SERMON NOTES | Acts 8:26-40 NRSV

Sun, Nov 8, 2026

Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

In Acts 8:26–40, God directs Philip away from familiar ministry and toward an unexpected encounter with an Ethiopian official. As they explore Scripture together, the good news of Jesus opens the way to faith, baptism, and joy. This passage invites us to consider how God interrupts our plans, helps us understand Scripture, and sends us across boundaries to share and receive Christ's love.

1. Philip responds to God's direction without knowing where it will lead (verses 26–30). What stands out about his response? How might we become more attentive to God's leading when it interrupts our plans?

2. The Ethiopian official is reading Scripture but welcomes help understanding it (verses 30–31). What does his example teach us about humility and learning? Who has helped you understand Scripture more deeply? And what might Philip learn from the official's questions, faith, and joy? How might this encounter widen Philip's understanding of whom God cares for and sends?

3. Philip begins with the passage from Isaiah that the official is reading and shares the good news about Jesus (verses 32–35). How does this description of suffering and humiliation from Isaiah 53 help us understand Jesus? What makes that message good news?

4. This encounter brings together people with different backgrounds, social positions, and life experiences. What boundaries do Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch cross? What boundaries might God be inviting us to cross?

5. The official asks what would prevent him from being baptized (verses 36–38). What does Philip's response reveal about recognizing and responding to a moment of readiness? How can our church accompany people toward faith in Christ, baptism, and their next steps with Jesus?

6. The official continues his journey rejoicing, while Philip continues sharing the gospel elsewhere (verses 39–40). How does their encounter connect with "Wider and Farther"? What is one concrete step you could take this week to respond to God's leading?

MDPC
MEMORIAL DRIVE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
mdpc.org | 713.782.1710

Financial Update as of Nov 1, 2026

2026 Annual Budget	$ 14,728,728
Actual Income to Date	10,799,710
Needed to Meet 2026 Budget	3,929,018



Online Giving give.mdpc.org

All Events events.mdpc.org

Have You Submitted Your Pledge?

Generosity is one way we respond to God's goodness. Prayerfully consider your support for MDPC's mission and ministry in 2027 and then visit **generosity.mdpc.org** to see the difference your giving makes! Pledge cards will be available on Sunday, or pledge online at **pledge.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**

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**

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**

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**.

YA Worship Night

Thu, Nov 12 | 7-8:30pm

Join other young adults (20s & 30s) for a relaxed worship night under the stars at MDPC. Learn more and RSVP: **yaevents.mdpc.org**

YA Friendsgiving Dinner

Sat, Nov 21 | 6-9pm

A night of comfort food, heartfelt conversations, and shared gratitude as we hear personal faith stories from a few young adults in their 20s & 30s Details and RSVP: **yaevents.mdpc.org**

Adults 55+ Fellowship

Dinners, lunches, fellowship events, and get-together over games and puzzles. All adults 55+ are welcome! Find details on all activities at **adults55plus.mdpc.org.**







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

8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Beth Case

*Songs of Praise — *Everlasting God* | *This Is My Father's World*

Confession & Assurance — Christyn Knoop

Song of Response — *Be Thou My Vision*

Prayer — Beth Case

Worship Song — *Good Plans*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Wider and Farther** (Acts 8:26-40) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

Offertory — *Good News*

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship — Meliza Gómez

*Songs of Praise — *Holy Forever* | *Fresh Wind*

Presentation of Student Bibles — Keri Mosk, Mayra Arellano

Worship Songs — *God So Loved* | *Good Plans*

HEARING THE WORD

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Wider and Farther** (Acts 8:26-40) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

Offertory — *Good News*

Call to Respond — Beth Case

SENDING

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Blended and Contemporary Worship Leaders
MDPC Worship Team: Uvaldo Callejas, David Cavazos, Asher Pudlo, Will Story
Meliza Gómez, Contemporary Worship Director | Michael Middleton, Generational Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Prelude — *Fantaisie in A* — César Franck (1822-1890)

Call to Worship — Beth Case

Choral Introit — *God Is Here* — arr. John Ferguson (1941-2025)

*Hymn of Praise — *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* | Vs. 1, 2, 3 — #464 | Hymn to Joy

*Confession and Assurance of Pardon — Laurien Hook

*Affirmation of Faith from New City Catechism, Q1

*Congregational Response — *Spirit of the Living God* | Vs. 1 — #322 | Living God

Presentation of Student Bibles — Keri Mosk, Mayra Arellano

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation — *Now We Are Ambassadors in the Name of Christ / How Lovely are the Messengers* — F. Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Message — **Interrupted & Sent: The Church Before the Building Wider and Farther** (Acts 8:26-40) — Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response — *He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought* | Vs. 1, 2 — #217 | He Leadeth Me

Prayer — Beth Case

Offertory — *Joy in the Morning* — Natalie Sleeth (1930-1992)

SENDING

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

*Benediction — Alf Halvorson

Postlude — *I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath* — arr. J. Wayne Kerr (b. 1957)

Traditional Worship Leaders
Sanctuary Choir | Jason Amos and Antoine Griggs, duet
Kathryn White, Organist | Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director

* Please stand, if comfortable.

THIRD GRADE BIBLE RECIPIENTS

9:45 Service

Camden Gardner Armes
William Charles Brackeen
Arabelle Birdie Breaux
Abigail Rose Brown
Ellie Butrum
Sutton Canfield
Steele Lea Davidson
William Keith Elliott
George Russell Elmore
Mattie Kate Fedorko
Hadley Glenn Floris
John Raymond Gassett
Samuel Ford Goodman
Russell Wade Kilgore Jr.
Julia Bentley Knoop
Hallie Bay Mayo
Aaron Miles Ong
Olivia Grace Osteen
Rocco Pudlo
Ruby Louise Reed
Isla Marie Rice
Grace Lillian Rice
Ford Patrick Sirgo
Shepherd Smith
Whitney Katharine Stowe
Kate Swinbank
Lucy Shawn Thomas
Amelia Ann Trevino
Brooke Avery Wallis
Sterling Watkins

11:15 Service

Lillie Avant Anderson
Katherine Crawley
Michael Pungong
Rita Pungong