



A Service of Worship
Second Sunday of Christmas
Epiphany of the Lord
January 5, 2025
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

We Gather

Prelude *Epiphany Procession* Phil Lehenbauer

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

Introit *We Three Kings of Orient Are* John Hopkins

***Call to Worship** Dr. Whitney Bayer

One: Come to worship, people of God

Many: We come ready to be embraced by God's love and grace. We come open to the Spirit moving among us.

One: Come to worship, people of God.

Many: We come ready to embody God's love and grace. We come open to being Christ's hands and feet.

***Carol 152** *What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright* PUER NOBIS



1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more
 2 'Tis now ful-filled what God de-creed, "From
 3 While out-ward signs the star dis-plays, an
 4 O Je-sus, while the star of grace im-

(C) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G)
 D A D G D A

love-ly than the noon-day light? 'Tis
 Ja-cob shall a star pro-ceed;" and
 in-ward light the Lord con-veys and
 pels us on to seek your face, let

(Am) (D7) (G) (C) (F) (C) (Dm)
 Bm E7 A D G D Em

sent to an-nounce a new-born king, glad
 lo! the east-ern sa-ges stand to
 urg-es them, with ten-der might, to
 not our sloth-ful hearts re-fuse the

(G) (C) (G) (C) (F) (G) (C)
 A D A D G A D

ti-dings of our God to bring.
 read in heaven the Lord's com-mand.
 seek the giv-er of the light.
 guid-ance of your light to use.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Bayer

Christ our Savior, you have empowered us to become children of God, but we doubt our power and our ability to create change. We excuse ourselves from necessary action citing priorities that are not yours. We deny the gifts and talents with which you have blessed us to embody love and work for justice. Forgive us, merciful God. Remind us how much we have to offer. 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. It is a prayer practice in churches all over the world to give people a star word on this Epiphany Sunday. Many of us experience prayer as talking to God as opposed to silence or contemplation. However, this prayer practice invites a new prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful way to connect with God. After worship, we will have children stationed at each door with a basket of words. The words will be placed facedown. Take a word, not looking to see what it is before choosing! Consider this a guiding word for the year ahead. We invite you to remember your star word often, seeking the ways God might be moving through the meanings and definitions the word contains. If you are worshiping online, please use this [link](#) to generate a star word online.
2. Color a star coloring page or draw a star. [Here](#) are some coloring pages you might enjoy. You also may enjoy chalking your door tomorrow for the actual celebration of Epiphany. You can learn about this tradition and how to chalk your door [here](#).
3. A wonderful story for today is *The Christmas Candle* by Richard Paul Evans. Listen to a [readaloud](#) of the story. When Thomas is given the Christmas candle, he doesn't quite understand what it is, but as he travels, he discovers that the light of Christ makes us all into one family. This is also one thing that our passage today from Ephesians tells us—that we are adopted into God's family through Christ, and so we are only family.
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a) What does it mean for you to be chosen by God?
 - b) How is a star word different than a new year's resolution?
 - c) How do you see yourself as part of the family of God?



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. Lindsey Odom

First Reading

Psalm 24

Rev. Odom

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

Rev. Odom

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

A Story Worth Sharing

Rev. Odom

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

The Nicene Creed

Dr. Brown

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

When We Seek Him

Shawna Edwards

*The Wisemen were watching and praying
For heavenly signs of his birth.*

*They followed the starlight through the long days and dark nights
To worship the Lord of the earth.*

*If miles lay between us, then I'd walk to Jesus;
O'er mountain and desert, I'd follow that star.*

*But he doesn't ask us to journey so far,
For he will be with us wherever we are
When we seek him.*

*Like wisemen I'm seeking the Savior
By learning and living his ways.*

*His light shines inside me, like starlight, it guides me
Closer to him every day.*

*I don't have gold to lay down before him,
But I'll give my heart to show I adore him.
When we seek him.*

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!

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

Rev. Odom

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Brown

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. *(Pastor's prayer)*
... *(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.**

The Words of Institution

Rev. Odom, Dr. Brown

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

***Carol 156**

Sing of God Made Manifest

SALZBURG

***Charge and Benediction**

Rev. Odom

***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

Epiphany March on "Salzburg"

Franklin D. Ashdown

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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

Acolytes: Reese Earp, Lydia Rose

A/V Team: Kari Case

Ushers: Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Frank Graham, Curt Ireland, Craig Parrish

Welcome Team: Donna Brown, Terry Gaines, Jack Hess, Donna Podgorny

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. 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 (as of January 2, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Donna and Matt Brown and their family as Donna's mother, Dot Elliott, entered the Church triumphant on December 23.
- Jennifer Calderwood and her family as Jennifer's father, Jim Thomas, entered the Church triumphant on December 27
- Marion Kay and her family as Marion's stepmother, Judy Atwell, entered the Church triumphant on Sunday, December 29.
- 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.

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South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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smpchome.org

SMPC WEEKLY

JANUARY 5, 2025

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

-
- tuesday**
JAN. 7
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.
-
- wednesday**
JAN. 8
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 Zoom info.
-
- thursday**
JAN. 9
9:00 a.m.
- Shelter Ministry**
Mecklenburg Hall
This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. They are always in need of body wash and Rx vials (please, no shampoo or conditioner!) Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.
-
- thursday**
JAN. 9
9:30 a.m.
- Men's Breakfast Group**
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.
-
- sunday**
JAN. 12
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
- New! Adult Study: 'Trust the Whisper'**
McQueen Room or Zoom
Join Melissa White and Rebecca Guzman for a four-week discussion on Kathy Izard's book, *Trust the Whisper: How Answering Quiet Callings Inspires Extraordinary Stories of Ordinary Grace*. Together, we'll examine how small moments and choices can lead to a meaningful life. Save the date for an evening with Kathy Izard in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 2, 5:00-6:30 p.m.. Contact: Melissa White, melissawhite1018@yahoo.com.
-
- sunday**
JAN. 12
10:10 a.m.
- Desserts for Center of Hope**
Drop off before worship in the narthex
On the second Sunday of every month we provide sweet treats for the women and children that temporarily call Center of Hope home. Desserts can be store-bought or homemade. Sign up at smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.
-
- sunday**
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.
-
- sunday**
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.

sunday
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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

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. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Tour Nourish Up's New Hunger Hub, Thursday, January 16, 10:00 a.m., Nourish Up, 901 Carrier Drive, Charlotte, NC 28216 (meet at SMPC 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.



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

Center of Hope Breakfast, Saturday, January 18, Meet in the church parking lot at 5:15 a.m. - 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. Monetary donations are always welcome. Sign up on smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.

ATTENTION! ROOF ABOVE BAGGED LUNCHES NOW

COLLECTED ON THE FOURTH SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH!

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 (previously we collected on the second Saturday!). Sign up at smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.

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

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 Izard and join us for an evening with Kathy Izard. 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.



Do you receive the church email? It's good news delivered to your inbox! SMPC sends emails twice a week: Dr. Matt Brown's weekly devotion on Tuesdays and 'SMPC Now,' the church's weekly email, on Thursdays. Email Cheryl Perry, cheryl@smpchome.org, with your email address to be added to the list.