

rightnow MEDIA

It's MDPC's gift to you!

10,000+ Bible Study Videos

Instantly stream biblical teaching to your Sunday school, home groups, men's groups, women's groups or youth groups. Resources from over 150 leading Christian publishers and ministries.

Real-Life Stories

See how real people just like you have dealt with adversity in life and encountered Christ on their journey to victory.

rightnow MEDIA

Kids

Just for Kids.

Whether at church, at home or in the back seat on a long drive, families with children of all ages now have unlimited access to an enormous library of entertaining and educational Bible-based content just for kids.

Look under MDPC Highlights in this bulletin for more information!

Christmas Music from MDPC!

His Light shines Bright!

You can download this exclusive collection of Christmas songs for free at light.mdpc.org, or listen to them through the MDPC app! Visit app.mdpc.org to download the app to your smart phone or tablet. The CDs (available at the Front Office) make a great gift.

▲ light.mdpc.org

▼ holiday.mdpc.org

A Christmas Celebration

Come experience festive Christmas music led by Meliza Gómez and the worship band. Afterward, we will have fellowship with delicious bites sponsored by the Fuente Community. See you there!

Wednesday, December 16
7:00 PM | Chapel

▼ adults.mdpc.org



Refresh your skills and learn something new at this drop-in session taught by experienced teacher and long-time BSD leader, Martha Moore. Bring your Bible!

Today at 11:15 AM | MC 122

SKILLS LAB

« How to Study Your Bible »

Part of the MDPC Bible Essentials Series



Martha Moore

▼ women.mdpc.org

Earlybird Registration Open

Girls' Getaway

Friday-Sunday, February 26-28
Mill Creek Ranch Resort | Canton, Texas

Gather for a weekend filled with fun, connecting, and good eating! We'll enjoy s'mores, a bonfire, shopping, a workshop at Paul Michael, and other activities! Rooming is available in two-person cottages.

Sign up by December 14, and pay \$85 (\$100 thereafter).



Women

Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2015



FIVE Prayers TO Prepare FOR THE Christ Child

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has looked favorably on His people and redeemed them..."

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,

to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the forgiveness of their sins..."

Zechariah's Prayer

Luke 1:67-79

Alf Halvorson preaching

Please silence all devices, and refrain from consuming food or beverages during worship.

MDPC HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas Eve Worship | Thursday, December 24

The Lord is come - celebrate with us! All services are in the Sanctuary. Candlelight services have a full choir and chamber orchestra.

4:00 PM | Children's Service, led by Alf Halvorson and the Children's Ministries Staff
5:30, 7:00, 8:30 PM | Candlelight Services, Alf Halvorson preaching

Poinsettias for the Sanctuary and Chapel

The poinsettias that adorn the chancels may be purchased in honor or memory of a loved one (\$8.00/dedication). These names will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Orders must be in by tomorrow, Monday, December 14!

Purchase online at flowers.mdpc.org.

RightNow Media: The "Netflix of Video Bible Studies" Is Here!

We're excited to share that MDPC now has access to an extensive new video library called RightNow Media! It has a huge library of faith-based videos that you can access whenever and wherever you want—on your phone, iPad, computer, or at home on your TV. Access exclusive streaming resources from Francis Chan, David Platt, Bill Hybels, Jen Hatmaker, JD Greear, Mark Batterson, Lisa Harper, Eric Mason, and more.

To request access to RightNow Media, email Janell Kelleher at jkelleher@mdpc.org.

More information: rightnow.mdpc.org

The Toy Train

MDPC's Toy Train will accept donations of new, unwrapped toys for children to open on Christmas morning! These gifts are distributed by MDPC's Mobile Unit.

The Toy Train will be stationed outside Children's Ministries through December 16.

Mission Market's Open

Come shop for the perfect gift and give the gift of HOPE!

Sundays through December 20 | Between services | Sanctuary Lobby

missionmarket.mdpc.org

Calling All Knitters!

