

Sermon Notes

Matthew 28:16-20 NRSV | Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

Happy New Year. I hope all of you had great times with family and friends and once again remembered that God came down to us in Christ to forgive us, free us, and give us hope-filled lives for Him and with Him through the incarnation. Often there are goals or resolutions in the new year. I often don't do New Years Resolutions, but, for whatever reason, I did this year. Here are mine, in a nutshell: 1) Word: At least 15 minutes of Scripture and Prayer daily. 2) Grat-itude: Ponder and write down five things I am thankful for daily. 3) Movement/Fitness: a 30-minute walk, a 30-second plank, 30 pushups, and/or 30 staircase step-up pairs (pick at least two each day). 4) Hydration: At least 48 ounces of water daily. 5) Fasting: Eat within an eight-hour timeframe 3 days a week (ex: between 10am-6pm); no social media/doom scrolling from 7pm-7am (Facebook, TikTok, X, Instagram, etc.).

1. What are your New Year's Resolutions for 2026, if you picked any this year? Why did you pick what you chose? Or why did you choose to ignore or avoid the resolution ritual?
2. Read Matt. 28:16-20, often referred to as The Great Commission. This passage was key at MDPC's founding and served as the first of three commitments of the initial small congregation. The other two included praying for all daily and radical generosity. My guess is that the initial small cadre of committed disciples thought they couldn't fulfill Christ's Commission without prayer and sacrificial giving. This challenge by Jesus didn't happen at the beginning of a new year, but it did happen after His resurrection, inaugurating us into a *new* Kingdom reality and into a *new* mission. Why would Jesus call very human and flawed followers into this daunting and all-encompassing challenge? How do you think the initial disciples felt when they heard this charge by Jesus?
3. In my message, I shared an update on our Master Planning Process from the last two years. I offered three reasons why we might decide, after prayer and wrestling, to add to and revise our current physical plant so we can fulfill Christ's Great Commission now and into the future. What concerns do you have about a possible campaign? How might our "yesses" cause frustrations, dislocations, challenges, required growth/giving/ faith/faithfulness like the first disciples? What excitement and new possibilities might emerge if we adapt spaces for expanded mission, service, worship, fellowship, disciple-ship, and Kingdom impact?
4. What questions will you need answered before you can get behind any initiative? What heart change and openness will you need to receive the possible call of God on our individual lives and our community together? What might you need to leave or where might you need to go to be faithful this year? Pray for discernment and openness to God's "calling," whatever that ends up looking like in our midst.

Births and Deaths

Carl Giesler passed away Dec 31.
Shirley Ann Landers passed away Jan 5.
Sonny Harkins passed away Jan 2.
More information at memorials.mdpc.org.

Financial Update

Update publication resumes after Session votes on the new budget in January.



Church in the City: Save the Date!

Sat & Sun, Feb 21-22, 2026

Join your MDPC family for this annual all-church day of service, when MDPC leaves the pews to serve some of our local outreach partners. Registration opens January 25 at citc.mdpc.org.

31 Days of Prayer

A small treasury of prayer awaits you—thirty-one offerings born from the hearts of women at MDPC. Written in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, these prayers rise from different tongues yet share one melody: a longing to love and treasure Jesus. Learn more and download a copy at 31days.mdpc.org, or pick up a hard copy at the front office.

Perspectives

Sundays, Jan 18–May 3 | 4–7pm

MDPC is partnering with Houston-area churches to promote the Perspectives course—a dynamic 15-week study that explores God's global purpose and how each of us can play a part in His mission to reach the nations with the Gospel. At Bethel Church. Learn more: perspectives.mdpc.org

Transforming Grief

Wednesdays, Jan 21-Mar 11 | 4:30-6pm

Have you been grieving the loss of a loved one? If so, you are not alone. Come join others in an 8-week program guided by trained facilitators. Group size limited to 10. Register: grief.mdpc.org

Women Together

Thu, Jan 22 | 6:30-8pm

All women from the Fuente, Brazilian, and English-speaking congregations are invited to a night of good food, conversation, and prayer! Bring your

favorite appetizer or dessert to share. Free childcare available. Register: together.mdpc.org

Women's Retreat

Fri-Sun, Feb 6-8 | Iron Horse Ranch

Let's get away! Enjoy fellowship and relaxation in a beautiful country setting. There will be downtime, small groups, and a time of teaching. Enjoy the beauty this venue has to offer and leave feeling pampered! Register: getaway.mdpc.org

