



**South  
Mecklenburg**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A Service of Worship  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2024  
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

**We Gather**

**Prelude**      *Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn*      arr. D. Cherwien

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church**      Rev. Lindsey Odom

**Introit**      DIX

*Light a candle bright and tall  
For the Hope within our world.  
Hope that heard the ages' call  
As the stars and planets whirled.  
Shine within our hearts today  
Come, O Hope, to us, we pray.*

**\*Call to Worship**

Lighting of the Advent Candle – HOPE  
Laura Black and Ned Slagle, Maddie and Olivia

Reader: Faithful God, out of death you bring life. Renew us in hope,  
that we may be alert to the burgeoning of Christ's advent  
among us.

**All:      God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.**

**\*Hymn 82**      *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*      HYFRYDOL



1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
 2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
 born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.



Is-rael's strength and con-so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;  
 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long-ing heart.  
 by thine all - suf-fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.



**Prayer of Confession** (*unison*)

Rebecca Guzman

God of every season, as we begin our journey through Advent, turn our hearts toward you. Guide us into your realm of peace and joy. Teach us to set aside our worries, as we walk in faithfulness and trust. May the love within us be born anew. Help us remain alert, that we may respond to pain and suffering and notice the signs of abundant life all around us. Come, Lord Jesus; come to us now, we pray. Amen.

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Rebecca Guzman

**\*Response of Praise**


*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
 and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

# We Hear and Respond to the Word

## Church Family Moment

Rebecca Guzman

1. Today is the first Sunday of Advent! Here is a [video](#) that explains Advent in two minutes. Light a virtual advent wreath by clicking [here](#). This is the Sunday when we light the candle for hope. 
2. One of the signs of Advent is a star. Maybe you will craft a star. [Here](#) is a video that shows you how to make a paper star. You could also make a star with pipe cleaners and beads, popsicle sticks and glue, or just cut one out and decorate it! Hang your star somewhere this Advent to remind you to look for signs of Jesus.
3. Listen to a [readaloud](#) of the book *Waiting* by Kevin Henkes. Like the animals in the story, we too are waiting. As we wait for the coming of Jesus, we have to be aware and ready to see how Jesus is already working in the world. What do you think about waiting? What does it mean to wait for Christmas?
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a. What signs do you think Jesus is talking about?
  - b. What does it mean for redemption to be drawing near?
  - c. What is causing you to “hang your head?” What could help lift you up?

## Children’s Liturgy

Rebecca Guzman

*As the children four years old through third grade gather for Children’s Worship, the congregation is invited to sing (hymn no. 114, stanza 3):*

***Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.***

**Congregation: God be with you there.**

Children: God be with you here.

*The children will return to join their families following the sermon.*

## Prayer for Illumination

Rebecca Guzman

### First Reading

Jeremiah 33: 14-16

Rebecca Guzman

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

**Anthem** *Choral Fantasy on “Creator of the Stars of Night”*

M. Larkin

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Creator of the stars of night, your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.*

*When this old world drew on toward night,  
you came; but not in splendor bright,  
Not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blessed mother mild.  
Come in your holy might, we pray, redeem us for eternal day;  
All things on earth with one accord, like those in Heaven shall call you Lord.  
Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, evermore and evermore.*

**Second Reading**                      Luke 21: 25-28                      Dr. Whitney Bayer

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

One:                                      This is the word of the Lord.

**All:            Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**                                      Hope of the World                                      Dr. Bayer

**\*The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*)                                      The Nicene Creed  
Rev. Odom

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Offertory**                                      *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*                                      arr. Mark Hayes  
Laura Black, soprano

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming as men of old have sung.  
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter,  
When half-spent was the night. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,*

*the rose I have in mind; With Mary we behold it,  
the virgin mother kind. To show God's love aright  
She bore to men a Savior, When half-spent was the night.  
O Jesus, until we part From this vale of tears  
Let your help guide us Into the hall of joy In your father's kingdom  
As we praise you forever O God, grant us this  
(translated from German)*

As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at [www.smpchome.org/give](http://www.smpchome.org/give) or texting SMPC to 73256.