Have you ever wanted to express your concern beyond using comforting words? Your knitting can reach out locally and globally through these quiet yet powerful MDPC ministries:

Knitting for Missions: Every Monday | 9:30 AM | MC Room 126

Prayer Shawl Ministry: December 14 (Second Monday monthly) | 6:30 PM | The Nook at MDPC

More information: outreach.mdpc.org

Use Your Business Skills: Newspring Business Plan Competition

Over the past eight years, over 100 MDPC members have participated as advisers to community college students, helping them draft business plans. It's a great opportunity to witness to your Christian faith in a secular world. Advisers work in pairs, mentoring their contestants throughout this annual competition.

Begins January 2016

For details, please contact Robert Westheimer at rwestheimer1@comcast.net.

MS 150: Ride with Team MDPC

The MS 150 is a two-day bike ride from Houston to Austin that raises money to combat multiple sclerosis. Ride with Team MDPC to fund MS research, build friendships, and achieve a goal! No prior cycling experience needed.

Training rides start in December! Join the team early to be ready for The Ride.

MS 150: April 16-17, 2016

Details and registration: ms150.mdpc.org

Parent Palooza 2016

A fun, FREE, two-day parenting fest! Come dig deeper with other parents in breakout sessions designed to equip you to be more effective in parenting.

Friday, January 8 (6:30-8:30 PM) and Saturday, January 9 (9:00-11:30 AM)

Register at parenting.mdpc.org. Childcare available by reservation (childcare@mdpc.org).

MDPC WORSHIP

*Please stand if able.

CCLI # 182374

8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

Dave Steane

*SONGS OF PRAISE

Here For You
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

arr. Redman/Maher/Reeves/Wanstall
 arr. Hillsong

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rick Myers

SONG OF RESPONSE

God With Us

arr. Ingram/Jordan

GIFTS OF GRATITUDE

Once in Royal David's City

arr. Proxy

MESSAGE

Five Prayers to Prepare: Zechariah's Prayer

Alf Halvorson

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

WORSHIP INVITATION

Michael Middleton and Tara Reynolds

*WORSHIP MUSIC

Worship Team

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Brandon Gaide

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rachel Poysky

GIFTS OF GRATITUDE

Dave Steane

MESSAGE

Five Prayers to Prepare: Zechariah's Prayer

Alf Halvorson

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

PRELUDES

Fantasia on "Greensleeves"
 Bill Lundgren, violin

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Dave Steane

CHORAL INTROIT

Holy Harmony

David Ashley White (b. 1944)

*HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels from the Realms of Glory

#22; Vs. 1, 4 | REGENT SQUARE

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rick Myers

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Angels We Have Heard on High

#23; Vs. 3 | GLORIA

ANTHEM

Recitative: Comfort Ye and Air: Every Valley Shall Be Exalted
Chorus: And the Glory of the Lord (from Messiah)

G. F. Handel (1687-1759)

Brian Yeakley, soloist; Chavdar Parashkevov and Bill Lundgren, violinists

OFFERTORY

Arise, Your Light Has Come

David Danner (1951-1993)

MESSAGE

Five Prayers to Prepare: Zechariah's Prayer

Alf Halvorson

HYMN OF RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#9; Vs. 3 | VENI EMMANUEL

POSTLUDE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

arr. Dan Forrest

OTHER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SPANISH SERVICE

11:15 AM | Chapel

fuente.mdpc.org

FIFTH SERVICE

5:00 PM | Chapel

fifthservice.mdpc.org

MDPC INFO

Coordinating Team

Dan Aikins | Interim Youth Ministries Dir.
 Mauricio Chacón | Associate Pastor for Fuente
 Brandon Gaide | Associate Pastor for Next Gen
 Ginny Glass | Communications & Media Dir.
 Meliza Gómez | Contemporary Music Dir.
 Alf Halvorson | Senior Pastor
 Charles Hausmann | Traditional Music Dir.
 Kristin Huffman | Associate Pastor for Outreach
 Brett Hurst | Relationships Minister
 Christyn Knoop | Adult Ministries Dir.
 Gena Kookon | Sr. Leadership Ministry Coord.
 Rick Myers | Associate Pastor for Caring
 Rachel Poysky | Children's Ministries Dir.
 Becky Riggs | Business Administrator
 Dave Steane | Executive Pastor & Head of Staff
 Kathryn White | Coordinating Music Dir.
 Karen Winship | Human Resources Dir.

