



A Service of Worship
First Sunday of Christmas
December 28, 2025
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* Gordon Young

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Sandy Hull

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

Introit *Wexford Carol* TRADITIONAL
Ann Carney, recorder

***Call to Worship** Savannah Brown

One: We recount the gracious deeds of God, all the praiseworthy acts that the Lord has done for us.

All: Praise God for coming to dwell among us.

One: Praise God for the good news of Immanuel, Christ with us, the pioneer of our salvation and the one who surrounds us with divine love.

All: Praise God for making us brothers and sisters in Christ.

One: Praise God who is present with us still, lifting us up and carrying us.

All: God's glory shines in heaven and on earth. Praise the Lord!

***Hymn 143** *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* REGENT SQUARE

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your
 3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vi - sions
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,

all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;
 beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
 Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing

now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 yon - der shines the in - fant light: come and wor - ship,
 you have seen his na - tal star:
 to the e - ter - nal Three in One:

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Dr. Hull

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Hull

*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

Emily Brown

1. **Story Connection:** Today's Gospel reading is a difficult one. In times of fear, the Rev. Fred Rogers encouraged us to "look for the helpers." As Sara Anne Berger notes, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are helped by angels who guide them to safety and later tell them when it is safe to return. We see a similar kind of help in [Make Way for Ducklings](#), where a police officer protects a duck family as they search for a safe home. Even in hard stories, we are reminded that God's intention is to protect and help. (Credit: Sara Anne Berger, [StoryPath](#)).
2. **Game:** Play a simple game of "Pin the Halo on the Angel." Draw or print an angel and tape it on the wall. Cut out a paper halo. Take turns wearing a scarf or closing your eyes, gently spinning once, and trying to place the halo on the angel. Angels play an important role throughout the Christmas story, and today they remind us that God sends helpers when people are afraid or in danger.
3. **Craft** Make a simple angel using items you have at home—paper, a paper plate, a coffee filter, or craft sticks. Add wings, a face, and a halo. As you create, talk about how angels in the Bible bring messages of protection, guidance, and hope.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder who the helpers are in today's Bible story.
 - b. I wonder how Joseph felt when he had to protect his family.
 - c. I wonder who helps you when you are scared or unsure.
 - d. I wonder how we can be helpers to others this week.



Children's Liturgy

Emily Brown

*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

Isaiah 63:7-9

Rev. Odom

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Second Reading

Matthew 2:13-23

Rev. Odom

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

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

Sermon

When God's Love Breaks In

Rev. Odom

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

Rev. Melissa White

As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world, which some seek to control, but which others view with despair, we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs to God! We rejoice in the goodness of God, renounce the works of darkness, and dedicate ourselves to holy living. As covenant partners, set free for joyful obedience, we offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in the world. With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended, we expect the Day of the Lord. We are confident that the light which shines in the present darkness will fill the earth when Christ appears. Come, Lord Jesus. Our world belongs to you. And God, by his gracious choosing in Christ,

gathers a new community— those who by God’s gift put their trust in Christ. This new community lives out the ongoing story of God’s reconciling love, announces the new creation, and works for a world of justice and peace. In the new community all are welcome: the homeless come home, the broken find healing, the sinner makes a new start, the despised are esteemed, the least are honored, and the last are first. Here the Spirit guides and grace abounds. 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

Variations on He is Born

Harold Owen

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 brought us to Christmas Day!

***Prayer of Dedication**

Caroline Brown

Holy God, giver of every good gift, we thank You for the greatest gift of all, your son – Jesus Christ, the Light of the World who was born for all of us in a humble stable. We dedicate these gifts, our offerings of praise, asking that they be blessed and used for your glory. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 136**

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
 rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

***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

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Michael Burkhardt

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

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

Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor

Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate for Congregational Care & Connection
Ann Carney, organ
Emily Brown, Children's Spiritual Formation Committee
Caroline Brown, Savannah Brown liturgist

A/V Team: Mary Katheryne Zagora, Michael Zagora

Ushers: Andy Burke, Bob Cushman, Tim Maguire, Elizabeth Rose, William Rose, Michael Zagora

Welcome Team: Curt Ireland

Today's Affirmation of Faith is from *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*, of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and is excerpted from Part 1, Part 6, Part 34, and Part 39 (2008).

