

 South Mecklenburg
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
8601 Bryant Farms Road
Charlotte, NC 28277
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They called it Blitzmas. Eighty years ago, the skies over London didn't immediately call to mind angel choruses bringing greetings or even an eastern star shining o'er a becalmed Bethlehem creche. Rather, the night firmament bore the dread of droning engines and whistling bombs. A typical London night in 1940 during Advent might find over 1,000,000 people huddled in air-raid shelters beneath the streets praying for a dawn that might not come and hoping beyond hope for the homecoming of a loved one far away in military service. Three years later, Advent would find American loved ones welling with emotion as Bing Crosby sang the sentiments of soldiers overseas. "...Please have snow and mistletoe and presents by the tree ... I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams." Christmas was going to be different than hoped for, but Christmas would still arrive in spite of it all. So, it would call upon the people's creativity and resourcefulness to acknowledge and celebrate that Christ comes to us regardless of any circumstances that may challenge us. Simple gifts were exchanged, makeshift celebrations were organized in unusual places, and yes, love was born.

Like Londoners during the Blitz, we too, enter this Advent with the pall of threat hanging over us; and with a toll that is already over seven times higher than that of the Blitz over WWII Britain, our current Covid blitz is certainly no less destructive. Yet, Advent is upon us and Christ will come, nevertheless. So, like the Londoners before us, we too, must endeavor to proclaim Advent's promise in new ways, addressing our challenges with creativity, ingenuity, patience, and love. Though we will not be able to gather the same way we have in years past, we will still be together through the wonder of Zoom choirs, walk-through Communion, Advent wreaths, and the Good News of Christ's birth. Even now, most especially now, Christ comes to SMPC. "For unto us a child is born..."

Grace and peace,

Matt

Dr. Matt Brown



THANKSGIVING SERVICE

ONLINE

AVAILABLE BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25
WWW.SMPCHOME.ORG ~ BOXCAST ~ FACEBOOK LIVE

GRATITUDE  WORSHIP  PRAYER

Join us at noon on Thanksgiving Day for our interactive prayer, *Thankful Thursdays* on Facebook Live!

Please list the things you are grateful for in the comments.



Sunday, November 22, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., SMPC Campus

Cider & Snacks

Join your SMPC family after worship for socially-distanced fellowship and an opportunity to pick up the following:

Advent Candles & Wreath Kits

Do you have an Advent Wreath? If you don't, please pick up a kit on Sunday, November 22 after worship to prepare for the Advent season. The wreath kit is \$5 and comes with a foam ring, candles, and instructions for assembly. You add your own materials to make it yours. Already have a wreath? Get fresh candles for \$4.

Sign up on ChurchLife for candles or a kit.



Family, Faith, & Fellowship: Advent Kit

Our Faith@Home: Advent kits will be distributed on Sunday, November 22 after worship. Make sure to sign up on ChurchLife for a kit so you will have the kit before the first Sunday of Advent, November 29.



Sunday, December 6

Family, Faith, & Fellowship: Christmas Pageant, 4:00 p.m.-5:15 p.m., SMPC Campus

Families are invited to gather for a Christmas celebration! We will distribute costumes, learn about the Christmas story, and then do a very simple socially-distanced pageant on the sanctuary steps.

Sign up on ChurchLife.

ADVENT STUDIES

ADULTS: Light of the World, Tuesdays, November 24 - December 15, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

In this study, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Join her as she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. Led by Rebecca Guzman. Sign up on ChurchLife.

YOUTH: Viva! The Christmas Story, Tuesdays, December 1, 8 & 15, 7:00 p.m.-7:45 p.m., Zoom

This study invites the group into an honest conversation about each Gospel's account, or lack thereof, of Christ's birth story. Specifically, we'll take the time to explore what each God-inspired author is trying to communicate with the way they tell the story. Sign up on ChurchLife.



Sunday, December 13

A Festival of Carols, 10:10 a.m., Streaming on www.smpchome.org/Boxcast/Facebook Live

This special ONLINE worship service, featuring Handel's Messiah, will be led by members of all ages of the SMPC Music Ministry. Worship with us and experience this fantastic musical pillar of our faith as we hear the story of Christ's birth and sing classic and new carols with all of our choirs!

SMPC Youth: Outdoor Movie Night, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., SMPC Campus

Our Youth will gather under the stars for socially-distanced fellowship and fun! Sign up on ChurchLife.



Monday, December 21

The Longest Night, 12:00 p.m., Streaming on www.smpchome.org/Boxcast/Facebook Live

This service is an offering of consolation and hope for many who move through the holidays with great difficulty due to divorce, grief, loss of employment or illness. Please invite a friend to share in this tender online service.

Advent Devotional: Online

Our annual offering of daily devotions is written by SMPC members and illustrated by our children.

This year, the devotions will be delivered as a daily blog post available at www.smpchome.org/advent and facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian.

For complete details of all Advent services and activities, please visit www.SMPCHome.org/Advent.

Odd Moon Over Ballantyne

A book by Dr. Matthew Brown featuring a collection of Advent sermons.

Available on Amazon and in the church office.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Streaming on www.smpchome.org/Boxcast/Facebook Live

5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE WALK-THROUGH COMMUNION

12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Alternative Gift Market: November 25 - December 24

This year, our Alternative Gift Market will be completely online. Visit www.smpchome.org/advent to view gift options and donate to your preferred agency. This is a wonderful opportunity for year-end giving, purchasing A GIFT THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE honoring family and friends in the form of contributions to worthy local and global missions. Contact: Carol Palmgren, carol.palmgren@gmail.com.



Angel Tree

Although the process will look a bit different this year, we invite you to join in our SMPC tradition of collecting and delivering Christmas gifts for area families in need. Visit www.smpchome.org/advent and click on the Angel Tree link for details and to view and select wished-for gifts. Return wrapped, labeled items to the church by Tuesday, December 15 in preparation for delivery on Wednesday, December 23.

Contact :Kristin Colson, kcolson@carolina.rr.com.

Christmas Cookies for Roof Above's Overflow Shelter: Sunday, December 6

Calling all bakers and cookie buyers! SMPC will be providing Christmas cookies for Roof Above's Overflow Shelter on Statesville Avenue. We are in need of 260 individually-wrapped bags of Christmas cookies!

Sign up to provide cookies at www.smpchome.org/advent; drop off at the church during the December 6 Family, Faith, & Fellowship event, 4:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m. Contact :Shelby Ullman, shelby.ullman@gmail.com.

Red Kettle Bell Ringing 2020: November 28, December 5 & 12

We invite you to join your SMPC family in ringing to bring joy for the Salvation Army again this Christmas season.

SMPC has reserved three days, with multiple shifts to volunteer: Saturday, November 28 (Walmart, Arboretum), Saturday, December 5 and 12 (Belk, SouthPark Mall).

This year, ringers are required to wear masks and the Salvation Army has put touchless donation options in place. The needs in our community are great! We look forward to showing our support for the local Red Kettle Campaign which raises funds for all Salvation Army programs, including Center of Hope, throughout the year.

To reserve your family's spot, visit www.smpchome.org/advent. Contact :Terry Gaines, terryhgaines@gmail.com.



CHRISMON TREE PHOTOS

This year, SMPC is honoring this annual tradition by offering dedicated times for photos with our Chrismon tree.

Visit www.smpchome.org/advent to sign up for a time slot on the following days: November 29, December 6, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 20.

Questions? Contact Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org.

