

# The MDPC Lenten-season Study Returns

(Turn over for more info)



**MDPC**  
Memorial Drive  
Presbyterian Church

Sunday, January 14, 2018

## The Seasons of Our Lives

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11a  
Alf Halvorson preaching

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

CCLI # 182374

**WELCOME**

Dave Steane (8:30) | Worship Team (9:45)

**\*SONGS OF PRAISE**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCE**

Brett Hurst (8:30) | Trevor Harris (9:45)

**SONG OF RESPONSE**

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE** (9:45)

Sarah Stone

**GIFTS OF GRATITUDE**

**MESSAGE**

The Seasons of Our Lives: Jew, Greek, and Roman

Alf Halvorson

**RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE**

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

### 11:15 AM TRADITIONAL

**PRELUDES**

*Give Me Jesus and I Sing the Power*

arr. Sterling/Hayes

**WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP**

Dave Steane

**CHORAL INTROIT**

*When Morning Gilds the Skies*

arr. Hausmann

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

*O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

#466; Vs. 1, 2, 3, 4 | AZMON

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

Amy Delgado

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** from 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 and Colossians 1:15-20

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

*The Gloria Patri*

Hymn #579

**ANTHEM**

*All Things Bright and Beautiful*

John Rutter (b. 1945)

**OFFERTORY**

*There Is a Season from Every Purpose Under the Heaven*

Howard Goodall (b. 1958)

**MESSAGE**

The Seasons of Our Lives: Jew, Greek, and Roman

Alf Halvorson

**\*HYMN OF RESPONSE**

*There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

#298; Vs. 1, 2 | IN BABILONE

**POSTLUDE**

*Overture to Music for the Royal Fireworks*

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Musicians in these services: Charles Hausmann, conductor • Kathryn White, pianist/organist

**Gary Haugen**

Founder and CEO of  
International Justice Mission

**February 22 • 7:00 PM • MDPC**

Learn more and listen to his TED Talk: [justice.mdpc.org](http://justice.mdpc.org)



Join Pastor Alf on Twitter! Save the date of February 7 for a special tutorial. More info is on the back of this bulletin.

## Lenten Season Small Groups

Meet Weekly, February 18-March 25

When we talk about deadly sins and saving virtues, we are emphatically *not* stating we must work our way into God's good favor by acquiring certain virtues, attributes, or characteristics. At the same time, though, "grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone" naturally leads to lives lived in gratitude and obedience to God's will.

As Pastor Alf preaches on these themes this Lenten season, small groups and classes will gather to further discuss how, in our journeys of faith, we will acknowledge, confess, and strive against the sins that pervade our hearts, and we will seek to develop virtues that counter these sins and give glory to God.

There will be a variety of small groups to join, or, consider starting your own with friends, family, or colleagues. Sign up as an individual or register your small group at our table on Sunday, January 28; online registration opens Thursday, February 1.

For details, stay tuned to [lenten.mdpc.org](http://lenten.mdpc.org).

*Deadly  
Sins and  
Saving  
Virtues*

### Large-group Option

The same curriculum will be offered in a large-group format at two different hours on Wednesdays, taught by Pastor Clay Brown.

Wednesdays at MDPC  
February 21-March 28  
Noon or 6:30 PM

## COMING UP AT MDPC

### 2018 Partner In Prayer Packet Pick-up

Are you excited to see who you're praying for this year? We're excited to show you!

*Packets are available in the Lobby this morning. You still can sign up! Details at [pip.mdpc.org](http://pip.mdpc.org).*

### Youth Baseball, Softball, and Volleyball

Boys and girls in pre-K through 6th grade are encouraged to sign up for baseball or softball. Volleyball is for 4th-8th grade girls who are not in club volleyball.

**All practices begin the week of March 19.**

**Games: Saturdays, March 24-May 19**

**\$120, includes jersey, pictures, and medal or trophy**

*Register by February 18: [sports.mdpc.org](http://sports.mdpc.org)*

### Call for Committee Members

We are looking for 15 volunteers to join Local Outreach Subcommittees. Local Outreach Ministry makes 120 site visits a year, sending a team of two to visit, learn more about, and pray with one of our local ministry partners. From these visits, recommendations are made to Session for sending support. A unique blessing is seeing God at work when you visit these hardworking, compassionate folks caring for others daily.