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 today 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 December 25, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Christy and Dan Trimmer and their family as Christy's father, Paul Davidson, entered the Church triumphant on December 23.
- Marianne Empie and her family, as her husband, Bruce Empie, entered the Church triumphant on December 18.
- 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

SMPC STAFF

Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor

sandy@smpchome.org

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

lindsey@smpchome.org

Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate

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Dr. Tammy Winchip, SMPC Preschool Director

tammy@smpchome.org

Mary Katheryne Zagora, Financial Administrator

mkzagora@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

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smpchome.org

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2025

Welcome! We hope you will consider joining one (or more!) of our many classes, small groups, service opportunities or ministries. There wasn't enough room to list all the ways to get involved! To stay updated, please subscribe to our weekly email, follow us on social media, or go to our website, smpchome.org. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

STUDY

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, January 2, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206

This group, which combines study and fellowship, meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

Third Thirty, Sunday, January 4, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 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: Rev. Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

Conversations with the Pastor, Every Wednesday resuming January 7,

9:30 a.m., McQueen Room and Zoom - Transitional Pastor Dr. Sandy Hull will lead a study on the book of Ephesians. Contact for the Zoom ID#: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

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. All are welcome. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, January 15, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206

- Moms of all ages are invited to join us on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month for study, service and fellowship. All are welcome. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

Adult Study: 'Second Thoughts About the Second Coming,' Sundays beginning

January 4, 9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom - 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. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

SERVE

American Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, January 3, 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,

Mecklenburg Hall - Sign up on smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Bill Ramsey, bill.john.ramsey@gmail.com.

Room in the Inn, Wednesday January 7, Sunday February 15, Sunday March 1,

Sardis Presbyterian Church - Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Contact: Amy Matthews, amymatthews1117@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, January 8, 9:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall

- Meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

Desserts for Center of Hope, Sunday, January 11, 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.

Breakfast for Center of Hope, Saturday, January 17, Meet at the church at 5:15

a.m. - Each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast for guests at the Center of Hope. Contact: Lee Martin, leewilsonmartin@gmail.com.

Bagged Lunches for Roof Above, Saturday, January 24, 9:30 a.m., In front of

Palmer Building - Each month we collect and donate 100 bagged lunches to Roof Above. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.

All-Church Serves: Time Out Youth (TOY), Sunday, February 22, 9:00-10:00 a.m.,

Mecklenburg Hall - All ages are invited to participate in a service project for TOY, an organization that creates affirming, supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. Contact: Rev. Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

SMALL GROUPS

Handiworkers Group, Tuesdays resuming January 6, 10:00 a.m., Palmer 104

All knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters (beginners to experts) are invited. Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, January 8, 9:30 a.m., Big View Diner, 6637

Lancaster Hwy - This group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com.

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.

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.

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. Contact: Carol Roan, candwroan@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.

CHILDREN

BAM! (Bible and Music), Sunday, January 4, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Meet in Narthex, K-

5th Grade - BAM! is our Sunday evening program for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

SMPC Preschool

Registration opens 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, to schedule.

YOUTH (MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL)

Big Youth Group (BYG), Sunday, January 4, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall,

Middle and High Schoolers - Bible study, small group time, good food, fun games and amazing company. We are collecting new and gently used coats for Smithfield and Sterling Elementary. Contact: Rev. Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Coffee and Conversation, Sunday, January 11, 11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Amelie's,

7715 Pineville-Matthews Rd 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. Contact: Rev. Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

MUSIC

Chancel Choir, Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m. - Do you enjoy leading worship through song? Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

2026 OPERATING FUND CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thank you to the 267 families who have committed a total of \$1.24 million in pledges to the *Called to Community* 2026 Operating Fund campaign! This campaign funds all of our ministries and operations for 2026. To date, 22 new families have made pledges, and repeat pledging families increased their pledges by an average of 6.72%. Thank you! There is still time to pledge via the QR code. Thank you to our Stewardship Committee and SMPC staff for their hard work on this campaign.



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