



**South  
Mecklenburg**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 23, 2025

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

**Prelude** *Melody* Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

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

**Introit** *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* African American spiritual

**\*Call to Worship** Hannah Angerer

One: Source of love and life, be with us in our time of worship,

**Many: as we seek the love it takes to walk in the ways and teachings of Jesus.**

One: Help us love our enemies,

**Many: and bless those who wrong us, for we cannot do this alone.**

One: Teach us the joy of treating others,

**Many: with the same love and respect that we hope to be treated with.**

One: May our every word and deed make known that we are your beloved children and vessels of your love. Amen.

**\*Hymn 386** *Come, Worship God* O QUANTA QUALIA

Come, Worship God  
(Psalm 95)


1 Come, wor-ship God, who is wor- thy of hon- or;  
2 Ruled by your might are the heights of the moun- tains;  
3 We are your peo- ple, the sheep of your pas- ture;  
4 Now let us lis- ten, for you speak a- mong us;

en- ter God's pres- ence with thanks and a song!  
held in your hands are the depths of the earth.  
you are our Mak- er, and to you we pray.  
o- pen our hearts to re- ceive what you say.

You are the rock of your peo- ple's sal- va- tion  
Yours is the sea, yours the land, for you made them,  
Glad- ly we kneel in o- be- dience be- fore you;  
Peace be to all who re- mem- ber your good- ness,

to whom our ju- bi- lant prais- es be- long.  
God a- bove all gods, who gave us our birth.  
great is the one whom we wor- ship this day!  
trust in your word, and re- joice in your way!

Psalm 95, often called *Venite* from its first word in Latin, has long served as an opening canticle in the worship of Western Christianity. John Calvin found here two reasons to praise God: for sustaining the created world and for adopting the church into a gracious relationship.

TEXT: Michael Perry, 1980  
MUSIC: Paris Antiphoner, 1681; harm. La Feillée's *Méthode du plain-chant*, 1808  
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O QUANTA QUALIA  
11.10.11.10

**Prayer of Confession** (*unison*)

Dr. Whitney Bayer

God of mercy and grace, forgive us for the ways we have fallen short. You ask us to look to the margins and care for the lost; we center ourselves. You ask us to give away; we grab for more. You ask us to love one another; we cannot see beyond our divisions. Forgive us. Help us. We call on you, our help, our God, our hope. Amen.

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Dr. Bayer

**\*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 the book *Rufus and His Angry Tail* by Elias Carr. On the Storypath website, Rev. Katie Barrett Todd writes, "This book does a wonderful job of teaching young readers how to recognize symptoms of anger as well as encouraging us to turn to prayer/God during times of mistreatment, frustration, hurt, and fury." This goes along well with our Gospel passage today, when Jesus teaches us during the Sermon on the Plain how we are to respond when we get angry.
2. Print out and color this reflective [coloring page](#) that has the Golden Rule on it. This verse is from the Gospel passage today. What do you think about the Golden Rule? Do you treat others the way that you would like to be treated? Is that always easy?
3. Think for a moment about the people whom you find hardest to love and to forgive. Keep those people in mind as you sing [The Servant Song](#).
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a. I wonder why Jesus tells us to **love our enemies** instead of just avoiding them (v. 27). What do you think?
  - b. Jesus says to **pray for those who hurt us** (v. 28). I wonder how praying for someone changes our hearts. What do you think?
  - c. I wonder what the world would be like if **everyone followed the Golden Rule** (v. 31). How would things be different?



### **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**

Psalm 37:1-11

Dr. Bayer

Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of

your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday. Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices. Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil. For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there. But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

**Anthem**

*Come and See*

Karen Marrolli

Chancel Choir; Jill Deanne Fung, cello; Ann Carney, piano

*Come and see. Love is here now. Free your soul. Let judgment go.*

*Come and see. Lay your heart down. Simply be, that you may see.*

*Only light can drive away the dark. Only mercy dampens hatred's spark.*

*Where compassion reigns, only love remains.*

*Come and see. Peace is here now. Just reach out and conquer doubt.*

*Come and see. Lay your fear down. See what you find with opened mind.*

*Where we tend to turn toward force or fight, shouting who is wrong and who is right, nurture opened hearts from whence healing starts.*

*Come and see. Come and see.*

*We can build a world where all are known, where all are home, where you don't need to carry guilt or shame, you don't need to carry hurt or pain, where the fires of grace burn in every place.*

*Come and see, come and see, come and see.*

**Second Reading**

Luke 6:27-38

Dr. Brown

"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon** I Thought It Was Supposed to Be Easier Than This Dr. Brown

**\*The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) A Declaration of Faith, 2.61-78  
Rev. Lindsey Odom

**God made us for life in community. God created human beings with a need for community and with freedom to enter into it by responding to their Maker with grateful obedience and to one another with love and helpfulness. We believe that we have been created to relate to God and each other in freedom and responsibility. We may misuse our freedom and deny our responsibility by trying to live without God and other people or against God and other people. Yet we are still bound to them for our life and well-being, and intended for free and responsible fellowship with them. Since every human being is made for communion with God and others, we must treat no one with contempt. We are to respect and love all other people and ourselves as well.**

