



# FOR *God* SO LOVED THE WORLD

**Your First Love**  
Revelation 2:1-7  
Alf Halvorson preaching

**8:30 AM Service**

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching

[Revelation 2:1-7](#)

**Welcome**

Dan Aikins

**Call to Worship & Advent Readings**

Alf Halvorson & Family

**Songs of Praise**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*  
*Hark, The Herald Angels Sing*

James Chaddwick

Charles Wesley

**\*Prayer of Confession & Assurance**

Clay Brown

**Songs of Response**

*Breath of Heaven*  
*Prince of Heaven*  
*O Holy Night*  
*Hallelujah*

Amy Grant

Brooke Ligertwood

John Dwight

Brenton Brown

**Moment of Prayer**

Dan Aikins

**Songs of Preparation**

*O Holy Night*  
*Hallelujah*

John Dwight

Brenton Brown

**Message**

*For God So Loved the World: Your First Love*

Alf Halvorson

**Song of Response**

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

Chris Tomlin

**Opportunity to Give & Benediction**

**Song**

*Feliz Navidad*

PUBLIC DOMAIN



## Sunday Worship Playlist

[Click here to listen.](#)

### Remember Our Mission Partners on the Front Lines of Ministry

Each week, we pray for three of **MDPC's** local and global mission partners. During these difficult days, our partners truly covet your prayers! Visit [partners.mdpc.org](http://partners.mdpc.org) to find this week's (three) prayer recipients.



# FOR *God* SO LOVED THE WORLD

**Your First Love**

Revelation 2:1-7

Alf Halvorson preaching

**9:45 AM Service**

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching

[Revelation 2:1-7](#)

**Welcome**

Meliza Gómez

**Call to Worship & Advent Readings**

The Knoop Family

**Song of Praise**

*He Shall Reign Forevermore*

arr. Chris Tomlin

**Kids' Moment**

Children's Ministries

**Moment of Confession & Assurance**

Christyn Knoop

**Songs of Response**

*Breath of Heaven*

Amy Grant

*Prince of Heaven*

Brooke Ligertwood

*O Holy Night*

John Dwight

*Hallelujah*

Brenton Brown

**Message**

*For God So Loved the World: Your First Love*

Alf Halvorson

**Song of Response**

*Come, All Ye Faithful*

Chris Tomlin

**Moment of Prayer**

Dave Steane

**Opportunity to Give & Benediction**

**Song**

*Feliz Navidad*

PUBLIC DOMAIN



## Sunday Worship Playlist

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FOR *God* SO LOVED THE  
**WORLD**

**Your First Love**  
Revelation 2:1-7  
Alf Halvorson preaching

**11:15 AM Service**

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching

[Revelation 2:1-7](#)

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<b>Prelude</b>	<i>Fantasy on 'Veni Emmanuel'</i>	Robert Lau (b. 1943)
<b>Welcome</b>		Dan Aikins
<b>Call to Worship &amp; Advent Readings</b>		The Delgado Family
<b>Choral Introit</b>	<i>Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heavenly Light (from Christmas Oratorio)</i>	J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
<b>*Hymn of Praise</b>	<i>Angels from the Realms of Glory</i>	REGENT SQUARE
<b>*Prayer of Confession and Assurance</b>		Amy Delgado
<b>*Affirmation of Faith</b>	from the United Church of Canada	
<b>*Congregational Response</b>	<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	GLORIA
<b>Anthem</b>	<i>What Child</i>	Ruth Morris Gray (b. 1961)
<b>Pastoral Prayer</b>		Dan Aikins
<b>Anthem of Preparation</b>	<i>Love Came Down at Christmas</i>	Howard Helvey (b. 1968)
<b>Message</b>	<i>For God So Loved the World: Your First Love</i>	Alf Halvorson
<b>*Hymn of Response</b>	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	ST. LOUIS
<b>Opportunity to Give &amp; Benediction</b>		
<b>Postlude</b>	<i>Sleepers, Wake! A Voice Astounds Us</i>	Paul Manz (1919-2009)

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Sunday, December 20, 2020

# MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

To see more events at **MDPC**, visit [events.mdpc.org](https://events.mdpc.org).

## WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE as of December 13, 2020

2020 Annual Budget	\$12,300,000
Income to Date	\$10,149,473
Needed to Meet Budget	\$2,150,527



Research shows certain marriage prep programs to be particularly effective at preventing divorce, lowering the risk by as much as 75%. **Married Life Prep** is approved by Twogether in Texas, and program graduates can have their Texas marriage license fee waived! A new 4-week class starts January 10.



