

New Member Class

The four-week New Member class series is taught by the Associate Pastors and Elders, and includes a Saturday service project at one of the organizations supported by MDPC. *Class will not meet Easter Sunday.*

Sundays, April 7-May 5 | Parlor | 11:00 AM-12:15 PM
 Register: membership.mdpc.org

Women's Dinner & Discussion Bible Study

Join women in their 20s & 30s for a home-cooked meal, a glass of wine, and discussion as we dig into the Bible. Sarah Stone tells a different Bible story each week, with added historical and cultural context, followed by a group conversation about the relevance for our lives today. Any stage of faith (including skeptics) welcome!

Alternate Tuesday Evenings | The Heights

Upcoming: April 16, 30, May 14, 28, June 18

Contact Sarah Stone: 832-605-8129 (text or call),
ssstone@mdpc.org

Second-Sunday Supper

Have lunch among your church family! Choose from Chicken Tandoori or Pork Shank served with saffron rice, tomato-stewed green beans, roasted cauliflower, and falafel (\$10/adult). Kids' menu of cheese pizza is just \$4! Meals come with a dessert, side salad, pita bread, and beverage. All are welcome!

Next Sunday, April 14 | 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

food.mdpc.org

Brain Boot Camp

Would you like to improve your memory? Want to learn tips for things such as remembering names and faces and recalling appointments and messages? This fun one-day class is taught by our friends at Amazing Place, and sponsored by Caring Ministries.

Wednesday, April 24 | 9:00 AM-1:30 PM | MDPC \$100 (includes a box lunch)

For more information, contact Sally Davis at 713-552-0420 or trainyourbrain@amazingplacehouston.org.

BBQ Fundraiser

Proceeds benefit dispatchers and police officers of the Memorial Villages Police Department. BBQ plate and fixings for a \$10 donation.

Saturday, April 27 | 10:00 AM-4:00 PM | MDPC

Sponsorships are available and appreciated! Contact Frank Lerma: flerma@mvptdx.org, 713-204-7467

This week's Ministry Partner prayer focus is on:

Cornerstone Family Ministries is a multicultural, faith-based nonprofit in Spring Branch that believes when parents do well, their children do well. It partners with churches to address practical and spiritual needs in a less threatening setting outside the institutional church.

cfmhouston.org

East Spring Branch Food Pantry is a small, completely volunteer-run organization. Located at Holy Cross Lutheran, it distributes food five days per week to families in 77024, 77041, 77043, 77055, 77080, and 77092 zip codes.

eastspringbranchfoodpantry.com

MDPC Field Partners Rev. Dave and Rev. Kim equip high-level Kingdom leaders to multiply movements of the gospel and mobilize the church for mission in less-reached and less-resourced parts of the world (particularly in Asia). Through their strategic mentoring, training and coaching, they help missionaries and national leaders develop their personal and professional capacities to serve God.

ALPHA at MDPC

Alpha is for people who would not call themselves Christians, and also for those who would but may still have big questions about faith. The course, dinner, and childcare all are free. Who will you invite?

Tuesdays, April 23-June 11 | 6:30-8:15 PM

Learn more: alpha.mdpc.org

Concert Series: Oratorio by Mendelssohn

The MDPC Sanctuary Choir is partnering with the Archdiocesan Choir of Galveston-Houston to perform the *St. Paul Oratorio* by Felix Mendelssohn. A Jewish Lutheran, this German Romantic composer was drawn to the conversion story of Saul.

Sunday, May 5 | 6:30 PM | MDPC Sanctuary

Free & open to the community • concerts.mdpc.org

Married Life Prep

Couples! Plan to join us this summer for a fun, free, four-week marriage prep course, taught at MDPC by Brett and Kellie Hurst of Home Encouragement. It combines Biblical teaching with the best current marriage research and is open to all engaged couples and those who are in their first 2-3 years of marriage.

Sundays, July 7-28 | 10:00 AM-Noon | CLC 171-172

For more information and to register: mlp.mdpc.org

Volunteer Opportunity

MDPC's Clothes Closet needs two volunteers.

Wednesday Mornings starting in May | MDPC

Call Karen Cole for details: 713-532-0966

Easter Lily Ordering Ends This Week!

Dedications in memory of and/or in honor of loved ones may be purchased online at flowers.mdpc.org or in person at the Front Office or Sanctuary.

Purchase/submission deadline: Thursday, April 11

flowers.mdpc.org

Global Missions: Vision Trip to Peru

Free Wheelchair Mission provides wheelchairs to the impoverished disabled around the world and shares the Gospel with each recipient. You will have the opportunity to serve on a wheelchair distribution team and witness as lives are transformed by providing dignity, independence, and hope through the gift of mobility.

Trip dates: September 8-14, 2019 (Approx.)

Registration deadline is May 15.

