



# South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 17, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

## We Gather

**Prelude** *The Old Rugged Cross* George Bennard

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church** Dr. Whitney Bayer  
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

**Introit** *Jesus, We Are Here* Patrick Matsikenyiri

**Call to Worship** Elizabeth Glover

One: We've come to worship God, who makes streams flow from rock,  
who turns the parched earth into springs of water, who sends rain  
from heaven, who makes the wilderness blossom and flourish,  
and whose son, Jesus Christ, declared, "I am thirsty," marking the  
end of his sacrifice on the cross.

**Many: Just as a deer thirsts for flowing streams, so we thirst for you, O  
God.**

One: Come, let's worship our life-giving God, who pours out living  
water on all who thirst!

**Hymn** *The God of Abraham Praise* No. 49

1 The God of A-braham praise, who reigns en-throned a - bove,  
 2 Your spir - it still flows free, high surg - ing where it will.  
 3 Your good - ly land we seek, with peace and plen - ty blest,  
 4 You have e - ter - nal life im - plant - ed in the soul;

the An - cient of E - ter - nal Days, the God of love!  
 In proph-et's word you spoke of old and you speak still.  
 a land of sa - cred lib - er - ty and Sab - bath rest.  
 your love shall be our strength and stay, while a - ges roll.

The Lord, the great I AM, by earth and heaven con-fessed,  
 Es - tab-lished is your law, and change-less it shall stand,  
 There milk and hon - ey flow, and oil and wine a - bound,  
 We praise you, liv - ing God! We praise your ho - ly name:

we bow be - fore your ho - ly name, for - ev - er blest.  
 deep writ up - on the hu - man heart by your strong hand.  
 and trees of life for - ev - er grow with mer - cy crowned.  
 the first, the last, be - yond all thought, and still the same!

### Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Bayer

**Living Christ, with whom we journey to the cross, we confess that we are always looking for an easier way. We long for the fullness of life with you, but we are slow to abandon the comforts of the life we know. We seek the fruit of new life, but we are not willing to die to ourselves. Yet you offer the grace of life abundant, even and especially when our best efforts fall short. Transform us, renew us, and free us from our attachment to what was, so that you might bring us into the glory of what will be. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

### Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Bayer

### 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 “thirsty.” In [The Water Princess](#), Susan Verde tells the story of Georgie Badiel, a woman who grew up in Africa having to walk miles each day to get clean water. Her mother told her that one day she would grow up to bring clean water to her village, and she did! She also helps bring clean water to lots of places in Burkina Faso. You can learn more about her [here](#). How do you hear the scripture passage after reading this book?
2. In our Lenten Devotional and on the poster, we see the words, “water,” “connection,” and “righteousness.” The sermon today talks about relationship. Are you thirsty for something besides water? Jesus was thirsty for justice, righteousness, and connection with us (relationship). Color the coloring page (available on the worship cart) and consider what you might be thirsty for.
3. Think about all the places in the Bible that talk about water. A few of them are listed in the bulletin today. If you are worshipping online, you can use an online Bible to do a search. If you’re in worship, take out a pew Bible and see what you can find! What do you think these things can tell us about why Jesus said he was thirsty?
4. Journal, considering the following: (These journaling questions are from our [Lenten Devotional written by Illustrated Ministry](#)).
  - a. Do you think it was hard for Jesus to say, “I am thirsty”? Is it ever hard for you to say when you need something?
  - b. Surely Jesus felt lots of things, felt lots of needs, on the cross. Why do you suppose he chose “thirsty” as the one to communicate?
  - c. Describe a time when you were really thirsty. What did you need? How did you know what you needed? How was your need met?

#### **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**

Dr. Bayer

#### **First Reading**

Exodus 17:1-7; Jeremiah 2:13;  
Isaiah 55:1

Dr. Bayer

Exodus 17: 1-17

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at

Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Jeremiah 2:13

for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Isaiah 55:1

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

#### **Anthem**

*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*

arr. Howard Helvey

Chancel Choir; Lori Schellin, soloist; Ann Carney, piano

*Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*I looked over Jordan, and what did I see, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*A band of angels comin' after me, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*I'm sometimes up and sometimes down, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*But still my soul feels heavenly bound, Comin' for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin' for to carry me home.*

#### **Second Reading**

John 19:28-29;

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

Isaiah 58:11; John 6:35

John 19: 28-29

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Isaiah 58: 11

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

John 6: 35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**

Thirsty

Dr. Brown

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

The Apostles' Creed

Rev. Lindsey Odom

**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**

Rev. Odom

**. . . (*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**

*All Good Gifts*

Stephen Schwartz

Mark Janney, guitar and vocals

*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**

***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**

Elizabeth Glover

**Holy God, we ask that you open our hearts to the needs of all who thirst. Give us courage to work together for justice, to stand alongside those who are thirsty, and to use our gifts and offerings for the good of your kingdom. May our offerings allow all your people to discover the abundant life you promise to each one of us. Amen.**