Dad Camp

Sat-Sun, Feb 28-Mar 1 | MDPC

An overnight campout with food, fun, and activities! Bring your tent(s), sleeping bags, Bibles, and kids. Learn more and sign up: men.mdpc.org

On Mission in Greece

May 15-23, 2026

Help care for missionary kids during The Antioch Partners retreat. Learn more: greece.mdpc.org

MDPC Young Adults at SXSW

Mar 12-16, 2026 | Austin, TX

Be part of a passionate team of young adults from around the globe bringing Jesus' love to South by Southwest Festival, where 300,000+ people gather for music, art, and innovation—and where countless hearts are open to hope. In partnership with Steiger. Details: yaevents.mdpc.org

Join an Outreach Committee!

Encounter God through the work of our outreach partners while helping steward MDPC's radical generosity. Interested? Contact Julie LaRue (jlarae@mdpc.org) or Kelsi McCormack (kmccormack@mdpc.org).



Tuesdays, Feb 3-17 | 7-8am

When life feels blurry, God's Word brings the lens into focus—clarity isn't just possible, it's promised. Men, let's challenge ourselves to grow deeper in understanding so that things become more crystal clear!

Learn more & register: ML.mdpc.org

As you enter worship, we kindly ask that you silence your cell phones.



8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship		Marcus Vajdos
Worship Songs	<i>Rejoice How Great Thou Art</i>	
*Confession & Assurance		Rachel Poysky
Song of Response	<i>Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing</i>	
Offertory	<i>The Lord Will Provide</i>	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Vision to Reality Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSV)	Alf Halvorson
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RESPONDING

Song of Response	<i>Here I Am, Lord</i>	
Officer Ordination and Installation		Alf Halvorson, Rachel Poysky

SENDING

*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
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9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

*Call to Worship		Rachel Poysky
Worship Songs	<i>Here for You Worthy of It All</i>	
*Confession & Assurance		Amanda Grace Morris
*Worship Song	<i>Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing</i>	
Offertory	<i>The Lord Will Provide</i>	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Vision to Reality Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSV)	Alf Halvorson
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RESPONDING

Song of Response	<i>Abide</i>	
Officer Ordination and Installation		Alf Halvorson, Rachel Poysky

SENDING

*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
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Musicians in these services: Asher Pudlo, drums | Chris Parrott, guitar | Uvaldo Callejas, bass
Michael Middleton & Meliza Gómez, worship leaders

*Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Prelude	<i>Meditation at Sainte-Clotilde</i>	Philip James (1890-1975)
Call to Worship		Marcus Vajdos
Choral Introit	<i>Jesus Shall Reign</i>	arr. Carl Nygard (b. 1947)
*Hymn of Praise	<i>Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation</i>	Vs. 1, 2, 4 #417 REGENT SQUARE
*Confession and Assurance of Pardon		Rachel Poysky
*Affirmation of Faith from the Apostles' Creed		
*Congregational Response	<i>Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing</i>	Vs. 1 #356 NETTLETON

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation	<i>In His Hands</i>	arr. Tim Osiek (b. 1978)
Message	Vision to Reality Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSV)	Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response	<i>Lord, You Give the Great Commission</i>	Vs. 1, 2 #429 ABBOT'S LEIGH
Officer Ordination and Installation		Alf Halvorson, Rachel Poysky
Offertory	<i>To Seek First the Kingdom</i>	Michael J. Trotta (b. 1978)

SENDING

*Doxology	<i>Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow</i>	OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
Postlude	<i>Psalms XX</i>	Gordon Young (1919-1998)

Musicians: Kelley Edwards, flutist | Sanctuary Choir
Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director | Kathryn White, organist

Women's
Mahjong
MONDAYS

Mahjong Mondays
Mon, Jan 12-Feb 23 | 1-3pm

Learn the game through complimentary beginner lessons and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming community. Soon you'll be talking Bam, Dot, and Crack like a pro—promise it's not a secret code.

Sign up today! women.mdpc.org

THE DAD SUMMIT

CLIMBING HIGHER TOGETHER

Sat, Jan 17 8:15am-11am
MDPC | Fellowship Hall

Dads, come together to learn from one another—veteran dads sharing their wisdom, younger dads finding encouragement, and everyone connecting over the real, faith-filled journey of fatherhood.

REGISTER HERE

Would you like to get in touch with one of our Pastors? Feel free to reach out!
Visit staff.mdpc.org for contact information and ministry areas.