



**South  
Mecklenburg**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

First Sunday in Lent

March 9, 2025

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

**Prelude** *Aubade* Brenda Portman

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

**Introit** *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* arr. Robert Powell  
Ann Carney, recorder

**\*Call to Worship** Felix Jaynes

Leader: Jesus began his ministry to the world, led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

**People: As we begin our Lenten journey, let us be led by the Spirit, even into the uncomfortable places.**

Leader: In those forty days, and in that place, Jesus was faced with hunger, doubt and temptation.

**People: As we seek to follow Jesus, we would be led, even into the uncomfortable choices.**

Leader: Jesus left the wilderness, faithful and obedient to God, rejoicing in the One in whom he trusted.

**People: As we continue on our path to faithfulness, we will be led by our Christ, rejoicing in the Lord our God.**

**\*Hymn 307** *God of Grace and God of Glory* CWM RHONNDA



1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple  
 2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as -  
 3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to  
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils



pour thy power; crown thine an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry; bring its  
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us free our  
 thy con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in  
 we de - plore. Let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our



bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,



for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.  
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.  
 lest we miss thy king - dom's goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.  
 serv - ing thee whom we a - dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.



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

Dr. Whitney Bayer

**Gracious God, we come before you in need of forgiveness and grace. You call us to trust in you completely, but we do not. We are timid and fearful as we follow your lead. We justify our actions and words, though we know they are not what you require. We struggle to understand the new life Christ offers, preferring old habits to risky change. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to be born again into the life of Christ, trusting that you have included us by grace in the family of faith. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Dr. Bayer

**\*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**

Rebecca Guzman

1. **Wondering with Jesus in the Wilderness:** Watch this video: [Jesus is Tempted in the Wilderness](#). As you watch, wonder—what was Jesus feeling during those 40 days? What did he do all day?
2. **The Nonsense Show – Knowing Who We Are:** Katie Barrett Todd of *Storypath* ([source](#)) connects this passage to Eric Carle’s *The Nonsense Show* ([watch here](#)). A chicken hatching from a banana? A rabbit pulling a person from a hat? That’s nonsense! Satan tempted Jesus to be something he wasn’t—a stuntman, a magician, a worldly king. But Jesus knew who he was—God’s Son. We don’t need to put on a “nonsense show” pretending to be someone we’re not. We are God’s children, and that’s enough!
3. **"Who Am I?" Collage:** Make a collage that shows who *you* are as God’s child! Grab old magazines, newspapers, or printed pictures. Cut out words, colors, or images that represent you—your favorite things, kind actions, or ways you follow Jesus. Glue them onto a piece of paper to create a "Who I Am" collage. Talk with each other about how each of you is uniquely made by God and loved just as you are.
4. **Journal, considering the following:**
  - a) What do you think Jesus felt like after 40 days in the wilderness?
  - b) When are we tempted to be someone we’re not?
  - c) How can we remember we are God’s children?
  - d) How can we be more like Jesus this Lent?



### **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.  
(sing twice)***

**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 4:3-8

Dr. Bayer

But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. (Selah) Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!" You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound. I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.

**Anthem**

*A Lenten Prayer*

Hal Hopson

Chancel Choir; Chancel Ringers; Collin Sinclair, soloist; Ann Carney, piano

*Lord, who throughout these forty days for us didst fast and pray,  
Teach us with thee to mourn our sins, and close by thee to stay.  
Jesus walked this lonesome valley, he had to walk it by himself;  
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him, he had to walk it by himself.  
We must walk this lonesome valley, we have to walk it by ourselves;  
Oh, nobody else can walk it for us, we have to walk it by ourselves.  
You must go and stand your trial, you have to stand it by yourself,  
Oh, nobody else can stand it for you, you have to stand it by yourself.  
And through these days of penitence, and through thy Passiontide,  
Yea, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.*

**Second Reading**

Luke 4:1-13

Dr. Brown

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

A Test of Trust

Dr. Brown

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

A Declaration of Faith, 9.83-92

Rev. Lindsey Odom

Christ calls us to pilgrimage toward the kingdom. Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom and its hidden presence in the midst of the world's kingdoms. He taught his disciples to seek God's Kingdom first. We believe Christ gives us and demands of us lives in pilgrimage toward God's kingdom. Like Christ we may enjoy on our journey all that sustains life and makes it pleasant and beautiful. No more than Christ are we spared the darkness, ambiguity, and threat of life in the world. We are in the world, but not of the world. Our confidence and hope for ourselves and other people do not rest in the powers and achievements of this world, but in the coming and hidden presence of God's kingdom. Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom: to serve as he has served us; to take up our cross, risking the consequences of faithful discipleship; to walk by faith, not by sight to hope for what we have not seen.