*If God is calling you to local outreach, contact Jan Roe to learn more: [jroe@mdpc.org](mailto:jroe@mdpc.org)*

### Please Pray With Us: MDPC Ministry Partners

This week, please pray for these MDPC partners:

**Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse** provides support services, education, and legal representation to individuals impacted by domestic violence; battering intervention and services for individuals who commit violence; and educational curriculum to prevent future violence.

*[avda-tx.org](http://avda-tx.org)*

**AIDS Foundation** leads the innovative efforts in prevention of new HIV infections. It empowers individuals, families, and communities affected by HIV/AIDS to create and sustain healthy lives. Each client meets with a case manager to develop an individualized plan that includes referrals to housing, health, and employment resources.

*[aidshelp.org](http://aidshelp.org)*

**MDPC Field Worker Urgessa** works and serves in Ethiopia as the founder of Light of Hope Ministry. The vision of Light of Hope is to bring the Good News of God's love, expressed in the life and death of Jesus, to the Muslim people groups of Ethiopia, beginning with the Arssi Oromo people both in Ethiopia and in North America.

### Tweet & Eat: Follow Pastor Alf on Twitter!

Support Pastor Alf's first foray into social media by following @alfhalvorson. Not a tweeter yourself? Save the date to join us for a Tweet & Eat for a basic intro to Twitter.

**Wednesday, Feb. 7 | 6:30 PM | Summit Room**

### Door Prizes Needed for Special Families

Special Blessings & Safe Haven are hosting an uplifting and encouraging evening for parents of children with special needs and foster/adoptive parents. Please consider donating items for door prizes (gift cards, event tickets, etc). *Contact Keri Mosk: [kmosk@mdpc.org](mailto:kmosk@mdpc.org), 713-490-9265*

### MDPC, You Set a Giving Record!

Mary White of East Spring Branch Food Pantry wrote us a precious note to say, "Thank you, MDPC!" You donated a record-breaking 467 sacks for ESBFP's Thanksgiving-Meal-in-a-Bag program. Over two days, they served 1,007 turkeys to families referred by school counselors at 19 Spring Branch Schools. Mary added, "To the question 'Lord, when did we see You hungry?' we saw [and fed] in abundance! God bless you for your generosity!"

### Correction: Walking the Mourner's Path Date

The quarterly newsletter lists the start date as February 27. The course begins on **Thursday, February 22.**

### The White Rose is in memory of

Patsy Stone, who passed away October 29, 2017.

Helena Hargrove, who passed away January 3, 2018.

### Today's Chancel Flowers

are given in honor of Lynne Williams, by Blaine Williams, "just because" and to tell her how much he loves her.

### WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

MDPC's 2018 Operating Budget is pending approval. This week's Financial Update will be shared this morning from the chancel.



**MDPC**

Loving God. Proclaiming Christ. Living Generously. Engaging All.

11612 Memorial Drive | Houston, Texas 77024 | [mdpc.org](http://mdpc.org) | 713-782-1710





**MDPC**

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church

# FIRST QUARTER FOCUS

Look what's coming up at MDPC!

mdpc.org • 713-782-1710

January-March 2018

**explore**

life  
faith  
meaning

**Tuesdays, January 23-April 10**

Learn more and register: [alpha.mdpc.org](http://alpha.mdpc.org)

Alpha is an opportunity to explore the meaning of life in an informal, fun, and friendly environment.

#### WHAT HAPPENS AT ALPHA?

A typical evening consists of a meal, a short talk about the Christian faith, and small group discussion. Talks cover a range of topics including "Who is Jesus?" and "Why and how do I pray?"

#### WHO IS ALPHA FOR?

Alpha is for everyone. No question is out of bounds and you are free to discuss as much or as little as you wish. We don't assume any knowledge of or belief in Christianity, anyone is welcome.

