
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT HOUSTON

Good Friday

MARCH • 29 • 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.

GOOD FRIDAY

It is a matter of interest that the day of the Lord’s death is called Good Friday. In terms of Jesus’ own pain and suffering, it was not a good day. But in view of the death of Jesus as a day when the powers of evil were put to flight and dethroned, it was indeed a good day. Our celebration of that day in worship captures the tension of both the sorrow we bring to the day through our identification with Jesus and the joy we experience knowing that his death was the death of death, the ruination of the powers of evil.

In the early church, believers understood the events observed on Good Friday as deeply connected to the events observed on Maundy Thursday—that is, Jesus’s Last Supper with his disciples (Maundy Thursday) foretold Jesus’s death the following day (Good Friday). As one of the final days before the celebration of Jesus’s resurrection on Easter Sunday, Good Friday is often kept as a day of fasting and preparation meant to capture the tension and folly of the cross: that beautiful, bewildering paradox that because of Christ, life is found through death.

As we join the generations of Christians who have continued to meet on Good Friday to retell Christ’s passion story in creative ways, it is important for us to pay attention to the question of who is responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion. The gospel story invites us to move beyond simply assigning blame to the Chief Priests, Pharisees, or even Pontius Pilate. Instead, the gospel story invites us to consider a King so powerful that even the wind and waves obey his voice, who freely gives up that power and sacrifices not only his position and authority, but also his very life. That is why this particular Friday is called “good.” The focus isn’t on those who would cause harm, but on the One whose love and grace lead Him to face death itself on our behalf.

REFLECTIONS

All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ, all hell terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning.

- **Oswald Chambers**

When Paul preached "the cross" he preached a message which explained that this instrument of rejection had been used by God as His instrument of reconciliation. Man's means of bringing death to Jesus was God's means to bring life to the world. Man's symbol of rejecting Christ was God's symbol of forgiveness for man. This is why Paul boasted about the cross!

- **Sinclair Ferguson**

No man understands the Scriptures, unless he be acquainted with the cross.

- **Martin Luther**

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

ENTER IN SILENCE

INVITATION

Isaiah 53:6; ESV

Leader: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way,

People: **And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Adapted from Isaiah 53 ESV

Leader: Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

People: **Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we account him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted.**

Leader: But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole...

ALL: **And by his bruises we are healed.**

*PRAYER

Adapted From ReformedWorship.org

Leader: Most gracious God, look with mercy upon us gathered here for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, given into sinful hands, and suffered death upon the cross. Forgive our betrayals, grant us faith and strengthen our faith as we enter the way of his passion; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

People: **AMEN.**

*SONG

Pensive Doubting Fearful Heart

Words by John Newton and music by Justin Smith

© 2012 Justin Smith Music

Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,
Hear what Christ the Savior says.
Every word should joy impart,
Change thy mourning into praise.
Yes, he speaks, and speaks to thee,
May he help thee to believe!
Then thou presently wilt see,
Thou hast little cause to grieve.

"Fear thou not, nor be ashamed,
All thy sorrows soon shall end.
I who heaven and earth have framed,
Am thy husband and thy friend.
I the High and Holy One,
Israel's GOD by all adored,
As thy Savior will be known,
Thy Redeemer and thy Lord."

"For a moment I withdrew,
And thy heart was filled with pain,
But my mercies I'll renew,
Thou shalt soon rejoice again.
Though I scorn to hide my face,
Very soon my wrath shall cease.
'Tis but for a moment's space,
Ending in eternal peace."

"When my peaceful bow appears,
Painted on the watery cloud,
'Tis to dissipate thy fears,
Lest the earth should be overflowed.
'Tis an emblem too of grace,
Of my cov'nant love a sign.
Though the mountains leave their place,
Thou shalt be forever mine.

Though afflicted, tempest-tossed,
Comfortless awhile thou art,
Do not think thou canst be lost,
Thou art graven on my heart.
All thy walls I will repair,
Thou shalt be rebuilt anew,
And in thee it shall appear,
What a God of love can do.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 22:39-46

[39] And [Jesus] came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. [40] And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. [44] And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [45] And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, [46] and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (ESV)

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 22:47-53

[47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, [48] but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" [49] And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" [50] And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. [52] Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (ESV)

SONG

Go to Dark Gethsemane

Words by James Montgomery and music by Kevin Twit

© 2007 Kevin Twit Music

Go to dark Gethsemane, ye that feel the tempter's power
Your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with Him one bitter hour
Turn not from His griefs away; learn of Jesus Christ to pray
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray

See Him at the judgment hall, beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned
O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn of Christ to bear the cross
Learn of Christ to bear the cross

Calvary's mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at His feet
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete
"It is finished!" hear Him cry; learn of Jesus Christ to die
Learn of Jesus Christ to die

Early hasten to the tomb where they laid His breathless clay
All is solitude and gloom. Who has taken Him away?
Christ is risen! He meets our eyes; Savior, teach us so to rise
Savior, teach us so to rise

THIRD SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 22:54-62

[54] Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. [55] And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. [56] Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." [57] But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." [58] And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." [59] And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." [60] But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. [61] And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." [62] And he went out and wept bitterly. (ESV)

[66] When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, [67] "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, [68] and if I ask you, you will not answer. [69] But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." [70] So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." [71] Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips."

[23:1] Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. [2] And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." [3] And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." [4] Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." [5] But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

[6] When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. [7] And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. [8] When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. [9] So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. [10] The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. [11] And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. [12] And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other. (ESV)

*SONG

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Words by Elizabeth C. Clephane and music by Christopher Miner

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Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
and the burden of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus,
mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears
Two wonders I confess
The wonders of redeeming love
and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
for my abiding place:
I ask no other sunshine than
The sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by
To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame,
my glory, all the cross.

FIFTH SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 23:13-25

[13] Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,
[14] and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading
the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man
guilty of any of your charges against him. [15] Neither did Herod, for he sent
him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. [16] I will
therefore punish and release him."

[18] But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”—[19] a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. [20] Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, [21] but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” [22] A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.” [23] But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. [24] So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. [25] He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will. (ESV)

SIXTH SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 23:26-43

[26] And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. [27] And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. [28] But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. [29] For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ [30] Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ [31] For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

[32] Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. [33] And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [34] And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. [35] And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” [36] The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine [37] and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” [38] There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

[39] One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” [40] But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? [41] And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” [42] And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” [43] And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (ESV)

*SONG

Were You There

African American Spiritual

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Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

SEVENTH SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 23:44-49

[44] It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, [45] while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. [46] Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. [47] Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" [48] And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. [49] And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. (ESV)

HOMILY

Jacky Yeung

The Seven Last Words of Jesus – "Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"

*SONG

When I Survey The Wondrous Cross

Words by Isaac Watts and music by Lowell Mason

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When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood

See from His head His hands His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did ever such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing so divine
Demands my soul my life my all

CLOSING PRAYER

Adapted from Book of Common Prayer, 2019 ACNA & from Lutheran Church of Australia; "Good Friday Intercessions"

Leader: Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love: in humble hope and fear may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are

Silent Prayer and Confession

Leader: We pray for the church, that we may bear our cross and follow Jesus.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for those who have sinned, like Peter. Teach us to turn away from our sins, and forgive us for Jesus' sake.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for prisoners and criminals like Barrabas. May they find true freedom in Christ, knowing that none are beyond your grace.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for people in government, like Pilate. May they serve your world and those in it with responsibility, truth, mercy and justice.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for those who are dying, like the criminals who died with Jesus. May they die with Jesus by their side, and be received into your kingdom.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for parents like Mary who have lost a child. May they bear their suffering and know the comfort of your love.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We pray for people throughout our city, our country, and the world. May all come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Father, may the suffering and death of Jesus lighten the burdens of all those who suffer. Lead us in the way of the cross, so that, as we suffer with Jesus, we may rise to life in his glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

ALL Amen.

***SONG**

There is a Fountain

Words by William Cowper and music by Edwin Othello Excell and Lowell Mason

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There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

Lose all their guilty stains
Lose all their guilty stains
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day
And there may I though vile as he
Wash all my sins away

Wash all my sins away
Wash all my sins away
And there may I though vile as he
Wash all my sins away

Dear dying Lamb Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more

Be saved to sin no more
Be saved to sin no more
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die

And shall be till I die
And shall be till I die
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die

When this poor lisp'ing stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave
Then in a nobler sweeter song
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save

I'll sing Thy pow'r to save
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save
Then in a nobler sweeter song
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save

*EIGHTH SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 23:50-56

[50] Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, [51] who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. [52] This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53] Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. [54] It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. [55] The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. [56] Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (ESV)

*DISMISSAL

From the UMC "Service of Tenebrae"

Leader: Go in peace.
 May Jesus Christ,
 who for our sake became obedient unto death, even death on a
 cross, keep you and strengthen you this night and forever.

LEAVE IN SILENCE

ANNOUNCEMENT



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday, March 31st, 10:00 A.M.

Celebrate the Risen Lord with your Advent family. Invite your friends and family to join you.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA, Gymnasium

Media Release

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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
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