Contact Kelsi McCormack: kmccormack@mdpc.org

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

at 3/31/19

2019 Annual Budget \$12,240,000

Actual Income to Date \$2,519,655

Needed to Meet Budget \$9,720,345



Sunday, April 7, 2019

REFLECT

Take up your cross and follow Me.

I TIMOTHY 1:12-17
 Pastor Alf Halvorson preaching

*Please stand when able.

CCLI # 182374

8:30 AM BLENDED & 9:45 AM CONTEMPORARY

PRAISE & WORSHIP*BAPTISMS (9:45)**

Ella Everett
 Isabella Grace Gebhardt
 Reid Robert Gilley
 Rebecca Andrea Wu

Daughter of Ed Everett
 Daughter of Eric and Francesca Gebhardt
 Son of Scott and Lindsey Gilley
 Daughter of Jose Wu & Katherine Nguyen

***CONFESSION** | prayers.mdpc.org

MESSAGE**OFFERTORY+**

+ In the 8:30 Service, the Offertory precedes the message. Musicians in these services: Gisele Duque and Michael Middleton, worship leaders; Daniel Amaya, bass; George Heathco, guitar; Daniel Martinez, keys; Asher Pudlo, drums

11:15 AM TRADITIONAL

PRELUDE	<i>Choral in E Major</i>	César Franck (1822-1890)
WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP		Beth Case
*HYMN OF PRAISE	<i>Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation</i>	#417; Vs. 1, 3 REGENT SQUARE
*CONFESSION & ASSURANCE		Amanda Grace Caldwell
*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH	from 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 & Colossians 1:15-20	
BAPTISMS		
Will Allen Shindler, III	Son of Will and Rebecca Shindler	
Campbell Claire White	Daughter of Stewart and Kate White	
ANTHEM	<i>Greater Love Hath No Man Than This</i>	John Ireland (1879-1962)
OFFERTORY	<i>Mercy</i>	Craig Courtney (b.1948)
MESSAGE		Alf Halvorson
*HYMN OF RESPONSE	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	#280; Vs. 1, 2, 3 AMAZING GRACE
POSTLUDE	<i>Sortie</i>	Nicholas Jacques Lemmens (1823-1881)

Musicians in this service: Jessica Ferring and Ivan Ley, anthem soloists; Charles Hausmann, conductor; Kathryn White, organ; Sanctuary Choir

MDPC Worship CD Release Today!

MDPC contemporary worship created this album, with original songs by our own Meliza Gómez, to enrich your study and reflection time. CDs are available in the Parlor Hallway and Sanctuary Lobby (\$10 cash or credit card).

More information at worshipcd.mdpc.org.



Holy Week SERVICES at MDPC

Join us for one of our **8** worshipful and celebratory Holy Week services. Easter's **interactive Family Service** is perfect for you and your children.

Maundy Thursday, April 18
7:00 PM • COMMUNION SERVICE

Good Friday, April 19
12 NOON • MUSIC & REFLECTION

Easter Sunday, April 21

Sunrise Service
7:00 AM • COURTYARD

Family-friendly Service
9:45 AM • SANCTUARY

Spanish Language
11:15 AM • CHAPEL

Contemporary Service
8:15 AM • SANCTUARY

Traditional Service
11:15 AM • SANCTUARY

Portuguese Language
6:00 PM • CHAPEL

For what is your soul longing? Close your eyes for a moment, and feel its need... Do you need comfort? Healing? Rest? Do you simply need to draw near to God and feel His presence?

We're nearing Holy Week. Many of us will go to church at its start (Palm Sunday) and at its culmination on Easter, but spend no time with Jesus during the intervening week – His walk from Jerusalem to Calvary. This year, we challenge you to *immerse yourself in each day of Holy Week*.

It's natural to want to go "from the parade to the party," but, if we do so now, we miss what gives the Easter story its resonance. By walking that most difficult path with Jesus, taking up His cross and following Him, we acknowledge His suffering, His condemnation, and His death, sacrifices made on our behalf. Through these deeply personal and painful times, we meet Jesus face to face and fully understand the depth of His love for us.

These Holy Week services and events are offered in remembrance of Him. Please join us.

Maundy Thursday, April 18 • 7:00 PM

If you've experienced the pain of loss...the bitterness of unbelief...the sting of rejection...the ache of loneliness...the angst of anger...this Maundy Thursday service is for you. Come seek and experience Jesus' healing. Communion will be served, in addition to a variety of optional experiences. You are invited to participate, or not, as the Spirit leads.

Good Friday, April 19 • Noon

Good Friday will be an experiential service led by the Sanctuary Choir. Together, we'll learn how to take our hearts of stone – hardened by hurts or injustices – and release the pain to God. Find a new freedom and a new spirit in the saving work of Jesus.

