



Now Thank We All Our God

Psalm 100
Pastor Alf Halvorson preaching



8:30 AM *Blended* • 9:45 AM *Contemporary*

WELCOME		Dave Steane (8:30), Worship Team (9:45)
*SONGS OF PRAISE		
*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE		Brett Hurst
SONG OF RESPONSE		
CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (9:45)		Keri Mosk
GIFTS OF GRATITUDE		
MESSAGE	Now Thank We All Our God	Alf Halvorson
RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE		

Musicians in these services: Arthur Ceker and Meliza Gómez, worship leaders • Uvaldo Callejas, bass • George Heathco, guitar • Daniel Martinez, keys • Asher Pudlo, drums

11:15 AM *Traditional*

PRELUDE	<i>Let Us Give Thanks</i>	arr. Ron Sprunger (b. 1933)
WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP		Dave Steane
CHORAL INTROIT	<i>We Gather Together</i>	arr. John Ness Beck (1930-1987)
*HYMN OF PRAISE	<i>Now Thank We All Our God</i>	#555; Vs. 1, 3 NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT
*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE		Dan Aikins
*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from Romans 8		
ANTHEM	<i>The Promise of Living (from A Tender Land)</i>	Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
OFFERTORY	<i>Homeward Bound</i>	arr. Mack Wilberg (b. 1955)
MESSAGE	Now Thank We All Our God	Alf Halvorson
*HYMN OF RESPONSE	<i>Now Thank We All Our God</i>	#555; Vs. 2 NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT
POSTLUDE	<i>Toccata on 'Come Thou Fount'</i>	Gordon Young (1919-1998)

Musicians in this service: Paulo Gomes, guest conductor • Yan Shen, guest pianist • Kathryn White, organ/piano

*Please stand if able.

CCLI # 182374



Mission Market Opens Today!
Visit us in the Lobby, Sunday mornings through December 17.

Purchasing Mission Market Christmas cards to give to your friends and family can change lives! **100% of the money received** is sent to the MDPC ministry partner(s) of your choice, helping **support cross-cultural mission** across the globe, **relieve food-insecurity** for preschoolers in Houston, bring **smiles to kids living with disabilities**, **minister to children orphaned by AIDS**, and so much more...

mission-market.mdpc.org

Mission Market
 Christmas Cards



Alpha is coming.
 January 23, 2018
alpha.mdpc.org

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24

Since Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year, we will celebrate in the morning, and again in the evening with a different message:
 10:00 AM Blended Worship
 4:00 PM Family | 5:30, 7:00, & 8:30 PM Candlelight
 Details: christmaseve.mdpc.org



HUNGER INITIATIVE: Baby Formula Drive

Let's keep up the fight against childhood food insecurity! Our next drive is for powdered baby formula (brand name or generic), benefitting LIFE Houston. The link below has details on requested varieties.

Formula Collection Day: Sunday, Dec. 3

More info: LIFE.mdpc.org

Married Life Prep

Taught at MDPC by Brett and Kellie Hurst of Home Encouragement, you will learn how to build your marriage upon a firm foundation.

Sundays, January 7-28 | 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Details and registration: mlp.mdpc.org

Theology On Tap

MDPC Young Adults: Round up pals for a relaxed, take-all-comers theological conversation over bites and beers. Contact Sarah for location details.

Monday, Nov. 27 | 6:30-8:00 PM | Location TBD

Contact Sarah Stone: ssstone@mdpc.org, 832-605-8129

B90: Read the Bible

Read 12 pages a day starting January 1, and meet once a week for support and encouragement. This could be the best new year's resolution you'll ever make.

Interest Meeting: Sunday, Dec. 17 | 11:15 AM | MC 218

Details: b90.mdpc.org

Concert Series: Choral Christmas Concert

How often do you get to sing Christmas carols with a full orchestra? Now is your chance! In addition to carols, the choir and orchestra will perform Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* and *The Many Moods of Christmas* by Robert Shaw and Robert Russell Bennett.

Sunday, Dec. 17 | 6:00 PM | Free admission

concerts.mdpc.org

Confirmation 2018

Confirmation is our yearly program for all students who are currently in the 8th grade or above. It'll be a time of focusing on what it means to follow Jesus and be part of His Church.

Kick-off: Sunday Evening, January 7

Class Meetings: Sundays, January 14-March 4

11:00 AM-12:15 PM | \$125 if you register by Dec. 3

Fee covers retreat expenses: confirmation.mdpc.org

Contact Laura with questions: lmiller@mdpc.org

Pastor Rick Myers Is Retiring

We'll celebrate our beloved Caring Ministries Pastor with a look back at his ministry at MDPC. Rick's program begins at 12:45; All-Church Lunch will be served at its usual time of 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Sunday, Dec. 3 | 12:45-1:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

For details, menu, and to RSVP: myers.mdpc.org

Christmas for Kids

MDPC Women are partnering with Small Steps Nurturing Center to help siblings of children in their program have a fun Christmas. We have 160 children to "adopt" this year! The suggested total donation is \$75-\$125, but purchase according to your budget.