#### WHEN IS ALPHA?

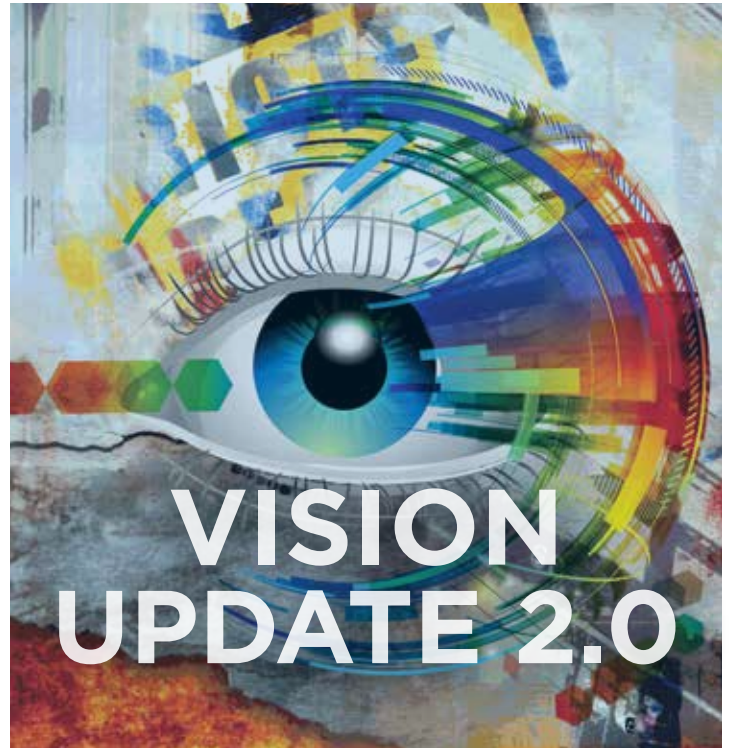
The next Alpha course at MDPC begins Tuesday, January 23. Bring a friend and come for a catered meal and a brief talk explaining the course. There is no pressure to return from week to week.

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on the Alpha Course, how to sign up, or how to help with the ministry, email Dan Aikins at [daikins@mdpc.org](mailto:daikins@mdpc.org).

MDPC  
Advantage  
**GOAL**

Alpha



## VISION UPDATE 2.0

Pastor Alf will lead a congregational discussion of the MDPC Advantage Goals, including a look back at 2017, and vision casting for the year ahead.

*Come and participate in this important time in our church's future!*

**Wednesday, January 31**  
**6:30 PM • Chapel**

Come early to enjoy Wednesday Night Dinner, served 5:00-6:30 PM. View the menu and more at [food.mdpc.org](http://food.mdpc.org).

Learn more about MDPC's Advantage Goals:  
[goals.mdpc.org](http://goals.mdpc.org)



# RENOVATE

JANUARY 23 - 25, 2018

HOUSTON, TX

The ECO 2018 National Gathering is in Houston this year, at Downtown's Hilton Americas Hotel. Many volunteer opportunities are available to assist with the conference.

Volunteers get free admission to the National Gathering on the day they work!

The needs are as follows:

**Transportation:** travel to First Presbyterian Houston to load conference materials for transportation to the Hilton Americas; also assist with unloading and setup.

**Needed January 21**

**Check in Desk Staff:** greet attendees, hand out badges and packets, and answer basic questions. (training provided).

**Needed January 22, 23, and 25**

**Check in Greeters:** welcome conference attendees in the hotel as guests arrive (training provided).

**Needed January 22 and 23**

**Session Greeters:** direct participants to their breakout sessions; staff ballroom doors and welcome people (training provided).

**Needed January 23 and 24**

**Synod Meeting Staff:** assist in the operation of the Synod meeting and in collecting voting devices.

**Needed January 25**

Volunteers can sign up at [ECO.mdpc.org](http://ECO.mdpc.org).

For more information on the National Gathering, please visit [econationalgathering.org](http://econationalgathering.org).



ECO NATIONAL GATHERING

## Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues

### Lenten Sermon Series

On Ash Wednesday, Pastor Alf will begin a Lenten Sermon Series on the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Saving Virtues. The first sermon in the series will be introduced at the Ash Wednesday Services on **February 14** (Noon in the Amphitheater, or 6:30 PM in the Sanctuary).