Other Holy Week Events (See ads at right)

The Spoken Word • Communal, out-loud, cover-to-cover Bible reading

The Silent Word • Engage with your Father in a special prayer room

Journey to the Cross • An interactive kid-friendly experience of Holy Week

Easter Morning, April 21

Having spent the week fully embracing Christ's Passion, your Easter Celebration will burst with the joy of the Resurrection! A full listing of service times is at the top of this page.



Celebrate Holy Week by with MDPC's annual continuous, out-loud, cover-to-cover reading of the Bible. Sign up for one or more 15-minute spots at spokenword.mdpc.org.

THE SPOKEN WORD HEBREWS 4:12

April 15-18 • Chapel
Come to read. Come to listen.

THE SILENT WORD LUKE 5:16

The Silent Word is an interactive prayer room inviting you into closer communion with the Living God.

HOURS:
April 15-18: Open to adults & children 14+, Monday through Thursday, 7:00 AM-7:00 PM
April 19: Children under 14 and families are invited to participate on Friday morning, 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Learn more: silentword.mdpc.org
No registration required.

Deepen your Easter experience this Holy Week

JOURNEY to the CROSS
Experience the Sights and Sounds of Holy Week

Good Friday, April 19
Tours run 9:10-11:30 AM

A guided walk for children and families to experience the sights and sounds of Holy Week. Live scenes, elaborate sets, & interaction!

Register to receive a tour time: journey.mdpc.org

JUNIOR JOURNEY to the CROSS
Preschoolers & parents are invited to experience *Junior Journey to the Cross*. Open 9:10-11:10 AM, come anytime.



Who will you invite?

ALPHA is an 8-week series of interactive sessions that allows people to experience Jesus for themselves and make their own decisions. It's a great place to invite people to explore faith and discuss the big questions of life.

Tuesdays, April 23-June 11 • 6:30-8:15 PM

Alpha is **FREE**, including dinner and childcare.
Info and registration: alpha.mdpc.org



All members of the foster care & adoption community are invited to join us for Safe Haven Conference 2019!

Hear from mental health experts, ministry leaders, and foster care/adoption professionals as we seek to educate, encourage, and empower our community.

Saturday, April 27, 2019
8:00 AM-12:00 PM • MDPC Amphitheater • \$10

See speakers and register: safehavencon.mdpc.org

Ready to try Online Giving?

Visit give.mdpc.org



MDPC, we want to thank you for your radical generosity that enables this church's ministries and outreach. Your giving feeds the hungry, cares for the poor and disenfranchised, and spreads the Name of Jesus around the world. Many of you make donations through the Sunday offering plate, but there's an easier-to-use alternative - *recurring online giving*. Why give online?

- **It's Convenient.**

Get started by visiting **give.mdpc.org**. This link takes you straight to the giving portal. If you've never created a log-in you can do so now. Elect to stay logged in and your next online-giving experience will be even faster!

- **It's Easy.**

No more envelopes and no more checks! Today's world is going paperless, thanks to how easy (and green!) it is to use online bill paying. Just as you do for credit cards and other bills, you can make your regular and recurring gifts to MDPC through your bank's bill paying feature. **FYI:** This is the most economical method for the church to process.

- **It's Customizable.**

Set up recurring donations to occur either monthly or weekly, and you have the option of using credit card, debit card, or online check (bill pay).

- **It's Beneficial.**

Predictable donations, evenly distributed throughout the fiscal year, help MDPC match income with expenses, allowing us to plan our annual budget effectively and accurately.

- **It's Practical.**

Making regular payments helps you fulfill your annual pledge without any year-end surprises. Even over the summer months when many are traveling, expenses here at MDPC continue without interruption, so we are grateful for those who continue regular giving throughout the summer.

Should you have questions, or need help with online giving, contact Ava Caliendo at acaliendo@mdpc.org or 713-953-2574.

*These notes come from MDPC's 2019 Lenten Study. Visit reflect.mdpc.org to learn more.
It is recommended to read both translations (ESV & NLT) of each scripture passage.*

REFLECT

Take up your cross and follow Me.

Week 5: 1 Peter 2:1-10 (ESV & NLT)

Anyone who hears the Christian teaching *we are chosen by God through His grace by faith*, and then responds with, "Well, of course! Who wouldn't choose me?" seriously misunderstands both why one is chosen and for what purpose.

This teaching, often called "election" in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, can be caricatured as a form of spiritual pride and self-aggrandizement. We're better than others, and thus we have been chosen. We lord it over others because we have something they don't.

Yet, in reality, God's choosing of humans is never because they deserve it. God chooses the most unlikely people, while those we think should have been first on the list never hear the call for reasons known only to Him. David, for instance, was chosen to be king of Israel even though he was the youngest and scrawniest of all his siblings and was brought in from tending sheep as an afterthought.

