



**A Service of Worship  
Baptism of the Lord  
January 12, 2025  
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

**We Gather**

**Prelude**      *Improvisation on "Shall We Gather at the River"*      Richard Elliott

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

**Introit**      *I've Got Peace Like a River*      African American spiritual

**\*Call to Worship**      Katie Gravender

One: We are marked as God's beloved ones.

**Many: God's love is abundant and overflowing for us.**

One: When we pass through difficulties,

**Many: God is with us always and calls us each by name.**

One: When we are discouraged and feel lost or alone,

**Many: God is with us, calls us each by name, and heals us.**

**ALL: Thanks be to God who is ever faithful to us. Amen.**

**\*Hymn 375**      *Shall We Gather at the River*      HANSON PLACE



1 Shall we gath-er at the riv-er, where bright an-gel feet have trod,  
 2 On the mar-gin of the riv-er, wash-ing up its sil-ver spray,  
 3 Ere we reach the shin-ing riv-er, lay we ev-ery bur-den down;  
 4 Soon we'll reach the shin-ing riv-er; soon our pil-grim-age will cease;



with its crys-tal tide for-ev-er flow-ing by the throne of God?  
 we will walk and wor-ship ev-er, all the hap-py gold-en day.  
 grace our spir-its will de-liv-er, and pro-vide a robe and crown.  
 soon our hap-py hearts will quiv-er with the mel-o-dy of peace.



*Refrain*



Yes, we'll gath-er at the riv-er, the beau-ti-ful, the beau-ti-ful riv-er;



gath-er with the saints at the riv-er that flows by the throne of God.



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

Rev. Odom

God, you call us to beloved community with you and with one another. But we exclude and reject whom we deem different than us. You claim us as your beloved, but we turn against each other in anger and hate. You liberate us and lead us in Christ's path of peace, but we build walls and do not faithfully follow. We have not lived as if we were your baptized people. Redeeming God, forgive our worldly ways. By your forgiveness, lead us back to your waters of transformation and love. Call us and claim us once again for the work of building your beloved community. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

**\*Response of Praise**

***Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, dead in the tomb  
with Christ our King; one with his rising, freed and forgiven,  
thankfully now God's praises we sing.***

**We Hear and Respond to the Word**

**Church Family Moment**

Rebecca Guzman

1. Today is the Baptism of the Lord Sunday. After Jesus' baptism, his public ministry begins. It's as if once God's claim on his life has been established, he can begin to live into who he really is. Although we are not Jesus, the same is true for us. Once we understand that through Jesus, God has claimed us, we can fully live into that claim. Matthew Paul Turner's book, *When God Made You*, beautifully illustrates this point. As you listen to the [story](#), consider what claim God has for your life.
2. Our Gospel passage for today is in a stained-glass window in the sanctuary. Can you find it?! Take some time to practice visio divina with it. This is a form of meditation using an image. You can find more information about visio divina [here](#). The purpose of visio divina is to let God speak to you through an image.
3. Take a look at the PC(USA) Seal. Do you see the symbols of the Holy Spirit (the dove and the fire) from today's Gospel passage? What other symbols do you see? There is also a pulpit, a Bible, a cross, a robe, a cup, a fish, and a triangle (representing the trinity). See if you can find them all!
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a) Describe the Gospel passage.
  - b) What does the voice from heaven say? What does that mean?
  - c) How was Jesus baptized? How is this similar to and different from the way we are baptized?



**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. 19):*

***God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,  
God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things belong,  
Alleluia, alleluia, praise be to your name.***

**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**

Isaiah 43:1-7

Rev. Odom

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

**Anthem***Come to the Water*

arr. Lynda Hasseler

Chancel Choir; Collin Sinclair, tenor; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*O let all who thirst, let them come to the water. And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord: without money, without price. Why should you pay the price, except for the Lord? And let all who seek, let them come to the water. And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord: without money, without strife. Why should you spend your life, except for the Lord? And let all who toil, let them come to the water. And let all who are weary, let them come to the Lord: all who labor, without rest. How can your soul find rest, except for the Lord? And let all the poor, let them come to the water, bring the ones who are laden, bring them all to the Lord: bring the children without might. Easy the load and light: come to the Lord.*