**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** *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* arr. Wesley Carroll  
Jill Deanne Fung, cello

*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** No. 606  
***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** Caroline Angerer  
**Gracious God, who blesses us in our brokenness and rejoices with us in our joy, we bring these gifts as an offering of hope and love. May they be used to heal the hurting, feed the hungry, and welcome the weary. Help us to be a community that reflects your kingdom, where all find acceptance and grace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

## **We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 795** *Healer of Our Every Ill* HEALER



- 2 In the pain and joy be-hold-ing how your grace is still un
- 3 Give us strength to love each oth-er, ev-ery sis-ter, ev-ery
- 4 You who know each thought and feel-ing, teach us all your way of



fold-ing, give us all your vi-sion, God of love.  
 broth-er; Spir-it of all kind-ness, be our guide.  
 heal-ing; Spir-it of com-pas-sion, fill each heart.

**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**\*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.***

**Postlude**

*Prelude in G (BWV 550a)*

J. S. Bach

## **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

Ann Carney, piano

Jill Deanne Fung, cello

Caroline Angerer, Hannah Angerer, liturgists

**Acolytes:** Caeden Myers, Grayson Myers

**A/V Team:** Mary Katheryne Zagora, Michael Zagora

**Ushers:** Bob Cushman, Phil Eatherton, Curtis Guy, Gwen Volker, Carol

Watkins, Michael Zagora

**Welcome Team:** Blair Choren, Brooke Choren, Marla Choren, Michael Choren, Jack Hess

In celebration of Black History Month, we will hear music from composers of African descent each Sunday in February. Today, our prelude is “Melody” by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who was born in London, England on August 15, 1875, and died in 1912. He was an English composer who achieved such incredible success that he was called the African Mahler. Coleridge-Taylor’s greatest success was the cantata *Hiawatha’s Wedding-feast*. It was widely performed in England during his lifetime and was rivaled only by Handel’s *Messiah* and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* in popularity. In addition, this morning’s introit, “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian,” is an African American spiritual.

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 Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, [adrienne@smpchome.org](mailto:adrienne@smpchome.org). Also, find us on Instagram: @southmeckpres and Facebook: @southmecklenburgpresbyterian.

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members on this Sunday at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Melissa White, Director of Hospitality and Connection, [melissa@smpchome.org](mailto:melissa@smpchome.org) or 704-887-7488.

### **Congregational Notes** (as of February 19, 2025)

#### **Remember in Prayer**

- Janet and Jeff Goetz, as Jeff’s mother, Joan Goetz, entered the Church triumphant on February 14.
- All those affected by conflict, displacement, and unrest around the world and at home.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti, as they navigate the chaos and challenges engulfing their country.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

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

### **SMPC STAFF**

**Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor**

[matt@smpchome.org](mailto:matt@smpchome.org)

**Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor**

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**Mary Katheryne Zagora, Financial Administrator**

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**Church Office Hours:**

**Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Friday: Closed**



## WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies 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. 23**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**BAM! Bible and Music**  
**Meet in Narthex, Children in Kindergarten-5th Grade**  
During BAM!, children sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza is served. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

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**today**  
**FEB. 23**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**SMPC Youth Sky Zone Event**  
**10200 Centrum Pkwy, Pineville, NC 28134, Middle and High Schoolers**  
Come jump with us at Sky Zone! Drop off and pick up will be at Sky Zone. Cost is \$25. Please bring cash if you want to buy a drink or snack. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

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**tuesday**  
**FEB. 25**  
10:00 a.m.

**Handiworkers Group**  
**Palmer Building, Room 104**  
All levels of knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited. This group meets weekly to work on projects. Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjaxmeson@gmail.com.

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**tuesday**  
**FEB. 25**  
7:30 p.m.

**Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday**  
**Chapel 206**  
The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

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**wednesday**  
**FEB. 25**  
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 Zoom info.

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**thursday**  
**FEB. 27**  
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.

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**thursday**  
**FEB. 27**  
7:30 p.m.

**Making Space Mom's Group**  
**McQueen Room**  
Moms of all ages are invited to join us on the first and third Thursdays of every month for study, service and fellowship. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

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**sunday**  
**MAR. 2**  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.

**Third Grade Bible Class**  
**Mecklenburg Hall**  
At least one significant adult should attend with the third grader (parent, grandparent, aunt, family friend). Then, during worship that morning, we will present Bibles to the children. During class, third graders and their adult will learn about the Bible, how to read the Bible, and some study tips. Please contact Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org, if your third grader plans on participating!

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**sunday**  
**MAR. 2**  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.

