



# South Mecklenburg

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

October 15, 2023

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

### We Gather

**Prelude**                      *Partita on "Gather Us In": II. Chant*                      Charles Lenz

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church**                      Dr. Whitney Bayer

**Moment for Stewardship**                      Greg Hobby

**Introit**                      *How Very Good and Pleasant*                      Barbara Boertje

**\*Call to Worship**                      Graham Trimmer

One: Come, the banquet of hope and praise is ready.

**Many: We come on your invitation, hungering for more.**

One: Feed on the love of God in Jesus Christ.

**Many: We come on your invitation, needing healing.**

One: Be healed by God's gracious mercy.

**Many: We come on your invitation, longing for forgiveness.**

One: In Jesus' name, you are loved, healed, and forgiven.

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it! Amen.**

**\*Hymn**                      *Here in This Place*                      No. 401

1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing; now is the dark-ness  
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who  
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the  
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,  
 van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings  
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,  
 bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,  
 light years a-way: here in this place the new light is shin-ing;  
 brought here to you in the light of this day.  
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.  
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.  
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.  
 Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en; gath-er us in, the  
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the  
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion; give us to eat the  
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and  
 blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;  
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly;  
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion  
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,  
 we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.  
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.  
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.  
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

**Prayer of Confession** (*unison*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

**God of grace, you invite us to a banquet, and we confess that we make light of your invitation. You set us a place at the table, but we find excuses not to come. Our time is committed, and business is pressing. You lovingly prepare for our arrival, yet we ignore your efforts. And as you once again call us to your table, help us to respond in faith. Forgive our failures and help us to learn from them. Change our hearts and minds as we hear your good news proclaimed. Help us to taste and see the goodness you have prepared for us, and for the world. Amen.**

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Rev. Odom

**\*Response of Praise**

*Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

No. 582

*(1<sup>st</sup> time: choir, 2<sup>nd</sup> time: all)*

***Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,  
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,  
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.***

## **We Hear and Respond to the Word**

### **Church Family Moment**

Rebecca Guzman

1. In our scripture this week from Isaiah, we are reminded that God is our refuge, a place where we always belong and can always call home. In her book, *Far From Home*, Sarah Parker Rubio writes about a boy who discovers that even though he has left everything he knows, he is always home when he is with his family. When he meets a kind lady at a bus station, she tells him the story of another boy who had to go on a hard journey, but who grew up to save the whole world. You can listen to the author read it aloud [here](#).
2. Our Isaiah scripture also reminds us that the Lord will wipe away all of our tears. [Here](#) is a coloring page that goes along with this verse.
3. Our Galatians passage contains what we sometimes call the Golden Rule: Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Check out this [video](#) from a church in the United Kingdom that sets video of the church showing the love of God to a fun song that helps us remember to love one another. How can you show love to another this week?
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a. How do you know that God is with you even through the hard times?
  - b. Imagine God wiping away your tears. What would that be like? What do you think that verse means?
  - c. What is our responsibility as followers of Jesus when terrible things happen to other people?

### **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**

Rev. Odom

**First Reading** Galatians 5: 13-15; Matthew 7: 13-14 Rev. Odom

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love

become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

**Anthem**

*The Kingdom*

Andre Thomas

Chancel Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost.*

*That's the Kingdom of God.*

*Don't you want to be a part of the Kingdom?*

*Come on everybody!*

*Oh, yes, there's joy in the Kingdom!*

*Oh, yes, there's peace in the Kingdom!*

*Oh, yes, there's love in the Kingdom!*

*Come on everybody!*

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.*

*We are part of the earth, and it is part of us.*

*The perfumed flowers are our sisters,*

*The deer, the horse, the great eagle.*

*These are our brothers. Oh, all things are connected.*

*Rivers our brothers, earth our mother. The earth is the Lord's.*

*Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost.*

*That's the Kingdom of God.*

**Second Reading**

Isaiah 25: 1-9

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might

save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon                      What Makes a People Strong?                      Dr. Brown

\*The Affirmation of Faith (*unison*)                      A Declaration of Faith, 8.5  
Dr. Bayer

