



**A Service of Worship
First Sunday of Christmas**

December 29, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

We Gather

Prelude *On Christmas Night* Noel Rawsthorne

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Matthew S. Brown

Introit *He Is Born* Harold Owen

***Call to Worship** Rev. Lindsey Odom

Leader: God of all creation, everything belongs to you, including us!

Many: Christ chose us before the foundation of the world!

Leader: We are sealed with the mark of the Holy Spirit.

Many: Let us embrace our inheritance as beloved children of God.

Leader: As forgiven and beloved children of God, let us set our hope in Christ.

Many: Let us live to the glory of Christ!

All: May our whole lives glorify God! Let's worship together!

***Carol 132** *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* IN DULCI JUBILO



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!



Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Odom

God of abundance and grace, you know us well, better than we know ourselves. You hear us say "Thy will be done" and "Use me, O God." And you watch us do nothing in response. Yet, you know us, you love us, and you forgive us. Impel us to sin no more and give us a more perfect knowledge of your divine ways in the world. Help us accept the grace and forgiveness you offer. Grant us the opportunity to celebrate this coming year with a faithfulness that we did not know we had in us. Make us more loving, courageous, and hopeful. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

***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. *The Last Straw* by Fredrick Thury tells the story of the wise men from the point of view of a camel named Hoshmakaka. He is old, achy, and cranky, but he finally realizes the importance of his task to carry gifts to the newborn baby king. Listen to a [readaloud](#) and consider what it was like for the wise men.
2. Make a star craft. You can use pipe cleaners, aluminum foil, or just paper and scissors. Hang your star somewhere to remind you to continually seek Jesus.
3. Try coloring a very detailed [coloring page](#) of the wise men. As you color, think about the story. Ask God to teach you something new about this story, or make it speak to you in a new way. You might be surprised at what happens!
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. What can we learn from the Magi, who sought Jesus? What do they teach us about seeking Christ?
 - b. Why does Mathew include the holy family's escape to Egypt in the gospel? What does it have to say about refugees?
 - c. Look back at all the humans involved in the story of Christ's birth as it unfolds—Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, the shepherds, Herod, the Magi. As God intervenes in their lives (in mysterious and startling ways), what does each person seek? As we begin this new year, what are we seeking?



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

Rev. Odom

First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

Rev. Odom

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

Second Reading Matthew 2:1-12 Dr. Matthew S. Brown

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.' " Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Road Trip Dr. Brown

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) Philippians 3:10-16
Rev. Odom

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies

behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Odom

. . . *(unison)* **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.**

Offertory

Still, Still, Still

Paul Manz

As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at 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 newborn Son.

Praise the Spirit, ever with us. Praise the Godhead, Three in One.

Clear a path! Prepare the way! Advent brought us Christmas Day!

***Prayer of Dedication**

Lindsey Odom

Holy One, this Advent season, use us and use our offerings to touch the world with the Christmas message, which reminds us that God is love, God is always with us, and God provides us with the gift of Christ to show us how to love. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Carol 145**

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



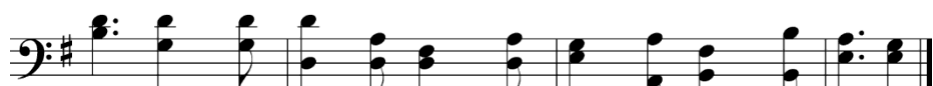
Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



***Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

***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

Angels We Have Heard on High

Timothy Albrecht

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

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

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Ann Carney, organ

A/V Team: Kari Case

Ushers: Bjorn Hansen, Jonathan Mangels, Evan Mangels, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson, Jim 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 worshipping with us and we want to stay connected with you. To receive our emails, sent on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, contact Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, adrienne@smpchome.org. Also, find us on Instagram: @southmeckpres and Facebook: @southmecklenburgpresbyterian.

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members on Sunday, January 26 at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor, whitney@smpchome.org or 980-265-2835.