Pick up a child's wish list at our table this morning.

Wrapped gifts due to MDPC by Dec. 1.

Contact Amanda Grace: acaldwell@mdpc.org

Family Christmas Festival: Angels

The evening starts with caroling, then dinner will be offered along with crafts, a hot chocolate bar, a service project, and more. All activities are free; dinner is affordably priced (more info at the link below). Invite your neighbors along - the entire family is welcome!

Next Sunday, Dec. 3 | 4:15-7:00 PM

angels.mdpc.org

Merry & Bright!

Come enjoy an art show and music concert in celebration of the Christmas season. The evening will feature art work from students of the REACH art class, a special performance art piece, and music led by Meliza Gómez, MDPC's contemporary worship leader.

Wednesday, Dec. 6 | Free Event | Chapel Area

6:30 PM Art Show, 7:00 Concert, Reception at 8:00

Women's Christmas Coffee

Join MDPC women for a fun kick-off to the Christmas season! Invite your friends and come enjoy the festivities, coffee, wassail, and treats at this holiday tradition.

Thursday, Dec. 7 | 9:30-11:00 AM | Parlor

coffee.mdpc.org

Register Now for Spring REACH Classes

Spring offerings include art, dance, music, and sports classes for both children and adults.

For a complete list of classes and to register, call the REACH office at 713-490-9564 or visit reach.mdpc.org.

Please Pray for MDPC Ministry Partners

This week, pray for these partners you support through MDPC:

Star of Hope is a Christ-centered mission providing shelter, meals, counseling, and education to men, women, and children. It introduces each child to a loving relationship with Jesus.

sohmission.org

Stoney Creek Ranch helps young people come to know Christ and His role in their lives. It works with urban youth, who rarely experience the beauty of God's creation.

stoneycreekranch.org

The Micah Project in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, ministers to young men who have spent anguished childhoods in impoverished homes or on the streets. They learn to become Christian leaders through discipleship, education, and service to others.

micahprojecthonduras.org

Today's Chancel Flowers are given by

Janet and Ben Orman, in celebration of their 35th wedding anniversary.

The White Rose is in memory of

Ben Bullock, who passed away November 16, 2017.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

2017 Operating Budget	\$ 11,400,000
Expected Income to Date	\$ 7,460,271
Actual Income to Date (11/19/17)	\$ 7,236,127
Current Income Deficit	\$ 224,144
Needed to Meet 2017 Budget	\$ 4,163,873
Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund	\$ 755,935



Now Thank We All Our God

Psalm 100 | Pastor Alf preaching

After a brief but important journey into the subjects of False and True Love, we now turn to how music/hymns/songs can help us be thankful and also prepare us for the birth of our Savior. Some things can be said better and understood more deeply through song than with words alone; some emotions can be named and processed more meaningfully through the cadence of note and tempo and instrumentation. Talk radio just makes me anxious right now, but music is able to calm and recalibrate me.

Johann Sebastian Bach once wrote, “The aim and final reason for all music should be nothing else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit.” I’m not sure all music must glorify God and refresh the spirit, but I am convinced that some music does just that for us. Post-Harvey, we need refreshment of the spirit and to see God’s glory. That is why our preaching for the next several weeks will look at the words, enjoy the tunes, and understand the Scriptures and history behind some of the greatest Christian songs of all time. Some of our best theology and the boldest articulation of the Gospel can be experienced as we meditate upon and sing the songs of the Season.

1. Read Ps. 100. What might “make a joyful noise” look like in real life from verse 1? What do you think the writer means by the phrase, “know that the Lord is God”?
2. The verses 1-2 tell us “what” we should do, verses 3-4 remind us of a profound truth to know/understand, then verse 5 tells us “why” God is worthy of this joyful noise and worship. Ponder verse 5 for a few minutes. If it’s *not* true, what does that mean for the human race and for you in particular? If it *is* true, what does that mean? Do you believe, personally, that verse 5 is true? What evidence would you share to make your argument to someone who does not affirm these attributes and actions of God?
3. I talked about Martin Rinkart, the author of the hymn “Now Thank We All Our God” and what was going on in Eilenburg, Saxony during the 30 Years’ War (1618-1648). The plague swept through the area in 1637 and Pastor Rinkart conducted up to 50 funerals a day at certain junctures during this time period. Shouldn’t he have composed a lament song instead of a Hymn of Thanksgiving?
4. Karl Barth, the 20th-century Theologian, defined joy as “a defiant nevertheless.” I offered three educated guesses at why Rinkart might have been thankful even in the midst of so much pain and suffering. Did any of those arguments ring true for you? Would you add any of your own arguments? How might they apply to us, post Hurricane Harvey?
5. I ended my sermon with a story from Robert Fulghum about a wedding gone awry. In spite of the mess, the bride still got the groom. Things don’t have to be perfect for us to give thanks. Where might you give thanks in spite of your circumstances? Where do you need to trust, “For the Lord is good, His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations”? If we wait until the conditions are perfect, we might still be waiting; but where have you seen/experienced God near at hand?

