres.org/jobopportunities
Submit resume to Admin@AdventPres.org



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GIRLS BAKING DAY

Monday, April 29th, 3:15-5 P.M. at the Leachman's

Calling all Elementary School girls ... it's time to get together, have some fun, and make some cookies and scones with Shelby and Josie!

Location: Leachman's | 4517 Evergreen Street
Reserve your spot at AdventPres.org/Events.



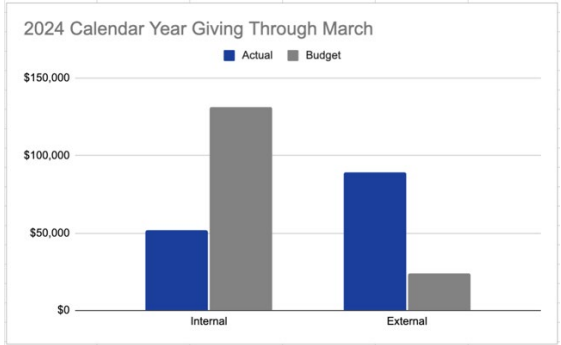
QUESTION & DISCUSSION

April. 28th 12:15 – 1:15 P.M.

Got questions? Let's discuss Glacial Indifference. Scan the QR code to submit your question. Join us after the worship service for the discussion. A light lunch will be available.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Multi-purpose Room

2024 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING



Media Release

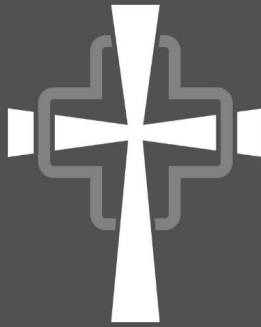
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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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