
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Second Sunday of Easter

APRIL • 7 • 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

The disciples were transformed. Something happened to Peter. Just a few days earlier his hopes had been dashed and he had denied Jesus in front of a few people he had never met. Yet just a few days later, he was fearlessly preaching about Jesus and explaining Jesus' death to the very people who killed Him. From dashed hopes to death-defying faith - not just in Peter, but in all the disciples.

— **Mark Dever**

What a wonderful Savior we have. It wasn't lovely people for whose sake He died; it was for ungodly people, for His enemies. It was for law breakers that He suffered. He loved us, says (the Apostle) Paul, in spite of how unlovely we were. Just as He loved us, Paul insists we are to love one another.

— **Jay Adams**

Ah, were their souls fully assured that God had loved them freely, and received them graciously, and justified them perfectly, and pardoned them absolutely, and would glorify them everlastingly, they could not but love where God loves, and own where God owns, and embrace where God embraces, and be one with every one that is one with Jesus.

— **Thomas Brooks**

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 133

Leader: Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

People: **It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!**

Leader: It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!

People: **For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life
forevermore.**

Leader: Therefore, may our voices be joined together in praise!

ALL: **We come together to worship our one true God!**

*SONG

Oh How Good It Is

Words and music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Ross Holmes, and Stuart Townend

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Verse 1

Oh how good it is
When the family of God
Dwells together in spirit
In faith and unity
Where the bonds of peace
Of acceptance and love
Are the fruit of His presence
Here among us

Chorus

So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord
And with one heart we'll live out His word
Till the whole earth sees
The Redeemer has come
For He dwells in the presence of His people

Verse 2

Oh how good it is
On this journey we share
To rejoice with the happy
And weep with those who mourn
For the weak find strength
The afflicted find grace
When we offer the blessing
Of belonging

Chorus

Verse 3

Oh how good it is
To embrace His command
To prefer one another
Forgive as He forgives
When we live as one
We all share in the love
Of the Son with the Father
And the Spirit

Chorus

PRAYER OF ADORATION**FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**

1 John 1:5-2:2

[5] This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. [6] If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. [7] But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. [8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

[2:1] My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. [2] He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 20:19-31

[19] On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [20] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. [21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." [22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. [23] If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

[24] Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

[26] Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." [27] Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." [28] Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

[30] Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (ESV)

Leader: The gospel of the Lord.
People: **Praise be to you Lord Christ.**

*SONG

Words and music by Jess Ray
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Psalm 19

Verse

Purify my heart,
May every word, every thought
Every motive, every intention
Be pleasing in your sight O God

Chorus

For Your voice refreshes my soul,
Brings joy to my heart,
And light to my eyes
Your words more precious than gold,
Sweeter than honey,
Better than life

Repeat all

Ending

Purify my heart,
May every word, every thought
Every motive, every intention
Be pleasing in your sight, O God
Be pleasing in your sight, O God

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Adapted from the *Theological Declaring of Korean Christians (1973)*

Leader: Christian, what is it that you believe?
ALL: **We believe in God's involvement in the history of humankind, revealed through Israel, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, communicated to us by the Holy Spirit, into which fulfillment all humanity is called.**

We believe in the destiny and dignity of all human beings, rooted in God’s initiative and design; and in our dependence upon God’s redeeming and liberating grace, because we are caught up in the ambiguities of our history and because we live in sin.

We believe in the reality of the event of Jesus Christ—his life, his death, his resurrection—and the reality of our answer of faith given to that event, that brings us by the Spirit, to the incorporation into Christ which means our salvation.

We believe in the reality of the church, being the body of Christ, called to be the nucleus and servant of the unity of humankind and of the universe. And we believe in our responsibility as Christians to have the mind of Christ and to live and act accordingly—as faith without works is dead.

We believe in the presence and the working of the Spirit, the pledge and seal of the kingdom into which we are confirmed. Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN

ALL: Almighty Father, you have called us to be your people and have made us one body, yet we do not live as such. We do not love each other as we should. Jealousy grips us and we fail to look out for others’ interests above our own. Conceit grips us and we fail to associate and care for those different from ourselves. Forgive us our offenses, Father, and subdue everything in us that is contrary to your purpose. By the power of your Spirit make us a community that reveals the acceptance, kindness and love found only in you. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

From Bud Thoreen and adapted from 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (ESV)

Leader: Adopted into the family of God through Christ, we are brothers and sisters, reconciled to God and to each other. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

People: **We know this to be true.**

Leader: The word of the Lord goes out from his mouth, does not return empty, but accomplishes all that he desires and achieves the purpose he sent it for, that is our redemption, our salvation, and our reconciliation.

ALL: **Thanks be to God!**

*GLORIA PATRI

Author unknown

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

Adapted from *Forward Movement Prayers*

Leader: Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We ask you mercifully to incline your ear to us who make our prayers and supplications; and grant that those things which we faithfully ask according to your will you would give to us, to the relief of our needs, and all for your glory; 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 4:32-35

[32] Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. [33] And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. [34] There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold [35] and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Will McKee

An Easter State of Mind: “Unified by Grace”



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 -
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-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 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

Be Thou My Vision

Words by Eleanor Henrietta Hull and music from a traditional Irish tune

© Words and music: public domain

Be Thou my vision O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine inheritance now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my vict'ry won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*SONG

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

Words by George Matheson and music by Christopher Miner

© 1997 Christopher Miner Music

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

***CLOSING PRAYER**

Leader: Almighty and everlasting God, who in the wonderful mystery of Easter brought about our peace and reconciliation through your Son, Jesus Christ: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in our lives what we profess by faith;

Leader's prayer

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

***BENEDICTION**

Romans 15:5-6

Leader: May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL: AMEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖
Starting April 14, our new worship time will be at 10:30 in the gym, and Sunday school will begin at 9:30 with childcare provided!
❖

STARTING APRIL 14TH ...

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.

THIRD COAST VOLLEYBALL

April
14th



5 - 8
p.m.

5652 FORNEY DR.

THIRD COAST VOLLEYBALL

April. 14th 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Inviting Young Adults and the Young at Heart for an evening of beach volleyball. Whether you're a beach volleyball club level player, backyard enthusiast, or novice, come, kick off your shoes, and have some fun. Friends of friends welcome!

RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.

Location: 5652 Forney Dr.

QUESTION & DISCUSSION SUNDAY, APRIL 28

SCAN HERE TO
SUBMIT A QUESTION
FOR Q&D



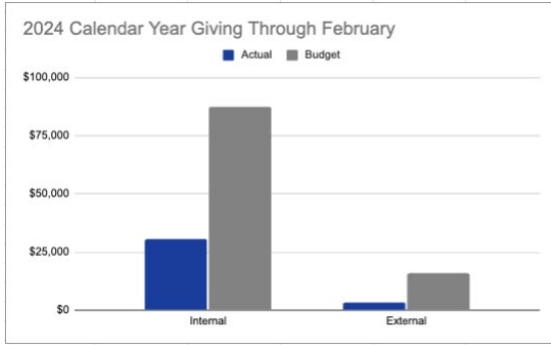
QUESTION & DISCUSSION

April. 28th 12:15 – 1:15 P.M.

Got questions? Let's discuss. 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

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

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

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