



Third Sunday of Advent, Dec 17, 2023

Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson preaching

**8:30 SERVICE**

Welcome and Call to Worship		Amy Delgado
Songs of Praise	<i>Joy to the World / Joyful, Joyful</i>	
*Prayer of Confession and Assurance		Clay Brown
Song of Response	<i>The First Noel</i>	
Moment of Prayer		Amy Delgado
Song of Preparation	<i>O Come, Let Us Adore</i>	
Message	<b>Joy on the Journey: <a href="#">Philippians 4:10-23</a></b>	Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	<i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>	

**9:45 SERVICE**

Opening Song	<i>Angels Medley</i>	
Meet and Greet (In person / Online)		Meliza Gómez / Sally Henien
Baptism	Frances Ann Sheets, daughter of Colton & Holly Sheets	Alf Halvorson
Songs of Praise	<i>Angels Medley Reprise / How Great Our Joy</i>	
Moment of Confession		Sally Henien
Songs of Worship	<i>Joy to the World/ O Come Let Us Adore</i>	
Message	<b>Joy on the Journey: <a href="#">Philippians 4:10-23</a></b>	Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	<i>The First Noel</i>	
Moment of Connection		Marcus Vajdos

Musicians at 8:30/9:45: Children's Choir, Director Steffanie Dean; Asher Pudlo, drums; Chris Parrott, guitar; Uvaldo Callejas, bass; Daniel Martinez, keys; Michael Middleton & Meliza Gómez, worship leaders

**11:15 SERVICE**

Preludes	<i>Strange Way to Save the World</i>	Harris/Koch/Clark
Welcome and Call to Worship		Amanda Grace Morris
Choral Introit	<i>And Suddenly and Glory to God from Messiah</i>	G.F. Handel (1685-1759)
*Hymn of Praise	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	#44 Vs. 1, 2, 4   ST. LOUIS
*Prayer of Confession and Assurance		Rachel Poysky
*Affirmation of Faith from the Apostles' Creed		
*Congregational Response	<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	#23 Vs. 3   GLORIA
Anthem	<i>A Little Child There Is Born</i>	Malcolm Archer (b. 1952)
The Lord's Prayer		Amanda Grace Morris
Anthem of Preparation	<i>Angels' Carol</i>	John Rutter (b. 1945)
Message	<b>Joy on the Journey: <a href="#">Philippians 4:10-23</a></b>	Alf Halvorson
*Hymn of Response	<i>Joy to the World</i>	#40 Vs. 1, 2   ANTIOCH
Postlude	<i>O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings from Messiah</i>	Handel/arr. Whitford

Musicians at 11:15: Jason Amos and Priscilla Salisbury, soloists; Charles Hausmann, conductor; Kathryn White, organ/piano

# MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

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



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



## Donate a Box through Dec 25

Pack your own boxes and return to MDPC no later than Dec 25. They're huge blessings to sailors far from home and onboard for months at a time. [seafarers.mdpc.org](https://seafarers.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)



## \$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).



## 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.



Candlelight services at 9:45am, 5:30, 7, and 8:30pm will have the same Christmas-Eve message by Pastor Alf. The family-friendly service is at 4pm, Fuente at 11:15, and the Portuguese-language service at 5:30!



## Apply Now • Begins in January

Has God been nudging you to do more to help people in need? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister. Accepting applications now. Learn more: [stephen.mdpc.org](https://stephen.mdpc.org)



## Sat, Jan 20 • 9-11:30am

Speakers and fast-moving breakout sessions offer tools to use right away, plus techniques for better relationships in the long term. Learn more: [dadpal.mdpc.org](https://dadpal.mdpc.org)



## Fri-Sun, Feb 9-11 • Iron Horse Ranch

Connection, gourmet food, and a chance to rest in the presence of God with others. Last year's retreat sold out - reserve your spot today! [getaway.mdpc.org](https://getaway.mdpc.org)



## Let's Get Out There and Serve!

Get to know your MDPC family while helping some of our local ministry partners! Mark your calendar and check out what we're doing in 2024: [citic.mdpc.org](https://citic.mdpc.org)

## Births and Deaths

**Robert Cagle** passed away on Dec 1. More information at [memorials.mdpc.org](https://memorials.mdpc.org).



## Remember Our Frontline Mission Partners

MDPC partners in local and global ministry truly covet your prayers! Find out this week's prayer recipients by picking up the prayer booklet available around campus or visit [partners.mdpc.org](https://partners.mdpc.org).

## Joy on the Journey • [Philippians 4:10-23](#)

This is the eleventh and final of our Fall/Advent Sermon Series this year. In this last part of chapter four of his Letter to the Philippians, Paul suggests in this thank-you-note-section that there is *joy* to be experienced through *giving* and *receiving*. Sounds to me like a very appropriate Christmas theme and thus relevant to ponder at this time. Enjoy the last few verses of what is probably the last thing Paul wrote to a church before his last breath.

1. What is/was your family of origin's tradition and practice regarding the giving and receiving of gifts? How, if at all, have you changed this practice in adulthood?
2. Read Phil. 4:10-23. What are the various component parts of Paul's thank-you note to his friends and brothers & sisters in Christ at Philippi? How does he specifically thank them? What is he grateful for regarding their service and friendship?
3. Verse 13 has been used by the Prosperity Gospel folk to suggest that God just wants you to be healthy and wealthy in this life and the next. Is that a faithful interpretation based on what Paul says right before and after this verse? What, in your mind, does the verse mean? I tried to share a better translation of that verse in my sermon. It is something like, "I can take in stride all things through Christ who infuses His strength in me." How does that paraphrase change things for you and your attempt to walk it out?
4. In verse 17, Paul seems to say that *he* did not need their gift, though it was greatly appreciated, but that *they* needed to give it; or, that they will get credit from God for their generosity. Do you believe that? Is Jesus right in Acts 20:35 where Paul says of Him, "In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'"? How might that apply in this season of buying gifts & receiving them?
5. How does Phil. 4:22 finish the thread started in Phil. 1:12-13? What is encouraging and profoundly hopeful about Paul's words here?
6. Is verse 23 just a throwaway closing phrase, or is Paul suggesting that the gift he offers back to them is Jesus the Christ? How can you and I keep that gift of *the living Christ* as the most important one for us, our families, and our world this Christmas? How will you nurture connecting your spirit with Christ's Spirit this Advent and beyond?