**God sends us to work for peace. God has brought out of the horrors of warfare the judgment and deliverance of nations. Yet the Lord has condemned the atrocities of war and warned his people not to trust in military might. The Prince of Peace does not bring in his rule by force. The Lord is moving toward the time when nations will not learn war any more. We affirm God is at work here and now when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war, perceive the threat of annihilation that hangs over the human race, and seek other ways of settling international disputes. We believe God sends us to minister to people on all sides of wars: the victims, the participants, and those who in conscience refuse to participate. It is our duty to attack the causes and roots of war, to unmask the idolatry that places national security above all else, to urge all nations to devote to making peace the resources, intelligence, and energy that have gone to making war.**

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                      *Exultation*                      Matthew Compton  
Chancel Ringers

*As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at [www.smpchome.org/give](http://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                      Graeme Mitchell

**O God, be in the ministries and mission for which these gifts are given, and bless those who give them, that we may dedicate ourselves as well. Teach us again and again the power of generosity and love. May we be a part of your creative work of healing in this world. Amen.**

**We Go Out to Serve**

1 O Christ, the great foundation on which your people stand  
 2 Baptized in one confession, one church in all the earth,  
 3 Where tyrants' hold is tightened, where strong devour the weak,  
 4 This is the moment glorious when he who once was dead

to preach your true salvation in every age and land:  
 we bear our Lord's impression, the sign of second birth:  
 where innocents are frightened, the righteous fear to speak,  
 shall lead his church victorious, their champion and their head.

pour out your Holy Spirit to make us strong and pure,  
 one holy people gathered in love beyond our own,  
 there let your church awakening attack the powers of sin  
 The Lord of all creation his heavenly kingdom brings:

to keep the faith unbroken as long as worlds endure.  
 by grace we were invited; by grace we make you known.  
 and, all their ramparts breaking, with you the victory win.  
 the final consummation, the glory of all things.

\*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.*

Postlude

Toccata

Johann Pachelbel

**Worship Service Notes****Leading Worship this Morning**

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor  
Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth and Missions/Outreach  
Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist  
Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation  
Chancel Choir  
Chancel Ringers  
Blythe Kinsey, piano  
Graham Trimmer, Graeme Mitchell, liturgists

**Acolyte:** Ryan Wooley

**A/V Team:** Brad Alford

**Ushers:** Mitchell Davis, Phil Eatherton, Linda Nagle Hanson, Craig Parrish,  
Alice Tyler, Bob Tyler, Sr.

**Welcome Team:** Donna Brown, Jack Hess, Emery Hicks, Elise Ullman

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](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org). These emails contain a weekly devotion and information about upcoming worship services and church activities. Also, find us on Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](#) and Instagram: [@southmeckpres](#).



*Thursday email*

## Congregational Notes (as of October 12, 2023)

### Remember in Prayer

- Emily Williams, as she recovers from surgery.
- Jack Rouse, as he recovers from surgery.
- All those caught in the crossfire of warfare in Israel and Gaza.
- 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](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org).

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## South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

[smpchome.org](http://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!

### 2024 Operating Fund Campaign Kicks Off Today

Today we kick off our 2024 Operating Fund Campaign, *Everything Good*. At SMPC, we rejoice in the gifts God has given and strive to respond with intention through worship, connection and service. Over the next three weeks, we hope you'll join us in person during our 10:10 a.m. worship services or via livestream to see and hear how your pledge makes a difference. Please pick up your campaign packet in the narthex. Make a pledge by returning a pledge card or by scanning the QR code.



### THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today

**OCT. 15**

11:30 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m.

**Training Session for Smithfield Reading Tutors  
McQueen Room**

For those who are interested in becoming a tutor for Smithfield students. You will receive training materials and SMPC tutor swag. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

tuesday

**OCT. 17**

10:00 a.m.

**Handiworkers Group  
Room 104, Palmer Building**

Knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited - all levels! We meet weekly to work on projects (to keep & to donate). Contact: Judy Jameson, [jgjameson@gmail.com](mailto:jgjameson@gmail.com).

wednesday

**OCT. 18**

9:30 a.m.

