South Mecklenburg
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship
First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2026
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Once in Royal David's City* arr. Victor Johnson

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Sandy Hull

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

Introit *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* Wayne Wold

***Call to Worship**

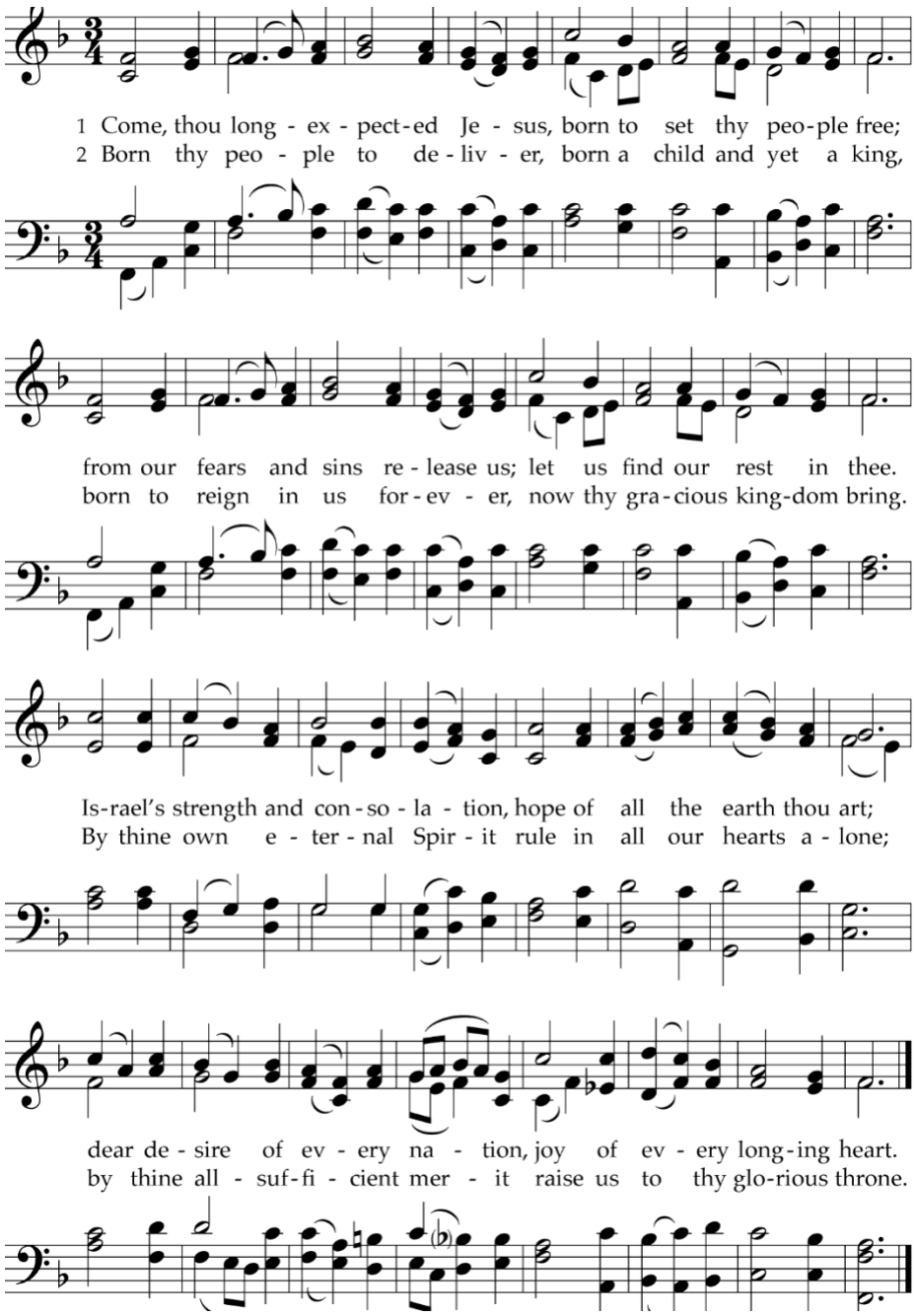
Lighting of the Advent Candle – HOPE

Melissa, Andrew, Ben Calvin and Lauren Cassell

One: We light the candle of hope.

All: Faithful God, you are the potter, and we are the clay. As we wait for the coming of Christ, shape our hearts and guide our hands. Help us to trust in your promises and respond to your call, just as Mary did. Fill us with hope, for God-is-with-us. Emmanuel is near. Amen.

Hymn 82** ***Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus HYFRYDOL



Prayer of Confession Reid Cook

One: I invite you to hold your hands open in front of you, palms facing upward, as we pray together.

