



**South  
Mecklenburg**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship  
Second Sunday in Lent  
March 16, 2025  
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

<b>Prelude</b>	<i>Psalm 27</i>	Emma Lou Diemer
<b>Welcome and Concerns of the Church</b>		Rev. Lindsey Odom
<b>Moment for Music</b>		Zach Bowyer
<b>Introit</b>	<i>Jesus, We Are Here</i>	Patrick Matsikenyiri
<b>*Call to Worship</b>		Lilliana Smigiel
One:	The Lord is our light and our salvation.	
<b>Many:</b>	<b>Of whom shall we be afraid?</b>	
One:	The Lord is the stronghold of our life.	
<b>Many:</b>	<b>We will wait for the Lord in faithfulness.</b>	
One:	Let us seek the Lord's face in this time of worship.	
<b>All:</b>	<b>We will honor God's presence in our prayers and our praises!</b>	
<b>*Hymn 49</b>	<i>The God of Abraham Praise</i>	LEONI



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*)

Rev. Odom

**God of compassion, we are creatures who seek our own comfort. We confess that we prefer our own plans to your purposes. We shrink from costly discipleship and put our own interests first. Forgive our fleeting commitment. Forgive us for the many times in which we have strayed from your path, turned away from you in guilt, anger, fear, or pride. We thank you, O' God, that you are always more ready to turn to us than we are to turn to you, that you are more ready to forgive than we are to confess, and that you more ready to heal than we are to ask for**

healing. Have mercy on us. Inspire us with the energy to do your will and serve our neighbors in the example of Christ. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

\*Response of Praise

No. 447

*We are forgiven. We are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.  
(sing twice)*

## We Hear and Respond to the Word

### Church Family Moment

Kathy Graham

1. To explore the gentle care of a mother hen, read or listen to [Five Little Chicks](#) by Nancy Tafuri. In this story, a mother hen leads her little chicks to find good things to eat, then gathers them close under her wings to snuggle and sleep. It's a beautiful picture of the way Jesus cares for us—gently, lovingly, and always keeping us close. (Idea from [Worshiping With Children](#).)
2. Play a simple game of “Hen and Chicks Tag” to remind everyone how it feels to be gathered close and safe. One person plays the mother hen while the others are chicks. The hen gently tags the chicks to bring them in close, and they hold hands or link arms as they stay together. Keep going until the mother hen has gathered all her chicks. Talk about how being gentle can be powerful and loving, just like Jesus.
3. Create a cozy “nest” craft to remember how Jesus gathers us in love. Cut out a hen shape from paper or cardboard. Underneath her wings, glue cotton balls, tissue paper, or yarn to look like soft feathers and tiny chicks. You can even write your name on one of the chicks to remember that Jesus gathers *you* under his wings. Hang your art somewhere you can see it during Lent.
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a. How is Jesus like a mother hen?
  - b. Why do you think Jesus chooses gentleness instead of force? How can we show gentle love to others this week?



### Sacrament of Baptism

**Jamie Louise Schultis, Lana Ember Schultis**

Children of Jill and Julian Schultis, sister of Emilia

Representing the Session: Gayle Ireland

Representing the children: Mia Smigiel

### Baptismal Response

*Child of blessing, child of promise, baptized with the Spirit's sign,  
with this water God has sealed you unto love and grace divine.*

***Child of joy, our dearest treasure, God's you are, from God you came.  
Back to God we humbly give you: live as one who bears Christ's name.***

*The children will return to join their families following the sermon.*

**Prayer for Illumination**

Rev. Odom

**First Reading**

Psalm 27

Rev. Odom

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident. One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation! If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