**Conversations with Matt Brown  
McQueen Room and Zoom**

We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. Contact: Matt Brown for the Zoom ID#, [matt@smpchome.org](mailto:matt@smpchome.org).

thursday

**OCT. 19**

12:30 p.m.

**Food For Thought Book Group  
McQueen Room**

We are reading *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. All are welcome. Contact: Kathy Paquette, [khesspaquette@aol.com](mailto:khesspaquette@aol.com).

thursday

**OCT. 19**

6:00 p.m.

**International Dining Group  
Punta Cana Grill, 5230 South Blvd.**

This group loves to eat out! All are welcome. Please RSVP to Alice Tyler, [rrt1317@aol.com](mailto:rrt1317@aol.com) by Monday, October 16.

saturday

**OCT. 21**

5:00 a.m.-  
9:00 a.m.

**Center of Hope Breakfast  
Meet at SMPC, Serve at Center of Hope**

Join us as we serve breakfast to the guests at Center of Hope. Food donations and volunteers still needed. Contact: Bob Williamson, [bobwill31@hotmail.com](mailto:bobwill31@hotmail.com).

saturday

**OCT. 21**

4:00 p.m.-  
6:00 p.m.

**Hops and Vine Around Town  
Olde Mecklenburg Brewery, 4150 Yancey Rd.**

All are welcome as we celebrate a belated Oktoberfest! Contact: Frank Graham, [Frank.Graham@forvis.com](mailto:Frank.Graham@forvis.com).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **2023 CROP Hunger Walk, Sunday, October 22, 2:30 p.m., Start at SMPC**

We'll gather at 2:00 p.m. and walk at 2:30 p.m. We hope you'll join us! Sign up for the walk and/or donate via the QR code. Contact: Bob Cushman, [rtcushman@yahoo.com](mailto:rtcushman@yahoo.com).



### **BAM! Bible and Music, Sunday, October 22, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Narthex, Children in K-5th Grade**

During BAM!, children will sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza will be served. Please register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

### **Tough Topic Tuesday, Tuesday, October 24, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Zoom**

Join us for the second Tough Topic Tuesday! We will listen as Dr. Kristin Du Mez describes her process of studying the history of White evangelicalism for her best-selling book, "Jesus and John Wayne," and challenges her listeners to dig deeper into and be honest about our own religious histories. Please register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

### **Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, October 24, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206**

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. We are studying the book *Courage* by Tom Berlin. Contact: Jon Myers, [jonmyers2@gmail.com](mailto:jonmyers2@gmail.com).

### **Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, October 26, 9:30 a.m., Big View Diner, 6637 Lancaster Hwy**

This group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. All are welcome. Contact: Bob Tyler, [Btyler@unitedskates.com](mailto:Btyler@unitedskates.com).

### **Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, October 26, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206**

Moms of all ages are invited to join us for conversation and fellowship! Contact: Allison Reeves, [allison.tarwater@gmail.com](mailto:allison.tarwater@gmail.com).

### **SMPC Youth Halloween Party and Bonfire Night, Sunday, October 29, 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers**

We'll have a costume contest, fun Halloween-themed games, and a bonfire with S'mores. Dress up and bring a friend! Please register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

## JOIN THE MEAL MINISTRY!

The SMPC Meal Ministry delivers meals to church members in need. We are looking for more volunteers! You don't have to be a five-star chef and there is a lot of flexibility with this service opportunity. For more information please contact Amy Zagora, [amyzagora@gmail.com](mailto:amyzagora@gmail.com).

## SUPPORT OUR MISSION IN HAITI

Friends Empowering Haiti (formerly Friends of OFCB) is raising money to purchase food for the school in Bayonnais, Haiti. Scan QR code for more.



We are over halfway to our goal of sponsoring 20 additional Haitian students. We would love your help! Please prayerfully consider changing a life through sponsorship. Scan the QR code for more information. Contact: Judy Jones, [judy21jones@gmail.com](mailto:judy21jones@gmail.com).