Congregational Notes

Remember in Prayer

- All those involved in the continued hurricane recovery efforts.
- All those living with uncertainty in the Middle East.
- 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.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-735003. All rights reserved



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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

PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

smpchome.org

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2024/2025

Welcome to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church! We hope you will consider joining one (or more!) of our many classes, small groups, service opportunities or ministries. There wasn't enough room to list all the ways to get involved! To stay updated, please subscribe to our weekly email, follow us on social media, or go to our website, smpchome.org. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

STUDY

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, January 3, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206

This group meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month. They will begin a new book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, in the new year. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

Conversations with Matt Brown, Every Wednesday resuming January 8, 9:30 a.m., McQueen Room and Zoom

Join us as we discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. Contact for the Zoom ID#: Matt Brown, matt@smpchome.org.

Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, January 14, 7:30 p.m. Chapel 206

The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, January 16, 7:30 p.m., McQueen Room

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

Adult Study: 'Trust the Whisper,' Sundays beginning January 19, 9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom

Join Melissa White and Rebecca Guzman for a four-week discussion on Kathy Izzard's book, *Trust the Whisper*. We'll examine how small moments and choices can lead to a meaningful life. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

All Church Reads and Event: 'Trust the Whisper: Discerning Ways to Love God and Love Neighbor,' Sunday, February 2, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

Everyone is invited to read *Trust the Whisper* by local author Kathy Izzard and join us for a discussion and Q&A with the author. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.

SERVE

American Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, January 4, 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall

Sign up on smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Bill Ramsey, bill.john.ramsey@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, January 9, 9:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall

Meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

Bagged Lunches for Roof Above, Saturday, January 11, 9:30 a.m., In front of Palmer Building

Each month we collect and donate 100 bagged lunches to Roof Above. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.

Desserts for Center of Hope, Sunday, January 12, Drop Off Dessert Before 10:10 a.m. Worship

Each month, we bring desserts for us to deliver Center of Hope guests. Homemade or store-bought! Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.

Room in the Inn, January 12, February 16 and March 2, Sardis Presbyterian Church

Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Breakfast for Center of Hope, Saturday, January 18

Each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast for guests at the Center of Hope. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.

SMALL GROUPS

Handiworkers Group, Tuesdays resuming January 7, 10:00 a.m., Palmer 104

All knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters (beginners to experts) are invited. Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, January 9, 9:30 a.m., Big View Diner, 6637 Lancaster Hwy

This group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com.

A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, January 14, 1:00-2:30 p.m., McQueen Room

Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Contact: Dr. Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

Food for Thought Book Group, Thursday, January 16, 12:30 p.m., McQueen Room

All are welcome as we discuss the book *The Frozen River: A Novel* by Ariel Lawhon. Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.

International Dining Group, Thursday, January 16, Time and Location TBD

This group explores local restaurants on the third Thursday of every month. Please join us! Contact: Alice Tyler, rtr1317@aol.com.

Supper Circles

Supper circles meet monthly or every other month and are hosted at a restaurant or a home. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

CHILDREN

BAM! (Bible and Music), Sunday, January 12, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

BAM! is our Sunday evening program for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

SMPC Preschool

Registration opens January 21 for church members. New preschool families must schedule a tour before registering. Tours will take place January 9-13. Please contact Tammy Winchip, tammy@smpchome.org, to schedule.

YOUTH (MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL)

Big Youth Group (BYG), Sunday, January 5, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall

Bible study, small group time, good food, fun games and amazing company. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Coffee and Conversation, Sunday, January 12, 11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Amelie's,

7715 Pineville-Matthews Rd We hope you can join us for a fun youth coffee! The church will cover the cost of a coffee or drink for each youth. Please bring additional money if you'd like a pastry or lunch. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

MUSIC

Chancel Choir, Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Do you enjoy leading worship through song? Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

2025 OPERATING FUND CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thank you to the 271 families who have committed a total of \$1.17 million in pledges to the *Live into Hope* 2025 Operating Fund campaign! This campaign funds all of our ministries and operations for 2025. To date, 20 new families have made pledges, and repeat pledging families increased their pledges by an average of 7.3%. Thank you! There is still time to pledge via the QR code. Thank you to our Stewardship Committee and SMPC staff for their hard work on this campaign.



[@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian)



[@southmeckpres](https://www.instagram.com/southmeckpres)