**Second Reading**

Luke 3:15-22

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison. Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Remember Your Baptism Dr. Brown

\*The Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) The Apostles' Creed  
Dr. Whitney Bayer

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 Dr. Bayer

. . . (*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 *Baptism* Paul Cardall

*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

*Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, cleansed by the blood of Christ our King; heirs of salvation, trusting the promise, faithfully now God's praises we sing.*

\*Prayer of Dedication Olivia Overcash

Gracious God, as we bring our offerings before you, we remember the baptism of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. May our gifts today be filled with the same Spirit, spreading your love and grace to all who are touched by them. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Service of Ordination and Installation

Statement of Purpose Gayle Ireland, Clerk of Session

Presentation of Elders Dr. Brown

Statement on the Nature of the Office of Elder Dr. Brown

Presentation of Deacons Dr. Bayer

**Statement on the Nature of the Office of Deacon**

Dr. Bayer

**Constitutional Questions to the Elders and Deacons**

**Constitutional Questions to the Congregation**

Gayle Ireland

Do we, the members of the church, accept Alicia Bickett, Caroline Guy, Kara Guy, Manny Villa and Bob Williamson as ruling elders chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?

Do we, the members of the church, accept Gena DeChant, Dana Hefner, Tim Maguire, Lee Martin, Josh Schardt and Carol Stillerman as deacons chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?

Do we agree to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the church?

**Prayer of Ordination and Installation**

Dr. Brown

**Charge to Elders and Deacons**

Dr. Bayer

## **We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 485**

***We Know That Christ Is Raised***

ENGELBERG

1 We know that Christ is raised and dies no more.  
 2 We share by wa - ter in his sav - ing death.  
 3 The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life.  
 4 A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows

(D) (A) (D) (E7) (A)  
 F C F G7 C

Em - braced by death he broke its fear - ful hold,  
 Re - born we share with him an Eas - ter life  
 The Spir - it's pow - er shakes the church of God.  
 as Christ's new bod - y takes on flesh and blood.

(Am) (D) (G) (Em) (Bm)  
 Cm F B<sup>b</sup> Gm Dm

and our de - spair he turned to blaz - ing joy.  
 as liv - ing mem - bers of a liv - ing Christ.  
 Bap - tized we live with God the Three in One.  
 The u - ni - verse, re - stored and whole, will sing:

1-3 4  
 (Em) (D) (Asus) (A) (Em) (D)  
 Gm F Csus C Gm F

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**\*Congregational Response**

***Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, marked with the sign of  
 Christ our King; born of the Spirit, we are God's children;  
 joyfully now God's praises we sing.***

**Postlude**

*Engelberg*

arr. Craig Phillips

## 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; Colin Sinclair, tenor; Blythe Kinsey, piano

Katie Gravender, Olivia Overcash, liturgists

**Acolytes:** Ellie Henriques

**A/V Team:** Brad Alford, Luke Estes

**Ushers:** Mitchell Davis, Curtis Guy, Kara Guy, Donna Podgorny, Gwen Volker, Bob Williamson

**Welcome Team:** Donna Brown, Blair Choren, Brooke Choren, Marla Choren, Michael Choren, Kathy Rasimas

A brief Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 19 after the 10:10 am worship service to fulfill the State of North Carolina's legal requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

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 Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, [adrienne@smpchome.org](mailto:adrienne@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, January 26 at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor, [whitney@smpchome.org](mailto:whitney@smpchome.org) or 980-265-2835

### **Congregational Notes** (as of January 9, 2025)

#### **Remember in Prayer**

- Mike Schrader, as he recovers from surgery.
- Janie Ramberger, as she recovers from a fall.
- All those affected by the wildfires in Southern California.
- 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](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org).

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**South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church**

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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**  
**JAN. 12**  
**11:45 a.m.**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**SMPC Youth Coffee and Conversation**  
**Amelie's, 7715 Pineville-Matthews Rd, Middle and High Schoolers**  
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. Cannot wait to see you all there! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

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**today**  
**JAN. 12**  
**5:00 p.m.** -  
**6:30 p.m.**

**BAM! Bible and Music**  
**Narthex, Children in Kindergarten-5th Grade**  
During BAM, children sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. They occasionally sing, play instruments, or display their creations during Sunday worship. 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. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

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**today**  
**JAN. 12**  
**various**  
**times**

**Room in the Inn**  
**Sardis Presbyterian Church**  
There are spots open for food donations and volunteers to help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Other dates include February 16 and March 2. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).



