



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Third Sunday of Easter

April 14, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus* arr. Janet Linker

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Matthew S. Brown

The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Introit *Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying* Ken Medema

Call to Worship Brett Parrish

One: Who are you?

Many: I am a child of God.

One: Who are we?

Many: We are the children of God, the family of faith.

One: God's love has been poured on us through Jesus Christ!

Many: We belong to God who loves us and calls us God's own.

**All: In life and in death, we belong to God. Come! Let us worship
God!**

Hymn *Christ Is Alive!* No. 246

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing, The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No lon - ger bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - ery age, till earth and sky and

prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - ery place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Whitney Bayer

Good and gracious God, we are creatures of dust, ignorant of your revelation, misunderstanding your life, death, and resurrection among us, needing forgiveness. We repent of our failure to give as you have given to us. We seek your Word, that we may live with the faith of Jesus. Be our solace in this life and always. We ask this as your own children, holy and incomplete. Forgive us and lead us, we pray. 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. Last Sunday, I invited the children (and anyone!) to ask me questions. This week, I will start to answer some of those questions, and today, one of the questions fits perfectly with the scripture. “Does God have a family?” wondered one of our very young children. Someone else piped up immediately, “Yes! It’s us!” and the asker responded, “I know, but I meant like the way we have families.” The original responder was correct. We are the only family that God has. Jesus is God’s child, and through and because of Jesus, we have all become children of God too. What does it mean to you to be a child of God?
2. Take a look at the [Children’s Catechism](#), especially the first six questions. How do you think they relate to the sermon today? Have you ever tried memorizing any of the children’s catechism?
3. Listen to a [readaloud](#) of *Spoon* by Amy Rosenthal. In the same way John teaches us how we can be followers of Jesus, Spoon learns what it’s like to be who he was made to be! And just like we are all unique and special in our own ways as children of God, Spoon is unique and special with his own gifts. What is your unique gift for the world?
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. Imagine yourself wearing a nametag that just says, “Child of God.” What would that feel like?
 - b. How do you show the world that you are a child of God?
 - c. Why is it important to also understand that everyone else is also a child of God?



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. Bayer

First Reading

Deuteronomy 7: 6-9

Dr. Bayer

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. [7](#) It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. [8](#) It was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

[9](#) Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

Anthem *Children of the Heavenly Father* arr. Eric Nelson
Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Children of the heavenly Father safely in his bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven such a refuge e'er was given.
God his own doth tend and nourish; in his holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things he spares them; in his mighty arms he bears them.
Neither life nor death shall ever from the Lord his children sever;
Unto them his grace he showeth, and their sorrows all he knoweth.
Praise the Lord in joyful numbers, your Protector never slumbers;
At the will of your Defender ev'ry foe then must surrender.
No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.
Children of the heavenly Father safely in his bosom gather;
nestling bird nor star in heaven such a refuge e'er was given.*

Second Reading 1 John 3: 1-3 Rev. Lindsey Odom

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. [2](#) Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. [3](#) And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

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

Sermon The Love of God and the Life of Love Rev. Odom

The Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) Dr. Brown

from A Vision for Children and The Church

Because we affirm that all children are a gift of God, created by God and created good; all children are a gift to the whole of the human community; all children have a real faith, and gifts for ministry; all children have the right to be children; and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today.

Therefore we hope for a world where all children can find a safe place; where all ages, races, genders, creeds, and abilities are recognized, valued, and celebrated; where all adults hear the voices of children and speak with as well as for them; where all children have "first call" on the world's resources and first place in the minds and hearts of the world's adults.

Because Jesus welcomed children and encouraged us to welcome them in his name; Jesus lifted up a child as an example of what the realm of God is like.

Therefore we hope for a church where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children committed to our care; where we bring good news to all those places where children are in need; where adults and children alike share in ministry.

We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children, now and in times to come.

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 *Jesus Loves the Little Children* arr. Janet Linker

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 Hunter Conway
God, we have been made in your image. So, in your generosity, make us generous. In your faithfulness, make us faithful. Bless these gifts and all the gifts we offer, that your kingdom may come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

Hymn *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* No. 547

1 "Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, nev-er a-lone.
 2 "Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure.
 3 "Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, clos-er to me.

Wak-ing, sleep-ing, I am with you, you are my own.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy-ful and free.

In my love's bap-tis-mal riv-er I have made you mine for-
 Here you heard my dear Son's sto-ry; here you touched him, saw his
 Here my Spir-it's pow-er filled you; here my ten-der com-fort

ev-er. Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own."
 glo-ry. Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure."
 stilled you. Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, joy-ful and free."