**We Go Out to Serve**

**Hymn**

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

No. 65

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this  
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing  
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me  
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me  
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,  
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,  
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.  
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.  
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

**Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**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**

*The God of Abraham Praise*

arr. Michael Burkhardt

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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

Lori Schellin, soloist

Mark Janney, guitar and soloist

Ann Carney, piano

Elizabeth Glover, liturgist

**Acolytes:** Caroline Brown, Caroline Trimmer

**A/V Team:** Chris Wilcox, Joe Wilcox

**Deacon/Elder of the Day:** Emily Brown, Crystal Myers

**Ushers:** Andy Burke, Mary Elledge, Curtis Guy, Judy Jones, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

**Welcome Team:** Donna Brown, Kathy Rasimas

We light a candle in worship today celebrating the birth of Micah Alexander Gadaire. Congratulations to parents Cecily and Drew Gadaire, and grandparents Jennifer and Paul Basquin!

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](#).

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](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org) or 980-265-2839.

### **Congregational Notes** (as of March 14, 2024)

#### **Remember in Prayer**

- 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, in the midst of the chaos that has enveloped their country.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

[prayer@SMPChome.org](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org).



## **South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church**

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[smpchome.org](http://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

<b>today</b> <b>MAR. 17</b> <b>5:00 p.m. -</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Intergenerational Trivia and Mission Night</b> <b>Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages</b> 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.
<b>tuesday</b> <b>MAR. 19</b> <b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Handiworkers Group</b> <b>Room 104, Palmer Building</b> Knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited - all levels! Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.
<b>wednesday</b> <b>MAR. 20</b> <b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Conversations with Matt Brown</b> <b>McQueen Room and Zoom</b> We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. Contact: Matt Brown for the Zoom ID#, matt@smpchome.org.
<b>thursday</b> <b>MAR. 21</b> <b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Food for Thought Book Group</b> <b>McQueen Room</b> The group is reading <i>Lessons in Chemistry: A Novel</i> by Bonnie Garmus. All are invited! Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.
<b>thursday</b> <b>MAR. 21</b> <b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>International Dining Group</b> <b>Basil Thai Cuisine, Stonecrest</b> All are invited as we sample different cuisines around town! RSVP by Monday, March 18 to Alice Tyler, rrt1317@aol.com.
<b>saturday</b> <b>MAR. 23</b> <b>1:00 p.m. -</b> <b>2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>SMPC Playground Family Playdate</b> <b>SMPC Playground, Ages 3-1st grade</b> Family fun on the SMPC playground. Siblings welcome! Snacks and drinks will be provided for the children. Contact: Kaitlin Gaul, kaitlin.slanina@gmail.com.
<b>sunday</b> <b>MAR. 24</b> <b>9:00 a.m. -</b> <b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Lenten Adult Bible Study: Seven Last Words</b> <b>McQueen Room and Zoom</b> Join us for the last class in this six-week study. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.
<b>sunday</b> <b>MAR. 24</b> <b>10:10 a.m.</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b> <b>Chancel Choir and Exultate Bells (High Schoolers)</b> <b>Sanctuary and Livestream</b>
<b>sunday</b> <b>MAR. 24</b> <b>5:00 p.m. -</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>BAM! Bible and Music</b> <b>Kindergarten through 5th Grade, Meet in Narthex</b> During BAM!, children will sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza will be served. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m., 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.

**Learn More About the Augustine Literacy Project, Wednesday, March 27, 9:00-9:30 a.m., Virtual** - Did you know that SMPC partnered with Augustine Literacy Project this past fall? Four SMPC members were trained by Augustine to tutor Smithfield students using the ALP curriculum. The ALP-SMPC partnership has opened the door to expanding the use of highly effective early literacy intervention to students at our partner school, Smithfield Elementary School. If you would like to learn more, plan to attend the upcoming virtual event. Find more information at <https://alpcharlotte.org/riseandread2024/>. Contact: Kathy Graham, kathyspeech@carolina.rr.com.

**Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, March 28, 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. Contact: Bob Tyler, Btyler@unitedskates.com

Holy Week and Easter at SMPC	
<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>March 28</b> Supper & Communion 6:00-7:00 p.m. Mecklenburg Hall Register on Realm
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>March 29</b> Tenebrae Service, 7:30 p.m. Scripture, Taizé Music, and Extinguishing Candles Sanctuary and Livestream
<b>Easter Sunday</b> 9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir and Chancel Ringers	<b>March 31</b> 11:00 a.m. Chancel Choir, Chancel Ringers, Jubilate Choir, and Children's Choir Sanctuary and Livestream

## MORE INFO HERE



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL/MISSION POSSIBLE

**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.