



South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross* arr. Cathy Moglebust
Gaudete Ringers

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Matthew S. Brown
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Moment for Mission Kathy Graham

Introit *Jesus, We Are Here* Patrick Matsikenyiri

Call to Worship Davis Lee

One: Sometimes we might wonder how we have gotten through difficult situations.

Many: Jesus probably wondered this too as he cried these words from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

One: But, even in times of distress, God does not forsake us.

Many: God's love, care, and concern reaches all.

One: God has not come into the world in Jesus to condemn us.

Many: Jesus has come into the world to live God's love in the flesh.

One: While the world is dim with injustice and the feeling of loneliness,

Many: Jesus' light of love illumines our path and creates a way forward.

All: So, let us faithfully and confidently follow Jesus. Amen!

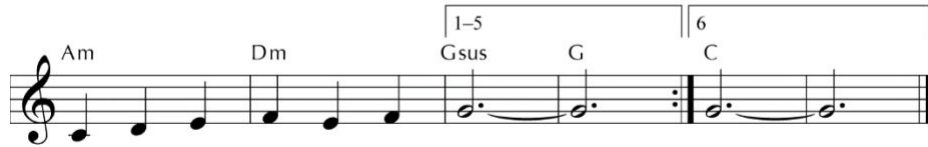
Hymn *God of the Sparrow* No. 22



1 God of the spar - row God of the whale God of the
 2 God of the earth - quake God of the storm God of the
 3 God of the rain - bow God of the cross God of the
 4 God of the hun - gry God of the sick God of the
 5 God of the neigh - bor God of the foe God of the
 6 God of the a - ges God near at hand God of the



swirl - ing stars How does the crea - ture say Awe
 trum - pet blast How does the crea - ture cry Woe
 emp - ty grave How does the crea - ture say Grace
 prod - i - gal How does the crea - ture say Care
 prun - ing hook How does the crea - ture say Love
 lov - ing heart How do your chil - dren say Joy



How does the crea - ture say Praise
 How does the crea - ture cry Save
 How does the crea - ture say Thanks
 How does the crea - ture say Life
 How does the crea - ture say Peace
 How do your chil - dren say Home

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

Gracious God, we acknowledge and confess before you, our sins. We confess that we are easily led astray by our own desires, and we are reluctant to forgive those who offend us. We acknowledge too that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do. We love with condition. We judge and condemn. We do not turn to you as the source of our healing. Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sins and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

Affirmation of Mercy

No. 447

We are forgiven, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. We are forgiven, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

We Hear and Respond to the Word

Church Family Moment

Rebecca Guzman

1. Our Lenten word for today is "forsaken." Jesus asked, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" We are reading Psalm 22 because Jesus was reciting a Psalm that he knew. These same words can be found in Psalm 22. What hymns, prayers, and scripture have you memorized?

2. When I was little, my favorite book was *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst. You can see and hear a read-aloud of it [here](#). I think the reason I loved it so much was that it reminded me that other people have bad days too. I'm not comparing the day Jesus died to a regular bad day, but I do think that it's important for us to know and understand that Jesus knew about all of our feelings—of being “forsaken,” sad, lonely, and hopeless. What do you notice about Alexander's bad day?
3. Play hide and seek. Make sure you take turns so that everyone gets to hide and to seek. As you play, think about how it feels to be lost and alone. What does it feel like to be found? What does it feel like to know that Jesus may have felt lost and alone too?
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. What are some songs or scriptures you know by heart like Jesus and his community knew the Psalms?
 - b. What do you do when you feel alone and hopeless?
 - c. Has God ever felt very near to you? What was that like?
 - d. Has God ever felt very far from you? What was that like?

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. 399):

God welcomes all, strangers and friends;

God's love is strong and it never ends.

God welcomes all, strangers and friends;

God's love is strong and it never ends.

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 22:1-15

Rev. Odom

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame. But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; "Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver— let him rescue the one in whom he delights!" Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast. On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer Dr. Brown
... (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 *O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus* arr. Molly Ijames
Ann Carney, recorder

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

*O suff'ring Jesus, in these forty days.
We view your sorrow, share in your distress.
Our Lenten songs are filled with muted praise;
Yet by your passion, we are truly blessed.
We praise the Father! We praise you, the Son!
We praise the Spirit, our God, Three in One.*

Prayer of Dedication Sumner Martin
Gracious God, as we offer our gifts, our tithes, and our offerings to you, may they be used to pass on the promise of hope, of peace, of life, and of community to all in need of your gifts and presence within their life. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

Hymn *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* No. 166

1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
 2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory
 3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-
 4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be

pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
 win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
 tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
 past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at-tain at last.

