



A Service of Worship
First Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2025
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

We Gather

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

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

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Rev. Lindsey Odom
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Introit *While We Are Waiting, Come* WAITING (CASON)
While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

***Call to Worship**

Lighting of the Advent Candle – HOPE
Kathy Galati; Allison, Brooks and Nolan King

One: We draw near to the God who waits with grace, filling us with
hope in every season. Let us pray together:

All: **Hopeful God, even though our flames may falter, your light
has come to us through Christ. Renew us in a spirit of hope,
for God-is-with-us—Emmanuel is near. Amen.**

***Hymn 97** *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* ABERYSTWYTH

1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.
 2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high-er yet that star as-cends.
 3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.

Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight: see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.
 Trav-eler, bless-ed - ness and light, peace and truth its course por - tends.
 Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight; doubt and ter - ror are with-drawn.

Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore - tell?
 Watch-man, will its beams a - lone gild the spot that gave them birth?
 Watch-man, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui - et home.

Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom-ised day of Is - ra - el.
 Trav-eler, a - ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.
 Trav-eler, we re - joice to - day, for Em - man - u - el has come!

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Rev. Melissa White

God of light and life, you call us to turn away from behaviors and attitudes that belong to the darkness, and to lead honest and transparent lives as those who live in the light of your love. We confess that we often give in to our darker thoughts and desires and act in ways that do not bring honor to your name. In your mercy, God, cleanse our hearts and minds of all that hinders us from loving you and loving our neighbor. Let our lives radiate faith that is alive with compassion as we watch and wait for your advent into our world with the birth of our Savior. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. White

*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. **Advent Begins — Hope!** Today is the first Sunday of Advent! During Advent, we get ready for Jesus, the Light of the World. Watch this [short video](#) about Advent. You can also light a virtual Advent wreath [here](#). This week we light the candle of Hope, because God's promises bring light to the world.
2. **Advent Craft — Stars of Hope:** Stars help us look for signs of Jesus. Make a star to hang in your house as a reminder to watch for God's light around you! You can try a [paper star](#), or make one from pipe cleaners, beads, popsicle sticks, or just draw and decorate one however you like.
3. **Story Connection — Waiting with Eyes Open:** Listen to [Waiting](#) by Kevin Henkes. The characters are waiting and watching, just like us in Advent! Paul tells us in Romans 13 to "wake up" and pay attention to how Jesus is already working in the world. While we wait for Christmas, we can also look around and notice love, kindness, and hope happening right now.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder what it feels like to wait for something exciting.
 - b. I wonder what it means to "wake up" to God's love.
 - c. I wonder how your star can remind you to look for Jesus every day.



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. White

First Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5

Rev. White

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Anthem *Choral Fantasy on "Creator of the Stars of Night"* Michael 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 Romans 13:8-14 Rev. Odom

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Sermon Love Is Our Calling: The Time Is Now Rev. Odom

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) A Brief Statement of Faith
Rev. Melissa White

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one true God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we

worship and serve. We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. White

. . . *(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

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

arr. Patrick Liebergen

Laura Black, soprano

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**

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**

Braxton Kasmer

Gracious and sovereign God, you are the source of our hope and the giver of every good gift. Receive what we offer, and by your Spirit, use these gifts, and use us, for the work of your Kingdom. Strengthen us to bear faithful witness to the hope we have in Christ. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 107** *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* REJOICE, REJOICE



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and
world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and
win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by
near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the
free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break
light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens
bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der
forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be
love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heav - en - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.
raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

***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

Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts

arr. Albin C. Whitworth

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

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

Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate for Congregational Care &

Connection

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist
Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation
Chancel Choir
Ann Carney, piano
Laura Black, soprano
Braxton Kasmer, liturgist

A/V Team: Mary Katheryne Zagora, Michael Zagora

Ushers: Mitchell Davis, Richard Franseen, Craig Parrish, Brett Thompson,
Linda Thompson, Jim Williams

Welcome Team: Bergen Kasmer, Braxton Kasmer, Donna Podgorny, Bob
Williamson

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy is adapted from *Wait for the Lord*, an
Advent Candle Liturgy written by Dr. Montisa Anntoinette Watkins and
Rev. Shavon Starling-Lewis.

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](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 Sunday, December 7, at
11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate
for Congregational Care and Connection, melissa@smpchome.org or
704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of November 25, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- All those affected by conflict, displacement, and unrest around the world and at home.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti, that God's peace, protection and justice may prevail amid the crisis, chaos, and despair engulfing their country.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

prayer@SMPChome.org

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday: Closed

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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

WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies outside. Come meet friends old and new! Registry pads are located in your pews. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps introduce yourself to someone new!