All: Gracious God, you created us in love and gave us hands to care, to create, and to serve. You call us to share your love with the world, but too often, we forget.

One: Gently close your hands into fists.

All: We hold tightly to what we have instead of sharing generously. We cling to our own plans instead of remaining open to your calling. We grow impatient when life does not unfold as we hope.

One: Place your hands in your lap.

All: We fail to notice those who are hurting. We remain silent when others are treated unjustly. We wait for someone else to do the work you have called us to share. Forgive us, O God.

One: Open your hands again, palms facing upward.

All: In your mercy, forgive what we have done and what we have left undone. Open our eyes to recognize your presence. Open our hearts to receive your grace. And open our hands to love and serve our neighbors.

One: As we watch and wait for Christ, shape us into people of compassion, courage, and hope, ready to participate in your work of justice, mercy, and peace.

All: Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace Reid Cook

***Response of Praise** No. 113, stanza 1

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. **Light the Candle of Hope!** Today is the first Sunday of Advent. If you have an Advent wreath at home, light the first candle, the candle of Hope. As you watch the flame, share something that gives you hope. Pray together using the prayer from earlier in the worship service.
2. **Keep listening!** Children are invited to use our Children's Worship Guide during today's sermon! It's full of activities to help children listen, learn, and reflect on our Scripture readings. Children will stay all the way through worship today. Please note that there is a version for prereaders and one for readers.
3. **Advent at Home... or in the Car!** Looking for ways to celebrate Advent together? Check out our Advent resources, featuring Bible stories, music, conversation questions, prayers, and coloring pages. Pick up an **Advent at Home cup** in the narthex after worship or from the church office. Each cup includes hot chocolate and a QR code linking to the guide. Use it whenever and wherever it works for your household!
4. **Talk about it together!** In today's sermon, we heard that God is the potter and we are the clay. We also heard Jesus remind us to keep awake and watchful while we wait. Here are some questions to discuss:
   a. What did each person make with their clay? Why did you choose that shape?

b. Isaiah reminds us that we are the work of God's hands. What do you think that means?
c. Why do you think Jesus tells his disciples to “Keep awake”?
d. What is something you're waiting for right now? Is waiting easy or hard for you?
e. What's one way you can share God's love while you wait this Advent?

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 Savannah Brown

First Reading Isaiah 64:1–9 Savannah Brown

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Anthem *We’re Waiting for You, Lord* W. Clifford Petty

Chancel Choir; Amanda Alford, soloist

We’re waiting for you, Lord, to come by here.
Oh, we’ve been waiting, anticipating,
waiting for you, Lord, to come by here.
Come, O come, Emmanuel, come by here.

And ransom captive Israel, come by here.
Come, O Wisdom, from on high, come by here.
To us, the path of knowledge show, come by here.
Come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, come by here.
From every foe, deliver them, come by here.
Come by here, my Lord, come by here.
Oh, we've been waiting, anticipating,
waiting for you, Lord, to come by here.