Charge and Benediction

Dr. Bayer

Congregational Response

No. 547

***Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 Here you heard my dear Son's story;
 here you touched him, saw his glory.
 Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.***

Postlude

Finale Jubilante

Brenda Portman

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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

Gaudete Ringers, Helen Castle and Gayle Ireland, co-directors

Ann Carney, piano and recorder

Davis Lee, Sumner Martin, liturgists

Acolyte: Ryan Wooley

A/V Team: Brad Alford

Deacon/Elder of the Day: Lillian McAnally

Ushers: Andy Burke, Dick Engle, Charlie Metzler, Jon Myers, Linda Nagle
 Hanson, Jim Williams.

Welcome Team: Kennedy Colson, Jack Hess, Kathy Rasimas, Paxton Sandeen

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](#).

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 Sunday, March 24 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 March 7, 2024)

Remember in Prayer

- Warren Stenvall, 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

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 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**
MAR. 10
11:15 a.m. -
12:15 p.m.
- SMPC Youth Lunch and Learn**
Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers
We'll discuss the sermon and more. Lunch will be served!
Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.
-
- today**
MAR. 10
11:30 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.
- Believing and Belonging**
McQueen Room
For all who are considering membership and/or would like to know more about being Presbyterian and SMPC. Lunch will be served and childcare will be available. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.
-
- today**
MAR. 10
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.
- Operation Sandwich**
Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers
We will make sandwiches for our neighbors at Roof Above. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.
-
- tuesday**
MAR. 12
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.
-
- tuesday**
MAR. 12
1:00 p.m. -
2:30 p.m.
- A Caregiver's Journey**
McQueen Room
Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Facilitated by Kathy Garner (Alzheimer's Association). Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.
-
- tuesday**
MAR. 12
7:30 p.m.
- Men's Evening Study Group**
Chapel 206
This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. They are watching a video series called *Strange Book of Books* that dives into the origins of different stories in the Bible. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.
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- wednesday**
MAR. 13
times vary
- Room in the Inn**
Sardis Presbyterian Church
Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Sign up at smpchome.org/serve-our-community. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smcphome.org.
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- wednesday**
MAR. 13
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**
MAR. 14
9:00 a.m.
- Shelter Ministry**
Mecklenburg Hall
This ministry meets to fill empty Rx bottles with body wash for our neighbors at Roof Above. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

thursday
MAR. 14
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
MAR. 14
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
MAR. 15
7:30 a.m. -
8:30 a.m. **Friday Morning Men's Group**
Chapel 206
The group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are starting a new book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

saturday
MAR. 16 **Center of Hope Breakfast**
Meet at SMPC
Help serve breakfast to guests at the Center of Hope. **Food donations for this month's breakfast are due Thursday, March 14.** Monetary donations are always welcome. Sign up at smpchome.org/serve-our-community. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.

saturday
MAR. 16
8:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m. **SMPC Campus Workday**
Many hands make light work! Help get our campus ready for spring! Come for the whole time or just for a couple of hours. Contact: Collin Sinclair, collinbsinclair@gmail.com.

sunday
MAR. 17
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m. **Lenten Adult Bible Study: Seven Last Words**
McQueen Room and Zoom
This six-week study concludes on Palm Sunday, March 24. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Intergenerational Trivia and Mission Night, Sunday, March 17, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages - We will assemble Easter meal kits and make Easter cards for students at our partner school, Smithfield Elementary. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Food for Thought Book Group, Thursday, March 21, 12:30 p.m., McQueen Room - The group is reading *Lessons in Chemistry: A Novel* by Bonnie Garmus. All are invited! Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.

International Dining Group, Thursday, March 21, 6:00 p.m., Basil Thai Cuisine, Stonecrest - All are invited as we sample different cuisines around town! RSVP by Monday, March 18 to Alice Tyler, rrt1317@aol.com.

SMPC Playground Family Playdate, Saturday, March 23, 1:00-2:30 p.m., SMPC Playground, Ages 3-1st grade - Family fun on the SMPC playground. Siblings welcome! Snacks and drinks will be provided for the children. Contact: Kaitlin Gaul, kaitlin.slanina@gmail.com.

OF NOTE

Vacation Bible School and Mission Possible registration now open! Monday, July 22-Thursday, July 25 at SMPC - VBS is for children ages 3-4th grade. Mission Possible is for rising 5th and 6th graders. Register on Realm. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, smpcvbs@gmail.com.

**"SEVEN LAST WORDS":
LENT AT SMPC**

