



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

First Sunday after Easter

April 16, 2023

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude *Toccata in Seven* John Rutter

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Matthew S. Brown

Introit *This Joyful Eastertide* Paul Bouman

***Call to Worship** Judah Estes

One: Christ is risen! He greets us with a word of peace.

Many: We welcome the risen Christ! We worship and adore him!

One: Christ is risen! Locked doors and doubting hearts cannot keep him away.

Many: We welcome the risen Christ! We worship and adore him!

One: Christ is risen! He comes to bless us with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**All: We welcome the risen Christ! We worship and adore him!
Amen.**

***Hymn** *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright* No. 254

1 That Eas - ter day with joy was bright; the sun shone
 2 He bade them see his hands, his side, where yet the
 3 From ev - ery weap - on death can wield, your own re -

out with fair - er light when, to their long - ing
 glo - rious wounds a - bide, the to - kens true which
 deemed for - ev - er shield; O Lord of all, with

eyes re - stored, the a - pos - tles saw their ris - en Lord.
 made it plain their Lord in - deed was risen a - gain.
 us a - bide in this our joy - ful Eas - ter - tide.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rebecca Guzman

We use a lot of words, Gracious God, but do little to turn them into deeds. Instead of being of one heart and soul, we choose sides and form groups of folks just like us. Blessed with great grace, we have trouble sharing it with those who need it the most. Forgive us, God of love. Forgive us, as we step out of our shadows into your light. Restore us, as we reveal our brokenness. Hear us, as we proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord and our God. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rebecca Guzman

***Response of Praise**

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We Hear and Respond to the Word

Church Family Moment

Lindsey Odom

Today's Church Family Moment is based on the April Edition of the Year of Justice, a resource developed by Lindsey Odom that gives families ways to engage as Christians with one justice issue each month. April's focus is Creation Care in honor of Earth Day.

1. If you are worshiping from home, listen to this [readaloud](#) of Brother Sun, Sister Moon by Katherine Paterson. Originally a prayer of St. Francis, this poem was adapted by the author and illustrated by Pamela Dalton. This book nurtures thankfulness and gratitude as it praises God for God giving creation variety, beauty, and bounty. And within this sweep of praise, the author also includes those who are sick, suffering, or facing death. What are some ways you can praise God for God's gift of creation?
2. Share your favorite memories of being outside or what your favorite thing about nature is to a friend or family member. Connecting with creation and being reminded of God's goodness is a powerful way to motivate ourselves and others to care for God's creation.
3. Draw or collect pictures of things within God's creation for which you praise God. Make a collage.
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. Why do some people take care of God's creation while others do not care for it?
 - b. What does it mean to care for God's creation? What about the people that God has created?
 - c. What is one thing you would like to begin doing to care for God's creation?

Children's Liturgy

Lindsey Odom

As the children four years old through third grade gather for Children's Worship, the congregation is invited to sing (hymn no. 19):

***God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,
God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things belong,
Alleluia, alleluia, praise be to your name.***

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

Dr. Brown

Reading from the Old Testament

Psalm 111

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. The

fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Reading from the Gospels

John 20: 19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

"Unless..."

Dr. Brown

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

A Declaration of Faith, Ch. 4.5

Rebecca Guzman

Jesus is our living Lord. Jesus was dead and buried, but God raised him from the dead. The risen Lord appeared to his followers. They recognized him as their Master who had been crucified. Before Jesus left them, he commissioned them to proclaim to all people the good news of his victory over death, and promised to be with them always. We are certain that Jesus lives. He lives as God with us, touching all of human life with the presence of God. He lives as one of us with God. Because he shares our humanity and has bound us to himself in love, we have an advocate in the innermost life of God. We declare that Jesus is Lord. His resurrection is a decisive victory over the powers that deform and destroy human life. His lordship is hidden. The world appears to be dominated by people and systems that do not

acknowledge his rule. But his lordship is real. It demands our loyalty and sets us free from the fear of all lesser lords who threaten us. We maintain that ultimate sovereignty now belongs to Jesus Christ in every sphere of life. Jesus is Lord. He has been Lord from the beginning. He will be Lord at the end. Even now he is Lord.

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.**

Offertory *Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing* J. Wayne Kerr

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**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him,
all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication** Luke Estes
Loving O God, we offer these gifts on the promise that they will serve you in our community and world. May they help bring peace, love and justice for the earth and all who dwell in it. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn** *Thine Is the Glory* No. 238

1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con - quering Son; end - less is
 2 Lo! Je - sus meets us, ris - en from the tomb; lov - ing - ly
 3 No more we doubt thee, glo - rious Prince of life! Life is naught

the vic - tory thou o'er death hast won. An - gels in bright rai - ment
 he greets us, scat - ters fear and gloom. Let the church with glad - ness
 with - out thee; aid us in our strife. Make us more than con - quers

rolled the stone a - way, kept the fold - ed grave - clothes
 hymns of tri - umph sing, for the Lord now liv - eth;
 through thy death - less love; bring us safe through Jor - dan

Refrain

where thy bod - y lay.
 death hath lost its sting. Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con - quering
 to thy home a - bove.