**Anthem**

*Wayfaring Stranger*

arr. Craig Courtney

Chancel Choir; Laura Schelhammer, flute; Blythe Kinsey, piano

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger while traveling  
through this world below; yet there's no sickness, toil,  
nor danger in that bright land to which I go. I'm going there to  
see my Father, I'm going there no more to roam. I'm just  
a going over Jordan, I'm just a going over home. I know dark  
clouds will father o'er me, I know my way is rough and steep;  
yet golden fields lie out before me, where weary eyes no  
more shall weep. I'm going there to meet my mother.  
She said she'd meet me when I come. I'm just a going over  
Jordan, I'm just a going over home. I want to wear a crown of  
glory when I get home to that good land. I want to shout  
salvation's story in concert with the heav'nly band. I'm going  
there to meet my Savior, to sing His praise forevermore.  
I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger while traveling  
through this world below; I'm just a going over Jordan,  
I'm just a going over home,  
I'm going over home.

**Second Reading**

Luke 13:31-35

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Who Sets the Agenda?

Dr. Brown

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

The Apostles' Creed

Dr. Whitney Bayer

**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. Bayer

*. . . (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***Ubi Caritas*

Bryan Sharpe

Jubilate Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Exultemus, et in ipso jucundemur.*

Where charity and love are, there God is.

Let us exult, and in Him be joyful.

*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.*

**\*Lenten Doxology**

FINLANDIA

***O suffering 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.  
 Praise to our God, and praise to you, the Son!  
 Praise to the Spirit, our God, Three in One.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Mia Smigiel

Living God, we offer our gifts today in hopeful gratitude. Bless these gifts and use them to increase the goodness enjoyed by those in need. Bless our lives that, through our relationships, others will be touched by the hope we know in Christ Jesus and find their lives blessed by his love and mercy. Amen.

**We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 213**

*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

RATHBUN



1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing  
 2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -  
 3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and  
 4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the  
 5 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing



o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred  
 ceive, and fears an - noy, nev - er shall the cross for -  
 love up - on my way, from the cross the ra - diance  
 cross are sanc - ti - fied; peace is there that knows no  
 o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred



sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.  
 sake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.  
 stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.  
 mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.  
 sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.



**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**\*Congregational Response**

No. 547, stanza 2

***“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*

## **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, Jubilate Choir

Laura Schelhammer, flute; Blythe Kinsey, piano

Kathy Graham, Children’s Spiritual Formation Committee

Lilliana Smigiel, Mia Smigiel, liturgists

**Acolyte:** Jones Woodard

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

**Ushers:** Richard Franseen, Bjorn Hansen, Jonathan Mangels, Evan Mangels, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

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

There are several options to remember or honor a loved one with the SMPC Flower Ministry. Find more details and sign up to reserve a Sunday via the QR code. Contact: Karen Malmut, karenmalmut@yahoo.com.



In celebration of Women’s History month, we will hear music by women composers every Sunday in March. Today, we will hear Emma Lou Diemer’s “Psalm 27” for the prelude. Diemer, born in 1927 in Kansas City, Missouri, is an accomplished American composer, organist, and educator who has taught at several universities, including the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she helped establish the electronic/computer music program. She has received numerous awards for her compositions, which range from orchestral and choral works to electronic and keyboard music, and continues to perform her works on piano, organ, harpsichord, and synthesizer.

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 Sunday, March 23 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 March 13, 2025)

### **Remember in Prayer**

- 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**

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**Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor**

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**Mary Katheryne Zagora, Financial Administrator**

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

**Church Office Hours:**

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

**Friday: Closed**



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## **South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church**

