SERMON NOTES | Acts 1:12-26 (NRSV) Sun, Sep 20, 2026

Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

Acts 1:12–26 shows the fragile beginnings of a church (the 11 remaining disciples) in a season of waiting, disappointment, and transition. Before sending the disciples outward, Christ forms them inwardly through prayer, honest attention to brokenness, Scripture, wise discernment, and a renewed commitment to witness. As you discuss this message, consider how God may be preparing you—and our church—not simply to complete a building project, but to become a people ready for God's next assignment.

1. Re-read Acts 1:1–11. The disciples still expected Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel, but Jesus redirected their attention from the timing of the kingdom to their Spirit-empowered witness. Where might you be tempted to treat a meaningful stage of discipleship as the destination rather than continue following Christ into His next venture?

2. Read Acts 1:12–26. Focus on verse 14. My message says that prayer must be more than decoration around decisions already made. What would it look like for prayer genuinely to surrender, correct, or interrupt one of your current plans? How can a Christian community recognize together when God may be redirecting it?

3. In verses 15-20, Acts neither hides the wound caused by Judas nor allows it to define the community. How can a church face brokenness truthfully, protect those who have been harmed, pursue appropriate accountability, and still move forward in hope? Without sharing anything you would prefer to keep private, what practices help a Christian community become safer, more truthful, and more faithful after harm?

4. Peter turns to Psalms 69 and 109 to interpret the community's pain and guide its next step. How do the wider story, promises, and commands of Scripture help God's people understand suffering without forcing a simple explanation onto it? When has Scripture helped you see a difficult experience differently?

5. In verses 21-26, the community sought someone who had accompanied Jesus' ministry and could join the apostles as a witness to the resurrection. What does this passage—and the wider witness of Scripture—teach us to prioritize when discerning whom God is calling to lead? Pray for our nominating committee as they assess our submittals and discern whom to present for approval by the church as elders and deacons.

6. Jesus promised the Spirit's power so that His people would be His witnesses; buildings and resources are valuable only as they serve that calling. How might MDPC's next chapter help us welcome, serve, equip, love, and send people more faithfully for Christ's kingdom? How can we remain faithful to that mission whether or not particular building plans unfold as we hope?

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Make an IMPACT!
Training: Sun, Sep 20 | 12:30pm
Games. Conversation. Friendship. That's all it takes to make a difference! Spend just 30 minutes each week with a child who would benefit from another caring adult in their life: **impact.mdpc.org**

YA CityServe
Sat, Sep 26 | 9-12:30 | SpringSpirit
CityServe is a monthly gathering for young adults in their 20s and 30s who want to show up for their city, build genuine friendships, and explore new corners of Houston together. Learn more and sign up: **yaevents.mdpc.org**

Young Adults Fall Retreat
Fri, Oct 2 at 4pm-Sun, Oct 4 at 1pm
Join other young professionals for a relaxing weekend in Caldwell, Texas, at a beautiful farmhouse tucked away in the countryside. Learn more and register: **yaevents.mdpc.org**

The Well
Thu, Oct 15 | 6:30pm | Chapel
Join us for a night of encouragement and testimony as women share how God stepped into their stories, redirected their paths, and revealed His perfect plan. Light refreshments at 6pm in the Parlor. Our speakers are Ruth Jacob, Lisa McChristian, and Ciria Yela. RSVP: **thewell.mdpc.org**

Marriage Retreat
Sat-Sun, Oct 17-18 | Moody Gardens Resort
Enjoy a fun and intentional weekend together focused on your married life! Led by Brett and Kellie Hurst. Register: **marriageretreat.mdpc.org**

Adults +55 Fellowship
Looking for ways to connect and have fun with other adults 55+? Stop by our lobby table this morning to discover what's coming up! Learn more: **adults55plus.mdpc.org**

Sharing the BIG Story
Sun, Oct 4-Nov 8 | 11:15am | Summit Room
Sharing the Big Story of the gospel doesn't have to be Big and Scary. This six-week class will equip you with simple, practical skills for sharing the love of Christ with others in a way that aligns with how God created you. Learn more: **sharing.mdpc.org**

Women's Circle
Monthly, Second Tue | 10am | Rm 122
Join this welcoming group for their new fall study, *Images of Christ*, designed to get you closer to Him through the pictures the Bible paints with words.







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

8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Paul Ehrsam

*Songs of Praise — *Glorious Day* | *All Creatures of Our God and King*

Confession & Assurance — Dan Aikins

Song of Response — *Because He Lives*

Prayer — Rachel Poysky

Worship Song — *King of Kings*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Foundations** (Acts 1:12-26 NRSV) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

Offertory — *Build My Life*

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Meliza Gómez

*Songs of Praise — *All Creatures of Our God* | *King of Kings*

Confession & Assurance — Amanda Grace Caldwell

Worship Songs — *Glorious Day* | *How Great Is Your Love*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Foundations** (Acts 1:12-26 NRSV) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

Offertory — *Build My Life*

Call to Respond — Christi Tullos

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Blended and Contemporary Worship Leaders
MDPC Worship Team: Uvaldo Callejas, David Cavazos, Asher Pudlo, Will Story, Angel Uribe, Fernie Uribe | Meliza Gómez, Contemporary Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Preludes — *Nimrod (from Enigma Variations)* — Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Call to Worship — Paul Ehrsam

Choral Introit — *Awake Our Souls* — Vulpius (1609), ed. S. Drummond Wolf

*Hymn of Praise — *Lead On, O King Eternal* | Vs. 1, 2, 3 — #447 | Lancashire

*Confession and Assurance of Pardon — Dan Aikins

*Affirmation of Faith from The Apostles' Creed

*Congregational Response
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past | vs. 1, 3, 5 — #210 | St. Anne

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation — *Teach Me Your Way, O Lord* — Lloyd Larson (b. 1954)

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Foundations** (Acts 1:12-26 NRSV) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response — *Sweet Hour of Prayer* | Vs. 1, 3 — #275 | Sweet Hour, from The United Methodist Hymnal

Prayer — Rachel Poysky

Offertory — *I Waited for the Lord (from Hymn of Praise)* — Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

SENDING

*Doxology — *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* — #592 | Old 100th

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Postlude — *Postlude on "Ellacombe"* — Jason D. Payne (b. 1980)

Traditional Worship Leaders
Sanctuary Choir | Rob Landes, Guest Organist/Pianist
Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT

Legacy Grandparenting Summit

Join other Christian grandparents at our neighbor Christ Presbyterian on Fri, Oct 9 for a day of wisdom, hope, practical resources, and community. Discover tools and encouragement for building a spiritual legacy that reaches generations to come! **LGS.mdpc.org**

Stay Plugged In

Sign up to receive the weekly email with Sunday information and upcoming events, and download the MDPC app for past sermons, event registrations, and more, right in your pocket! Scan the QR code or visit **mymdpc.mdpc.org**



Remember Our Frontline Mission Partners

MDPC partners in local and global ministry truly covet your prayers! Find out this week's prayer recipients by picking up the prayer booklet available around campus or visit **partners.mdpc.org**.

Financial Update as of Sep 13, 2026

2026 Annual Budget	$ 14,728,728
Actual Income to Date	9,269,238
Needed to Meet 2026 Budget	5,459,490