

**Pastoral Team**

**Dan Aikins**  
Assistant Pastor, Alpha Hub Director

**Clay Brown**  
Equipping Pastor

**Beth Case**  
Caring Ministries Pastor

**Mauricio Chacón**  
Spanish Language Pastor

**Almir Dias**  
Portuguese Language Pastor

**Alf Halvorson**  
Senior Pastor

**Brett Hurst**  
Relationships Pastor

**Rachel Poysky**  
Children's Pastor

**Dave Steane**  
Executive Pastor

**Connect**

**Contact Us**

Website: mdpc.org  
Front Office: 713-782-1710  
Prayer Chain: 713-953-2558

**Follow Us**

Facebook: facebook.mdpc.org  
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**MDPC App**

For a quick download link for Apple and Android, text "APP" to 832-742-1832.

**MDPC Worship**

8:30 AM • Blended • Chapel  
9:45 AM • Contemporary • Sanctuary  
11:15 AM • Traditional • Sanctuary  
11:15 AM • Spanish Language • Chapel  
6:00 PM • Portuguese Language • Chapel

To secure the safety of the newborn Child, both the Wisemen and the Holy Family took measures to avoid the duplicity and the outright cruelty of King Herod. As they prepared to return home, they were forced to choose a different road than the one from which they had come. Post-Christmas, each of us must return to our normal lives, though they too may be less than peaceful.

**THE ROAD AHEAD**

A Post-Christmas Sermon Series  
December 29 & January 5

**WEEKLY MINISTRY PARTNER PRAYER FOCUS**

**The Woods Project** • The Woods Project develops leadership and life skills in low-income youth through outdoor education/environmental awareness programs. It prepares students for college and beyond by encouraging interest in science and nature, and by expanding their experience with challenging situations and diverse environments. [thewoodsproject.org](http://thewoodsproject.org)

**WorkFaith Connection** • This Christ-centered nonprofit helps people achieve economic self-sufficiency through job placement, job retention, and career advancement. It empowers clients to provide for themselves and their families emotionally, spiritually, and financially, stabilizing families and our community. [workfaithconnection.org](http://workfaithconnection.org)

**African Enterprise** • African Enterprise (AE) is a global partnership that believes in a bright future for Africa under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Its aim is to proclaim the Gospel to the residents of Africa's major cities, making a special effort to reach the continent's leaders, since Godly governance can result in major transformations of whole countries. Through evangelism, reconciliation, leadership training, relief, and community development, AE ministers to often overlooked community crises, such as AIDS, infant mortality, street children, and polluted water. [africanenterprise.org](http://africanenterprise.org)

**End of Year Giving:** For gifts of check or cash to be included in your 2019 giving statement, the gift must be received or postmarked no later than December 31, 2019. You may drop your gift in the offering plate on Sundays, or bring it by the church office no later than Tuesday, December 31. The most convenient option is to give online at [give.mdpc.org](http://give.mdpc.org).

If you plan to make a gift of stock, please request transfer from your account by end of business day **tomorrow** so that those gifts may arrive in the church's account before year-end. Please contact Ava Caliendo at [acaliendo@mdpc.org](mailto:acaliendo@mdpc.org) or 713-953-2574 for information on gifts of stock.

Sunday, December 22, 2019



**INTO THE MARGINS**  
THE PARABLES OF LUKE

**The Wicked Tenants**  
Luke 20:9-19 • Alf Halvorson preaching

**Christmas Eve Services**

**4:00 PM** (Family Service) and **5:30, 7:00, & 8:30 PM** (Candlelight Services)

**The Parable of the Tenants • Luke 20:9-19**

He (Jesus) went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out. "Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him." "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. "This is the heir," they said. "Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When the people heard this, they said, "God forbid!" Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed." The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest Him immediately, because they knew He had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: JOY**

Call to Worship with Elise Bounds and Ally Reichel

**8:30 AM BLENDED & 9:45 AM CONTEMPORARY**

**PRAISE & WORSHIP • CONFESSION • MESSAGE • OFFERING**

Musicians in these services: Meliza Gómez and Michael Middleton, worship leaders  
Asher Pudlo, drums • Daniel Martinez, keys • Daniel Amaya, bass • George Heathco, guitar

