



A Service of Worship  
**Second Sunday of Christmas**

**Epiphany**

**January 4, 2026**

**10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

*\*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

**We Gather**

**Prelude** *Epiphany Procession* Phil Lehenbauer

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

The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

**Moment for Mission** Amy Matthews

**Introit** *We Three Kings of Orient Are* JOHN HOPKINS

**Call to Worship** (from Psalm 36) Rev. Odom

One: Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens.

**All: Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**

One: How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

**All: All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.**

One: With you is the fountain of life.

**All: In your light we see true light!**

One: Let us worship God together.

**\*Carol 152** *What Star Is This* PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

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)*

Rev. Odom

Lord of light and love, the Magi saw the star and set out to worship the new King. But too often, when we hear your call, we prefer to stay put and stick with the status quo. We choose comfort over faithfulness, being in control over risky obedience. Forgive us, we pray, through your Son Jesus Christ, and by your Holy Spirit help us to go wherever you lead. Amen.

### Assurance of God's Grace (Colossians 1:13-14)

Rev. Odom

One: "God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in who we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Hear and believe God's good news:

**All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

### \*Response of Praise

No. 113

*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. **Star Words:** It is a prayer practice in churches all over the world to give people a *star word* on Epiphany Sunday. Many of us experience prayer mostly as talking to God, but this practice invites a slower rhythm of reflection and review. During Communion today, you will be invited to select a star word. The words will be placed face down in a basket. When you come forward, take one without looking first. Consider this word a guide for the year ahead. We invite you to return to your star word often, noticing how God might be at work through its meaning. If you are worshiping online, please email [Rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:Rebecca@smpchome.org) to receive your star word.
2. **Story Connection:** Listen to [\*Home by Another Way\*](#) by Barbara Brown Taylor, a poetic retelling of today's scripture that invites us to imagine the Magi's journey, and their return. more deeply. This story helps us wonder how encountering Jesus might change the direction of our lives, just as it changed the Magi's path home. Full explanation for families is [here](#).
3. **Game:** Play a simple game of "Follow the Star." One person holds a paper star and becomes the leader. Everyone else follows, copying the leader's movements around the room or yard. After a few minutes, switch leaders. Talk together about how the Magi followed the star—and how we try to follow God's guidance in our own lives.
4. **Wonder Together:**
  - a. I wonder how the Magi felt as they were following the star.
  - b. I wonder what it means to go "home by another way."
  - c. I wonder how your star word might guide you this year.



## Children's Liturgy

Rebecca Guzman

*As the children four years old through third grade gather for  
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

Isaiah 60:1-6

Rev. Odom

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

### **Second Reading**

Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. Odom

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.

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

### **Sermon**

"Starstruck"

Dr. Hull

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

Apostles' Creed

Rev. Melissa White

**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**

**Offertory**      *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*      arr. Page/Robertson  
Mark Janney and Zach Bowyer

