

Room to DREAM

through a spirit of generosity

A Beacon to Ballantyne and Beyond

Since joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church in 2007, the Sinclair family has connected with many ministries and programs. Whether offering songs in worship, serving a meal at Salvation Army's Center of Hope, leading little ones in Vacation Bible School, or making sure our SMPC campus looks lovely, the Sinclairs are "all in."

"SMPC is like a family to us – especially to our girls," said Wendy, whose strongest connection is with her circle, Journey of Faith. The women meet twice a month for study, fellowship and support. Their children have grown up together at SMPC, and the moms have served as Confirmation mentors for each other's children. "Our small group is a place where we all feel loved and supported."

Daughter Caroline is an eighth grader in the 2016-17 Confirmation Class; her mentor is Tricia Gosnell. "My most meaningful experience at SMPC so far has been growing my faith through Confirmation and building a relationship with my mentor," Caroline said. Her dream is to put her faith in action by going on a youth mission trip one day. She and Julianne are both active participants in our youth program and enjoy their roles as VBS helpers in the summer. As a result, Wendy says when the girls see younger kids that they know from VBS, they are all excited to see one another.

In Confirmation Class, our youth spend a year in study – seeking to understand God's Word, what it means to love and serve our neighbors, and the importance of generously sharing our talents and our resources. The Sinclair family puts all of these lessons into action when it comes to their faith journey at SMPC. "Being actively engaged in a church family is important to us," said Collin, whose parents, Anne and Tommy Sinclair, joined SMPC in 2010. "SMPC provides my family a place for spiritual growth, engagement and fellowship. It also provides us with a strong sense of community. It's very comforting to know that our church family will always be there to support us."

The Sinclairs share a passion for serving our neighbors and Wendy hopes that SMPC will have an even greater impact on Charlotte's homeless community through the Center of Hope in the future. "While SMPC currently supports many great programs, our current debt does constrain our ability to do more in our community and around the world," said Collin.

Please join the Sinclairs in making the dream of expanding SMPC's ability to impact homelessness and the needs of vulnerable people in Charlotte and beyond. Take time to pray and faithfully contemplate how you can financially support the 2017-2020 Room to Dream capital campaign. As we share this responsibility, SMPC can be debt-free in nine years, allowing us to commit more resources to those God calls us to love and serve.



*"Our dream is for SMPC to be able to expand the number and scope of ministries we support. The church community can play a critical role in solving some of the biggest challenges in our society. Our hope is that SMPC can be a model congregation to this area."
-- Collin Sinclair*

From left: Wendy, Caroline (14), Julianne (16) and Collin Sinclair

A Spiritual Home

Cristy and Chuck Powell joined South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church in 2003. Married at First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte and expecting their first child, the young couple wanted their new family to worship close to home so they could be actively engaged.

Today, the family of five is deeply rooted in the life of SMPC. In 14 years they have seen our congregation grow from less than 400 members to over 1,200. Worship services have moved from Mecklenburg Hall to our permanent Sanctuary where our youth recently led us in worship. "It was so powerful to experience the gifts of our amazingly talented young people! I've taught most of them in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, so I got a little emotional," said Cristy. Their eighth-grade son Nathan led a prayer written by his fellow Confirmation Class members.

While all three Powell children have been baptized at SMPC, only six-year-old Katie was baptized in our permanent Sanctuary. "Katie's baptism was in March of 2011 and our son Grant still says that standing with his sister that day is one of his most special memories at SMPC," said Cristy.

Whether they are sorting rice and beans during Stop Hunger Now, participating in the CROP Walk, or going to the Massanetta Youth Conference, the Powells look forward to serving and spending time with their SMPC friends. Last fall, Chuck accompanied the Confirmation Class on an eye-opening weekend retreat where our young people experienced homelessness and poverty in Asheville. Cristy, who served on SMPC's search committee that brought us Rebecca Guzman, looks forward to chaperoning future youth mission and fellowship trips.

Like our early founders who gathered at McAlpine Elementary 26 years ago with a dream of building a spiritual foundation for their families, the Powells are leaving a lasting legacy through their active engagement at SMPC. We are grateful for their spirit of generosity in sharing their gifts and themselves.



"Our three children know they can always turn to God and their church family. Our dream is that no matter where life takes them, they will know they can come home to SMPC. Of course, we'd love for them all to get married in our Sanctuary some day!"