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS



Advent Devotionals Begin TODAY!

Subscribe to our Advent Devotionals via QR code! Devotionals are written by SMPC members and staff and illustrated by the children and youth of SMPC. Delivered to your email inbox every morning during Advent! Contact: Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com.

Angel Tree Tags Available in Person Beginning Today!

We hope you will join us in this SMPC tradition of helping families in need during the holidays. Trees are set up in the narthex and Chapel building. Online Angel Tree tags are available via QR code. Donations are due to the church by Sunday, December 14. Contact: Kristin Colson, kscolson@carolina.rr.com.



monday
DEC. 1

10:00 a.m. -
11:00 a.m.

New! Advent Adult Study - "Calling All Angels" McQueen Room or Zoom

Note: This study also meets on Sundays, 9:00-10:00 a.m. in McQueen Room or Zoom. Participants can go to either day on any week! Join this four-week study as we reflect on the surprising ways angels appear in Scripture and what their presence reveals about God's message of hope, peace, joy, and love. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

tuesday
DEC. 2

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. Please note this group will not meet on Tuesday, November 25. Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

tuesday
DEC. 2

11:45 a.m.

SMPC Lunch Bunch Burton's Grill, Blakeney

Join us for a time of great fellowship and food. All are welcome—invite a friend. RSVP by today, November 30 via Realm/QR code or to Anita Schult, coachanita2001@yahoo.com



wednesday
DEC. 3

9:30 a.m. -
10:30 a.m.

Pastor's Wednesday Morning Bible Study McQueen Room or Zoom

Transitional Pastor Dr. Sandy Hull will lead this study that meets weekly to discuss the Scripture for the coming Sunday. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

thursday
DEC. 4

7:30 p.m.

Making Space Mom's Group Chapel 206

This group meets on the first and third Thursday of every month. Moms of all ages are invited for fellowship and study. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

friday
DEC. 5

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 *Imagine Heaven* by John Burke. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

saturday
DEC. 6
10:30 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.

Women's Advent Tea

Women of all ages are invited for music, meditation, food and fellowship. Please bring a special teacup or mug! Lunch catered by the Community Culinary School of Charlotte. Cost - Adults: \$15; Children 11 and under: \$8. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



sunday
DEC. 7
9:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

Alternative Gift Market
Narthex

Agencies will be at the church to share more information on how your donation can help those in need. Shop in person on Sunday, December 7 or online via the QR code anytime between now and December 25. Contact: Heather Carpenter, heathercarpenter1@yahoo.com.



We will welcome Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor, and his wife, Belinda, for their first Sunday in worship at SMPC on December 7. We hope you can join us in welcoming them with warmth and hospitality!

UPCOMING EVENTS

BAM! Bible and Music, Sunday, December 7, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Meet in the Narthex, K-5th Grade - We only have one more rehearsal before Festival of Carols! Hope you can join us. Please register on Realm so we order enough pizza! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org

SMPC Youth Christmas Party, Sunday, December 7, 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers - We'll have an Advent devotion and will decorate gingerbread houses and Christmas cookies! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, December 9, 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: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com

Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, December 9, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 - The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, December 11, 9:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall - Join this group that fills empty prescription bottles with body wash for our neighbors at Roof Above. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, December 11, 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.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Saturday, December 13, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Belk, SouthPark Mall - One slot left to ring bells this season! Sign up via QR code. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com..



Festival of Carols, Sunday, December 14, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream - A special worship service led by the SMPC Music Ministry. Music enhanced with scripture. Childcare provided. Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

The Longest Night, Tuesday, December 16, 5:30 p.m., Chapel - A special service of consolation for those who have experienced any type of loss.

Food for Thought Book Group, Thursday, December 18, 12:30 p.m., McQueen Room - The group is reading *Christmas at the Little Paris Hotel* by Rebecca Raisin. All book lovers are welcome! Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.

SERVE WITH ROOM IN THE INN NEXT YEAR

We partner with two other churches to help with dinner, overnight stays, breakfast, and cleanup. Room in the Inn is an initiative led by Roof Above. Upcoming dates to serve in 2026 are January 7, February 15 and March 1 at Sardis Pres. Contact: Amy Matthews, amymatthews1117@gmail.com. Sign up at smpchome.org/serve-our-community.