**\*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!*

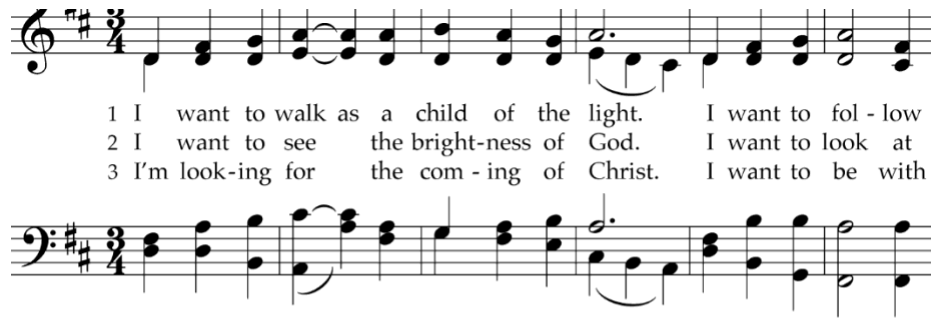
**Invitation to the Table** Dr. Hull

*. . . (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.**

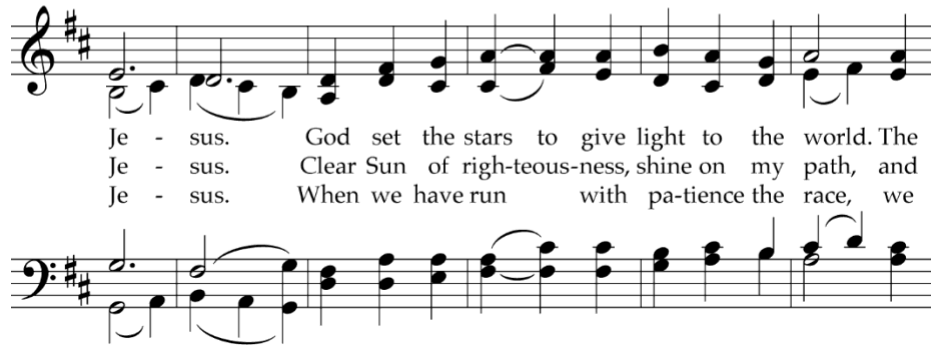
*You are invited to come forward (see diagram) to receive the elements of communion by intinction. When receiving the elements by intinction, you are invited to take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, and return to your seat. If you are not able to come forward, you will be served at your seat. Servers with gluten-free elements are located at the back of the sanctuary.*

**The Prayer after Communion** Dr. Hull

**\*Hymn 377**     *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*     HOUSTON



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to fol - low  
 2 I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to look at  
 3 I'm look-ing for the com - ing of Christ. I want to be with



Je - sus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The  
 Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ-teous-ness, shine on my path, and  
 Je - sus. When we have run with pa-tience the race, we

*Refrain*



star of my life is Je - sus.  
 show me the way to the Fa - ther. In him there is no dark-ness at  
 shall know the joy of Je - sus.



all. The night and the day are both a - like. The Lamb is the  
 light of the cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Hull

**\*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.***

## Worship Service Notes

### Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor

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

Mark Janney

**A/V Team:** Kari Case, Xander Case

**Ushers:** Andrew Brown, Frank Graham, Judy Jones, Craig Parrish, Donna Podgorny, Bob Williamson

**Welcome Team:** Jack Hess, Jimmy Galati, 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 Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, [adrienne@smpchome.org](mailto: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 Sunday, January 25, at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, [melissa@smpchome.org](mailto:melissa@smpchome.org) or 704-887-7488.

## Congregational Notes (as of December 31, 2025)

### Remember in Prayer

- Debi Wheeler, as she recovers from a knee injury.
- Mandy Godbey, as she recovers from a recent fall.
- 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](mailto: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](http://smpchome.org)

## WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies near Coffee Grounds. 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

**today**  
**JAN. 4**  
**11:30 a.m.**  
**12:30 p.m.**

**Third Thirty - 'How Different is a Third Thirty for Those Who Don't Fit the Mold?' Mecklenburg Hall, Ages 60-90**  
These gatherings meet monthly over a light lunch to create space for open discussion of some of the issues facing us as we navigate these decades of our lives. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**today**  
**JAN. 4**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**BAM! (Bible and Music)**  
**Meet in Narthex, Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
BAM! is our Sunday evening program for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

**today**  
**JAN. 4**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**BYG (Big Youth Group)**  
**Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers**  
Bible study, small group time, good food, fun games and amazing company. We are collecting gently used or new coats now through the end of January for students in need at our two partner schools, Smithfield Elementary and Sterling Elementary! Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

**tuesday**  
**JAN. 6**  
**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, jgjamason@gmail.com.

**wednesday**  
**JAN. 7**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
**10:30 a.m.**

**Pastor's Wednesday Morning Bible Study**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**  
Transitional Pastor Dr. Sandy Hull leads this study that meets weekly. They will be discussing the book of Ephesians. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

**wednesday**  
**JAN. 7**  
**times vary**

**Room in the Inn**  
**Sardis Presbyterian Church**  
Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Donations also needed. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



**thursday**  
**JAN. 8**  
**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 need body wash donations! Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

**thursday**  
**JAN. 8**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Men's Breakfast Group**  
**Big View Diner, 6637 Lancaster Hwy**  
This group meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4th Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com.