Son; end - less is the vic - tory thou o'er death hast won.

***Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

***Congregational Response**

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place, I can feel his mighty power and his grace. I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place. Amen.

Postlude *Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!* Healey Willan

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Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor
Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation
Lindsey Odom, Director of Youth Ministry
Judah Estes, Luke Estes, liturgists
Ann Carney, organist

A/V Team: Chris Wilcox, Joe Wilcox

Deacon/Elder of the Day: Dick Engle

Ushers: Andy Burke, Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Richard Franseen,
Tom Klecker, Judy Jones

The flowers in worship today are given to the glory of God and in gratitude for our SMPC staff by the Gaines family.

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 Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, nancy@smpchome.org. These emails contain a weekly devotion and information about upcoming worship services and church activities. Also, find us on Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian) and Instagram: [@southmeckpres](https://www.instagram.com/southmeckpres).

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members on Sunday, April 23 at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, nancy@smpchome.org or 980-265-2839.

Congregational Notes (as of April 12, 2023)

Remember in Prayer

- All those affected by the conflict in Ukraine.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

prayer@SMPChome.org



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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smpchome.org

WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for coffee (served inside at Coffee Grounds) and lemonade and cookies (served outside). Come meet friends old and new!

Registry pads are located on your pew. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps speak to someone you haven't met! If you would like more information about SMPC or have prayer concerns, please complete a Welcome Card located in the pew rack.

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

tuesday
APR. 18
10:00 a.m.

Handiworkers Group **Palmer Building 104**

All knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters (beginners, experts, and anything in between) are invited. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.

tuesday
APR. 18
7:00 p.m.

Ramadan Iftar Dinner with Divan Center Friends **Mecklenburg Hall**

During the celebration of Ramadan, the Muslim community breaks their daily fast with a meal, referred to as an Iftar. Join us for an opportunity to come together for an interfaith Iftar family dinner with our Muslim neighbors from Divan Center, a local Turkish Islamic community. The Divan Center is providing traditional food for our dinner. We will all celebrate diversity and pray for unity. Free to attend. Please register on Realm or by using the QR code. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.



wednesday
APR. 19
9:30 a.m. &
6:30 p.m.

Conversations with Dr. Matt Brown **Zoom or Chapel 206 (9:30 a.m. only)**

Join us as we discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. We welcome new participants. Hybrid option for 9:30 a.m. class only. Contact for the Zoom ID#: Dr. Matt Brown, matt@smpchome.org.

thursday
APR. 20
12:30 p.m.

Food for Thought Book Group **McQueen Room**

All are welcome as we discuss the book *The Nature of Fragile Things* by Susan Meissner. Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.

thursday
APR. 20
7:30 p.m.

Making Space Mom's Group **Thursday, April 20, 7:30 p.m., McQueen Room**

Moms of all ages are invited to join us for study, service and fellowship. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

friday
APR. 21
7:30 a.m. -
8:30 a.m.

Friday Morning Men's Group **Mecklenburg Hall**

We are reading a new book starting this meeting: *Searching for Happiness* by Martin Thielen, author and retired Methodist minister. All are welcome! Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

sunday
APR. 23
9:00 a.m.

Book of Revelation Study Group
McQueen Room

Join Director of Spiritual Formation Rebecca Guzman and Melissa White for a six-week study of Revelation. No expertise necessary—we'll be learning together! No books or materials to purchase. Contact Rebecca to sign up, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday
APR. 23
5:00 p.m.

An Evening with Katherine Martin
Mecklenburg Hall

SMPC member Katherine Martin, author of the All Church Reads' book, *The Colorful Image of God: A White Christian's Guide to Doing Better*, will give insights into what inspired her to write the book and will offer ideas for doing better. There will also be time for Q&A and discussion. Participation in the All Church Reads discussion groups is not required – we encourage everyone to come and join the conversation! Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

sunday
APR. 23
5:00 p.m.
-6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music
Ages Kindergarten-5th Grade, Narthex

Children sing, engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza will be served. Please register on Realm by April 21. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday
APR. 23
5:00 p.m.
-6:15 p.m.

SMPC Youth High Seas Miniature Golf
High Seas Miniature Golf, 10001 Charlotte Hwy, Fort Mill, SC 29707

Middle and High School Youth

Drop off and pick up at High Seas. Register on Realm.

Looking Ahead

New! Men's Evening Study Group

Beginning Tuesday, April 25, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206

This new group will meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. All are welcome. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Lunch on the Grounds

Sunday, April 30, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall

Join us on the grounds of SMPC for fellowship and delicious food from Patty & the Dogs food truck! Burgers and dogs will be freshly cooked on site and will be served with your choice of toppings including homemade chili, slaw, relish, lettuce and tomato. Meals will include chips, a drink and a cookie. Register on Realm or by using the QR code. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.



Vacation Bible School

Monday, July 24 - Thursday, July 27, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Ready for some fun with the ultimate hero team? Hero Hotline VBS invites children of all ages to answer the call to serve God together. Ages 3-Rising 6th Grade (Rising 5th and 6th Graders participate in a concurrent program, Mission Possible.) There will be an extended day option this year. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.



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