**11:15 AM TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

<b>PRELUDES</b>	<i>Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming</i> <i>Joy to the World</i>	arr. Hayes/Gaspard arr. Jim Hammerly
<b>CHORAL INTROIT</b>	<i>Sleepers Wake</i> (from St. Paul)	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
<b>*HYMN OF PRAISE #53</b>	<i>What Child is This?</i>	Vs. 1, 2 & 3; GREENSLEEVES
<b>*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #40</b>	<i>Joy to the World</i>	Vs. 2; ANTIOCH
<b>ANTHEM</b>	<i>African Alleluia</i>	Benjamin Harlan (b. 1954)
<b>OFFERTORY</b>	<i>The First Noel</i>	arr. Dan Forrest (b. 1978)
<b>*HYMN OF RESPONSE #44</b>	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	Vs. 1 & 3; ST. LOUIS
<b>POSTLUDE</b>	<i>Joy to the World</i>	arr. Don Hustad (1918-2013)

Musicians in these services: Beth Case, piano • Kathryn White, organ  
Julio Sanchez, percussion • Sanctuary Choir • Dr. Charles Hausmann, conductor

### Christmas Eve Services

We have a crucial need for help during Christmas Eve Services. Ushers are needed for each of the services (4:00, 5:30, 7:00, & 8:30 PM). [Sign up at XMASushers.mdpc.org](http://Sign up at XMASushers.mdpc.org). Volunteers are also needed to work a shift between services at refreshment tables, or to greet at entrance doors. [Sign up at XMAShosts.mdpc.org](http://Sign up at XMAShosts.mdpc.org). **Invite others to Christmas Eve Services!** Stop by the Connection Center this morning to pick up an invitation that may be passed on to family, friends, and co-workers.

### Racial Reconciliation Workshop

MDPC will be hosting this workshop in partnership with area ECO churches. It was developed to facilitate helpful conversations around the topics of race and diversity in a gospel-centered way. The conference will be led by Pastor Albert Tate from Monrovia, CA. All are welcome, but please make every effort to attend both days.

**Friday & Saturday, January 10-11**

**Cost is \$30; scholarships are available**

Contact Rachel Poysky: [rpoysky@mdpc.org](mailto:rpoysky@mdpc.org)

### Youth Confirmation

Our yearly confirmation program for all students currently in 8th grade or above.

**Sundays, January 12-March 1**

**11:00 AM-12:15 PM**

**Confirmation Sunday: March 8**

Register: [confirmation.mdpc.org](http://confirmation.mdpc.org)

\$125 fee covers retreat expenses.

### Walking the Mourner's Path

Does it seem like you should be over your grief? Join us for this Christ-centered grief program designed to help those dealing with the loss of a loved one. Trained facilitators guide the group.

**Thursdays, January 16-March 5**

**3:30-5:00 PM • Ministry Center Room 116**

**Fee: \$30 for materials**

[grief.mdpc.org](http://grief.mdpc.org) or contact Beverly Fluke: [bfluke@mdpc.org](mailto:bfluke@mdpc.org) or 713-490-9542

### Winter 2020 Alpha

Invite a friend from any faith or non-faith to try Alpha with you. It's a no-pressure way to explore Jesus, with no question, belief, or idea off-limits. It's a place to talk about difficult seasons like having doubts or fears, or being dissatisfied with life. It's a place to simply meet new people or share what you believe. Alpha is for Christians, too, and can help rekindle faith that has cooled.

**Tuesdays, Jan. 21-Mar. 10 | 6:30-8:15 PM**

**Free dinner, free childcare**

Info and RSVP: [alpha.mdpc.org](http://alpha.mdpc.org)

### Parents Night Out

Enjoy an evening out while your kids are lovingly cared for by MDPC Children's Ministry.

