



Sun, Sep 8, 2024

8:30 SERVICE

Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson preaching

Welcome & Call to Worship		Christyn Knoop
Songs of Praise	<i>Everlasting God/Here for You</i>	
*Prayer of Confession & Assurance		Dan Aikins
Song of Response	<i>How Deep the Father's Love</i>	
Moment of Prayer		Christyn Knoop
Song of Response	<i>Great Are You, Lord</i>	
Message	Who's in Charge Here? Esther 1:1-22	Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	<i>Great Is Thy Faithfulness</i>	

9:45 SERVICE

Welcome & Call to Worship		Meliza Gómez
Praise Song	<i>Only King Forever</i>	
Baptisms		Alf Halvorson
	Sophia Grace Menard, daughter of Christopher & Caitlin Menard Elizabeth Valentine Eicher, daughter of Jacob & Lauren Eicher Madeleine Abigail Eicher, daughter of Jacob & Lauren Eicher	
Song of Praise	<i>Praise God (Doxology)</i>	
Moment of Confession & Assurance		Hillary McMullen
Songs of Worship	<i>Firm Foundation/Great Are You, Lord</i>	
Message	Who's in Charge Here? Esther 1:1-22	Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	<i>Great Is Thy Faithfulness</i>	
Moment of Prayer & Connection		Amanda Shockley

Musicians at 8:30/9:45: Asher Pudlo, drums; Chris Parrott, guitar; Uvaldo Callejas, bass;
Tim Hughes, violin; Michael Middleton & Meliza Gómez, worship leaders

11:15 SERVICE

Prelude	<i>Fantaisie in A</i>	César Franck (1822-1890)
Welcome & Call to Worship		Brett Hurst
Choral Introit	<i>This Is a Day of New Beginnings</i>	David Schwoebel (b. 1957)
*Hymn of Praise #138	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty</i>	Vs. 1, 3, 4 NICAEA
*Prayer of Confession and Assurance		Luke Funderburk
*Affirmation of Faith	from the Apostles' Creed	
Anthem	<i>Psalm 8: Adonai, Adonenu (O Lord, Our Lord)</i>	Dan Forrest (b. 1978)
Baptisms		Dan Aikins and Brett Hurst
	Bailey Paige Buck, daughter of Travis & Paige Buck	
Anthem of Preparation	<i>The Last Words of David</i>	Randall Thompson (1899-1984)
Message	Who's in Charge Here? Esther 1:1-22	Alf Halvorson
*Hymn of Response #263	<i>Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise</i>	Vs. 1, 2 ST. DENIO
Postlude	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>	arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953)

Musicians: Stefanie Dean, guest conductor; Kathryn White, organ/piano

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

See more events at MDPC at events.mdpc.org.



Give Online
give.mdpc.org



Sat, Sep 14 • 6-9pm

The Fuente community invites you to its "Night of Flavor," an annual multicultural celebration. This all-church event is free and all are welcome. nds.mdpc.org



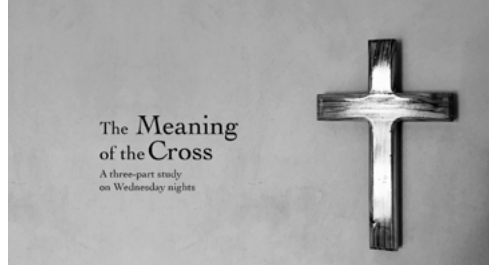
Tue, Sep 10 • Doors Open 6:30pm

Enjoy bites and an episode of Alpha, then join in the convo - or not! All beliefs and backgrounds welcome. Free food and cash bar. RSVP: alphalaunch.mdpc.org



Starts Tue, Sep 10 • 6:30-7:45am

Men's Life has been imparting wisdom and strength to men for over 20 years. Join us this fall for powerful conversations about what true strength really is. ml.mdpc.org



Wednesdays, Sep 11-25 • 7-8pm

What does the death of Jesus mean, especially in light of the often confusing Old Testament sacrificial system? Taught by Laurien Hook. Details: events.mdpc.org



Starting Wed, Sep 11 • 7-8:30pm

Great insights for Biblical interpretation come through engaging with the original Greek of the Bible. Learn more in this new Greek Reading Group! greek.mdpc.org



Sun, Sep 15 • 12:30-2:30pm

Pastors guide parents and children through educational, interactive experiences to learn about communion and baptism. Learn more at faithwalk.mdpc.org.