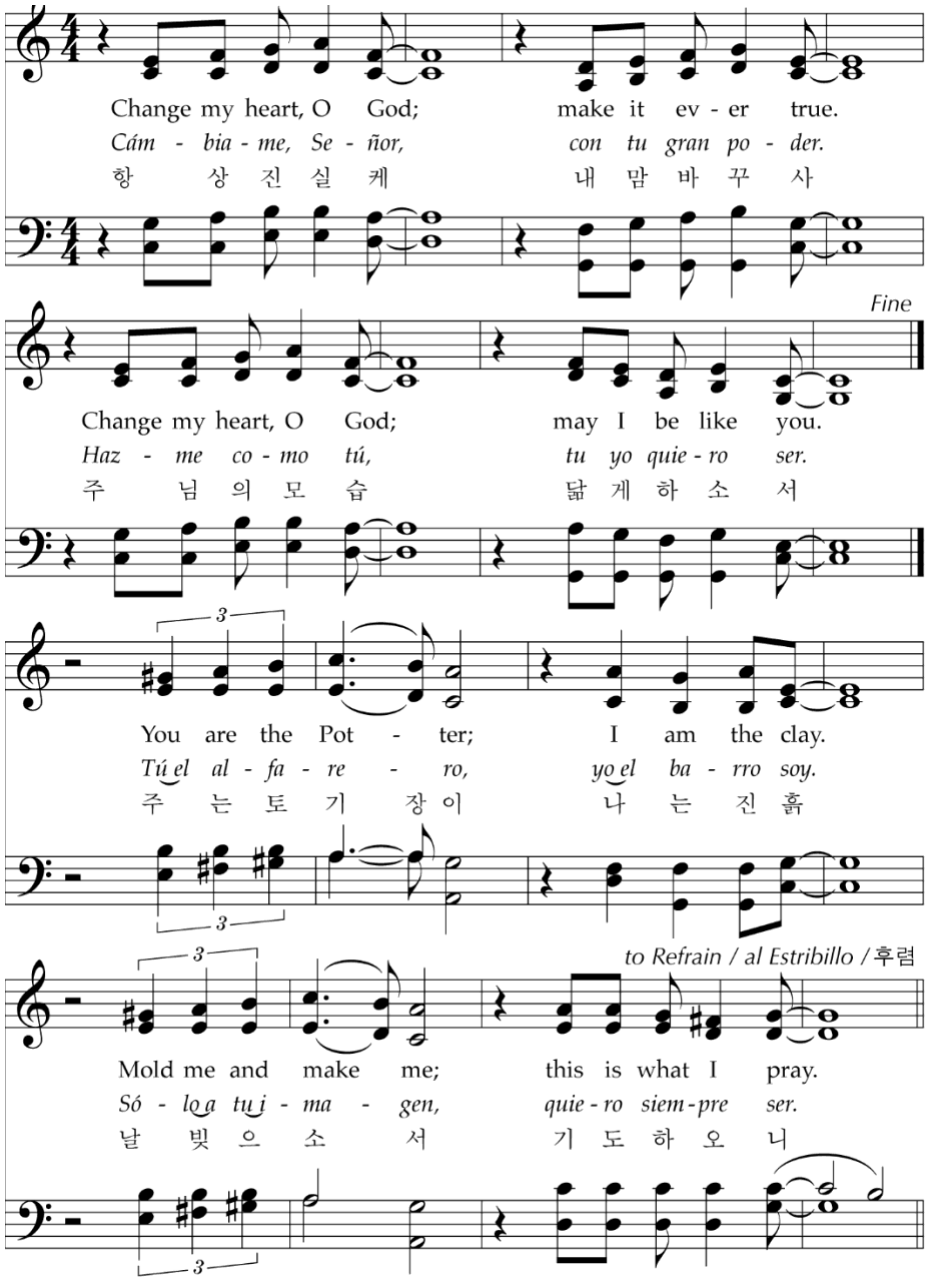
Second Reading Mark 13:32-37 Rev. Lindsey Odom

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

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

Sermon The Work of Waiting Rev. Odom

Hymn 695** ***Change My Heart, O God CHANGE MY HEART



***The Affirmation of Faith** *(unison)* The Apostles' Creed

Dr. Hull

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 right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer Rebecca Guzman

. . . (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.