**Saturday, January 11 • 4:00-8:00 PM**

**\$25/child; \$15 for sibling; \$50 maximum**

Sign up at [pno.mdpc.org](http://pno.mdpc.org)

### Spring Recreational Classes (REACH)!

Spring classes include Abakadoodle, Art, Ballet, Basketball, Bridge, Coder Kids, Dance, Little Geniuses Chess Class, Mini-Star Sports, Music Together, Piano, Soccer Shots, Tumbling and Gymnastics, Voice, Woodworking and Yoga.

For a complete listing, or to register:

[reach.mdpc.org](http://reach.mdpc.org) or 713-490-9564.

### Church in the City

Join your MDPC friends and family for this annual service event. In lieu of our usual Sunday services, we will participate in a variety of service projects, both here and with our ministry partners. There are several new and exciting opportunities this year, so please visit the website for more details.

**Sunday, February 23**

[CITC.mdpc.org](http://CITC.mdpc.org)

### Girls' Getaway: Spring Is Coming!

Join us for a time of refreshment, laughter, and fun. Bring a friend, neighbor, mother, or sister to enjoy a five-star retreat complete with an outdoor movie, teaching time, and free time to walk the property or just relax. All adult women are welcome.

**Friday-Sunday, April 3-5**

**Jordan Ranch in Schulenburg**

Register: [getaway.mdpc.org](http://getaway.mdpc.org)

Contact Amanda Grace Caldwell:

[acaldwell@mdpc.org](mailto:acaldwell@mdpc.org) or 713-490-0931

### Light of Hope Ethiopia Vision Trip

Visit Light of Hope, one of our global outreach partners that is bringing the Good News of God's love to the Arssi Oromo people. Witness how God is at work in Ethiopia through the building of village schools, the planting of churches, and Bible translations.

**February 23-March 2 • Cost: \$1,800**

Contact Kelsi: [kmccormack@mdpc.org](mailto:kmccormack@mdpc.org)

### Central Asia Mission Trip with TAP

Journey to the ancient Silk Road with The Antioch Partners to see how God is at work transforming lives. Experience the beauty and hospitality of Central Asia as you learn how partners are serving in this region.

**May 12-21 • Cost: \$2,750-\$3,000**

**Includes airfare, transport, meals, & lodging**

Contact Hope Whitney: 713-490-9571 or [admin@theantiochpartners.org](mailto:admin@theantiochpartners.org)

# Mission Market

**Sundays, December 15 & 22**

**Chapel and Sanctuary Lobbies**

Give the gift of hope for Christmas this year when you purchase cards in honor of friends and loved ones. The money goes directly to an MDPC ministry partner to fund life-saving surgeries, safe and loving homes for children, life-transforming education, wheelchairs, and so much more. **Shop Mission Market on weekdays in the Front Office.**



Last week  
to purchase  
cards!



## ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES AT MDPC

### Walking Through Luke

Stand-alone lessons, taught by MDPC theologians, follow the "Transformed by Hope" study.

**Today: 9:45 or 11:15 AM, Amphitheater**

**Clay Brown, Equipping Pastor, Luke 12:1-59**

**The Winsome Witness Challenge** • Join us in this Challenge, where we suggest simple and practical ideas for building deeper relationships and sharing your faith with those in your sphere. **This week, think how you might bless someone who has a lot on their plate by helping with simple chores or errands (a trip to the grocery store or the cleaners, or weeding a flower bed).**

**"The Big Ten" Bible Study:** Taught by pastors Beth Case, Rachel Poysky, and Clay Brown. This "Big Ten" walks us through the Ten Commandments and reveals their continuing insight for today's world. No homework or pre-registration.

**Tuesdays, 9:00-10:00 AM | MC 122**

**(Holiday break ends January 14)**

### Download the New MDPC App

Check out our powerful new mobile app, with all the features you enjoyed in the former app, PLUS expanded features in the area of event information and easy registration, group communication, personalized notifications, check-in, and so much more!

