



South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

12th Sunday after Pentecost

August 20, 2023

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude

Welcome and Concerns of the Church

Dr. Whitney Bayer

Introit

***Call to Worship**

Savannah Brown

One: Though we come from different circumstances,

Many: we are one in Christ.

One: Though we have traveled different paths of struggles and successes,

Many: we are one in Christ.

One: Though each one of us has struggles and strife, as well as joy,

Many: we are one in Christ.

One: Receive the loving power of Christ as the Lord's healing love, compassion, and hope embraces everyone!

Many: Let us reach out to others with that same love and compassion.

All: Praise be to God whose blessings extend to all people. Amen.

***Hymn**

I'll Praise My Maker

No. 806

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Bayer

God our refuge, you hear our cries for mercy. You lift the lowly and offer hope to the hopeless. But we, who benefit from your grace, do not emulate you and your ways. We are quick to condemn, exaggerate, critique and act mercilessly. We confess the ways we demean and dehumanize others. We pray for your forgiveness. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Bayer

***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

Rebecca Guzman

1. Listen to a [readaloud](#) of the book *I Can't Believe You Said That!* by Julia Cook. In the book, RJ just says whatever he is thinking out loud, without considering how it might feel to hear his words. His parents teach him to use a filter to sort his "thinking bubble" words and

decide which ones belong in his “talking bubble.” In our Gospel passage for today, Jesus gives us a similar filter and reminds us that our words matter.

2. Look at this [piece of art](#) painted by Keith Haring as part of his illustration of the Ten Commandments. What does it say about the power of our words? What kinds of words do you think the snakes represent?
3. Get some practice with using words that build one another up! Draw a picture or make a list of ways that you can use your words to show love and kindness to someone else. Write a note to someone about the lovely things you have noticed about them. Write down the things that you are grateful for. Jesus says that what comes out of our mouths reveals what’s in our hearts, but it works the other way too—when we decide that we will only let good words come out of our mouths, our hearts are also changed.
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. The Old Testament has lots of cleanliness rules, the rules about what one should eat and not eat. How do you think the people felt when Jesus said that these rules didn’t matter? Do you think they felt confused, angry, relieved?
 - b. What **does** Jesus say matters? Do words matter for us today?
 - c. What do the words we choose tell people about who we are?

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. 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. Matthew S. Brown

Reading from the Epistles

James 3: 5-12

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and

sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Reading from the Gospels

Matthew 15: 10-20

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Outcomes

Dr. Brown

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) The Confession of 1967: 9.36-9.37
Dr. Bayer

The church gathers to praise God, to hear God's word for humankind, to baptize and to join in the Lord's Supper, to pray for and present the world to God in worship, to enjoy fellowship, to receive instruction, strength, and comfort, to order and organize its own corporate life, to be tested, renewed, and reformed, and to speak and act in the world's affairs as may be appropriate to the needs of the time.

The church disperses to serve God wherever its members are, at work or play, in private or in the life of society. Their prayer and Bible study are part of the church's worship and theological reflection. Their witness is the church's evangelism. Their daily action in the world is the church in mission to the world. The quality of their relation with other persons is the measure of the church's fidelity.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Bayer

. . . (*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

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**

Lilly McAnally

Generous God, whose love knows no boundaries, work in us to remove the limits of our love. Bless these gifts, tithes, and offerings to heal those we deem as untouchable and to feed those we reject as undeserving. Allow them to open our minds to new possibilities, open our hearts to love freely, and open our hands to help each other. Expand our love and our offerings to see you in the world and to serve you in our lives. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn**

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

No. 265

(stanzas 1-4)

1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun does its suc -
2 To him shall end - less prayer be made, and prais - es
3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - ery tongue dwell on his
4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er he reigns: the pris - oners
5 Let ev - ery crea - ture rise and bring hon - ors pe -

ces - sive jour - neys run; his king - dom stretch from
throng to crown his head; his name, like sweet per -
love with sweet - est song, and in - fant voic - es
leap to loose their chains; the wea - ry find e -
cu - liar to our King; an - gels de - scend with

shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
fume, shall rise with ev - ery morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
shall pro - claim their ear - ly bless - ings on his name.
ter - nal rest, and all who suf - fer want are blest.
songs a - gain, and earth re - peat the loud A - men!

***Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

***Congregational Response**

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

No. 265

(stanza 5)

Postlude

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-735003. All rights reserved.

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Savannah Brown, Lilly McAnally, liturgists

James Martin, summer organ sidekick

Ushers: George Elledge, Mary Elledge, Curt Ireland, Tom Klecker, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

Welcome Team: Donna Brown

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).