Tuesdays, Sep 17-Oct 29 • 9:30am

Get ready to dive into captivating stories and engaging discussions with MDPC Women's Book Club! Free childcare. Learn more and sign up: bookclub.mdpc.org



Conquerers. Not Captives.

Take seriously the Bible's assurances that, even though sin remains in our lives, it no longer reigns over us. Details and RSVP for this free event: speakers.mdpc.org

Join Pastor Alf's 2024 Challenge



Week 37 Question: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, comforts us, guides us, gives us spiritual gifts and the desire to obey God; and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word

[Ephesians 6:17-18](https://ephesians6:17-18)

Learn more: 52qs.mdpc.org

Financial Update as of Sep 1, 2024

2024 Annual Budget	\$ 13,723,677
Actual Income to Date	\$ 8,292,238
Needed to Meet Budget	\$ 5,431,439

Births and Deaths

Dorothy Clark passed away August 27.
More information at memorials.mdpc.org.

Who's in Charge Here? • [Esther 1:1-22](#)

This is the first in our six-week fall sermon series on the Book of Esther. The story takes place approximately 100 years after the Israelites are taken into captivity by the Babylonians, who then are conquered by the Persians. Darius, the Persian Ruler, allows the people of God to go back home, and Ezra and Nehemiah tell that story—which we studied a couple of years ago. But not all the exiles return to rebuild the temple. Esther's story is about the exiles who remain in Suza, one of the four capitals of Persia, and the winter home of Ahasuerus, the son of Darius, who we know as Xerxes, who ruled from 486-465 BC. His kingdom was the world superpower of the day and spanned the known world, except some parts of Greece. These exiles in Suza were a small minority, with little power, surrounded by people of different beliefs, different customs, and different ways. How do exiles stay faithful in a time like that? And how might we, called resident aliens in 1 Peter 2:9-12, whose home is really heaven (Heb. 13:14), remain faithful in our time and place, similarly surrounded by a more and more secular society with people of various faiths and agendas?

1. When, if ever, have you felt like an outsider? When were you a *minority* in a *majority* (different from you) situation? How did you feel? Where did you find peace, protection, and hope?
2. Read Esther 1:1-22, but focus first on verses 1-4. What do you learn about the empire that the people of God are challenged to live within at that time? Have you ever heard of a half-year-long party? What does this suggest about the Persian Kingdom?
3. Ponder Esther 1:5-11. What do you learn about this after-party party? Who is it for? Where is it held, and what are the surroundings for this banquet and the instructions for the guests? If you were the queen, how would you feel about the king's command? If Vashti appears, is it to her or Xerxes's benefit?
4. Wade through Esther 1:12-22. How does this "house of cards" begin to fall with Vashti's refusal to come at the king's command? How does Xerxes react? Who does he consult? What do they recommend? What is the decision and final action?
5. The author means for us to laugh at what happens. It is a ridiculous result: What you wanted to stay quiet or disappear is broadcast through the entire realm. What is an embarrassment to the king, that he can't compel Vashti to appear before him, results in him forbidding her to appear before him forever, which is maybe what she wanted in the first place. And if you must rule by force, you don't really rule. If the greatest human power turns out to be a charade, then there is a hint that power lies elsewhere. Where do you think power will reside in this story? The biggest question in the book of Esther is, "Who is in charge?" Is it the king? Someone else? Chance? Fate? Determinism? Or God? How would you answer that question in our world at this time? Did the last section of my sermon help you with that question? Discuss together.