**sunday**  
**JAN. 11**  
**10:10 a.m.**

**Desserts for Center of Hope**  
**Drop Off Dessert Before 10:10 a.m. Worship**  
We deliver desserts for Center of Hope guests every month. Homemade or store-bought! Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.





**sunday**  
**JAN. 11**  
**9:00 a.m. -**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Adult Study: "Second Thoughts About the Second Coming"**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**

Join Rebecca Guzman and Melissa White for a six-week explorative study using *Second Thoughts about the Second Coming: Understanding the End Times, Our Future, and Christian Hope* by Ronald Allen and Robert Cornwall. This thoughtful book guides readers through biblical teachings and historical perspectives on the second coming and Christian hope, offering accessible insights and questions for reflection and discussion. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

**sunday**  
**JAN. 11**  
**11:45 a.m. -**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**SMPC Youth Coffee and Conversation**  
**Amelie's French Bakery, Carmel Commons, Middle and High Schoolers**

We'll cover the cost of a coffee or drink for youth! Please bring extra money if you'd like a sweet treat or pastry. We can't wait to see you. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, January 13, 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](mailto:kathygarner15@gmail.com)

**Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, January 13, 7:30 p.m. Chapel 206 -** The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. Contact: Jon Myers, [jonmyers2@gmail.com](mailto:jonmyers2@gmail.com).

**Food for Thought Book Group, Thursday, January 15, 12:30 p.m., McQueen Room -** All are welcome as we discuss the book *Lily's Promise* by Lily Ebert.. Contact: Kathy Paquette, [khesspaquette@aol.com](mailto:khesspaquette@aol.com).

**International Dining Group, Thursday, January 15, 6:00 p.m., Mi Pueblo Mexican Grill, 1820 Sardis Road North, Charlotte, NC -** This group explores local restaurants on the third Thursday of every month. RSVP on Realm via QR code. Contact: Carol Roan, [candwroan@gmail.com](mailto:candwroan@gmail.com).



**Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, January 15, 7:30 p.m., 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](mailto:allison.tarwater@gmail.com).

**Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, January 16, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206 -** This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month for study and fellowship. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, [irelandcurtis00@gmail.com](mailto:irelandcurtis00@gmail.com).

**Center of Hope Breakfast, Saturday, January 17, Meet at SMPC 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. They are back to the church around 9:15 a.m. Food donations are due Thursday, January 15. Monetary donations are always welcome. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lee Martin, [leewilsonmartin@gmail.com](mailto:leewilsonmartin@gmail.com).



**Bag Lunches for Roof Above, Saturday, January 24, 9:30 a.m., Drop Off in Front of Mecklenburg Hall -** Every month we donate 100 bag lunches to our neighbors in need at Roof Above. Please consider donating this month! Simply scan the QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, [julierdurham@gmail.com](mailto:julierdurham@gmail.com).



## ALL-CHURCH RETREAT

**All-Church Retreat: "Created for Community," Friday, March 6-Sunday, March 8, Montreat, NC -** All ages are invited to join us as we examine how God exists in community and how God designed us to be in relationships with God and one another. More information and register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

## SMPC PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION UPDATES!

Registration opens Tuesday, January 20 for church members. New preschool families must schedule a tour before registering. Tours will take place January 5-16. Please contact Tammy Winchip, [tammy@smpchome.org](mailto:tammy@smpchome.org), to schedule.