



A Service of Worship

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Ding Dong! Merrily on High* arr. Robert Lau

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Sandy Hull
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Moment for Mission Heather Carpenter, Leanne Royster

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 – PEACE
Judy Casey, Colby Nutter

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

All: Prince of Peace, at times our souls are disquieted, weary from our own expectations. The anxiousness of life can pull us away from the promise of your peace. Yet you offer us peace, a gift unlike the world's, bringing calm to the chaos within us. We say "yes" to the peace you give, and all that comes with it. Amen.

***Carol 88** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* VENI EMMANUEL
(Stanzas 1, 2, 6, and 7)



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

Prince of Peace, in this busy season, we confess that we lose sight of you. Our hearts are often troubled, restless with fear, distracted by uncertainty, and weighed down by expectations we cannot carry. The noise of the world pulls us away from your calming presence, and we forget that your peace is a gift, that is not earned, not grasped, but given. Forgive us for seeking peace in everything but you. Forgive us when our anxious spirits overshadow our trust. Teach us to walk in your way of peace; to listen more than we speak, to love more than we judge, and to rest in the promise of your steadfast care. Renew us by your Spirit, that we may prepare the way for Christ, our Prince of Peace. May we receive your peace with open hands and rest in your steadfast love. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

*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. **Story Connection:** Read or [listen to](#) *Miracle on 133rd Street* by Sonia Manzana. This story shows how a simple act of welcome can change everything. Neighbors who begin the evening feeling sad, angry, or afraid are transformed when José and his family invite them in to share a Christmas roast. As Noell Rathbun Cook writes on Storypath, this book helps children imagine how welcoming and being welcomed opens us to God's joy and peace. ([Storypath Source](#))
2. **Explore:** Watch this [Bible Project video](#) about John the Baptizer. John's story helps us understand what it means to be ready for Jesus. After watching, open your Bible and see what else you can discover about John. The Bible Project is a wonderful and accessible resource for all ages to explore Scripture together.
3. **Game:** Play a movement game at home to think about being "ready" for Jesus. Choose an open space and call out, "READY, SET, GO!" Each round, use a different motion—hopping, skipping, running, or walking backward. Talk about what it means to listen, pay attention, and prepare our hearts during Advent. You can also explore these related activity pages: [Crossword](#), [Word Search](#), [Decoder](#)
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. Today is the second Sunday of Advent, when we celebrate Christ's peace. How do these Bible passages help us understand what true peace is?
 - b. I wonder why John the Baptist lived such a wild and unexpected life. (You might read "[The Peace of Wild Things](#)" afterward to think about peace and wilderness.)
 - c. I wonder how we can welcome others in the same spirit that Paul describes in Romans 15 — with acceptance, support, and love.
 - d. I wonder how our family can share Christ's peace with others this week — at home, at school, or in our community.



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

Matthew 3:1-12

Rev. Odom

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' " Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Anthem

No Night There

Dan Forrest

Chancel Choir; Amanda Turner, violin; Blythe Kinsey, piano

God is with us, God is for us; do not be afraid.

There shall be no night there, no crying there;

God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes;

Lo, I am with you always, even to the end.

Even in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Second Reading

Romans 15:1-13

Dr. Hull

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our

instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

Sermon

"Where to Now?"

Dr. Hull

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

Heidelberg Catechism

Rev. Melissa White

One: What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

All: My only comfort, in life and in death, is that I belong – body and soul, in life and in death – not to myself, but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Offertory

In the Bleak Midwinter

arr. Jason Krug

Amanda Turner, violin

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!

Invitation to the Table

Dr. Hull

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Odom

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, Rev. White

The Bread and the Cup

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.

Communion of the People

Hymn 347

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY

1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim, with

(G) (F#) (G) (D) (Em)
B^b A B^b F Gm

trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly
earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man
on the way, as the Light of light de -
sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the

(Bm) (C) (G) (D)
Dm E^b B^b F

mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,
pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

(B) (Em) (Bm) (A)
D Gm Dm C

Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth,
he will give to all the faith - ful
that the powers of hell may van - ish
"Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

(Bm) (Em) (F#m) (Bm)
Dm Gm Am Dm

our full hom - age to de - mand.
his own self for heaven - ly food.
as the shad - ows clear a - way.
al - le - lu - ia, Lord most high!"

