

TONIGHT! Free Admission • concerts.mdpc.org



Gloria

Sunday, December 16 • 6:00 PM • Sanctuary

MDPC's Sanctuary Choir, joined by Houston Christian HS Chamber Choir and a full orchestra, present Karl Jenkins' *Gloria* and festive music by John Rutter and Gustav Holst, with congregational Christmas carols.



TREATS FOR YOUR FEAST! ORDER BY DEC. 16

Giant Chocolate Chip Cookies • 1/2 Dozen \$6 • Baker's Dozen \$12
 Christmas Cookies • 24 Asstd \$30 • Iced Sugar 1/2 Dozen \$20
 Pumpkin Pie \$12 • Pecan Pie \$16 • Cranberry Bread \$7

Pick up in MDPC Kitchen, Dec. 18-20 • Order at treats.mdpc.org

Mission Market
missionmarket.mdpc.org

Give the Gift of Hope!

**Sundays through December 23
 Between Services • Sanctuary Lobby**

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.

Plan your order by tearing off the form attached to this bulletin! ▶



Join us for
Christmas Eve

4:00 PM
 Family Service
 Visit the Nativity Animals in the Breezeway.

5:30, 7:00, & 8:30 PM
 Candlelight Services

christmaseve.mdpc.org



EPISODE 2
 GUEST: PASTOR ALF

Being Human

YOU'RE FINE. I'M FINE. EVERYTHING'S FINE.

Are emotions bad? Is counseling wrong? What does God think of us when we're anxious or depressed? How do the Bible and mental health intersect? Join seminarian Laurien Hook and Amanda Grace Caldwell, MA, LPC, in a podcast seeking answers to these questions and more.

Available now with more episodes coming soon: beinghuman.mdpc.org



Partner in Prayer

Partners In Prayer commit to praying for their fellow MDPC members and a mission partner, each day for one year. Pastor Alf's goal is to have 1,000 or more Prayers for 2019. Help make it happen!

To learn more and sign up:
pip.mdpc.org



MDPC Young Adults on Mission 2019

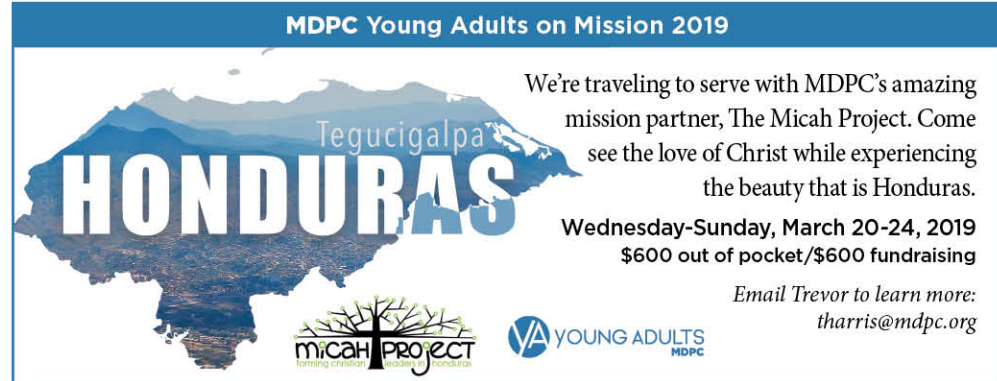
We're traveling to serve with MDPC's amazing mission partner, The Micah Project. Come see the love of Christ while experiencing the beauty that is Honduras.

HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa

Wednesday-Sunday, March 20-24, 2019
 \$600 out of pocket/\$600 fundraising

Email Trevor to learn more:
tharris@mdpc.org



December 16, 2018
 The Third Sunday in Advent

MDPC

A THRILL OF HOPE
The weary world Rejoices

Luke 3:7-18 | Pastor Alf Halvorson Preaching



8:30 AM BLENDED

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH Kim and Joe Dang
 *SONGS OF PRAISE
 *PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON Christyn Knoop
 GIFTS OF GRATITUDE Dave Steane
 MESSAGE A Thrill of Hope | Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV) Alf Halvorson

9:45 AM CONTEMPORARY

WORSHIP INVITATION
 LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH Kim and Joe Dang
 NEW MEMBERS
 TIME OF CONFESSION Hillary McMullen
 MESSAGE A Thrill of Hope | Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV) Alf Halvorson
 GIFTS OF GRATITUDE Dave Steane

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

11:15 AM TRADITIONAL

PRELUDE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Edward H. Wetherill
 WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP Dave Steane
 LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH Kim and Joe Dang
 CHORAL INTROIT *Personent Hodie (On This Day Earth Shall Ring)* arr. Vijay Singh
 *HYMN OF PRAISE *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent* #5; Vs. 1, 4 | PICARDY
 *PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE Amy Delgado
 *AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from Romans 8
 ANTHEM *The First Noel* arr. Dan Forrest (b. 1967)
 NEW MEMBERS
 OFFERTORY *Gloria in excelsis Deo (from Gloria)* Karl Jenkins
 MESSAGE A Thrill of Hope | Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV) Alf Halvorson
 *HYMN OF RESPONSE *O Little Town of Bethlehem* #44; Vs. 4 | St. Louis
 POSTLUDE *Shepherd's Noel* J. Wayne Kerr (b. 1957)

Musicians in this service: Charles Hausmann, conductor; Kathryn White, organ; Sanctuary Choir; Guest Choir: Houston Christian High School Chamber Choir; Mark Bailey, Director

* Please stand if able.

CCLI # 182374

MDPC NEW MEMBERS

Today we are so happy to introduce these 11 new members of the MDPC family! Learn a little more about each in the brief bios below, and join us in warmly welcoming them to MDPC.



Lane and Leslie Alexander are the parents of Haley (11) and Jacob (7). Lane works for Chevron as a Finance Manager. Leslie is a CPA and a homemaker. Lane enjoys playing golf in his free time. Leslie volunteers at their kids' schools every week. They both enjoy traveling their kids' sports and spending time with family and friends.



Morris and Mary Burkwall are the parents of three adult children and their spouses and have three grandchildren. Morris spent 30 years at Quaker Oats in Barrington, Illinois, where he conducted food research. Morris and Mary retired to Michigan for five years, then moved to Conroe for 15 years and were active members at First Presbyterian Church of Conroe. Morris served as an elder and church clerk and Mary served for many years in the church choir. They both loved playing in the bell choir. They are now living at Eagle's Trace Retirement Community.



Chris and Jennifer Fernelius are the parents of two sons, Harrison (18) and Henry (16). Chris works at Thomson Reuters in Legal Managed Services. Jennifer works for MDPC Outreach Partner, Stoney Creek Ranch. They are grateful to lifelong friends, Mike and Laura Benes, for introducing them to MDPC.



Bernadette Loweree is the MDPC Chef and Director of Food Services. She enjoys traveling, scuba, and spending time with family and friends. Bernadette loves helping others through retreats and finding ways to encounter Jesus.



David McBrayer has one adult daughter. He is a retired transportation planning consultant. David lost his wife to Alzheimer's last year and then moved to Eagle's Trace Retirement Community and began worshipping at MDPC and is now happy to make this his church home. David enjoyed traveling as part of his working career. He also enjoys music, photography, woodworking, writing, and reading. He is proud to be a military veteran (USNR).



Tom and Amanda Seiler are the parents of an adult daughter, Lauren Rodriguez, and her husband, Aaron. They have two grandsons, Bennett (6) and Holden (3). Both Tom and Amanda are retired. Tom from a large oil company and Amanda from a non-profit company—together they balanced each other out. They both have really enjoyed volunteering in MDPC Food Ministries over the past several years. Tom has been an avid collector of pop culture since he was young and now has turned his collection into an eBay business. He loves sharing his passions with his son-in-law and grandsons. Amanda has been very involved with organizing neighborhood events, and loves bringing their community together.



Karen White is a native Houstonian who has been in the energy business for over 30 years. She is a former member of MDPC. Karen is happy to be coming home and is ready to serve here again.