-- Cristy Powell

From left: Chuck, Grant (11), Cristy, Katie (6) and Nathan (14) Powell

When "making a difference in the world" was the theme of Katie Powell's Daisy Troop meeting, mom Cristy enlisted the girls' help in decorating snack bags for A Child's Place. During SMPC's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, 500 bags were packed for Charlotte's homeless children; 100 of the colorful sacks were created by Katie and her Daisy Troop #1511 friends! They meet at Harrisburg Elementary in Indian Land, SC – one of SMPC's tutoring partner schools.



Room to Dream: My Stewardship Journey

by Dr. Matt Brown

The revered Christian mystic, Thomas Merton, said, "You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope."

Some 10 years ago, a regional church administrator told me that people would never cross the Union County line to go to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church. Another church expert later informed one of our Sunday School classes that "you are doing nearly everything wrong at South Mecklenburg, but you're growing anyway." Thankfully, many of you just ignored them because you saw the future differently. In spite of the worst financial crisis since the Depression, you pressed on with the conviction that the Spirit of God was moving within the community you call SMPC, and yes, many of you crossed both county and state lines to be a part of the journey.

By your generosity, diligence, prayer and effort a patch of North Carolina clay was transformed into a resplendent sacred space, allowing this unique faith community to represent Christ's hospitality whenever we pray, play and praise. It is hard to believe we are in our eighth year of worship in our permanent Sanctuary! Whether you began your SMPC journey at McAlpine Elementary, Mecklenburg Hall, or your preferred pew in the balcony, your presence and commitment have been integral to our growth. We now see the possibility of paying down our mortgage and lifting up our presence in the larger community. There are dreams of an operating room in our blessed community of Bayonnais. There are visions of a Charlotte where everyone is valued and has a voice in: constructively confronting homelessness; enhancing educational opportunity; fostering social mobility; and building relationships across racial and religious lines.

Together, working toward the fulfillment of the promise our Sanctuary has provided us, who knows what God has in store for us? God is giving us room to dream and I am convinced that a community built upon the hospitality of Christ instead of the narrowness of dogma is the primary calling of this age. For it is grace that has brought of safe thus far, and grace will lead us on.

We come from different places, we were raised with different ideas, we possess different gifts, and we won't always agree. But, I believe this diversity is precisely why we have become a place of welcome. I have certainly experienced it here through your graciousness, and I am committed to sharing this great work with you. Yeats said, "In dreams begin responsibilities," And so, for the Brown family, our commitment to the ministries and facilities of SMPC have by far been the largest financial commitment we have made apart from our house.



We believe in the "us" God is creating here. Donna and I invite you to join us in making a prayerfully significant contribution to this campaign so that future generations may have room to dream. The Lord be with you.

Dr. Matt Brown and wife, Donna, were part of an SMPC mission trip to Haiti in January. Like all previous SMPC capital fundraising efforts, our Room to Dream campaign has a benevolence component. Three percent of funds raised will be shared between our friends in Haiti and ministries SMPC supports in Charlotte.





South Mecklenburg
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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→ PRAYER WALK → **Saturday, April 22**

Take a spiritual time out with your SMPC family on Saturday, April 22. Come as you are with your family, by yourself, or with your small group and drop in between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to experience our beautiful 14-acre campus – rain or shine.

It is a time of prayer, reflection and gratitude as you embark on a guided prayer journey through 12 different stations inside our wonderful facilities and throughout the grounds. A prayer leader will greet you at each destination along the way – the Community Outreach closet, outdoor worship space, pastors' offices – and offer self-directed activities. The prayer walk can be completed in as little as 30 minutes, but you are invited to linger as long as you like.

"As we consider our dreams for the future of SMPC on our journey toward generosity, prayer is a major component," said Kathy Galati who is helping to lead the spiritual life aspect of our *Room to Dream* Capital Campaign. "We're excited to offer this unique prayer event. Our hope is that our entire SMPC family will enjoy this opportunity to slow down, focus on prayer and reflect on how we might offer our gifts of time and resources. And we are also eager for people to learn more about the variety of ministries and programs SMPC offers." Kathy and her co-chair Lisa Gilleland look forward to seeing members of all ages for this guided prayer event.

For more information, contact Kathy at kathyhg118@yahoo.com or Lisa at lsgilleland@gmail.com.

Room to
DREAM →
through a spirit of generosity

**Commitment
Sunday
APRIL
23**

**One worship service at
10:30 a.m.
followed by lunch!**