Carol 116

The Snow Lay on the Ground

VENITE ADOREMUS



1 The snow lay on the ground; the stars shone bright,
2 'Twas gen - tle Mar - y maid, so young and strong,
3 Saint Jo - seph too was by to tend the child,
4 And thus that man - ger poor be - came a throne;



when Christ our Lord was born on Christ - mas night.
who wel - comed here the Christ - child with a song.
to guard him, and pro - tect his moth - er mild.
for he whom Mar - y bore was God the Son.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
She laid him in a stall at Beth - le - hem;
The an - gels hov - ered round and sang this song:
O come, then, let us join the heaven - ly host



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
the ass and ox - en shared the roof with them.
Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
to praise the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.

The Prayer after Communion

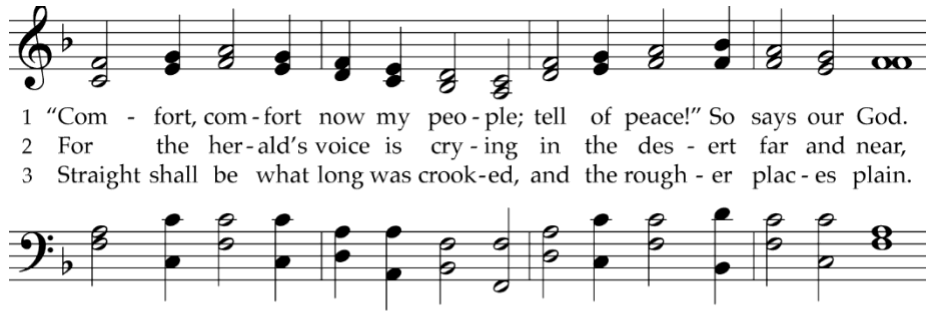
Rev. White

We Go Out to Serve

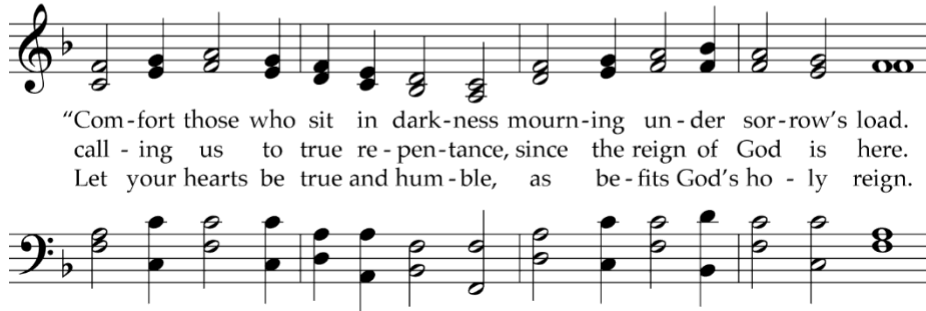
***Carol 87**

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

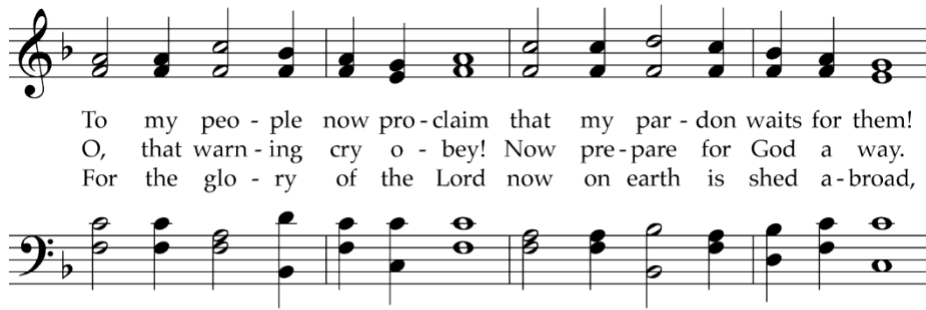
GENEVAN 42



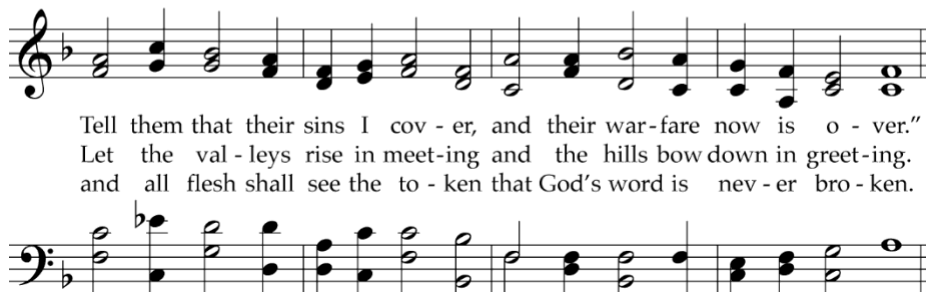
1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



"Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To my peo - ple now pro - claim that my par - don waits for them!
 O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver."
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

***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.

Postlude

Toccata on "Veni Emmanuel"

Adam Heron

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

Chancel Choir

Amanda Turner, violin

Blythe Kinsey, piano

A/V Team: Kari Case, Xander Case

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

Welcome Team: Jack Hess, Amy Zagora

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, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of December 4, 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

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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!



We welcome Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor, and his wife, Belinda, for their first Sunday in worship at SMPC!

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS



Advent Devotionals! It's not too late to subscribe to our Advent Devotionals via QR code!

Angel Tree Tags - Thank you for your generosity! 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 next Sunday, December 14. Contact: Kristin Colson, kscolson@carolina.rr.com.



today
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.



today
DEC. 7
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music **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

sunday
DEC. 7
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