**\*Doxology** **Advent Doxology** R. G. Huff  
**Praise to God, the One who made us.**  
**Praise to Christ, the soon-born Son.**  
**Praise the Spirit, ever with us. Praise the Godhead, Three in One.**  
**Clear a path! Prepare the way! Advent leads to Christmas Day!**

## **Celebration of the Lord's Supper**

**Invitation to the Table** Dr. Bayer

**Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer** Rev. Odom

One: The Lord be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**Many: We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise . . .**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**The Words of Institution** Dr. Bayer, Rev. Odom

### **The Bread and the Cup**

*You are invited to come forward (see diagram), take the elements, and return to your seat. Remove the wafer on the bottom of the cup before opening the juice. If you are not able to come forward, you will be served at your seat.*

### **Communion of the People**

**The Prayer after Communion** Dr. Bayer

## **We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 360** **Christ Is Coming!** UNSER HERRSCHER

**\*Charge and Benediction** Dr. Bayer

**\*Benediction Response** R. G. Huff

***Go, all ye faithful! All who know the Savior.  
Carry the message far beyond these walls.  
Hold forth the Christ-light. Conquer every darkness.  
Go forth, O Church of Jesus! Proclaim the One who frees us!  
Speak peace! Reach out in mercy, in kindness, and love.***

**Postlude**

*Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts*

arr. Albin C. Whitworth

## **Worship Service Notes**

### **Leading Worship this Morning**

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth & Missions/Outreach

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Ann Carney, piano

Laura Black, soprano

**Acolyte:** Reese Earp

**A/V Team:** Kari Case

**Ushers:** Andrew Brown, Bob Cushman, Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant,  
Frank Graham, Craig Parrish

**Welcome Team:** Blair Choren, Brooke Choren, Marla Choren, Michael  
Choren, Nolan King, Steve Williams

Welcome to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church! If you are joining us in person or online, are a first-time visitor, a long-term member, or anything in between, we are glad that you are worshiping with us and we want to stay connected with you. To receive our emails, sent on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, [nancy@smpchome.org](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org). Also, find us on Instagram: [@southmeckpres](https://www.instagram.com/southmeckpres) and Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian).

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members on Sunday December 22 at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, [nancy@smpchome.org](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org) or 980-265-2839.

## **Congregational Notes** (as of November 26, 2023)

### **Remember in Prayer**

- Jerrie Olson, as she is now under hospice care at her daughter Adrian Soderlund's home in Waxhaw.
- All those affected by the path of destruction left by Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton.
- All those caught in the crossfire of warfare in Israel and Gaza.
- All those affected by the conflict in Ukraine.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti, amid the chaos that has enveloped their country.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

[prayer@SMPChome.org](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org).

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## South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

8601 Bryant Farms Road, Charlotte, NC 28277, 704-544-0404

PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

[smpchome.org](http://smpchome.org)

## WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies outside between the sanctuary and chapel buildings. Come meet friends old and new! Registry pads are located on your pew. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps speak to someone you haven't met!

### THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today  
DEC. 1

#### Advent Devotionals Begin

Sign up to receive Advent Devotionals, written by SMPC members and staff, and illustrated by the children and youth of SMPC. Delivered to your email inbox every morning during Advent! Devotionals began today! Contact: Terry Gaines, [terryg@carolina.rr.com](mailto:terryg@carolina.rr.com).



today  
DEC. 1  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

#### BYG (Big Youth Group) and Christmas Party Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers

Join us for our Christmas party where we'll share an Advent Devotion, spend time in fellowship and decorate gingerbread houses and cookies. Please bring supplies to decorate cookies. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

tuesday  
DEC. 3  
10:00 a.m.

#### Handiworkers Group Palmer 104

All knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited. Meets weekly. All levels. Contact: Judy Jameson, [jgjameson@gmail.com](mailto:jgjameson@gmail.com).

wednesday  
DEC. 4  
9:30 a.m.

#### Conversations with Dr. Matt Brown McQueen Room or Zoom

We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. All are welcome! Contact Matt Brown, [matt@smpchome.org](mailto:matt@smpchome.org), for the Zoom ID#.

wednesday  
DEC. 4  
6:30 p.m. -  
7:30 p.m.

#### SMPC Youth Christmas Crafting at Legacy Heights Legacy Heights, 11230 Ballantyne Trace Ct., Middle and High Schoolers

We'll craft with the residents of Legacy Heights. Please bring your favorite (nut-free) cookies to share with the rest of the group! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

thursday  
DEC. 5  
7:30 p.m.