**tuesday**  
**JAN. 14**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Handiworkers Group**  
**Palmer Building, Room 104**  
All levels of knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited. This group meets weekly to work on projects. Contact: Judy Jameson, [jgjameson@gmail.com](mailto:jgjameson@gmail.com).

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**tuesday**  
**JAN. 14**  
**1:00 p.m.** -  
**2:30 p.m.**

**A Caregiver's Journey**  
**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](mailto:whitney@smpchome.org).

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**tuesday**  
**JAN. 14**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**Men's Evening Study Group**  
**Chapel 206**  
The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, [jonmyers2@gmail.com](mailto:jonmyers2@gmail.com).

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**wednesday**  
**JAN. 15**  
**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 Zoom info.

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**thursday**  
**JAN. 16**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Tour Nourish Up's New Hunger Hub**  
**Nourish Up, 901 Carrier Drive, Charlotte, NC 28216**  
**(Carpool: Leaving SMPC parking lot at 9:15 a.m.)** -  
We will tour and learn about Nourish Up (formerly Loaves & Fishes and Friendship Trays) whose mission to nourish our neighbors with food and compassion. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Donna Brown, [donnamatt89@gmail.com](mailto:donnamatt89@gmail.com).



**thursday** **Food for Thought Book Group**  
**McQueen Room**  
**JAN. 16** All are welcome as we discuss the book *The Frozen River: A Novel* by Ariel Lawhon. Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.  
**12:30 p.m.**

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**thursday** **International Dining Group**  
**Hacienda El Rey, 3901 Providence Road South ~ Suite A, Waxhaw**  
**JAN. 16** All are invited to join this group as they sample cuisines from around the world! Bring a friend! RSVP by tomorrow, January 13 to Alice Tyler, rrt1317@aol.com.  
**6:00 p.m.**

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**thursday** **Making Space Mom's Group**  
**McQueen Room**  
**JAN. 16** 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.  
**7:30 p.m.**

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**friday** **Friday Morning Men's Group**  
**Chapel 206**  
**JAN. 17** This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are reading *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.  
**7:30 a.m. -**  
**8:30 a.m.**

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**saturday** **Center of Hope Breakfast**  
**Meet in the church parking lot at 5:15 a.m.**  
**JAN. 18** On the third Saturday of each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast for guests at the Center of Hope. Volunteers are back at the church around 9:00 a.m. Food donations are due Thursday, January 16. Scan QR code to sign up to serve or donate items/money or go to [smpchome.org](http://smpchome.org) > Serve Our Community. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.



**sunday** **Adult Study: 'Trust the Whisper'**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**  
**JAN. 19** We are in week two of a four-week discussion on Kathy Izzard's book, *Trust the Whisper: How Answering Quiet Callings Inspires Extraordinary Stories of Ordinary Grace*. All are welcome - even if you missed the first meeting! Contact: Melissa White, melissawhite1018@yahoo.com.  
**9:00 a.m. -**  
**10:00 a.m.**

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, January 23, 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.

**Bagged Lunches for Roof Above, Saturday, January 25, Drop off at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Palmer Building** - SMPC provides 100 bag lunches to Roof Above, a men's homeless shelter, on the fourth Saturday of each month. Sign up at [smpchome.org](http://smpchome.org) > Serve Our Community or scan the QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



## READ WITH US! ALL CHURCH READS 'TRUST THE WHISPER' BY KATHY IZZARD

**All Church Reads and Author Talk/Reflection - Sunday, February 2, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Sanctuary** - Read the book *Trust the Whisper* by Kathy Izzard and join us for an evening with Kathy Izzard. After sharing the story behind the book, Kathy will answer questions and lead a short "Find Your Whisper" exercise. Children are also invited to a special program with Director of Spiritual Formation Rebecca Guzman featuring Kathy's children's book, *Grace Heard a Whisper*. Casual reception to follow. All are welcome! Registration on Realm is appreciated but not required! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.