We're excited to announce that several artists from the MDPC community will participate in the 7-part series with uniquely painted compositions depicting each topic.

<b>Wednesday, Feb. 14</b>	<i>From Pride to Humility</i>
<b>Sunday, Feb. 18</b>	<i>From Envy to Concern</i>
<b>Sunday, Feb. 25*</b>	<i>From Sloth to Caring</i>
<b>Sunday, Mar. 4</b>	<i>From Anger to Faith</i>
<b>Sunday, Mar. 11</b>	<i>From Greed to Contentment</i>
<b>Sunday, Mar. 18</b>	<i>From Lust to Love</i>
<b>Sunday, Mar. 25</b>	<i>From Gluttony to Balance</i>

\*This is the MDPC Church in the City service day, and the worship and message will be presented on the bus if you are traveling to the Houston Food Bank, or in the Chapel if you are participating in projects at MDPC.

### Lenten Small Group Study

A team led by MDPC's Equipping Pastor Clay Brown has prepared a 7-week Lenten Small Group Study as a companion guide to Pastor Alf's sermon series. Your existing Sunday School Class or Small Group may choose to use the curriculum, or, you're invited to study on your own or join a specially-formed Lenten group. We hope as many of our congregation as possible will participate in this study to sync our hearts and minds as we prepare for the Easter season! To learn more, visit [lenten.mdpc.org](http://lenten.mdpc.org).



## Gary Haugen

CEO and Founder of  
International Justice Mission

**February 22 • 7:00 PM**

Join us on February 22 to hear one of today's most passionate voices in the cause of anti-slavery. Before founding International Justice Mission in 1997, Gary was a human rights attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, where he focused on crimes of police misconduct. In 1994, he served as the Director of the United Nations' investigation in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. In this role, he led an international team of lawyers, criminal prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and forensics experts to gather evidence that would eventually be used to bring the perpetrators of the genocide to justice. Gary received a B.A. in Social Studies from Harvard University, and a J.D. from the University of Chicago.

Gary's anti-slavery work has been recognized by the U.S. State Department, and featured in major publications such as *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *The New Yorker*. He is the author of several books, including *Good News About Injustice* and, most recently, *The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence*. Gary was invited to share the themes of *The Locust Effect* at the annual TED Conference in a talk entitled *The hidden reason for poverty that the world needs to address now*.

Watch Gary's TED Talk for a great primer before the February 22nd event. Quick link to the talk at [haugen.mdpc.org](http://haugen.mdpc.org).

This event serves the dual purpose of meeting two of our MDPC Advantage Goals: four dynamic speakers each year and The MDPC Justice Initiative.

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



## MDPC CHURCH IN THE CITY

A special task force has been hard at work preparing a Sunday morning of service to meet the MDPC Advantage Goal of serving together as a church body. On **Sunday, February 25**, step out of your comfort zone when the church leaves the building! Instead of our usual service schedule, we will meet at 8:00 AM for sign-in before boarding pre-assigned buses that will depart the church at 8:30 AM. To register or to learn more about the schedule and the service projects, visit [CITC.mdpc.org](http://CITC.mdpc.org).

Children 6 and older can participate at the Houston Food Bank; for those age 3-5, a parent is required to stay here at MDPC to participate in special service projects for kids and their parents. This option is also available for individuals with mobility issues.

Childcare is provided for children 2 and under at MDPC for those serving at the church or at HFB.

## 02.25.18







# Bake Cookies for U.S. Troops

This is a call to MDPC families to put on aprons, dig out their bowls and spoons, and bake! Each year, the Sewing for Missions group bakes cookies to send to our military that have an APO or FPO address. Our soldiers receive any gift with hearts full of gratitude - but it's the homemade cookies they really crave.

Put this on your calendar, and keep in mind that cookies can be baked ahead of time and frozen! Cookie care packages assembly is February 1. You can drop off cookies, or stay to help. Everyone is welcome!

