



South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

5th Sunday after Epiphany

February 4, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude *This is My Father's World* Jason Payne

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Rebecca Guzman

Introit *Rain Down* Jaime Cortez

Call to Worship Rev. Lindsey Odom

One: Good people of the church, lift up your eyes and see,

Many: our God greets us here.

One: Our God meets us here.

Many: Our God is the everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth.

One: Have you not heard?

Many: God does not faint or grow weary.

One: Have you not known?

Many: God's understanding is unsearchable.

One: Have you not heard?

Many: God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.

One: Have you not known?

Many: Those who wait for God will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

One: We come to hear.

All: We come to know. Thanks be to God.

Hymn *All Creatures of Our God and King* No. 15
(Stanzas 1-3, 6)

Unison

1 All crea-tures of our God and King, lift up your voice
 2 O broth - er wind with clouds and rain, you nur - ture gifts
 3 O broth - er fire, so warm and bright, chase off the shad -
 4 All who for love of God for - give, all who in pain

Harmony

and with us sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 of fruit and grain. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 ows of the night. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 or sor - row grieve, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Unison

O broth - er sun with gold - en beam, O sis - ter moon
 O sis - ter wa - ter, flow - ing clear, make mu - sic for
 Dear moth - er earth, who day by day un - folds such bless -
 Christ bears your bur - dens and your fears; so, e - ven in

with sil - ver gleam, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 your Lord to hear. Sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 ings on our way, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 the midst of tears, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!

Unison

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

5 And you, most gentle sister death,
 waiting to hush our final breath:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Since Christ our light has pierced your gloom,
 fair is the night that leads us home.
 Sing praises! Alleluia!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,
 and worship God with humble heart.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
 and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 Sing praises! Alleluia!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Odom

Holy God, we know how easy it is for us to forget who you are. It is easy for us to claim ignorance of your power and your love. It is so easy for us to point fingers at others and to forget our own roles in contributing to an unfair and unjust world. Forgive our disregard, O God. Reconcile us to each other as one. Open all the closed corners of our minds, that they may be opened to the reality of injustice all around us. Teach us how to live more like those who belong to you, O God, and less like those who belong to the world. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

Response of Praise

No. 582

*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. Listen to a [readaloud](#) of "God's Dream" by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In Children's Worship today, we will be hearing this book from our friend Olguens, and we will also be writing letters or drawing pictures to send to our friends in Haiti. This is one way that we can make God's Dream become a reality!

2. Click the link to check out our [February Year of Justice](#). Our focus in February is loving our neighbors, whether they are near or far away, and whether they are like us or different from us. One of the activities asks us to do the following: Because God calls us to love all our neighbors across all boundaries, make a visual representation of this truth. On a piece of 8.5x11 paper or bigger than this, pre-write "Love Your _____ Neighbor." Then write a noun, adjective, or trait of people who are marginalized and face injustice in one of the blanks. Examples include: "Love Your (immigrant, sick, hungry, Black, Hispanic, lonely, homeless, etc.) Neighbor."
3. Illustrate Psalm 147. You can print out [this paper](#). If you are worshipping in person, there are copies on the worship cart. Start by underlining the phrases you love the most. Then think about which phrases could be drawn. How can you draw them? After you are finished, say a prayer to thank God for being with us all the time.
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. I wonder what kinds of things were making the people so tired. What makes you tired?
 - b. Do you think there was a time before God, or a time after God?
 - c. What cheers you up when you are sad, or makes you feel refreshed when you are tired?

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

Psalm 147:1-11

Rev. Odom

Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre. He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Anthem*Guide My Feet*

arr. Avis D. Graves

Chancel Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano; Kyle Gavagan, percussion

*Guide my feet while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.*

*Hold my hand while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.*

Lord, guide my feet (direct my path) and keep my way.

*Can't make a step without you.
I don't want to run this race in vain.*

*Be my friend while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.*

*Stand by me while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.*

Second Reading

Isaiah 40:21-31

Dr. Whitney Bayer

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Have You Not Heard?

Dr. Bayer

The Affirmation of Faith (*unison*)

from A Brief Statement of Faith

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image,

male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

Offertory

Promised Land Calypso
Chancel Ringers

Joel Raney

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.*

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

Dr. Bayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Brown

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise . . .

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.

The Words of Institution

Rev. Odom, Dr. Brown

The Bread and the Cup

You are invited to come forward (see diagram), take the elements, and return to your seat. Remove the wafer on the bottom of the cup before opening the juice. If you are not able to come forward, you will be served at your seat.

Communion of the People

The Prayer after Communion

Rev. Odom

We Go Out to Serve

Hymn

This Is My Father's World

No. 370

1 This is my Fa-ther's world, and to my lis - tening ears all
2 This is my Fa-ther's world. O, let me ne'er for - get that

na - ture sings, and round me rings the mu - sic of the spheres.
though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the rul - er yet.

This is my Fa-ther's world; I rest me in the thought of
This is my Fa-ther's world. The bat - tle is not done: Je -

rocks and trees, of skies and seas, his hand the won - ders wrought.
sus who died shall be sat - is - fied, and earth and heaven be one.

