
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Seventh Sunday of Easter

MAY • 12 • 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

“When you went to bed last night Jesus was at work subduing his enemies. While you slept he was continuing to rule over the world. He was still at it when you woke up this morning and even now as you read this. That is the outrageous claim of the ascension.”

— **Tim Chester & Jonny Woodrow**

“The ascension reminds us that Christianity is not only an historical faith, but a faith of the present and future. Jesus is, right now, in glorified humanity on the throne of the universe, wielding as the God-man “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18). He is not just our suffering servant who came and died and rose triumphant, but our actively ruling, actively conquering king.”

— **David Mathis**

When Christ returned to heaven, He withdrew His physical presence from our sight. He didn’t stop being with the disciples but by the ascension fulfilled His promise to be with us to the end of the world. As His body was raised to heaven, so His power and reign have spread to the uttermost parts.

— **John Calvin**

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

Revelation 15:3b-4

Leader: Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!

People: **Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!**

Leader: Who will not fear, O Lord,
And glorify your name?

People: **For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship you,
For your righteous acts have been revealed.**

*SONG

Crown Him With Many Crowns

Words by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring and music by George Job Elvey

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Crown Him with many crowns
The Lamb upon His throne
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity

Crown Him the Lord of love
Behold his hands and side
Rich wounds yet visible above
In beauty glorified
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight
But downward bends His wandering eye
At mysteries so bright

Crown Him the Lord of life
Who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife
For those He came to save
His glories now we sing
Who died and rose on high
Who died eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die

Crown Him the Lord of years
The Potentate of time
Creator of the rolling spheres
Ineffably sublime
All hail Redeemer, hail
For Thou hast died for me
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 1:15-23

[15] For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, [16] I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, [17] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, [18] having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might [20] that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21] far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. [22] And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, [23] which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 24:44-53

[44] Then [Jesus] said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” [45] Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, [46] and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

[50] And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. [51] While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. [52] And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53] and were continually in the temple blessing God. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

*SONG

As The Deer

Words and music by Martin Nystrom

© 1984 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing

Verse 1

As the deer panteth for the water
So my soul longeth after Thee
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

Chorus

You alone are my strength, my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

Verse 2

You're my friend and You are my brother
Even though You are a King
I love You more than any other
So much more than anything

Chorus

Verse 3

I want You more than gold or silver
Only You can satisfy
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye

Chorus

Ending

You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Irenaeus' "The Rule of Faith"

(Irenaeus lived from 125-202 A.D. and was a pastor/theologian in present-day France.)

People: **We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,**

Leader: Who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all the things that are in them;

People: **We believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God,**

Leader: Who was made flesh for our salvation;

People: **We believe in the Holy Spirit,**

Leader: Who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and [Christ's] coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus.

People: **Christ Jesus is our Lord,**

Leader: and in the future he will appear from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise anew all flesh of the whole human race.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Rev. Giorgio Hiatt, Pastor in the PCA

People: We confess that we remain captivated by the things of this world that promise so much, but deliver so little. We live as if we were our own gods.

Silence

People: We do not believe that you could be calling us to something more noble and beautiful than our own self rule. So we settle for lives of rebellion against your reign over us.

Silence

People: We quickly forget that your grace is infinite and that your rule over us is one of love and compassion. We forget that you are not just King but Father as well.

Silence

People: We forget that Jesus came, not to call the righteous, but the unrighteous. Forgive us, King of mercy. Invade our lives by your Spirit and make us new. Grant that we may know the joy of abundant life given in Jesus Christ, the promised king.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalm 103:8 (ESV)

Leader: The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

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

“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow” 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

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

Edited from Revised Common Lectionary Prayers

Leader: Risen and Ascended Lord,
open our minds to understand the scriptures,
so that when sin cripples our hope,
we may discover the freedom of your forgiveness;
when suffering and death overtake our lives,
we may know the joy of the risen Christ;
and when we feel abandoned,
we may know and remember the power of Your promised
Spirit,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*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 1:1-11

[1] In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, [2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. [3] He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

[4] And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; [5] for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

[6] So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” [7] He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” [9] And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

An Easter State of Mind: "Our Ascended Lord"



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: It is truly right to give you thanks and praise. Through your dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who after his most glorious resurrection appeared to his Apostles, and in their sight ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us; that where he is, there we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory.