**Thursday, February 1**  
**CLC 170 | 9:00 AM-1:00 PM**

Contact Pat Ikard with questions:  
pjikard@comcast.net, 713-303-1101



# KIDS' MEALS

## Kids' Meals Monthly Service Project

One of MDPC's Advantage Goals is fighting childhood food insecurity. Our Hunger Initiative task force wants to engage the congregation in ways large and small in the fight to keep Houston-area kids fed. In Houston, one in four preschool children goes to bed hungry - you can make sure there is one less empty tummy! Give one hour of your time, bring FOUR loaves of bread per sandwich-maker, and make sandwiches for Kids' Meals. That's all it takes to make a difference.

**2nd Wednesday each Month (Feb. 14, March 14)**  
**4:30-6:00 PM | Fellowship Hall**

Contact Julie with questions:  
hempeljulie@gmail.com



MDPC  
Advantage  
GOAL

## YOUTH Mission Trips

**Summer 2018**

**Middle School Mission Trip**  
San Antonio • June 3-9

**High School Mission Trip**  
Miami, FL • June 16-22

**6th Grade Mission Trip**  
Houston • June 27-28

Registration now open:  
[youthmissions.mdpc.org](http://youthmissions.mdpc.org)

## GREECE

*A 13-day Walk in the Footsteps of Paul*

Includes 4-night Greek Isles Cruise with Optional Rome Extension

Hosted by Pastor Alf and Shari Halvorson

Visiting: Kavala, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Meteora, Athens, Corinth, Mars Hill and more...

Travel Dates: **June 11-23, 2018**

Visit [greece.mdpc.org](http://greece.mdpc.org) for details.

A few spots left!

## Romp through the New Testament

with Rachel Poysky and Martha Moore

We believe that God invites us to experience the good life through His Word. Gather with others to seek God through study, prayer, and the sharing of community. There's always room for one more!



Tuesdays, 9:00-10:00 AM | MC 122  
[marthamoore@mdpc.org](mailto:marthamoore@mdpc.org)

## New Member Classes

**Discover MDPC With Alf**  
Sunday, January 21  
10:45-11:10 AM  
Gathering Room

**New Member Class Intensive**  
The normally four-week New Member class series is compressed into an evening and a morning.  
Friday PM & Saturday AM  
February 3 & 4 | Parlor

More info: [discover.mdpc.org](http://discover.mdpc.org)

## Harvey Aftercare

MDPC Women are hosting a gathering for women seeking hope and blessings. Guests will be treated to live music, savory appetizers, and desserts.

**Monday, January 22 | 7:00-8:30 PM**

MDPC, please invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers...any woman you know who could use some extra love in the New Year. There is no charge for this event, but please reserve your space.

Register at [newyear.mdpc.org](http://newyear.mdpc.org). Free childcare by reservation: [childcare@mdpc.org](mailto:childcare@mdpc.org)

An Event to Encourage Women Impacted by Harvey

CONNECT WITH FRIENDS  
CONNECT WITH JESUS

NEW YEAR.  
NEW BLESSINGS.

## THE MUSIC BOX KIDS' CHOIR

Learn about music and choral singing in a fun and worshipful environment. We'll put on seasonal programs, and even have a chance to lead worship on Sunday! All kids in grades K-5 are welcome. Sign up at [themusicbox.mdpc.org](http://themusicbox.mdpc.org).

**WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 31-MARCH 28**  
4:45-5:30 PM | CHAPEL

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:  
MELIZA GÓMEZ,  
MDPC CONTEMPORARY  
MUSIC DIRECTOR





The MDPC Sanctuary Choir is beginning preparations for its **April 15** concert. If you don't have time for a weekly commitment, singing in the concert might be for you! Join us for two upcoming workshops where you can learn the music and enjoy the fellowship of the choir. All youth and adults are invited.

**Saturdays, Feb. 3 and Mar. 3**  
**9:30 AM-12:30 PM**  
**Choir Room**  
 Childcare provided with reservations. For more info, contact Tracy Stidam at [tstidam@mdpc.org](mailto:tstidam@mdpc.org).