Charge and Benediction

Rev. Odom

Choral 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

Postlude on "Truro"

David Lasky

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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
Ann Carney, piano
Brett Parrish, Hunter Conway, liturgists

Acolyte: Ryan Wooley

A/V Team: Brad Alford, Luke Estes

Deacon/Elder of the Day: Jon Myers

Ushers: Bob Cushman, Mary Elledge, Richard Franseen, Craig Parrish, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

Welcome Team: Curt Ireland, Kathy Rasimas, Gary Sunstrom

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 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, April 28 at 9:15 a.m. To learn more, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, nancy@smpchome.org or 980-265-2839.

Congregational Notes (as of April 11, 2024)

Remember in Prayer

- David, Barbara, Colin, and Daniel Lee, as David's mother, Catherine Hicks Lee, entered the Church triumphant on April 2.
- Phil Eatherton, as he recovers from surgery.
- Judy and C.W. Casey, as C.W. has transitioned to hospice care.
- 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.

we

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 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!

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today
APR. 14
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music, Sunday
Meet in Narthex, Ages Kindergarten - 5th Grade
Children sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments. We will serve pizza. Register on Realm.
Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

today
APR. 14
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BYG (Big Youth Group)
Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers
Bible study, small group time, good food, fun games, and amazing company. Please register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

monday
APR. 15
12:00 p.m. -
1:00 p.m.

CARE (Conversations Around Race Equity) Group
Zoom
This group is beginning a six-week **virtual** study and discussion of a video series, *The Color of Compromise* by Jamar Tisby. New members to CARE are welcome and encouraged. Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smcphome.org.

tuesday
APR. 16
10:00 a.m.

Handiworkers Group
Room 104, Palmer Building
Knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited - all levels! Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjaxon@gmail.com.

wednesday
APR. 17
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
APR. 18
6:00 p.m.

International Dining Group
Eggspectation, 14815 Ballantyne Village Way, Suite 150-160
Join us as we sample different cuisines around town! Please RSVP by tomorrow, April 15 to Alice Tyler, rrt1317@aol.com.

friday
APR. 19
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 reading the book, *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

saturday
APR. 20

Breakfast for Center of Hope Shelter for Women & Children
Help serve breakfast to guests at the Center of Hope. Food donations for this month's breakfast are due Thursday, April 18. Monetary donations are always welcome. Sign up at smpchome.org/serve. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.

sunday
APR. 21
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

Adult Bible Study: Invitation to the Old Testament
McQueen Room and Zoom
This 8-week study began before Lent and concludes on Sunday, May 5. Newcomers to the study are welcome. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday
APR. 21
11:15 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.

SMPC Youth Mission Project
Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers
We will be writing letters to Haitian students. SMPC has a close relationship with Haiti and supports Haiti through our work with Friends Empowering Haiti (previously Friends of OFCB) and Ewo (previously World of God). Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

sunday
APR. 21
3:00 p.m. -
4:30 p.m.

High Seas Mini Golf
10001 Charlotte Hwy, Fort Mill, SC, 4th and 5th Graders
Fourth and fifth graders are invited to join us for mini golf! Cost: \$15 (covers mini golf and ice cream). Please register on Realm. Contact: Emily Brown, ekhoward@vt.edu.

sunday
APR. 21
1:30 p.m. -
3:30 p.m.

CARE Group Uptown Walking Tour
Polk Park, 501 N. Tryon St (Carpool from SMPC, meet at 12:45p)
A guided, two-hour walking tour exploring how stories of "exclusions and invisibilities" have been written into the Charlotte cityscape. Cost is \$20/person. Register on Realm by Thursday, April 18. Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Men's Evening Study Group Social, Tuesday, April 23, 7:30 p.m., Open Tap, 5010 Carmel Center Dr. - This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. Everyone is welcome to join us for a social outing at Open Tap. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, April 25, 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.

Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, April 25, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 - Moms of all ages are invited to join us for fellowship and study. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

Lunch on the Grounds, Sunday, April 28, 11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall (lunch tables outside weather permitting) - Join us for fellowship and delicious food from Brown Bag! \$12 per adult, \$6 ages 5-10, free for ages 4 and under. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Kathy Graham, kathyspeech@carolina.rr.com.



LOOKING AHEAD

Here are a few dates to mark on your calendar as we head into the busy spring/summer months!



American Red Cross
Blood Drive
Saturday, May 4
8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
The Commons



Confirmation Sunday
Sunday, May 12
10:10 a.m. Worship,
Sanctuary



Pentecost Sunday
Sunday, May 19
10:10 a.m. Sanctuary



Augusta Youth Choir
Guest Performance
Thursday, May 29
7:00 p.m., Sanctuary



Graduate Sunday
Sunday, June 2
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary



Vacation Bible School and
Mission Possible
July 22-July 25
9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
More info and register
on Realm