#### Making Space Mom's Group Chapel 206

This group meets on the first and third Thursdays of every month. Moms of all ages are invited to join us for study, fellowship and service. Contact: Allison Reeves, [allison.tarwater@gmail.com](mailto:allison.tarwater@gmail.com)

friday  
DEC. 6  
7:30 a.m. -  
8:30 a.m.

#### Friday Morning Men's Group Chapel 206

This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are reading the book He Leadeth Me: An Extraordinary Testament of Faith by Daniel L. Flaherty. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, [irelandcurtis00@gmail.com](mailto:irelandcurtis00@gmail.com).

saturday  
DEC. 7  
10:00 a.m. -  
4:00 p.m.

#### Salvation Army Kettlebell Ringing Two-Hour Shifts, SouthPark Mall

Join SMPC's annual tradition of ringing the Red Kettle Bells for Salvation Army! Ringers serve in groups of 6 or less in 2-hour shifts. Other dates include December 14, and December 21. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Terry Gaines, [terryg@carolina.rr.com](mailto:terryg@carolina.rr.com).





**saturday**  
**DEC. 7**  
10:30 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m.

**Women's Advent Tea**  
**Women of All Ages, Mecklenburg Hall**  
Join us for music, meditation, food and fellowship. Lunch will be catered by Chicken Salad Chick, and we'll also enjoy our delicious spiced tea. You're welcome to bring a special teacup or mug! Adults: \$15; Children 11 and under: \$8. Childcare available. Register on Realm by Saturday, November 30. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.



**sunday**  
**DEC. 8**  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.

**New! Adult Bible Study - The Symbols of Advent**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**  
Join this three-week study to explore the Advent symbols, such as the dove, wreath, and candle. We will explore what each symbol represents and the faith story behind them. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissawhite1018@yahoo.com.

**sunday**  
**DEC. 8**  
9:00 a.m. -  
12:00 p.m.

**Alternative Gift Market, Sunday, December 8, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Narthex (Online Shopping Available Now)** - Agencies will be set up in the narthex to provide more information on how your gift will help those in need. Shop in person on December 8 or online until December 25 via the QR code. Hard copy brochures are available in the Connection Center. Scan QR code to shop online. Contact: Donna Brown, donnamatt89@gmail.com.



**sunday**  
**DEC. 8**  
10:10 a.m.

**Center of Hope Desserts**  
**Drop Off Before 10:10 a.m. Worship, Narthex**  
On the second Sunday of every month we provide sweet treats for the women and children that temporarily call the Center of Hope home. Sign up at smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com

**sunday**  
**DEC. 8**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**BAM! Bible and Music**  
**Narthex, Children in Kindergarten-5th Grade**  
During BAM, children will sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. We end with a pizza dinner and free play time. BAM is a great way for children to form friendships with other kids at church. Please register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Conversations Around Race Equity (CARE) Group, Monday, December 9, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Zoom**

We are using the book *Anti-Racism As Daily Practice* by Jennifer Harvey to spark our conversation as we seek to broaden our understanding and learn how to work toward a more just world. All are welcome. Register on Realm. Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

**Lunch Bunch Winter Gathering, Tuesday, December 10, 11:30 a.m., Burton's Grill, Blakeney Shopping Center** - SMPC Lunch Bunch is an informal group that meets four times a year for lunch and fellowship. All are welcome! Please RSVP by Sunday, December 8 to Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com

**SMPC Christmas College Party, Sunday, December 22, 6:00-8:00 p.m., the Wheeler's House, 7019 Turning Point Ln., Charlotte, NC 28277** - SMPC college students are invited to join us for an evening of Christmas fun, food and fellowship! We'll have a lasagna dinner, salad, and decorate Christmas cookies. Please wear your favorite ugly Christmas sweater! Sign up on Realm by Monday, December 16. Contact: Debbie Wheeler,



## IMPORTANT ADVENT DATES

**Festival of Carols:** Sunday, December 15, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream

**The Longest Night Service:** Tuesday, December 17, 5:30 p.m., Chapel

**Christmas Eve Worship:** 3:00 p.m. - Family Worship; 5:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m. - Candelight Communion. Childcare provided at all services.



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go to  
smpchome.org/  
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