SMPC Youth Christmas Party **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.

monday
DEC. 8
10:00 a.m. -
11:00 a.m.

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. 9
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, [jjameson@gmail.com](mailto:jgjameson@gmail.com).

tuesday
DEC. 9
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: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com

tuesday
DEC. 9
7:30 p.m.

Men's Evening Study Group
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.

wednesday
DEC. 10
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 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. 11
9:00 a.m.

Shelter Ministry
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.

thursday
DEC. 11
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.

saturday
DEC. 13
times vary

Salvation Army Bell Ringing
Belk, SouthPark Mall

Saturday, December 20 also available. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com.



sunday
DEC. 14
6:00 p.m. -
7:30 p.m.

Festival of Carols
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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

Youth Gift Wrapping Fundraiser, Sunday, December 21, 12:00-3:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall - Bring your gifts and wrapping paper or choose from some of our wrapping paper and let SMPC Youth wrap them for you! Proceeds offset costs and provide scholarships for our summer youth trips. \$5 per gift. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

SMPC PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION UPDATES!

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year at SMPC Preschool opens in January. Before registering a child, all families must meet with the director and tour the school. If you are interested in Fall 2026 enrollment for a 2 yr old-TK child, now is the time to tour (before the school breaks for Christmas!). Contact SMPC Preschool Director Tammy Winchip, tammy@smpchome.org, visit the preschool's website (www.smpcpreschool.org).

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT: "CREATED FOR COMMUNITY"

March 6-8, 2026 | William Black Lodge, Montreat

All ages are invited to join us for the SMPC All-Church Retreat as we explore how God created us for community! Our speaker, Rev. Laura Cunningham, will lead us through thought-provoking discussions and worship. We'll have time for fellowship, shared meals, games, and the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of Montreat. A deposit of \$65 per person is required at registration (deposit covers the cost of 4 meals). Room rates for the weekend range from \$250 to \$310, which will be collected at a later date. Financial assistance is available if needed. More details and register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