New Member Service Day at THE AMAZING PLACE

New Member Classes end with a Saturday spent serving in the community. This time, they visited long-time MDPC ministry partner, The Amazing Place, to decorate their facilities for Christmas!

The Amazing Place is an interactive, affirming, state-of-the-art daytime wellness center for adults with mild to moderate memory loss. Its programs serve participants age 51 to 98 who suffer from Alzheimer's or related dementia, and their care-giving families.

amazingplacehouston.org



IS IT TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN MDPC?

DISCOVER MDPC WITH ALF

Want to know more about MDPC? Thinking about membership? Discover MDPC is a brief informational meeting about who we are and how we operate, within our walls and out in the world. No commitment required! Learn what it means to be part of our faith community.

Sunday, January 27 | 10:45-11:10 AM | Gathering Room

NEXT NEW MEMBER CLASS (CONDENSED FORMAT)

If you are interested in membership, or in becoming a Christian, any of our pastors would love to meet you and discuss your questions! Taught by our Pastors and Elders, the class includes an outreach service project. This session is an "Intensive," condensing the normally four-Sunday course into one Friday evening and one Saturday morning.

February 1-2 (Friday PM & Saturday AM) | MDPC Parlor

Visit membership.mdpc.org to register for the next New Member Class.

Contact Diann Turet with questions: dturet@mdpc.org, 713-490-9553

HAPPENING AT MDPC

Welcome Home, College Students!

You did it! Now that finals are over, take a load off and reconnect with your friends at church. Each Sunday you're invited up to the young adult space for breakfast tacos (10:45-11) and faith discussions/bible study (11-Noon), upstairs overlooking the Sanctuary Courtyard. Follow the signs or text Trevor Harris (713-446-8388). You know he's been eagerly awaiting this moment.

Theology On Tap: BEER & HYMNS

Young Adults (20s & 30s), join us at St. Arnold's for craft beer, food, Christmas pub trivia, and a sing-a-long, TOT style. Panelists will present mini theology lessons from Christmas songs we all know and love. **Tuesday, Dec 18 | \$5 gets you craft beer & food 7:00-9:00 PM | St. Arnold's Brewery Tap Room** facebook.com/theologyontaphouston

Celebrate Teachers

Help MDPC celebrate the wonderful teachers and staff of Piney Point Elementary at Christmas! Bring 2-4 dozen homemade goodies (in a disposable container), or a gift card, or a monetary donation for a gift card to the MDPC Front Office by 5:00 PM, December 19. Contact Chris Gehrman: chrishgerman@gmail.com, 713-410-9872

Women's Backpacking Trip Summer 2019 * Colorado

"A change of pace plus a change of place equals a change of perspective." There's something transformational about getting away from city life for a wilderness adventure with a community of women from church. For five days we'll carry all our supplies up and over a mountain, sharing life stories, devotional times with God, campfire meals, and majestic views. Led by Beth Case and Christyn Knoop.

Details: wayforwardadventures.com/mdpcwomen

Toy Train Is Here!

All year long, MDPC's Mobile Unit travels to nearby low-income neighborhoods with low-cost or free necessities. At Christmastime, it hands out toys! Donations of new, unwrapped toys for ages newborn to 12 would be very much appreciated.

Collecting toys through **Tuesday, Dec. 18**

More information: toys.mdpc.org

The White Rose is in Memory of:

- Mary Lew Carnahan, who passed away November 12, 2018.
- Bob Bussian, who passed away December 1, 2018.

This week, please pray for these MDPC Ministry Partners:

Vita-Living offers lifelong services and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It maintains homes with trained staff and specialists. vitaliving.org

Westside Homeless Prevention in Spring Branch is for homeless families with children. The aim is for clients to achieve self-sufficiency and permanent housing. westsidehomeless.org

Faith Ministry aims to meet the basic physical needs of families living in poverty on the border in Reynosa, Mexico, and in so doing, it shares the love of Jesus Christ. faithministry.org

Married Life Prep

Couples are invited to join us for a four-week course taught by Brett and Kellie Hurst of Home Encouragement. It combines Biblical teaching with the best current marriage research. Open to engaged couples and those in their first 2-3 years of marriage.

