



**A Service of Worship
Second Sunday of Advent
December 8, 2024
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

We Gather

Prelude *Zimbelstern - Prelude on "Prepare the Way, O Zion"* Paul Fey

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

Introit DIX

***Light a candle bright and tall
For the peace we wish to know.
Peace on earth for great and small
God's good news to us bestow.
Shine within our hearts today
Come, O peace, to us, we pray.***

***Call to Worship**

Lighting of the Advent Candle – PEACE

Jill and Don Page; Kelley, Matthew, Austin and Sydney Favreau

One: God of hope, Prince of Peace, You speak peace into the world
in the Way of the Christ child. Help us embody your peace and
live as peacemakers that we may be called children of God.

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

***Carol 88** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* VENI EMMANUEL
(stanzas 1-2, 6-7)

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from
 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple
 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
 Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Whitney Bayer

Holy God, we confess we prefer the crooked paths where we think we can hide from you. We'd rather you didn't examine us too closely; all we do and fail to do. Yet you are coming not to judge, but to save us from our sins and our love of sinning. So come, Lord, by crooked path or straight, to enter our aching hearts. In the certainty of your grace we make our prayer. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Bayer

***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, for those who are attending worship in person, we have the Alternative Gift Market. Click [here](#) to access the online version of the Children's Market if you are worshipping from home or use the QR Code if you are in person. Watch some of the videos and learn more about the different places that SMPC supports during this Advent season.
2. Our scripture readings today are from Malachi and Luke. Find Malachi in your Bible. Now find Luke. The Malachi scripture is



predicting what happens in Luke. There aren't that many pages in the Bible, but there are 400 years between these writings! Think about how long that is! For comparison, 400 years ago was 1624. The Declaration of Independence hadn't even been written! Think about how long that was for the people to wait. What do you think it was like for them?

3. Malachi's message is not an easy one. He's a prophet who is telling us that sometimes, following God will be very difficult. Think about taking a medicine that tastes terrible or getting a shot. How about putting on lotion when your skin is really dry and it stings?! Sometimes, we have to do things that are hard in order to be the kind of people that God wants us to be. Draw a picture of a time you had to do something difficult so that you could be better.
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. What is a messenger? What's their job?
 - b. When have you had to do something difficult that helped you get better?
 - c. What does it mean for something to be purified?

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

Dr. Bayer

First Reading

Luke 3:1-6

Dr. Bayer

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

Anthem*Every Valley*

John Ness Beck

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain made low,
and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain,
and all flesh shall see it together. For the glory of the Lord shall be
revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord
hath spoken it. Amen.*

Second Reading

Malachi 2:17-3:4

Dr. Brown

You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "All who do evil are good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Seriously

Dr. Brown

Hymn 463

FOUNDATION

***When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all sufficient,
shall be thy supply; the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy
dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.***

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*)

The Apostles' Creed

Rev. Lindsey Odom

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

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 *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen* arr. Molly Ijames
Ann Carney, recorder; Laura Schelhammer, flute

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 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!

***Prayer of Dedication** Madi Jenkins
Holy One, this Advent season, we wait in peace. For we have left behind us a time of fear and uncertainty and we raise our heads because we know our redemption is coming near. May our gifts be dedicated to help heal the brokenness of our world and to welcome Jesus into the world once again. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Carol 106** *Prepare the Way, O Zion* BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN



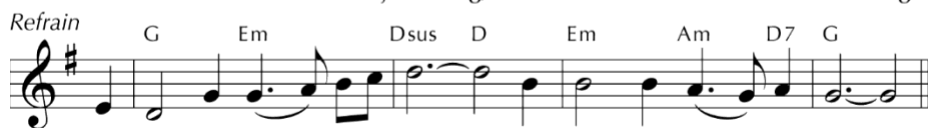
1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

***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

Toccata on "Veni Emmanuel"

Adam Heron

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

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 and recorder

Laura Schelhammer, flute

Madi Jenkins, liturgist

A/V Team: Brad Alford, Luke Estes

Ushers: Mitchell Davis, George Elledge, Mary Elledge, Judy Jones, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

Welcome Team: Kathy Galati

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, at 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, <mailto:nancy@smpchome.org> or 980-265-2839.

Congregational Notes (as of December 5, 2023)

Remember in Prayer

- Julie Boyes, as she recovers from surgery.
- 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.



