

Advent @ First



“Experience the spiritual discipline of communal study and prayer during Advent with a specific focus on the need to open ourselves to accepting the birth of Jesus Christ in our lives today...”

Advent at First Christian Church

The world around us starts revving up for Christmas on the day after Halloween and then intensely on Black Friday, the Friday after Thanksgiving. The pace quickens to the ring of the Salvation Army bell and the sounds of Christmas Music piped in through muzak. Why? One reason and one reason only...because Christmas makes or breaks the whole year for most retailers. The sooner Santa and his reindeer can set up the Galleria photo booth, the better chance stores can rake in what they need from your pockets. Sounds a bit cynical, but frankly, it's true.

Really and truly, though, there is more to Christmas than all this implies, isn't there? Before the church celebrates Christmas, it goes through a time called Advent – of preparation, planning, celebrating and waiting. Latin "adventus" is the translation of the Greek word "parousia", commonly used in reference to the Second Coming. Christians believe that the season of Advent serves a reminder both of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of their Messiah as well as the waiting of Christians for the Second Coming of Christ.

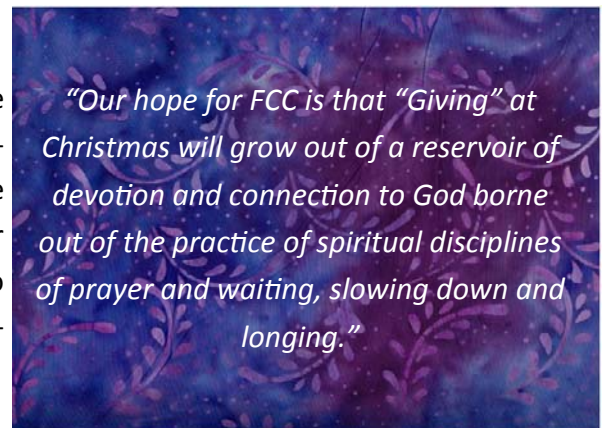
At First this year we want to be intentional about how we prepare for the birth of God's Messiah, Jesus. We want to create an atmosphere and setting that is very different than what most of the world experiences. While people walk around their favorite major retailers to the sounds of Jingle Bells, we want them to walk into worship at First and note that something very different is happening.

We want people to sense that while the rest of the world is thinking of Christmas as a time to work down their lists to buy presents for family and friends, the church is thinking about Christmas differently: as a time to remind the world that Jesus promised to come back. We want people to understand that the time leading up to Christmas Eve is a period of waiting expectantly, watching intently, preparing spiritually and celebrating joyfully the return of our King, Jesus. We want to invite people into a different time, into an Advent time.

It will take all that we have to resist the urge to begin Christmas in early December like everyone else. We have been conditioned by routine and tradition to do so, when we see the signs of Christmas all around us beginning as soon as it can get away with.

Our space, however, will be filled with the colors of Advent. It will sound like the message of waiting and hope in the songs the church has sung for centuries about waiting and expectation and preparation. It will smell not of evergreen and pine sap, but of expectation and joy, a Christian joy that runs deeper than the things we buy and consume.

To help in creating this atmosphere and setting, to help in slowing the revved up pace that comes with Christmas buying and consuming, we hope you'll join us and invite someone else to slow the pace and prepare for something greater!



Advent at First Christian Church

Sunday Morning Advent Worship

“How Beautiful are the Feet of Those who Share Good News!”

Worship each Sunday begins at 10:30 am.

The Messages: In this fast-paced world it seems odd to say that we celebrate Advent by waiting, but this waiting is far more than a passive submission to time. Advent is a time of active preparation for a whole new way of life ushered in by Jesus' birth. Jesus came and brought good news for people, and has called his followers to be good news to the world. Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful are the feet on the mountains of those who bring good news!”

11/28 – “Preparing: Beautiful Feet”

12/5 – “Accepting: Your Scouts are Shouting”

12/12 – “Journeying: Break out in Song, you Ruins!”

12/19 – “Birthing: God Rolls up his Sleeves”

Advent Prayer Gathering

Sunday mornings at 9:00-10:15 am

On Sunday mornings in Advent, join with others in the Chapel to gather and pray. Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for the promised coming of Jesus to restore God's creation. Early Christians prayed “Maranatha!”, which means “Come, Lord Jesus!” The setting and time will be meditative and reflective, set in the warm light of candles and *Taize* music. Come when you can and leave when you must.

Advent Wednesdays

Each Wednesday evening in Advent we will gather for a communal meal together in Knowles Hall. We will also take time for songs and biblical devotions by candlelight in the spirit of reflection and prayer. Each evening we will also have time in small group discussion and prayer.

Our evenings together will be shaped like this:

6:15 – Gathering and Meal time together

6:45 – Nursery and Children’s Program begin in Faith Factory room

7:00 – Devotions and Small Group Sharing

8:00 – Gathering for Close and Dismissal

Advent Dates

Advent 1

November 28

December 1

Advent 2

December 5

December 8

Advent 3

December 12

December 15

Advent 4

December 19

Hanging of the Greens

Parent's Afternoon Out

Messiah Sing-Along

December 22

Christmas Eve

December 24

Candlelight Christmas Eve

Gatherings in the Community

December 7

DWM Christmas Sing

December 11

Families in Fellowship Christmas Open House at Pastor Dunn's

Christmastide

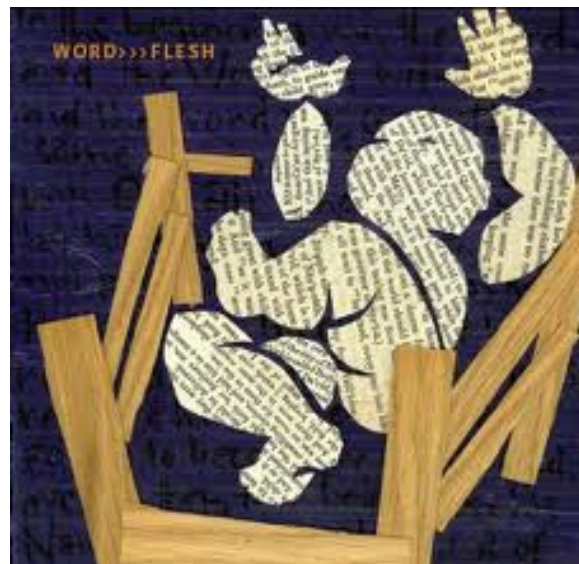
December 26

January 2

Kidventure

December 20-23

December 27-30



First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
1601 Sunset Blvd
Houston TX 77005

Phone: 713-526-2561
E-mail: admin@fcchou.org
www.fcchou.org