Dave Peterson | Pastor Emeritus
 Gary Bowker | Pastor Emeritus

MDPC Foundation

*For information, contact Business Administrator
 Becky Riggs at briggs@mdpc.org or 713-953-2570.*

Ministry Partners

Pray for these MDPC partners working to make a difference in the lives of others:

WorkFaith Connection is a Christ-centered nonprofit helping 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

The Outreach Foundation is an independent Presbyterian global mission organization that enables the Church to proclaim the good news of Christ by connecting U.S. Presbyterian congregations with global Presbyterian partners.

theoutreachfoundation.org

God is at work in the world in unprecedented ways, and **Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship (PFF)** is privileged to help Presbyterians join in what He is doing. PFF's goal is to see every ethnic group have its own church, reflecting its own cultural characteristics.

pff.net

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

OPERATING INCOME

2015 Budget	\$ 10,500,000
Expected Income to date	8,095,206
Actual Income to date	7,343,577
Needed to meet Budget	\$ 3,156,423

Pictured: Your giving supports The Outreach Foundation, working in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon to provide refugees food and medicine.



MDPC Turns 60...

In 2015, we celebrate 60 years of faith and ministry!

Pictured: Charles and Beverly Roberts volunteering with MDPC Food Service Ministries in 2007. This fun and vibrant ministry would love to have your help, too!

There are a number of ways to volunteer, so we can find the perfect fit for your schedule. If you would like to join in the fun, stop by the kitchen and say hello!

You also can contact Janell Kelleher for more info (jkelleher@mdpc.org or 713-490-9549).

Please Pray

For these MDPC family members recently released from the hospital:

- Gaby Harris

The Red Rose is in honor of:

- **Emily Joan Knoop**, born December 2, 2015, to Christyn and Alex Knoop.

The White Rose is in memory of:

- **Jeannette C. Marshall**, who passed away December 3, 2015.



MDPC

Loving God. Proclaiming Christ. Living Generously. Engaging All.
 11612 Memorial Drive | Houston, Texas 77024 | mdpc.org | 713-782-1710

FIVE
Prayers
TO *Prepare*
FOR THE
Christ Child

Zechariah's Prayer

Luke 1:67-79

Pastor Alf Preaching

This is the third in a series on *Five Prayers to Prepare for the Christ Child*. Today we look at Zechariah's Prayer in Luke 1:67-79, but there are two passages that I talked about in the sermon that set up the prayer: Luke 1:5-25 (Zechariah in the temple meeting the Angel Gabriel and becoming mute because he did not believe) and Luke 1:57-66 (Zechariah and Elizabeth naming the baby at its circumcision).

1. Why is this context so important to our actual text? How do you normally, when you read Scripture individually or in a group, look for contextual clues before or after the passage you are studying?

2. I made an *observation* that "it was in God's house that God's message came to Zechariah. God shows up at the normal places where we are trying to be faithful." What are your normal ways to place yourself in the path of God's grace and direction? Do they need to change or expand?

3. My *caution* in the sermon had to do with Zechariah's unbelief—that it silenced him, caused him to be stuck, blocked him for a while. What do you think it felt like for those nine months when Zechariah was mute? Did he rationalize? How did he pray silently? Did he pray? How did he and Elizabeth relate to each other?

4. Have you ever had a time when you “blew it” with God and became stuck? There have been times in counseling when I have asked someone, “Has God told you to do something that you haven’t done yet?” only to have them say back to me, “How did you know? But I’m not going to forgive her,” or some other interesting response.
5. I shared a portion of the story of my call to MDPC. Share a story from your life, big or small, when you said “Yes” to God. What happened, positively or negatively?
6. Is there some invitation from God that needs your response now? This Christmas?