**See back page for quick links.**

Contact Marquita Pointer:

[mpointer@mdpc.org](mailto:mpointer@mdpc.org)

### MOPs (Mothers of Preschoolers)

Are you a mom of young children who could use a little break in the week to drop off the kids, relax, and chat with other moms? Then MOPS is for you! Come for connection, solid content, and adult conversations. Childcare is free.

**Every other Thursday, 9:30-11:15 AM | Parlor**

**OR Monthly on Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 PM**

**(Holiday break ends January 9)**

Check dates and register: [mops.mdpc.org](http://mops.mdpc.org)

**Married Life Prep**  
A fun, free, four-week Marriage Course

Engaged couples and those married 5 years or fewer are encouraged to come!

**Sundays, January 5-26 • 10:00 AM-Noon**

To register or learn more: [mlp.mdpc.org](http://mlp.mdpc.org)

Questions? Contact:  
Kami Vaughn, [kvaughn@mdpc.org](mailto:kvaughn@mdpc.org)

# Theology Matters

Additional resource materials and outside study required. For details, links, and registration: [theology.mdpc.org](http://theology.mdpc.org)

### The Trinity

In this second course, we'll dive deeper into what Christianity professes about the Trinity, how we may understand it more clearly, and why this crucial doctrine makes a difference in daily Christian living. **Classes will be taught by Dr. Clay Brown, Equipping Pastor.**

**Wednesdays, January 8, 15, 22, & 29**

**6:30-8:00 PM • Ministry Center Room 122**

# INTO THE MARGINS

THE PARABLES OF LUKE

## The Wicked Tenants

Luke 29:9-19 | Pastor Alf Halvorson

This is the sixteenth and final parable in our Fall Parable Series from the Gospel of Luke. Now Jesus is in Jerusalem. The Triumphant Entry into the City has occurred (Luke 19:28-39); Jesus has cried over the city and people he loves (Lk. 19:41-44); he has cleansed the Temple of moneychangers (Lk. 19:45-48); and he has had a confrontation on the Temple Mount with the chief priests and the scribes (who are looking for a way to kill him on their turf-Lk. 19:47-48). They ask him a question, saying, “By what authority are you doing these things?” Jesus does not answer them but asks them a question instead. They can’t answer His question so He says He won’t answer their question. (Lk. 20:1-8) The stakes, the tension, the stress, could not be higher. In that pressure-cooker of context, Jesus tells our last parable for the year.

1. *Read Luke 20:9-19.* It was common knowledge by the hearers of this parable that the vineyard image was a symbol for Israel from the Old Testament. Whom would you say the other characters in this parable of Jesus symbolize? The Owner of the Vineyard? The tenants? [Look at verse 19 for a hint] Three different slaves sent to collect a share of the produce? The beloved Son? Others who will get the vineyard in verse 16?
2. If you were the owner, could you expect to receive respect and allegiance from your tenants and toward your slaves and Son? Verse 13 is a pivotal point in the parable. We hear an internal dialogue from the owner. Would you have done what he did? What are other optional responses to the tenant’s insubordination?
3. Now put yourselves in the shoes of the tenants. Why, do you think, were they so hostile toward the slaves of the Owner and the Owner’s Son? Can you pick up motives for their behavior in any of the verses?
4. Verses 17-18 almost seem to be another parable. Read Ps. 118:22, Is. 28:16, Eph. 2:20-22; and I Peter 2:4-10. What is Jesus saying here? How does Jesus’ death either crush our sins or crush us?
5. Verse 19 is so telling. The goal of a parable is to have a creative story that can be understood so we can follow Jesus. The Scribes and the Chief Priests understand what Jesus is saying but instead of repenting or turning around they double down on their intent to kill him. How are other people sometimes like the Scribes and Chief Priests? How are we like them? The key to me seems to be that ‘Knowledge alone is not enough; it’s not too late to prevent Jesus’ blood from being on their hands, but they would have to act on their knowledge. What knowledge about God or yourself do you have that requires a decisive and positive response this Christmas? How can you humble yourself (like the Savior who is born in a manger) so that you might be exalted through His life and death?