**Adult Study: 'Wonder'**  
**McQueen Room/Zoom**  
We are in the last week of a four-week study where we'll explore how these two ways of understanding the world can complement and enrich one another. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

**sunday**  
**MAR. 2**  
**11:30 a.m. -**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**SMPC Youth Lenten Lunch**  
**Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers**  
Join us for lunch and Lenten activities and stations. Please note we'll meet directly after worship as we have Room in the Inn that evening.  
- Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

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**sunday**  
**MAR. 2**

**Room in the Inn**  
**Sardis Presbyterian Church**  
There are spots open for food donations and for volunteers to help with breakfast and cleanup.  
Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



**sunday**  
**MAR. 2**  
**4:00 p.m. -**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**4th and 5th Grade Bowling and Arcade**  
**Spare Time Bowling in Pineville, 4th and 5th Graders**  
Join us for bowling, arcades and pizza! Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Tuesday, March 4, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall** - Bring your family and friends for a pancake feast as we prepare to journey through the Lenten season together. We will collect food donations to support our Center of Hope ministry: pancake mix (add water variety), syrup, Tang drink mix and quick grits. \$5/person (maximum family cost of \$20). Register on Realm via the QR code by Sunday, March 2. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



**Ash Wednesday**  
**Drive-Through Ashes** - March 5, 7:30-9:15 a.m., Church Parking Lot  
**Worship Service** - March 5, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream; Childcare provided for ages 3 and under.

**American Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, March 8, 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** - The need for blood is greater now than ever. Parents! Remember that Parents' Morning Out is also on March 8, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (see more below)! Maybe you can drop the kids off and donate blood! Please bring your American Red Cross Donor Card or photo I.D. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Bill Ramsey, bill.john.ramsey@gmail.com.



**Parents' Morning Out, Saturday, March 8, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Meet in the Sanctuary, Ages 3-2nd Grade** - Children are invited to this fun-filled morning where we'll play games, create crafts, watch a Bible story movie and enjoy a snack! Cost is \$10 to cover materials. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

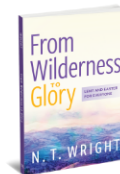
**Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, March 11, 11:30 a.m., Jekyll and Hyde Taphouse Grill, 216 W. North Main St, Waxhaw** - SMPC Lunch Bunch is an informal group that meets four times a year for lunch and fellowship. All are welcome—invite a friend. Please RSVP to Ruth Ann Engle by Sunday, March 9, raengle22@gmail.com.

## NEW! LENTEN STUDY

**"From Wilderness to Glory" - Lenten Adult Study Begins March 9 and March 13**

**Sundays beginning March 9, 9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom OR Thursdays beginning March 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Chapel 204 or Zoom**

Join us Sundays OR Thursdays (or go between the two!) for a seven-week Lenten study of *From Wilderness to Glory* by N.T. Wright. This study explores Jesus' journey in the Gospel of Mark, guiding us from the wilderness to the cross and resurrection. Through Scripture, reflection, and discussion, we'll deepen our faith and understanding. Even if you can't join the study, we encourage you to purchase the book as a daily devotional for Lent - contact Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org, for more information. All are welcome!



# THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO THE ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET!

We hope your friends and loved ones treasured your Christmas "gift of giving" - it made an impact! We encourage you to give the gift of giving all year - Valentine's Day, anniversaries, birthdays, special occasions - they are all opportunities to give to those in need!



Many of the organizations we partner with for alternative giving also have opportunities to serve throughout the year. Make 2025 your year to give back through your time, talent and treasure! Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org)

**2024 ALTERNATIVE GIVING IMPACT**  
**\$23,070.21**

## 13 ORGANIZATIONS

- ♥ Augustine Literacy Project (ALP)
- ♥ Promising Pages
- ♥ Ballantyne Families Helping Neighbors in Need
- ♥ Roof Above
- ♥ Community Culinary School
- ♥ Salvation Army Center of Hope
- ♥ Crisis Assistance Ministry
- ♥ VIA Health Partners
- ♥ Freedom School
- ♥ Friends Empowering Haiti/Ewo
- ♥ Nourish Up
- ♥ Presbyterian Disaster Relief through PC(USA)
- ♥ Project 2 Heal

## A FEW HIGHLIGHTS



**\$2,052** Donated to ALP

**3** ALP Tutors for Smithfield Elementary



Donated to help feed students in Haiti

**77** OFCB students are sponsored by SMPC members - more sponsorships available!

**\$3,530**



**\$3,103** & clothing and supplies donated to Crisis Assistance Ministry

**12** Saturday mornings spent serving breakfast to Center of Hope Guests



**\$2695 & 2,285** lbs of food  
 Donated to Nourish Up

HONOR A LOVED ONE WITH A DONATION TO THE ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET ANY TIME OF YEAR! SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE.



WORSHIP. CONNECT. SERVE.

[smpchome.org](http://smpchome.org)  
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 @southmeckpres

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## **South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church**

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