



South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

13th Sunday after Pentecost

August 18, 2024

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed

We Gather

Prelude *Blessed Be the God of Israel* arr. Jacob Weber

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

Introit

***Call to Worship** Lily Claire Jacobus

One: God, we need your justice.

Many: For such a time as this to light our way.

One: Praise be to God who leads us each and every day.

Many: God leads us into worship to strengthen our spirits.

One: God's loving presence strengthens and sustains us. So, listen for God's call to each of you.

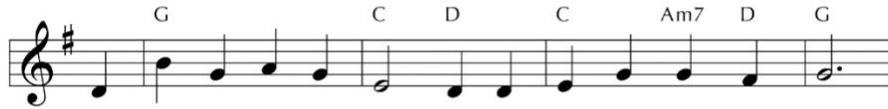
Many: Lord, we are listening and seeking your guidance.

One: God leads us into service that will offer peace and hope to others. Thanks be to God. Amen!

***Hymn 402** *How Lovely, Lord* MERLE'S TUNE



1 How love - ly, Lord, how love - ly is your a - bid - ing place;
2 In your blest courts to wor - ship, O God, a sin - gle day
3 A sun and shield for - ev - er are you, O Lord Most High;



my soul is long - ing, faint - ing, to feast up - on your grace.
is bet - ter than a thou - sand if I from you should stray.
you show - er us with bless - ings; no good will you de - ny.



The spar - row finds a shel - ter, a place to build her nest;
I'd rath - er keep the en - trance and claim you as my Lord
The saints, your grace re - ceiv - ing, from strength to strength shall go,



and so your tem - ple calls us with - in its walls to rest.
than rev - el in the rich - es the ways of sin af - ford.
and from their life shall riv - ers of bless - ing o - ver - flow.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

A word spoken without forethought; an acknowledgement withheld because of pride; a welcome not offered; the frustration of self-loathing projected upon the innocent; the expectations we place on others that we have no capacity to meet ourselves; another promise not kept. Individually our sins seem minor to us, and yet, collectively, they add to the distance separating us from our neighbors and from you. Forgive us, Lord, and guide us in the way of repentance that we may live in closer fellowship with you, each other, and your children throughout the world for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Brown

*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

Anna Vechnak

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-20

1. This scripture reminds me of a song that we sang in church when I was a child, *O Be Careful Little Eyes*. Sing along with [this version](#) that includes the lyrics. What does this mean? Why should we be careful about what we see, what we say, and what we hear?
2. Trace and cut out your foot several times, at least four. On the feet cutouts, write, "I Will Follow Jesus!" Tape them down and then walk on top of them. As you walk, think about what it means to follow Jesus' example.
3. Listen to [a read aloud](#) of *When God Made Light* by Matthew Paul Turner. When we imitate Jesus, we become like the light of God. What does it mean to be a child of light?
4. Journal, considering the following:
 - a. How do you decide whether something is wise or not?
 - b. What does it look like in your life to imitate Jesus?
 - c. If you were to write your younger self "a word to the wise" from Jesus, what would it say?



Children's Liturgy

Anna Vechnak

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

Scripture Reading Esther 4:1-17

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and

why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Sermon

Courage

Dr. Bayer

***Hymn**

Come, Let Us Honor Esther

MERLE'S TUNE

*Come, let us honor Esther, her courage we applaud.
When she could live with riches, she dared to serve her God.
She could not rest with privilege deny her people's fate.
She chose to live her calling: serve those outside the gate.
God, grant that we, like Esther, have courage for our quest,
and use our past experience to serve those not as blessed.
Help us to trust you fully that we may find our bliss,
and answer when you call us for 'such a time as this.'*

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) From: A Brief Statement of Faith
Dr. Brown

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word

proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

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 *My Lord, What a Morning* arr. Mark Hayes
Lori Schellin, soprano

As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at smpchome.org 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** Graham Trimmer

God of all goodness and grace, receive the gifts we offer and grant that our whole life may give you glory and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 305** *Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!* DARWALL'S 148TH

1 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
 2 Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns su - preme,
 3 Let cour - age be our friend; let wis - dom be our guide,
 4 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has led us through the a - ges long!
 em - power - ing us to catch the vi - sion, dream the dream!
 as we in mis - sion mag - ni - fy the Cru - ci - fied!
 For Christ the Lord has tri - umphed o'er the a - ges long!

In bold ac - cord, come cel - e - brate the jour - ney now and praise the Lord!

***Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Bayer

***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. Amen.

Postlude

Tuba Tune

Carson Cooman

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist

Lori Schellin, soprano

Anna Vechnak, Children's Spiritual Formation committee

Lily Claire Jacobus, Graham Trimmer, liturgists

A/V Team: Mary Katheryne Zagora, Luke Estes

Summer Organ Sidekick: Daniel Lee

Ushers: Andrew Brown, Mitchell Davis, Richard Franseen, Curtis Guy, Craig Parrish

Welcome Team: Dana Hefner, Wells Hefner, Shelby 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. These emails contain a weekly devotion and information about upcoming worship services and church activities. Also, find us on Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](#) and Instagram: [@southmeckpres](#).

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members Sunday, August 25 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 August 15, 2024)

Remember in Prayer

- Kurt Weinheimer, as he recovers from a recent hospitalization.
- 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.

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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

wednesday
AUG 21
9:30 a.m.

Conversations with Dr. Matt Brown
McQueen Room or Zoom
We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. All are welcome! Contact Matt Brown, matt@smpchome.org for the Zoom ID#.

thursday
AUG 22
10:00 a.m. -
11:00 a.m.

Beginning to Ring
Sanctuary
Learn to play the handbells! All are welcome. No RSVP or experience required. Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

saturday
AUG 24
8:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

SMPC Campus Workday
SMPC
Many hands make light work! Help get our campus ready for fall! Come for the whole time or just for a couple of hours. Contact: Collin Sinclair, collinbsinclair@gmail.com.

saturday
AUG 24
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

SMPC Youth Down on the Farm
The Bartholomews' House, 6th Graders through 12th Graders
Join us for the first youth event of the school year! We'll start with a short devotion, then gather and reconnect after a busy summer with activities such as swimming, sand volleyball, basketball, spikeball, corn hole, and other fun outdoor games! We'll serve pizza and lemonade for dinner. Bring a lawn chair. Please register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

sunday
AUG 25
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

All Church Serves - Backpacks for Smithfield Elementary School, Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages
We will sort school supplies and pack backpacks for Smithfield Elementary. To register or if you would like to donate school supplies or contribute via the school's Amazon wishlist, please go to Realm or scan the QR code (school supply wish list is also printed on back). Light breakfast items will be served! Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



sunday
AUG 25
10:10 a.m.

Blessing of the Backpacks
During 10:10 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary
Bring your backpack to be blessed for the new school year! We encourage you to invite a friend to SMPC to share in this joyful tradition!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn More About Becoming a Tutor at Smithfield Elementary School, Monday, August 26, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Zoom - Returning tutors and those interested in learning more about tutoring at Smithfield Elementary School are invited to join us to learn about the school's tutoring opportunities this year. Contact Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org, for the Zoom link or see the weekly church email.

New! Adult Bible Study - How to Study the Bible, Sundays beginning September 8, 9:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom - Melissa White and Rebecca Guzman will lead this 4-session class. All are welcome! Please register on Realm.



RESCHEDULED! SMPC Golf Tournament, Tuesday, September 17, 1:00 p.m., Sun-City Carolina Lakes, 23012 Kingfisher Dr, Indian Land, SC - For all levels, men, women & youth. Captain's Choice Scramble with warmups beginning at 12:00 p.m. and a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. \$50 per person. More info and register on Realm. Contact: Brett Thompson, bathomp1971@yahoo.com, or Ron Morgan, colronmorg@gmail.com.

SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY 2024-2025 SCHOOL SUPPLIES WISHLIST

We are in need of school supplies to fill backpacks for Smithfield Elementary School students during our All Church Serves next Sunday, August 25 at 9:00 a.m. in Mecklenburg Hall. Donated school supplies can be placed in the narthex or the church office. You can also order supplies through Smithfield's Amazon wish list. Scan the QR code or go to the All Church Serves event in Realm to access the wish list online.

Student wishes

- Glue Sticks
- Pencils
- Plastic pocket folders – any color
- Expo markers
- Sharpie Markers
- Coloring pencils
- Coloring markers
- Crayons
- Highlighters
- Index cards any size
- Post-it notes
- Rulers
- Scissors
- 1 subject notebooks



Classroom wishes

- Tissues
- Laminating sheets – 3mm individual size
- School electric pencil sharpeners
- Flair pens – any color (these would be a treat for our teachers)
- Lysol or Clorox wipes