**Mardi Gras**  
**All-Church Lunch**  
**Mardi Gras Themed Menu**  
**Sunday, February 4**  
**Served from 11:15 AM**  
**to 12:30 PM**  
**[food.mdpc.org](http://food.mdpc.org)**

*Spring*  
**Girls' Getaway**  
 Gather for a weekend of refreshment, laughter, and hope. Sandy Schultz, President/CEO at The WorkFaith Connection, will be teaching us about the "springs to come" in our life.  
 The weekend will be full of relaxing and rejuvenating activities including making our own succulent gardens.  
 All adult women welcome, so invite a friend, neighbor, mother, or sister and we'll see you there!  
**Friday-Sunday, February 9-11**  
 Bishop's Landing RV Resort | Willis, TX  
 Cost \$150  
 Register: [getaway.mdpc.org](http://getaway.mdpc.org)



Christian Diaz has been on the MDPC staff since 2016 as a facility coordinator—but, in his native Peru, he practiced as a dentist. In the early years of his career, Christian regularly went on medical mission trips, traveling the globe, from jungles to mountains, to volunteer his time and expertise. In early 2017, a year since his arrival at MDPC and almost four years since his last medical mission trip, he felt his spirit tugged. God was moving in his heart, strongly enough for Christian to plan his first self-guided mission trip...

For Young Engaged & Marrieds, 20s & 30s

**The 5 Love Languages**  
 GARY CHAPMAN'S #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Looking for a marriage tune-up?  
 Want to figure out now what will bring a lifetime of love?  
 Ready to be in a small group together?

**Sundays, February 11-March 25**  
**11:00 AM | MC 116**

Details and registration:  
[fivelove.mdpc.org](http://fivelove.mdpc.org)

**Walking the Mourner's Path™**  
 TRANSFORMING GRIEF INTO JOYFUL LIVING

This Christ-centered eight-week grief program is limited to ten participants, creating a safe place to share feelings with each other and with God. Two trained facilitators will guide the group.

**Thursdays**  
**Feb. 27-Apr. 19**  
**3:30-5:00 PM**  
**Chapel Bride's Room (116)**

Register online:  
[grief.mdpc.org](http://grief.mdpc.org)

**JOURNEY to the CROSS**  
 A Guided Walk to Experience the Sights and Sounds of Holy Week  
**Good Friday, March 30**  
 Tours begin in the Chapel at 9:30 AM  
 Last tour at 11:00 AM  
 Register to receive a tour time:  
[journey.mdpc.org](http://journey.mdpc.org)

**JUNIOR JOURNEY to the CROSS**  
 Preschoolers and their parents are invited to experience Junior Journey to the Cross!  
**Open 9:30-11:30 AM**  
 Come anytime!

Contact Alicia Boykin with questions:  
[aboykin@mdpc.org](mailto:aboykin@mdpc.org)  
 or 713-490-9261

Christian, who grew up in Lima, Peru, compares the city to Los Angeles. Like LA, it has its "Beverly Hills," the beautiful coastal city center that all the tourists visited; and it has its barrios and outer wards of poverty. One of the latter, *Villa el*

*Salvador*, is known for its extreme poverty, street violence, and drug issues. This is the area Christian chose to target.

Through his old friend Willy, Christian was connected to Pastor Elías Hurtado Junco, who leads a Villa el Salvador church called Pastor Divino. The church ministers to about 490 children, ages 3 to 17. Three days per week, each of the kids spend the morning or the afternoon at Divino, depending on his or her school schedule. They half of their day being tutored, and are fed lunch.

While helping the children along academically, Pastor Junco and his 22 adult volunteers work hard to also instill strong Christian values. These kids spend every day surrounded by the influence of the street – drugs, gangs, and the promise of





easy money. Pastor Junco has a very specific goal for Divino Church: “To build a new generation of love, obedience, and service.” He recognizes that keeping the next generation safe, strong, and Christ-centered requires today’s adults to commit to shepherding the children, and he works to equip and encourage his congregation in the effort.

Christian arrived in Peru armed with \$1600.00 in donations from MDPC staff, ministries, and members, plus savings out of his own pocket. He and his team of four – two friends from dental school and Mom and Dad Diaz – visited Lima’s downtown market to pick up supplies like toothbrushes and tiny toys (aka, motivation for the kids to sit through a cleaning!).