Offering Invitation Dr. Hull

Offertory *Of the Father's Love Begotten* arr. J. Bert Carlson

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

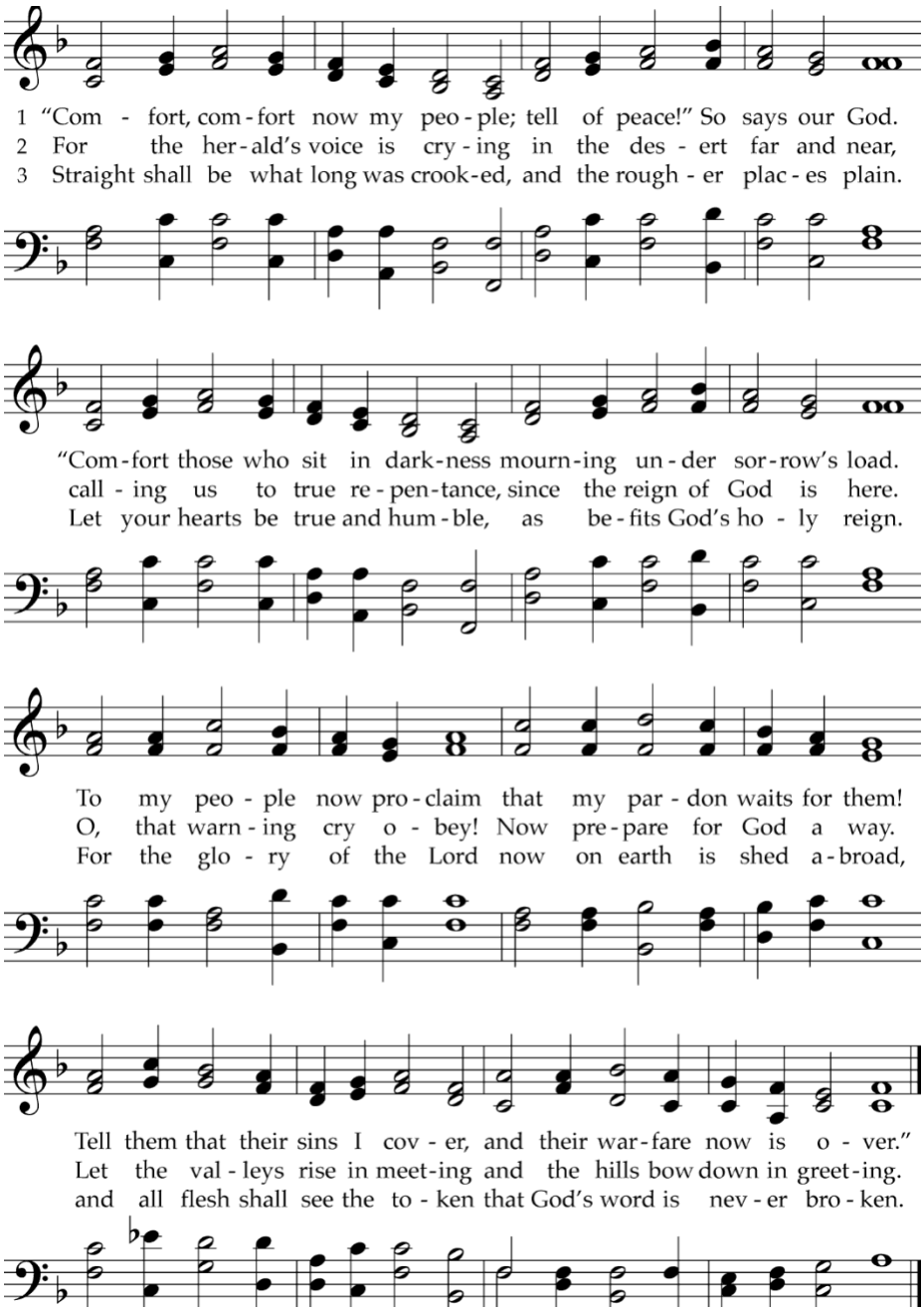
Praise to God, the One who made us.
Praise to Christ, the soon-born Son.
Praise the Spirit, ever with us.
Praise the Godhead, Three in One.
Clear a path! Prepare the way!
Advent leads to Christmas Day!

***Prayer of Dedication** Caroline Brown

Gracious God, thank you for the many gifts you have given us. As we begin this season of Advent, help us to wait with hope, share with generous hearts, and use our gifts to love and serve others. Bless these offerings and use them to bring your love, peace, hope, and joy to our world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

Hymn 87** ***Comfort, Comfort Now My People GENEVAN 42



***Charge and Benediction** Rev. Odom

***Congregational 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
Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor
Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist
Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation
Chancel Choir; Amanda Alford, soloist
Caroline Brown, Savannah Brown, Reid Cook, liturgists

A/V Team: Brad Alford

Ushers: Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Richard Franseen, Jenny Gates, Bjorn Hansen, Craig Parrish

Welcome Team: Kathy Galati, Betsy Leonard

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 Thursday mornings, contact Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, adrienne@smpchome.org. SMPC uses Realm as a church directory and for event registrations. If you are new to Realm or have questions about it, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, and she will be happy to help!

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? To learn more about membership and the process of joining, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of November 24, 2026)

Remember in Prayer

- Steve Stevenson, our Property Administrator, as he recovers from surgery.
- The Mission Study Task Force as they work to discern God's calling for SMPC.
- The people of Bayonnais and all of Haiti, that God would bring protection from violence, healing for the injured, provision for those in need, and strength and hope in the midst of hardship.
- All those affected by conflict, displacement, and unrest around the world and at home.
- That God would guide us to serve others with compassion, justice, and mercy within our church, our community, and our world.

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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Laura Black, Ministry Associate for Children and Music

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Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

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Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

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Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager

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Cheryl Perry, Director of Communications

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Steve Stevenson, Facility Administrator

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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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SMPC WEEKLY

WELCOME!

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, NOVEMBER 29

Sign Up for Advent Weekly Devotionals

Written by SMPC members and staff, and illustrated by SMPC children, subscribers will receive SMPC Advent Devotionals in their email inbox daily. Subscribe via the QR code. *Contact: Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com*

Advent at Home...or in the Car!