Sundays, January 6-27 | 10:00 AM-Noon | CLC 171 Register: mlp.mdpc.org

Alpha Winter 2019

Alpha is a great place to invite people to explore faith and discuss the big questions of life. An 8-week series of interactive sessions that allows people to experience Jesus for themselves and make their own decisions about faith. Free dinner and free childcare.

Tuesdays, February 5-March 26 | 6:30-8:15 PM Info and RSVP: alpha.mdpc.org

Sign Up Now for REACH

Spring into fun and learning with rec classes at MDPC. There are two NEW classes - Guitar for all ages and Chess for kids - and most athletic, arts-y, and educational favorites still are available, too!

See more & register: reach.mdpc.org

Girls' Getaway: Spring is Coming!

Join us on our annual retreat for a time of refreshment, laughter, and fun! All adult women are welcome.

February 1-3 | Jordan Ranch in Schulenburg, Texas \$160 (includes all lodging and meals)

Details and registration: getaway.mdpc.org

B90: Read the Bible in 2019

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.

Classes begin **January 6**

Details: b90.mdpc.org

Love Christmas Carols & Festive Music?

Join us as the Sanctuary Choir and Houston Christian High School Chamber Choir with a full orchestra present Karl Jenkins' *Gloria* with highlights from past Christmas concerts and congregational carols. It is free and open to the public. Bring your friends and family!

Sunday, Dec 16 | 6:00 PM | Sanctuary

Learn more: concerts.mdpc.org

The End of 2018 Is Almost Here!

For gifts of check or cash to be included in your 2018 giving statement they **must be received by MDPC or postmarked no later than December 31, 2018.**

Gifts from IRAs or Donor Advised Funds **must be dated before the end of the year.**

Gifts of stock should be requested for transfer soon as they **must arrive in MDPC's account before close of business December 31, 2018.**

Contact Ava Caliendo for information on making a stock gift or to let us know if you plan to make one: acaliendo@mdpc.org, 713-953-2574

Enjoy the convenience of online giving: give.mdpc.org

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

2018 Operating Budget	\$11,600,000
Actual Income to Date (12/9/18)	\$8,596,984
Needed to Meet 2018 Budget	\$3,003,016

A THRILL OF HOPE

The weary world Rejoices

Luke 3:7-18
Alf Halvorson preaching

This is the third in our Advent Series using the New Common Lectionary Scripture texts to prepare our hearts for the birth of the Savior. We focus again on John the Baptist, who continues his sermon to the crowds who came from all around the region to hear him prepare the way of the Lord.

Last week, John introduced the concept of “repentance (*metanoia*) for the forgiveness of sins.” This week, he fleshes out what that repentance might look like in our lives; what fruit it might produce.

1. Read John 3:7-18 and then focus on verses 7-9. In those first three verses, what does John call the crowd? Why? Read Psalm 140:1-5.
 - a. What should they do based on verses 7-9?
 - b. And what should they not “rely on” regarding their hope of salvation?
2. Read John 3:10-14. The crowd asks, “What then should we do?” Then the tax collectors and the soldiers asked virtually the same question. What are John’s three answers? What topics or areas are covered by these answers? How might these answers help us be faithful this Christmas? What do they challenge us to do and be? To not do and not be?
3. Read John 3:15-18. By John’s previous answers, what wrong conclusion were many people coming to about John, according to the Gospel of Luke? How does John the Baptist redirect their excitement away from himself and to Jesus? What, according to John, are the qualities of the One who is to come, the One whom they really are waiting for at this time?
4. Verse 18 suggests what John said was “good news.” Why do you think the people would have seen it or heard it as Good News? How is it Good News to you? To us? To our world?
5. How might “the weary world rejoice” based on those words and actions? If you are weary, what if you put one or more of these attitudes or actions into motion in your own life? (Report back to your group next week what happened when you “walked out the message.” What fruit was born because of your repentance?)