Once at Divino, the dental mission team set up their week-long operation in the church’s chapel. Each day was much the same: The team would first speak to a group of kids about the importance of dental hygiene, proper brushing, and daily tooth care. Then Christian’s friend Willy would lead a devotional or Bible lesson, and after that the dental visits would begin. The three dentists had to work quickly to see each of the 100 children that lined up each day! Older kids got cleanings, and everyone got a fluoride treatment to prevent future cavities.



After everyone for the day was seen, the kids were given their promised toys. “You can’t give out the prizes before,” noted Christian, “or there’s chaos.” The group would gather to sing hymns and Peruvian songs, and more stories would be shared of Christ’s saving grace. The team, staff, and children had lunch together each day, enjoying *aji de gallina* or other regional specialties. Simple food, but wholesome, filling, and frequently the only meal the kids would eat that day.

Christian returned from the trip satisfied with their work, but eager to do more. His concern for the needs of Pastor Divino is evident in all his stories and in the photos he shared: the roof leaks but corrugated plastic is expensive; books and school supplies are unavailable for local children; part of the church’s third floor is quite simply *gone* - the roof over that portion was destroyed, and the pillars have become rubble. This first trip was just the beginning, and he will visit again, of that Christian is certain. With God’s grace and the generosity of Christian’s friends, each time will touch more lives...and more teeth.

*written by Eva Kaminski Shaw, Associate Director Communications*



## LENTEN & EASTER SCHEDULE

Ash Wednesday Services	February 14	Noon 6:30 PM	Amphitheater Sanctuary
The Spoken Word	March 26-29	Begins at 6:00 AM	Chapel
Maundy Thursday Service	March 29	7:00 PM	Chapel
Good Friday Service	March 30	Noon	Sanctuary
Easter Morning Services	April 1	7:00 AM 8:15, 9:45, & 11:15 AM	Courtyard Sanctuary

## The Seasons of Our Lives

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11a  
Alf Halvorson preaching

This is a stand-alone sermon to get our heads around the beginning of another year. 2018 is upon us; can you believe it? In one sense, the new month and year are just a week or so ahead of the previous ones. And in another sense, there is a fresh start, and a chance to begin again with God and others. John Maxwell, a retired pastor who writes a great deal about leadership, pens that “You will never change your life until you change something you do daily.” The secret of success (and faithfulness) is found in our daily routines.

1. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11a. As you look back on the four quarters of last year, what seasons or appointed times using the language of Ecclesiastes 3 did you go through individually and as a family? What do you think we went through as a church? As a community? As a global community?
2. It looks to me, in each pairing, that there is a taking on and a giving up; or to put the dichotomies in other terms, a building up and a tearing down, a positive and a negative, an adding and a subtracting, a creating and a destroying. How can both be of God? Share some examples from your life or from our world.
3. There are some difficult seasons: *a time to kill* (vs. 3); *a time to mourn* (vs. 4); *a time to lose* (vs. 6); *a time to keep silence* (vs. 7); *a time to hate and a time for war* (vs. 8). Is this prescriptive—or descriptive? In other words, does God force these on us as God’s will, or do humans go through these times because of sin and brokenness?
4. Take “a time to hate” for example. Proverbs 6:16 says, “*There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testified falsely, and one who sows discord in a family.*” Which one or two of these statements must you join God in “hating” this season?
5. I talked in my sermon about the Jewish, Greek, and Roman periods of life. Which season would you say you are in right now? If you are having a difficult time with a family member or friend or neighbor, is it possible that they are in a different season and you two are somehow *missing* each other? How might placing yourself in their shoes or season help?
6. Verse 11a says, “[God] has made everything suitable [apt, just right, beautiful] for its time.” If you are in a difficult season, how might you see its beauty or apt-ness? If you are in a sweet season, how can you enjoy it but also empathize with those who are not in that season?
7. Seasons, by definition, change. In certain climates, the changes are radical; in others, the changes are subtle. How can you/we prepare for and even celebrate the changing of the seasons?

