



First Sunday of Advent, Dec 3, 2023

Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson preaching

**8:30 SERVICE**

**Welcome and Call to Worship** Rachel Poysky

**Songs of Praise** *God with Us / Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

**\*Prayer of Confession and Assurance** Laurien Hook

**Song of Response** *Holy Forever / O Come Let Us Adore Him*

**Message** **Joy on the Journey: [Philippians 3:12-4:1](#)** Alf Halvorson

**Communion** *All who confess their faith in Christ are welcome to the table.*

**Communion Music** *Emmanuel, God with Us Forever*

**Benediction** Alf Halvorson

**9:30 SERVICE**

**Meet and Greet** (In person / Online) Michael Middleton / Mitchell Kearney

**Songs of Praise** *God with Us / Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

**Moment of Confession** Mitchell Kearney

**Songs of Worship** *Holy Forever / O Come Let Us Adore Him*

**Message** **Joy on the Journey: [Philippians 3:12-4:1](#)** Alf Halvorson

**Communion** *All who confess their faith in Christ are welcome to the table.*

**Communion Music** *Emmanuel, God with Us Forever*

**Moment of Connection** Miah Collins

**Benediction** Alf Halvorson

Musicians at 8:30/9:45: Asher Pudlo, drums; Chris Boyer, keys; Uvaldo Callejas, bass;  
Chris Parrott, guitar; Michael Middleton & Sarah Fuselier, worship leaders

**11:15 SERVICE**

**Preludes** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* arr. Gilbert Martin (b. 1941)  
*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Edward H. Wetherill (1927-1990)

**Welcome and Call to Worship** Rachel Poysky

**Choral Introit** *Sleepers Wake (from St. Paul)* Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

**\*Hymn of Praise** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* #9 Vs. 1, 3 | VENI EMMANUEL

**\*Prayer of Confession and Assurance** Amy Delgado

**\*Affirmation of Faith** from Romans 8

**\*Congregational Response** *Angels We Have Heard on High* #23 Vs. 1 | GLORIA

**Anthem of Preparation** *The Yearning* Craig Courtney (b. 1948)

**Message** **Joy on the Journey: [Philippians 3:12-4:1](#)** Alf Halvorson

**Communion** *All who confess their faith in Christ are welcome to the table.*

**Communion Meditations** *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)  
*Once in Royal David's City* arr. Lorie Line (b. 1958)

**Benediction** Alf Halvorson

**Postlude** *Trumpet Tune on "Sleepers, Wake!"* Martha Sobaje (b. 1948)

Musicians at 11:15: Charles Hausmann, conductor; Kathryn White, organ

# MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

See more events at MDPC at [events.mdpc.org](https://events.mdpc.org).



Give Online

[give.mdpc.org](https://give.mdpc.org)



**Sun, Dec 3 • 3:30-5:30pm**

Bring your whole family to enjoy a petting zoo, inflatables, cookie decorating, games, crafts, and more! The Festival is free and all are invited. Please bring cans of mixed veg or fruit cocktail to support our food pantry.



**Sun, Dec 3 • 6-7:30pm**

With a 33-piece orchestra, the Sanctuary Choir performs *Magnificat* by Taylor Scott Davis, as well as popular carols with the congregation. Free admission and child-care. Learn more at [concerts.mdpc.org](https://concerts.mdpc.org).



**Open til the Dec 24 morning service**

Give the gift of hope when you purchase cards in honor of friends and loved ones! Learn which partners you can support and how it works: [missionmarket.mdpc.org](https://missionmarket.mdpc.org)



**Dec 1-25 • East Hallway near the Office**

All ages are invited to explore devotionals and Scripture-based activities designed to deepen our sense of wonder and our Joy on the Journey to Christmas Day.



**Tue, Dec 5 • 9:30am or 6:30pm**

Join us for the Women's Christmas Coffee in the Parlor or, new this year, an offsite Christmas Happy Hour! Learn more and RSVP for Happy Hour (no need to RSVP for the Coffee) at [coffee.mdpc.org](https://coffee.mdpc.org).



**Thu, Dec 7 • 6pm • Sanctuary Courtyard**

*NOTE: The recent Rooted newsletter listed the incorrect date.* This is an evening carved out of the Christmas season for the merry...and the "not so merry." Learn more at [blue.mdpc.org](https://blue.mdpc.org).



**Donate a Box through Dec 25**

Donate to boxes packed at MDPC or pack your own! They're huge blessings to sailors far from home and onboard for months at a time. Details at [seafarers.mdpc.org](https://seafarers.mdpc.org).



**\$9/dedication • Order by Dec 15**

The poinsettias adorning the chancel may be purchased in honor or memory of a loved one. To order and make your dedication, visit [flowers.mdpc.org](https://flowers.mdpc.org).



**Accepting Donations through Dec 10**

Thank you to everyone who has given to the Toy Train (benefitting FORGE for families)! If you'd like to participate, drop new, unwrapped toys for boys and girls ages 6-12 in the Toy Train by next Sun, Dec 10.

## Births and Deaths

**Sammy Booher** passed away on Oct 28.

**Frank Harrison Richardson** passed away on Oct 7.

More information at [memorials.mdpc.org](https://memorials.mdpc.org).

## Financial Update as of Nov 26, 2023

2023 Annual Budget	\$ 13,175,787
Income to Date	\$9,877,047
Needed to Meet Budget	\$3,298,740

**MDPC** 11612 Memorial Drive, 77024 | [mdpc.org](https://mdpc.org) | 713-782-1710

## Joy on the Journey • [Philippians 3:12-4:1 \(NRSV\)](#)

This is the ninth in our series on Paul's Letter to the Church in Phillipi and, with this being the first Sunday in Advent 2023, we wait and hope, prepare and anticipate the Coming of Christ. We rehearse His First Coming to be ready for His Second Coming. And Paul suggests that, while we live in this "in-between liminal space and time of waiting," there is work to be done internally and externally for the Kingdom breaking in among us. But ultimately, "our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," as Phil. 3:20 exclaims. The Stoics lived in fear of the future, but Paul suggests that Christians live from the future (and thus have joy and hope.)

1. What are your traditions in your family regarding Advent and Christmas?
2. For Paul, a supreme goal for the Christian is "to know Christ" and "to share" in His death and resurrection. See Phil. 3:8, 10, 12, 14, 17-20. What does that mean for you? How do you know Christ? Does reading Scripture, or prayer, or worship, or service play a role in your knowing? And where is Christ still a mystery to you? I quoted Augustine last week: "You stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God as if He were you." Does that help explain this "know Christ" idea at all? In what way is it helpful?
3. In verses 13-14, we are challenged to "forget what lies behind in the past and press on toward the goal" in the future. What might you *leave behind* and what should you hold onto from the past? And how is "pressing forward," or our sanctification, a response of gratitude instead of works righteousness (or trying to save ourselves)?
4. In verses 18-19, Paul describes those who are perishing as enemies of Christ. Where is their focus and on what is their attention? Give some present-day examples of these *earthly* things. Where might the focus be re-directed, according to Paul?
5. I used Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) and his concept of "disordered loves" to get at how he believed he wasted too much of his early life on the wrong things or putting good things in the wrong place. How have you done (or do you do) that yourself?
6. In Phil. 3:20-4:1, what gives Paul confidence that followers and servants of Christ can stand firm in the Lord? Where might you need to "stand firm" this Advent and Christmas?