Congregational Notes (as of August 16, 2023)

Remember in Prayer

- Maggie and Mike Gravener and Aimee, Ryan, Nate, and Katie Gravener as Maggie's sister and Ryan's aunt, Hope Sandborn, entered the Church triumphant on August 15.
- All those affected by the wildfires in Maui.
- 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

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 between the sanctuary and chapel buildings. 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

wednesday
AUG. 23
9:30 a.m.

Conversations with Dr. Matt Brown **Chapel 206 and Zoom**

We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. Evening session resume date to be determined. Contact: Dr. Matt Brown for the Zoom ID#, matt@smpchome.org.

thursday
AUG. 24
10:00 a.m.

Beginning to Ring **Sanctuary**

Our last Beginning to Ring of the summer! Learn how to play the handbells while having tons of fun. Ages high school and up are welcome. Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

saturday
AUG. 26
6:00 p.m. -
8:00 p.m.

SMPC Youth Down on the Farm **Middle and High Schoolers** **The Bartholomew's House, 402 Marvin Rd, Waxhaw, NC**

Join us for the first SMPC Youth event of the school year! We will have a brief devotion before swimming, sand volleyball, basketball, Spikeball, cornhole, and other fun outdoor games! There will be pizza and lemonade for dinner. Please bring a lawn chair. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

sunday
AUG. 27
9:00 a.m.

All Church Serves - Sort and Pack Backpacks for **Smithfield Elementary School** **Mecklenburg Hall**

Children, youth and adults are invited to sort and pack backpacks with donated supplies for Smithfield Elementary School. Light breakfast items will be served. We will then bless the backpacks in worship at our annual Blessing of the Backpacks. Register for the All Church Serves on Realm or via the QR code.



Register for All
Church Serves

sunday
AUG. 27
10:10 a.m.

Blessing of the Backpacks **During 10:10 a.m. Worship**

Bring your backpack for a special blessing!

sunday
AUG. 27
5:00 p.m.

Ordination of Lindsey Odom **Sanctuary**

Join us as Director of Youth Ministry and Missions/Outreach Lindsey Odom becomes an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament. Her new title at SMPC will be Associate Pastor of Youth Ministry and Missions/Outreach. Please stay for a reception following the service!



@southmecklenburgpresbyterian



@southmeckpres

OF NOTE

Attention Youth and Adult Music Ministry Members!

Rehearsals are kicking off for another year of choir and handbells. If you have not already registered, please fill out the form via the QR code our our website. We always welcome new members! Contact: Zach Bowyer: zach@smpchome.org.



Music Ministry Form

Help Those Affected by the Fires in Hawaii

We pray for the people who are affected by the multiple fires that continue to burn in Hawaii. If you would like to help those in need, please consider making a donation to the Presbyterian Disaster Association's (PDA) Disaster Relief - U.S. Wildfires fund.



Donate to PDA

New Adult Study Begins September 10

Join us this fall as we walk through the Bible's earliest source for the life of Jesus – the Gospel of Mark. We will follow scholar Amy-Jill Levine as she examines John the Baptizer, the Little Apocalypse, the Transfiguration and several of Jesus's most notable stories and parables.

This six-week study, led by Melissa White and Rebecca Guzman, will meet Sundays beginning September 10 at 9:00 a.m. in the McQueen Room. Please sign up on Realm or via the QR code. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.



Register for Gospel of Mark Study

Tips For Choosing a Bible for Your Child

Director of Spiritual Formation Rebecca Guzman dives into the wonderful journey of choosing the perfect Bible for your child in our latest SMPC blog post. Scan the QR code to read the post. We encourage children to bring their Bibles to worship, too!



How to Choose a Bible for your Child

FACES OF FAITH

This is the last in our "Faces of Faith" series where we spotlight SMPC members and learn about how their faith and involvement in the church have impacted their lives. We hope you've enjoyed getting to know other members and their stories. Thank you to all of our "Faces of Faith" volunteers! This week is Laura Flora!

Name: Laura Flora

Family: My husband, Matthew, and our sons, Lucas (3) and twins Brooks and Bennett (18 months)

Years at SMPC: 1

What made you choose SMPC as your church home? We originally got involved in the preschool program for our oldest son, Lucas, and really enjoyed the people running the program. When we first attended the church in the summer of 2022, Mary Katheryne Zagora and Nancy Metzler were so welcoming and accommodating that we felt this was our home. We became members in the fall of 2022 and haven't looked back.