FPU's focus on behavior change is a different view of personal finance. Most folks know what to do with money, but not how to do it. Millions have followed Dave Ramsey's plan out of debt and into a life of saving and giving. You can, too! Learn more at [fpu.mdpc.org](https://fpu.mdpc.org).



**MDPC's** fast-paced Saturday food pantry can use your helping hands, even if it's just for an hour or two. Shifts are flexible and you'll be put right to work! Learn more and sign up at [action.mdpc.org](https://action.mdpc.org).



Even in these difficult times, our **MDPC** Mission Partners are still hard at work providing needed services to their clients and sharing the love of Jesus. To hear some of their stories, visit [stories.mdpc.org](https://stories.mdpc.org).



Sunday childcare currently is available for children five and under. Visit [children.mdpc.org](https://children.mdpc.org) to see our Sunday morning health and safety protocols. For The Galaxy elementary Sunday school, just text Galaxy F2F to the number 94000 so we know you are coming!



We have a variety of service times and attendance options for Christmas Eve. For the LIVE services, please RSVP to attend in-person (as circumstances permit) or join us online (no matter what!). Details at [christmaseve.mdpc.org](https://christmaseve.mdpc.org).



NEW THIS YEAR! Shop and pay online at [market.mdpc.org](https://market.mdpc.org), then stop by Mission Market in the Lobby on Sundays or Front Office on weekdays to pick up your cards and envelopes. It's fast, simple, and safe!



College students! Come for weekly (outdoor) Fire Pit Fellowship over Christmas Break. Free food! Plus friends and Bible study. Kicks off Thursday, December 17; 6:30 PM for dinner, Bible study begins at 7:15 PM. [Learn more here.](#)



Need a soft place to land? Unsure of where to go next? Learn more about our short-term counseling ministry by emailing **MDPC** counselor-in-residence Amanda Grace Caldwell, or visit [counseling.mdpc.org](https://counseling.mdpc.org).



CONNECTION is our Sunday program for Middle and High School students where we come together for fellowship, teaching, and worship. 11:15 AM in the Youth Loft; more info at [connection.mdpc.org](https://connection.mdpc.org).



Children's Ministries Sunday School is moving to YouTube! We will have Sunday School for Preschool and Elementary Kids on our YouTube channel from 10:45-11:15 AM for our Preschool and Elementary Kids. [Click here](#) to learn more.



This is the seventh and final Advent text in our series on agape love. I chose [Revelation 2:1-7](#) because the book of Revelation begins, according to Rev. 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ.” Jesus is the gift God gives us at Christmas.

John, while he was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision/revelation, not only of what the end of the world would be like because of Jesus Christ, but also what to say in the present to the persecuted churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) to help them be faithful in challenging times. Included in the book are seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor at the time. The first letter was to the church at Ephesus. This city is where the Apostle Paul lived for three and a half years as he shared Christ with the Gentiles. It had a great harbor for commerce on the Aegean Sea and bustled with trade, being the end of the silk trade route from the East and the link to Rome in the West. It also had the third largest library in the Ancient World, as well as the Temple of Artemis (the revered fertility figure), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Each letter from John follows a uniform pattern: affirmation first, then correction, and finally a promise if faithfulness follows.

1. Read Rev. 2:1-7. How does John show agape love (that we learned about in 1 Cor. 13) toward this church in Ephesus?
2. How are they affirmed? Where are they corrected? And what promise awaits them if they are faithful? Where do these words from nearly 2,000 years ago speak to you/us at the end of a very challenging 2020? For example, where have you patiently endured (vs. 2)?
3. The *correction* part occurs in verses 4-5. They chose for a time to give up on agape love. Why do you think they abandoned the love they had at first? Can you remember a time in your life when you did the same thing? What causes the diversion from your primary or first love? And what is the prescription that is given here?
4. Did you ever have a time when faith came alive and you had a *first love* regarding Christ? Or maybe you grew up in a Christian household where you never doubted faith in Christ. What might *first love* look like faith-wise in either case? How can we be diverted from it? This Christmas, how might you return to your first love, according to this passage?
5. Christmas, whether we are near or far from family and friends, offers us a great opportunity to practice and display agape love toward others and God. What “works” (vs. 5) might you do this year *in response* to the amazing gift of agape love we receive in the person of Jesus the Christ—the Babe in the manger who is the Savior of the world?

*May the peace and love Christ came to give be yours this Christmas in abundance!!! Pastor Alf*