Charge and Benediction

Dr. Bayer

Congregational Response

Rain Down
(all sing twice)

No. 48

***Rain down; rain down;
rain down your love on your people.
Rain down; rain down;
rain down your love, God of life.***

Postlude

Jubilate

Fela Sowande

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth & Missions/Outreach

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Chancel Ringers

Blythe Kinsey, piano

Kyle Gavagan, percussion

Acolyte: Ryan Wooley

A/V Team: Kari Case, Xander Case

Ushers: Mitchell Davis, Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Tom Klecker, Craig Parrish, David Wooley

Welcome Team: Terry Gaines, Jack Hess, Amy Zagora, Jake Zagora

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](#) and Instagram: [@southmeckpres](#).

In celebration of Black History Month, we will hear music from composers of African descent each Sunday in February. Today, our anthem is based on an African American spiritual. Our offertory is an arrangement of an early American folk tune with text from 18th century England; however, it was often sung by African American slaves, especially those who escaped on the Underground Railroad. Our postlude is an original composition by a Nigerian composer from the 20th century.

A note to parents: We are so delighted that you and your children are here! Children are an integral part of our faith community, and we strive to support parents during worship. Here are some helpful things to know:

- Children are welcome in worship. We understand that means wiggles!
- We provide blue worship totes in the Narthex to help children engage in worship. Please return the totes after the service.
- There is a nursery located in the Palmer Building with dedicated staff who are happy to keep your infant – three-year-old safe.
- Children's Worship is provided for children ages 4 through 3rd grade. The children gather after the Church Family Moment and return after the sermon.

- A glider and changing table are available in Room 301 for mothers who wish to have privacy while nursing.
- During worship, the service is broadcast to the parlor, where there is more space to move around if your little one becomes restless.

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members today 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 January 25, 2024)

Remember in Prayer

- Jim Loftus, 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.



South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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smpchome.org

WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies in Coffee Grounds, located in the narthex. 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!

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today
FEB. 4
after
worship

Columbarium Drop-In Information Session Parlor

Columbarium Committee members will be in the parlor following worship to give more information and answer questions. Contact: Charlie Metzler, charlesmetzler@carolina.rr.com.



today
FEB. 4
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music Kindergarten through 5th Grade, Meet in Narthex

During BAM!, children will sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza served. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

today
FEB. 4
5:00 p.m.

SMPC Youth at Room in the Inn Sardis Presbyterian Church

SMPC Youth will serve dinner to Room in the Inn guests. If you haven't had a chance to sign up to volunteer, contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday
FEB. 6
10:00 a.m.

Handiworkers Group Room 104, Palmer Building

Knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited - all levels! Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

wednesday
FEB. 7
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.

thursday
FEB. 8
9:00 a.m.

Shelter Ministry Mecklenburg Hall

This ministry meets to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. Empty Rx vials are always needed. Contact: Carol Morgan, morganc43@aol.com.

thursday
FEB. 8
9:30 a.m.

Men's Breakfast Group Big View Diner, 6637 Lancaster Hwy

This group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays each month to enjoy breakfast and conversation. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com.

thursday
FEB. 8
7:30 p.m.

Making Space Mom's Group Chapel 206

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

friday
FEB. 9
11:15 a.m.

Lunch Bunch Narthex

Join us for a first person historical presentation of Martha Washington and a catered lunch. Cost is \$8 per person. Register on Realm by Tuesday, February 6. Contact: Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com.



sunday
FEB. 11
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

**Adult Bible Study: Invitation to the Old Testament
McQueen Room and Zoom**

Hear the story of God and God's calling of the people of Israel through the many voices of the biblical text. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Youth Sunday and Souper Bowl of Caring, Sunday, February 11, 10:10 a.m.

Worship - SMPC Youth will play an active role throughout the worship service. Youth are also collecting canned goods for Nourish Up (formerly Loaves and Fishes). Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Tuesday, February 13, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall - Bring your family and friends for a pancake feast! Food donations will support our Center of Hope ministry: pancake mix, syrup, Tang drink mix and quick grits. \$5/person (maximum family cost of \$20) will defray meal costs. Register on Realm. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.



Ash Wednesday, February 14

Drive Through Ashes, 7:30-9:15 a.m., Church Parking Lot
Worship & Communion, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream

Hops and Vine Around Town, Saturday, February 17, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Open Tap, 5010 Carmel Center Drive - All are invited to join us for fellowship! Contact: Frank Graham, Frank.Graham@forvis.com.



Parents Morning Out, Saturday, February 24, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Children ages 3-5th Grade - We'll play games, craft, watch a Bible story movie, and enjoy a delicious snack. Cost: \$10/child to cover materials. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

OF NOTE

Valentine's Day Alternative Giving - Give the gift of love by donating to the agencies that our Missions & Outreach Ministries support. Cards and envelopes are in the Connections Center. Contact: Donna Brown, donnamatt89@gmail.com.



Registration for the 2024-25 school year at SMPC Preschool is now open. Children ages 2 through TK. Contact SMPC Preschool Director Tammy Winchip, tammy@smpchome.org for more information.



Support SMPC Youth by purchasing a SMPC t-shirt! Funds go to the SMPC youth program and youth trips. Deadline to order t-shirts is Sunday, February 18. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Desserts for Center of Hope: Sunday, February 11
Center of Hope Breakfast: Saturday, February 17
Room in the Inn: Wednesdays, February 21 and March 13
American Red Cross Blood Drive: Saturday, March 9



"SEVEN LAST WORDS": LENT AT SMPC

We hope you'll join us this Lenten season for worship, study, service and fellowship. Register for events and find out more on our website.