This Advent, we're inviting households to explore the Christmas story together! *Advent at Home...or in the Car!* Scan QR code for more! *Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org, or Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org*

SMPC Angel Tree

The SMPC Angel Trees are located in the narthex and outside the church office! Thank you for bringing Christmas cheer to families in need at Smithfield and Sterling Elementary! You can also select a tag online by scanning the QR code. Wrapped gifts are due Monday, December 14. Monetary donations are also accepted. *Contact: Kristin Colson, kscolson@carolina.rr.com*

Advent Study: "God's Surprises for the Christmas Season"

11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Parlor

Led by Kari Case. All are welcome. *Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org*

THIS WEEK

SMPC Tuesday Mahjong

Tuesday, Dec. 1 • 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Narthex

Players of all skill levels are invited to play weekly on Tuesdays. *Contact: Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org*

Handiworkers Group

Tuesday, Dec. 1 • 10:00 a.m. • 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*

Pastor's Weekday Bible Study

Wednesday, Dec. 2 • 9:30 a.m. • McQueen Room or Zoom

Everyone is welcome at this weekly study, which is currently focusing on the Sermon on the Mount. *Contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org*

SMPC Thursday Mahjong

Thursday, Dec. 3 • 1:15-3:15 p.m. • Narthex

Players of all skill levels are invited to play weekly on Thursdays. *Contact: Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org*

Making Space Moms Group - Praying with Scripture

Thursday, Dec. 3 • 7:30 p.m. • Room 302

We'll discover ways to use the Bible as a starting point for prayer, even when you're not sure what to say. Newcomers are always welcome! *Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com*

Friday Morning Men's Group

Friday, Dec. 4 • 7:30-8:30 a.m. • Room 206

Meets on the first and third Fridays for study and fellowship. All are welcome. *Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com*

Parents' Night Out...and Children's Christmas Party

Saturday, Dec. 5 • 4:00-7:00 p.m. • Mecklenburg Hall • Ages 3-5th Grade

Children will enjoy dinner, games and playtime, Christmas crafts, the Christmas story, and maybe even a short Christmas movie. Register on Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org*

Women's Advent Tea

Saturday, Dec. 5 • 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Mecklenburg Hall

Join us for lunch, tea and a special guest speaker. Bring your favorite tea cup or mug! More details and register via QR code, Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 6

Adult Advent Study: "God's Surprises for the Christmas Season"

9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room OR 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Parlor

We are offering this study at two different times to make it easier for everyone to participate! Register on Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org*

Alternative Gift Market

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. • Narthex

Agencies will be at the church to share more information on how your donation can help those in need. Shop online via the QR code until December 25. *Contact: Heather Carpenter, heathercarpenter1@yahoo.com, or Leanne Royster, leanneroyster@gmail.com*

Third Thirty

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Mecklenburg Hall • Ages 60-90

Learn about the most common scams, discuss tips to protect yourself from scams and fraud, and find out how to get help if you have been the victim of a scam or fraud. Register on Realm by December 3. *Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org*

BAM! (Bible and Music)

5:00-6:30 p.m. • Palmer Building • Grades K-5

Children sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, explore instruments, and build friendships in age-based groups. Dinner is served. Register on Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org*

December BYG and Gingerbread Houses

5:00-6:30 p.m. • Mecklenburg Hall • Middle and High Schoolers

We'll enjoy a Christmas party, an Advent devotion and gingerbread-house decorating! Register on Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org*

COMING UP

Lunch Bunch Winter Gathering

Tuesday, Dec. 8 • 11:30 a.m. • Burton's at Blakeney

All are invited to join this group for lunch! RSVP via QR code or by emailing Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com, by December 6.

A Caregiver's Journey

Tuesday, Dec. 8 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • McQueen Room

A support group focused on finding meaning and purpose while caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. *Contact: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com*

Shelter Ministry

Thursday, Dec. 10 • 9:30 a.m. • Room 104 (Palmer Building)

Fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. Body wash and Rx vials are always needed. *Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@gmail.com*

Men's Breakfast Group

Thursday, Dec. 10 • 9:30 a.m. • Big View Diner

Meets the second and fourth Thursdays to enjoy breakfast and conversation. *Contact: Bob Tyler, btyler@unitedskates.com*

SMPC Book Club - Pages and Fellowship

Thursday, Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m. OR Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1:30 p.m. • McQueen Room

Choose from two meeting times! Both groups are reading *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. Register on Realm or smpchome.org/events. *Contact: Freda Smith, fredasmithnc8@gmail.com, or Jane Brookshire, jane.t.brookshire@gmail.com*

Bell Ringing for Salvation Army

ADVENT SERVE!

Belk, SouthPark Mall, Saturdays December 5, 12, 19, 10:00 am-4:00 pm (two-hour shifts). Scan QR code to sign up. *Contact: Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com*