

Sermon Notes

Psalm 145:4 and Matthew 22:34-40 NRSV | Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

This is the second in our short two-week series on updating the congregation regarding our Master Planning process. You can get more information on our website at masterplan.mdpc.org, and also offer input or feedback by sending an email to masterplan@mdpc.org. Or, if you want to talk to someone with skin on, face to face, we would love for you to reach out to members of the Master Planning Committee (listed on the website) or current elders, deacons, and pastors regarding your thoughts, concerns, hopes, and dreams about possible next steps and even a finished project.

1. Have you ever been part of a remodel or expansion of your house, business, a second property, or your church? What were the worst parts of that process? And what were the best parts of the process and result? (Think not only about physical challenges or blessings, but the emotional, relational, and spiritual opportunities/ramifications.)
2. Read Psalm 145:4. What is the responsibility of the current generation to the next generation regarding faith and faithfulness? What does it mean to contemplate that “The faith is only one generation away from extinction”? How was the faith passed down to you? How might we in word and deed and physical location “declare God’s mighty acts”?
3. In addition to The Great Commission in Matt. 28:16-20, which I focused on last Sunday, The Great Commandments of Jesus in Matt. 22:16-20 somehow summarizes all the law and the prophets that came before in the Old Testament. Jesus reveals here how He taught and lived. Read Matt. 22:16-20 and answer this question: What are ways we can love God and our neighbor(s) as ourselves? What might this vertical and horizontal relationship look like in the church? Can architecture facilitate or inhibit love of God and love of neighbor?
4. I shared in my message about the Four Strategic Pillars or Goals that session approved in 2023-2027 to serve as a filter through which to view all our programs and activities, and present and future plans. That each idea must pass through this filter in order to gain approval. If the activity or future plan does not advance one or more of the pillars, it is dropped or modified until it meets those criteria. We believe this will advance the Great Commission and The Great Commandments of Christ. How does framing put our possible building campaign into perspective? Which possible ideas were you most excited about from the visual part of my presentation? Are there any things that were missing? Or are there any of the options that you believe missed the mark? What ways can we carry out The Great Commandments and The Great Commission right now and not wait until some future project is completed?

Births and Deaths

Betty Stockbridge passed away Jan 6.
More information at memorials.mdpc.org.

Financial Update

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



Master Planning: Committee Charter

Looking forward to the next 25 years, develop a plan to provide campus improvements that reflect MDPC’s Strategic Guiding Priorities to advance the Great Commandments and the Great Commission through the Four Pillars of Community, Evangelism, Formation, and Outreach. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact the committee at masterplan@mdpc.org.

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.

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

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

Meet Our Newest MDPC Missionary

MDPC member, Ellie, will be moving to South Asia in February to build relationships and share the Gospel with local college students and young adults. Come meet her in **The Nook before and after the 9:45 service** to hear about her calling to the mission field.

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).

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

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

Taste of Alpha

Sun, Mar 8 | 12:30-2:15pm | Fellowship Hall

A chance for you to see what Alpha is about and get a sense of the “why” behind the way we do things. Perfect for anyone who’d would like to learn more before inviting friends to the Alpha course.



Online Giving give.mdpc.org



All Events events.mdpc.org



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

Thu, Jan 22 | 6:30-8pm | Summit Room

Bring your favorite appetizer or dessert to share!

Register at together.mdpc.org.

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



8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship		Clay Brown
Worship Songs	<i>Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us</i> <i>Praise to the Lord, the Almighty</i>	
*Confession & Assurance Prayers of the People		Beth Case
Worship Song	<i>You Are My King (Amazing Love)</i>	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Vision to Reality	Alf Halvorson
	Psalm 145:4; Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV)	

RESPONDING

Song of Response	<i>Firm Foundation (He Won't)</i>	
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SENDING

*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
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9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

*Call to Worship		Beth Case
Worship Songs	<i>God So Loved</i> <i>Glorious Day</i>	
*Confession & Assurance Prayers of the People		Hillary McMullen
*Worship Songs	<i>Living Hope</i> <i>Great Are You Lord</i>	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Vision to Reality	Alf Halvorson
	Psalm 145:4; Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV)	

RESPONDING

Song of Response	<i>Firm Foundation (He Won't)</i>	
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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>Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown</i>	Dale Wood (1934-2003)
Call to Worship		Brett Hurst
Choral Introit	<i>Sing, Ye Righteous</i>	Lodovico Viadana (1560-1627)
*Hymn of Praise	<i>Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee</i>	Vs. 1, 2, 3 #464 HYMN TO JOY
*Confession and Assurance of Pardon		Brett Hurst
*Affirmation of Faith from the Apostles' Creed		
*Congregational Response	<i>Glory Be to the Father</i>	#579 GLORIA PATRI

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation	<i>Love Never Ends</i>	James Biery (b. 1956)
Message	Vision to Reality	Alf Halvorson
	Psalm 145:4; Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV)	

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response	<i>Take My Life</i>	Vs. 1, 6 #391 HENDON
Prayers of the People The Lord's Prayer		Brett Hurst
Anthem	<i>God Be in My Head</i>	John Rutter (b. 1945)

SENDING

*Doxology	<i>Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow</i>	#592 OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
Postlude	<i>All Creatures of Our God and King</i>	Joshua Evanovich (b. 1984)

Musicians in this service: Sanctuary Choir
Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director | Rob Landes, organist

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.

PRAYER AND ART


VISIO DIVINA AT MFAH

Wed, Jan 28 | 9:30am-2:30pm

Join pastors Beth Case and Jeanmarie Tade in a day of Visio Divina.

Details and registration: mfah.mdpc.org





GETTING CRYSTAL CLARITY

MEN'S LIFE

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