8601 Bryant Farms Road, Charlotte, NC 28277, 704-544-0404


PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

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

## 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**  
**MAR. 16**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.
- Intergenerational Yoga + Mindfulness Night**  
**Lawn behind Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages**  
All ages are invited for a Yoga + Mindfulness Night led by SMPC member Katie Henriques. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.
- 
- tuesday**  
**MAR. 18**  
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, jgjameson@gmail.com.
- 
- wednesday**  
**MAR. 19**  
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.
- 
- thursday**  
**MAR. 20**  
10:00 a.m. -  
11:00 a.m.
- "From Wilderness to Glory" - Lenten Adult Study**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**  
Join us Thursdays OR Sundays (or go between the two!) for a seven-week Lenten study of From Wilderness to Glory by N.T. Wright. We are in the second week. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.
- 
- thursday**  
**MAR. 20**  
12:30 p.m. -  
1:00 p.m.
- Food for Thought Group**  
**McQueen Room**  
This group is reading *The First Ladies* by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray. All are welcome! Contact: Kathy Paquette, khesspaquette@aol.com.
- 
- thursday**  
**MAR. 20**  
7:00 p.m.
- SMPC/Mosaic of Charlotte Ramadan Iftar Dinner**  
**Mecklenburg Hall**  
During the celebration of Ramadan, the Muslim community breaks their daily fast with a meal, referred to as an Iftar. Join us as we come together for an interfaith Iftar family dinner with our Muslim neighbors from Mosaic of Charlotte, a local Turkish Islamic community. The Mosaic of Charlotte is providing traditional food for our dinner. We will all celebrate diversity and pray for unity. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.
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- 
- thursday**  
**MAR. 20**  
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.
- 
- friday**  
**MAR. 21**  
7:30 a.m.
- Friday Morning Men's Group**  
**Chapel 206**  
This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are beginning a new book, Green Lights by Matthew McConaughey. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

**saturday**  
**MAR. 22**  
**9:15 a.m.**

**Bag Lunches for Roof Above**  
**Drop off in front of the Palmer Building.**  
On the fourth Saturday of each month, SMPC provides 100 bag lunches for Roof Above to help feed those in need. Sign up to bring bag lunches via QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



**sunday**  
**MAR. 23**  
**9:00 a.m. -**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**"From Wilderness to Glory" - Lenten Adult Study**  
**McQueen Room 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 will begin the third week of the study. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**sunday**  
**MAR. 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.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 -**  
The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

**SMPC Preschool Annual Hop-A-Thon, Wednesday, March 26, 11:40 a.m.-12:40 p.m., SMPC Playground -** Children are given 1 minute to hop inside a hula hoop as many times as possible. Sponsors can donate per hop or with a set amount. Funds raised go to the school's summer building refresh and repairs as well as 10% going to support students in Haiti. Donate at smpchome.org > Give. Fund: Other; Memo: Hop-A-Thon. Contact: Tammy Winchip, tammy@smpchome.org.

**Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, March 27, 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.

**Believing and Belonging, Sunday, March 30, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., McQueen Room -** For all who are considering membership and/or would like to know more about being Presbyterian and SMPC. Led by Rebecca Guzman and Melissa White, we will explore the history and beliefs of the Presbyterian church and how God uses our gifts to create community. Lunch will be provided and childcare available. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



**APRIL BYG (Big Youth Group), Sunday, March 30, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers -** BYG (Big Youth Group) is held on the first Sunday of each month during the school year. BYG provides an opportunity for youth to grow in faith and love through Bible study, small group time, good food, fun games, and fellowship. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

**Community Culinary School of Charlotte Lunch, Tuesday, April 1, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 9315 D Monroe Rd, Charlotte, NC 28270 -** Join us for lunch at the Chef's Table at Community Culinary School of Charlotte (CCSC) and learn more about their mission! Cost is \$20 plus optional gratuity. Register on Realm. Contact: Donna Brown, donnamatt89@gmail.com.



### SMPC'S HYMN MADNESS



Get ready for some friendly competition—hymn style! Just like March Madness, we're putting beloved hymns head-to-head in a bracket-style tournament. Each round, you'll vote for your favorites until we crown the "Heavenly Hymn" champion, which will be revealed on Easter Sunday! Voting each week ends at noon on Wednesday, and winners will be announced each Thursday in the weekly email and on social media, so make sure you're following us on Facebook (@southmecklenburgpresbyterian) and Instagram (@southmeckpres)! Share with your fave "teammates" - it's more fun with a crowd of fans!