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 -
san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader: Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

People: **Christ has died!**
Christ is risen!
Christ will come again!

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

All the Poor and Powerless

Words and music by Leslie Jordan and David Leonard

© 2011 Integrity's Praise! Music

Verse 1

All the poor and powerless
And all the lost and lonely
And all the thieves will come confess
And know that You are holy
And know that You are holy

Chorus 1

And all will sing out hallelujah
And we will cry out hallelujah

Verse 2

All the hearts who are content
And all who feel unworthy
And all who hurt with nothing left
Will know that You are holy

Chorus 1 x2

Bridge

Shout it
Go on and scream it from the mountains
Go on and tell it to the masses
That He is God

Repeat

Chorus 2

We will sing out hallelujah
And we will cry out hallelujah
We will sing out hallelujah

Repeat

Bridge x1

*CLOSING PRAYER

*BENEDICTION (May the Peace)

Words and Music by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty

© 2005 Thankyou Music

Verse 1

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

Chorus

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

Repeat Verse1 & Chorus

Verse 2

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

Chorus

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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



KINGDOM PRAYER

Wednesday, May 29th, 5:30 – 6:30 P.M.

We invite you to come for an evening of prayer where we ask the Lord for his kingdom to come: where we pray for Him to heal sickness, for people to come to know Jesus, for Him to comfort us and one day end all our sorrows, and anything else we hope for in his coming kingdom.

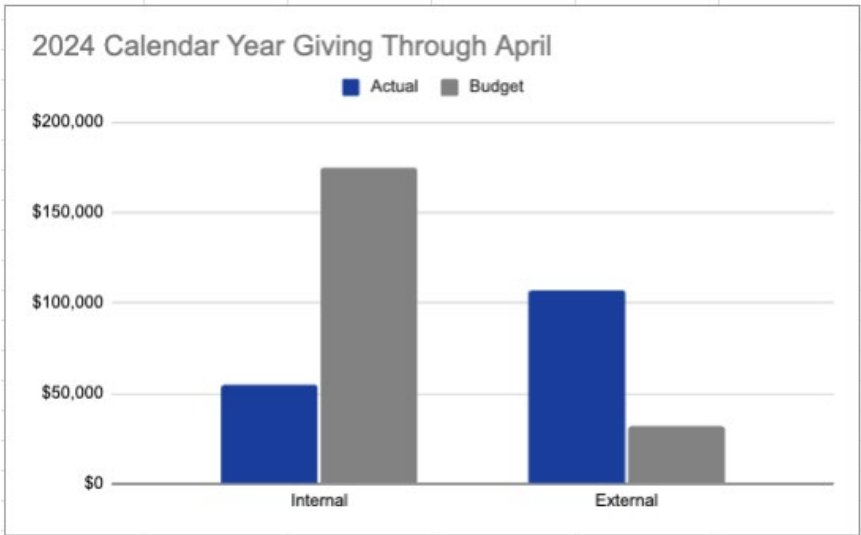
Location: West U Scout House | 6108 Edloe St.



PRAYER SLIPS – *How can we pray for you*

Would you like the Prayer Team to pray for you? Please complete the Prayer Slip found inside the back page of the printed bulletin, fold it, and place it in the offering basket. Your prayer request will remain confidential.

2024 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING



Media Release

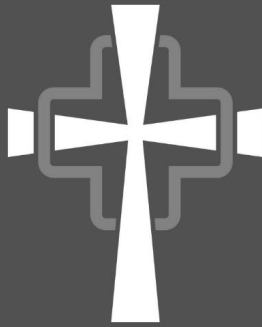
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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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