SERMON NOTES | Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-8:1 NRSV Sun, Nov 1, 2026

Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

Stephen's witness shows that faithful discipleship is expressed not only in words, but also through courage, forgiveness, generosity, and sacrificial love. Use these questions to reflect on where God may be interrupting your plans, inviting you to trust the Holy Spirit, and calling you to offer your time, gifts, and treasure as a witness to Jesus Christ.

1. Stephen expected to serve in one role, but God quickly led him into another. When has God interrupted your plans or called you beyond what you thought was your responsibility?

2. Read Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-8:1. If you have time, also read Stephen's full sermon before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7. Stephen remained calm and Spirit-filled while facing false accusations and hostility. What practices help you trust the Holy Spirit and respond faithfully when you feel pressured, misunderstood, or opposed?

3. Stephen's final words echoed Jesus as he entrusted himself to God and forgave those harming him. What makes forgiveness difficult, and how might Christ help us release resentment without minimizing wrongdoing?

4. The message describes generosity as a countercultural witness that declares, "Jesus—not money—is our Savior and Lord." Where do materialism or consumerism most compete for your trust, identity, or sense of security?

5. The three true stories of radical generosity shared in the message show people giving from abundance, postponing a purchase, and offering time and talent when money was scarce. What specific sacrifice of time, gifts, or treasure might God be inviting you to make, and whom could it bless? Share with the group a time when generosity brought you joy.

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Today Is Covenant Sunday

Each fall we enter a season of Generosity that culminates in Covenant Sunday, when the MDPC family prayerfully pledges our financial support in the year ahead. A pledge is a projection of your giving in 2027, which helps MDPC plan wisely for ministry expenses.

There are extra cards in the pews, or you may pledge online at **pledge.mdpc.org**. If you choose to pledge online but want to participate in today's covenant moment, simply check "I submitted my pledge online" on your pledge card.

Reaching Gen Alpha

Fri & Sat, Nov 6 & 7

What's next for Gen Alpha? MDPC is hosting a two-day conference to help you discover new ways to engage 3 to 16-year-olds and help them grow in faith! $60 includes meals.

On Friday night, *everyone* is welcome to a free presentation for parents, with practical insights for understanding, supporting, and connecting with the next generation. Details about all the events: **exchange.mdpc.org**

Soup Squad

Tue, Nov 10 | 9:30am-1:30pm

Join Women's Ministry as we serve lunch to our neighbors experiencing homelessness in downtown Houston. Come make a difference through compassionate service! Learn more and register: **soupsquad.mdpc.org**

Veterans Coffee & Connection

Wed, Nov 11 | 9:30-11:30am | Parlor

Come enjoy a light breakfast and while connecting with other veterans and Pastor Alf. All veterans are welcome, you do not need to be a church member to attend! Share the event: **vets.mdpc.org**

Women's Spiritual Retreat

Sat, Nov 14 | 9am-3:30pm

Margins: Making Room for God. What if the space you're trying to fill is actually space in which God is already present and active? Join women of all ages/stages as we breathe deeply, immerse ourselves in Scripture, and explore God's calling in the margins! Register: **margins.mdpc.org**

YA CityServe

Sat, Nov 14 | 9:30am-12pm

This monthly gathering is for young adults in their 20s and 30s who want to show up for their city while building genuine friendships. We'll serve side by side, then grab lunch at a local spot. The Nov project is at Boys & Girls Country of Houston. Learn more and sign up: **cityserve.mdpc.org**

Christmas for Kids

Help support siblings of students at Small Steps Nurturing Center! Suggested budget: $75/child. For details and to select a child to sponsor, visit **CFK.mdpc.org**.

Children's Choir

Sundays, 12:30pm | Choir Room

Children ages 5-11 are welcome to join Children's Choir! In a fun and encouraging Christian environment, children learn music, grow in their faith, and share the joy of singing with others. Includes lunch! Learn more: **childrenschoir.mdpc.org**

Adults 55+ Monthly Fellowship Lunch

Next Lunch: Mon, Nov 16 | 11am-1pm

An opportunity to connect and enjoy Christian fellowship. No reservation required! Order from the MDPC Café and sit at the tables reserved for our group in Fellowship Hall. Contact Connie with questions: **connie2whelchel@gmail.com**





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

8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Clay Brown

*Songs of Praise — *O Worship the King* | *King of Kings*

Confession & Assurance — Rachel Poysky

Song of Response — *In Christ Alone*

Prayer — Clay Brown

Worship Song — *Build My Life*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building** — Alf Halvorson
Faithful No Matter the Cost (Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-8:1)

RESPONDING

Covenant Moment — Alf Halvorson

Song of Response — *So Much*

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Michael Middleton

*Songs of Praise — *Praise* | *King of Kings*

Confession & Assurance — Jeff Taylor

Worship Songs — *Freedom in the House* | *Build My Life*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building** — Alf Halvorson
Faithful No Matter the Cost (Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-8:1)

RESPONDING

Covenant Moment — Alf Halvorson

Song of Response — *So Much*

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Blended and Contemporary Worship Leaders
MDPC Worship Team: Uvaldo Callejas, David Cavazos,
Asher Pudlo, Will Story, Angel Uribe, Fernie Uribe
Michael Middleton, Generational Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Prelude — *Adagio from Symphony No. VI* — Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)

Call to Worship — Amy Delgado

Choral Introit — *With a Voice of Singing* — Martin Shaw 1875-1958)

*Hymn of Praise — *For All the Saints* | Vs. 1, 3, 4 — #526 | Sine Nomine

*Confession and Assurance of Pardon — Rachel Poysky

*Affirmation of Faith from Romans 8

*Congregational Response — *Glory Be to the Father* — #579 | Gloria Patri

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation — *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* — arr. Bryan Sharpe (b. 1990)

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building** — Alf Halvorson
Faithful No Matter the Cost (Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-8:1)

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response — *Jesus, Lover of My Soul* | Vs. 1 — #303 | Aberystwyth

Covenant Moment — Alf Halvorson

Anthem of Response — *Walk Humbly with God* — Joel Raney (b. 1956)

SENDING

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

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Postlude — *Finale from Symphony No. 6* — C. M. Widor

Traditional Worship Leaders
Sanctuary Choir | Cassandra Black, Soloist
Kathryn White, Organist | Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

Our pastors are here to help. **They'd love to hear from you!**



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Financial Update as of Oct 25, 2026

2026 Annual Budget	$ 14,728,728
Actual Income to Date	10,500,336
Needed to Meet 2026 Budget	4,228,392