Also, God's choosing of humans is not simply for salvation, or as one wag once put it, "God's fire insurance for eternity." Instead, when God calls people into His family, He also has ministry in mind for them to accomplish in His name, as well. As Presbyterians often express it, we are "saved both for salvation and for service."

This study takes one of the most powerful statements in the New Testament about our call as disciples, 1 Peter 2:1-10, and focuses on how our calling to be Christians is a calling to be disciples who love, serve, and minister in Jesus' name. Let's investigate how election and discipleship are connected.

Introducing: Getting Ready to Discuss the Passage

- How is your week going? Share with each other one thing, good or bad, that happened since you last met.
- Have you ever been chosen for something positive you never thought you'd receive? How did this selection surprise you? Describe how it made an impact on you.

Discovering: What the Passages Say

- Compare the two translations (ESV & NLT) for 1 Peter 2:1-10. What jumps out at you as you read them? Similarities? Differences? Overlaps? Things to pursue?
- 1 Peter 2:1 lists some ethical imperatives for those who claim to follow Jesus. What are they and why might they be important here?
- What analogy is Peter making in 1 Peter 2:2-3? Please describe it.
- Peter expands upon this analogy in 1 Peter 2:4-8 for both Christians and Christ. What are Christians called? How is Christ described? If you have a reference Bible, where are the three quotations from the Old Testament?
- What does 1 Peter 2:8 describe as the chief difficulty for those who are unaccepting of Jesus?
- 1 Peter 2:9 details how the followers of Christ are different. Call out each phrase in the first half of verse 9. What gives each phrase its "punch"? What is the result of such grace shown to followers of Jesus by God and what opportunity for service do they have?
- 1 Peter 2:10 sums up the message of the passage in a familiar quotation from Hosea. What does this summary proclaim about the people of God?

Exploring: What the Passages Mean

- Do we all start out in our faith journeys as "newborn babies"? If so, how? What does Peter say will be the source of nourishment for babes like us? How do we receive it?
- Jesus is the "living stone," according to 1 Peter 2:4. What makes this image so helpful in understanding who Jesus is and what He is all about? How is it significant for us to be described as "living stones," sharing (at least in part) in this description?

- Peter calls all followers of Jesus “holy priests.” What is the role of a priest? How might we act in this role with fellow followers of Jesus? With those presently outside the family of faith?
- One of the most theologically hefty terms for Jesus in Scripture is “cornerstone.” In a building, what function does a cornerstone have? What theological and spiritual weight does this descriptive term carry when used about Jesus? Why is it crucial to Christian discipleship for it to do so?
- What about Jesus makes it so people either accept Him or stumble over Him?
- When we become Christ followers, we are not just saved for the hereafter. Even more, we become part of what God is doing in His world with a specific role and task on our plates. How do the terms “chosen people,” “royal priests,” “holy nation,” and “God’s own possession” define and describe the ministry we have as Christ’s disciples?
- The “before” and “after” when it comes to knowing Christ is stark and revealing. Who were we before we were “called out of darkness into His wonderful light”? Who are we now? Does this new status make us better than our fellow humans? If not, what does this new status direct us to do?

Applying: Wrestling with the Implications for Our Lives

- One implication of this passage is we all need to mature and to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually in our Christian discipleship. Yet many who profess faith in Christ as their Lord (to use historic Presbyterian terminology) seem to have no interest in spiritual growth in any sense. Without seeking to be judgmental, it often appears many perceive both the Christian faith in general and one’s active participation in a community of faith as items on a list to be checked off rather than life-transforming beliefs, events, and resources. Why is this? How we can encourage one another, even the ones not so excited about it right now, to a well-rounded Christian discipleship?
- Another implication is Jesus is the only foundation for a life with purpose, meaning, and connectedness to God. This echoes other statements by Jesus Himself, such as John 14:6 (NLT), “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.” Yet our world offers many, many other foundations for life advertised as being equally (or more) effective, and Jesus is understood by many humans as a way, but not The Way. How do we follow Jesus as His disciples in such ways that lift up His foundation for life and inspire our friends and neighbors to know more about Him?
- Still another implication is every Christian has a ministry as Jesus’ disciple. To what ministry are you called? How do you recognize the ministry to which Jesus calls you as one of His “royal priests”? Does it float down to you from heaven? Do you figure it out by some trial and error? Do friends and counselors provide helpful advice? Some or all of the above?
- One final implication is the amazing, transformational power of God’s grace through Jesus and the incredible difference His grace makes in a human life. Once you were not God’s person, but now through Jesus you belong to Him. Once you had not received God’s mercy, but now you have. Because of Jesus, everything is now different. How do you now treat others—friends and enemies—differently because of Jesus? How do you now spend your money and use your material resources differently because of Jesus? How do you now allocate your time and energy differently because of Jesus?