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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

PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

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. 8
9:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

**Alternative Gift Market
Narthex (Online Shopping Available Now)**
Agencies are set up in the narthex to provide more information on how your gift will help those in need. Shop in person today 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.



today
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.

monday
DEC. 9
12:00 p.m. -
1:00 p.m.

**Conversations Around Race Equity (CARE) Group
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.

tuesday
DEC. 10
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.

tuesday
DEC. 10
11:30 a.m.

**Lunch Bunch Winter Gathering
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 - invite a friend!
Please RSVP by today, December 8 to Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com

tuesday
DEC. 10
1:00 p.m. -
2:30 p.m.

**A Caregiver's Journey Tuesday
McQueen Room**
Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Facilitated by Kathy Garner (Alzheimer's Association). Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

tuesday
DEC. 10
7:30 p.m.

**Men's Evening Study Social
OpenTap, 5010 Carmel Center Drive**
This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays every month and welcomes new participants! They are meeting for a social this month! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com

wednesday
DEC. 11
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, for the Zoom ID#.



Scan to see Advent
info or go to
smpchome.org/advent



thursday **Shelter Ministry**
DEC. 12 **Mecklenburg Hall**
9:00 a.m. This group meets monthly to fill empty Rx bottles with body wash for our neighbors at Roof Above, a men's homeless shelter. They are in GREAT need of body wash donations (please, no shampoo, conditioner or lotion!). Please bring donations by the church office, M-Th, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., or to their next workday. All are welcome. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

thursday **Men's Breakfast Group**
DEC. 12 **Big View Diner, 6637 Lancaster Hwy**
9:30 a.m. This group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com.

saturday **Bagged Lunches for Roof Above**
DEC. 14 **9:30 a.m., In Front of the Palmer Building**
9:30 a.m. On the second Saturday of each month, SMPCC collects 100 bagged lunches for Roof Above, a men's homeless shelter. Sign up at smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.

sunday **Adult Bible Study - The Symbols of Advent**
DEC. 15 **McQueen Room or Zoom**
9:00 a.m. - 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.
10:00 a.m. Contact: Melissa White, melissawhite1018@yahoo.com.

sunday **Festival of Carols - "Dreams of the Holy Night"**
DEC. 15 **Sunday, December 15, 6:00 -7:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream -**
6:00 p.m. - Join us for a special worship service led by ensembles of all ages within the SMPCC Music Ministry. Our worship and music will be enhanced with scripture and poetry written by Director of Spiritual Formation Rebecca Guzman. Childcare will be provided. Bring a friend! Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.
7:30 p.m.

UPCOMING ADVENT EVENTS

The Longest Night Service, Tuesday, December 17, 5:30 p.m., Chapel - A special worship service that offers hope and consolation for anyone who has experienced a loss of any kind. Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

SMPCC Christmas College Party, Sunday, December 22, 6:00-8:00 p.m., the Wheelers' House, 7019 Turning Point Ln., Charlotte, NC 28277 - SMPCC college students are invited to join us for an evening of Christmas fun, food and fellowship! Sign up on Realm by Monday, December 16. Contact: Debbie Wheeler, ERW7019@carolina.rr.com .

JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, SANCTUARY AND LIVESTREAM

3:00 p.m. - Family Worship - Lively, family-friendly worship for all ages. Messages are geared toward a younger audience but are relevant for teens and adults and will include a children's nativity! Childcare is provided for ages 4 and under.

5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. - Candlelight Communion - Traditional worship services with handheld candles and communion. We will be joined by the Youth Choir and Youth Ringers at 5:00 p.m. and the Chancel Choir at 8:00 p.m. Childcare for ages 4 and younger is provided at both services.



SERVE IN THE NEW YEAR!

Room in the Inn - Sundays, January 12, February 16 and March 2, Various Times and Opportunities, Sardis Presbyterian Church - There are spots open for food donations and volunteers to help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Tour Nourish Up's New Hunger Hub - Thursday, January 16, 10:00 a.m., Nourish Up, 901 Carrier Drive, Charlotte, NC 28216 (meet at SMPCC at 9:00 a.m. to carpool) - We will tour and learn about Nourish Up (formerly Loaves & Fishes and Friendship Trays) whose mission is to nourish our neighbors with food and compassion. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Donna Brown, donnamatt89@gmail.com