**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** *Darkness in the Midst of the Storm* Mary Lou Fast  
Chancel Ringers

*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** Grace Wooley  
**Abundant God, in this wilderness and on this sacred journey to the cross, you call us to share the love and nourishment provided by your hand. Accept our offering, given in gratitude, so that what you have placed in our possession might become abundance and blessings for all. Amen.**

## **We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 618** *O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High* DEO GRACIAS

1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high, be - yond all  
 2 For us bap - tized, for us he bore his ho - ly  
 3 For us by wick - ed - ness be - trayed, for us, in  
 4 For us he rose from death a - gain; for us he  
 5 All glo - ry to our Lord and God, for love so

thought and fan - ta - sy, that God, the Son of  
 fast and hun - gered sore; for us temp - ta - tions  
 crown of thorns ar - rayed, he bore the shame - ful  
 went on high to reign; for us he sent the  
 deep, so high, so broad: the Trin - i - ty whom

God, should take our mor - tal form for mor - tals' sake.  
 sharp he knew, for us, the tempt - er o - ver - threw.  
 cross and death; for us gave up his dy - ing breath.  
 Spir - it here to guide, to strength - en, and to cheer.  
 we a - dore for - ev - er and for - ev - er - more.

**\*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** *When Jesus Wept* *David Schelat*

## 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  
Chancel Ringers  
Collin Sinclair, soloist; Ann Carney, recorder, piano  
Felix Jaynes, Grace Wooley, liturgists

**Acolyte:** Ryan Wooley

**A/V Team:** Brad Alford, Luke Estes

**Ushers:** Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Dick Engle, Curt Ireland, Jon Myers  
Craig Parrish

**Welcome Team:** Cynthia Bernhardt, Kathy Rasimas, Grace Wooley, Kari  
Wooley, Ryan Wooley

The flowers in the sanctuary today are given to the Glory of God and in  
memory of Brooke Randle on her 21st birthday by the Randle family.

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 Dr. Brenda  
Portman's "Aubade" for the prelude and Mary Lou Fast's "Darkness in  
the Midst of the Storm" for the offertory. Dr. Portman is a highly  
accomplished concert organist and composer, serving as the Resident  
Organist at Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church in Cincinnati  
and teaching at Xavier University. Mary Lou Fast is a lesser-known  
composer who has published a small number of handbell works.

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. Also, find us on Instagram:  
@southmeckpres and Facebook: @southmecklenburgpresbyterian.

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. During this time, they will explore the story interactively and engage with their peers.
- 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 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 6, 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. 9**  
**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.
- 
- today**  
**MAR. 9**  
**5:00 p.m. -**  
**6:30 p.m.**
- BYG (Big Youth Group)**  
**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.
- 
- tuesday**  
**MAR. 11**  
**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.
- 
- tuesday**  
**MAR. 11**  
**11:30 a.m.**
- Lunch Bunch, Tuesday**  
**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. RSVP to Ruth Ann Engle by today, March 9, raengle22@gmail.com.
- 
- tuesday**  
**MAR. 11**  
**1:00 p.m. -**  
**2:30 p.m.**
- A Caregiver's Journey**  
**McQueen Room**  
Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Contact: Dr. Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.
- 
- tuesday**  
**MAR. 11**  
**7:30 p.m.**
- Men's Evening Study Group - SOCIAL**  
**Middle James Brewery, Pineville**  
This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month (usually in Chapel 206) but this week they're meeting at Middle James Brewery for a social! All are welcome - it's a great time to join! Friends are welcome! Option to register on Realm to let us know you're coming. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.
- 
- wednesday**  
**MAR. 12**  
**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. 13**  
**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. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.
- 
- thursday**  
**MAR. 13**  
**9:00 a.m.**
- Shelter Ministry**  
**Mecklenburg Hall**  
This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. They are always in need of body wash and Rx vials (please, no shampoo or conditioner!) Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

**thursday**  
**MAR. 13**  
**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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**saturday**  
**MAR. 15** **Center of Hope Breakfast**  
**Meet at SMPC at 5:15 a.m.**  
On the third Saturday of each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast for guests at the Center of Hope. Food donations are due Thursday, March 13. Monetary donations are always welcome. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.



**saturday**  
**MAR. 15** **SMPC Montreat Mission Project**  
**Meet at SMPC at 7:00 a.m.**  
Montreat Conference Center is a place that many of us hold very near to our hearts, and it's a place that was devastated by Hurricane Helene. Space is limited to 20 volunteers (ages 14 and up). Lunch will be provided. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



**sunday**  
**MAR. 16**  
**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. Register on Realm. This will begin the second week of this study. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

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**sunday**  
**MAR. 16**  
**5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.** **Intergenerational Yoga + Mindfulness Night**  
**Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages**  
Children, youth, and families, please join us on Sunday, March 16th in Mecklenburg Hall or behind Mecklenburg Hall on the field (TBD based upon weather) for a Yoga + Mindfulness Night led by SMPC member, Katie Henriques. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SMPC/Mosaic of Charlotte Ramadan Iftar Dinner, Thursday, March 20, 7:00 p.m., 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.

**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. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@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 STAFF UPDATE

### **From SMPC Personnel Committee Chair Janet Morgan:**

As you all should already be aware from Associate Pastor Dr. Whitney Bayer's letter to the congregation, it's with both joy and sadness that I share that Whitney has informed us that she has received and accepted the call to serve as the next pastor of Rumson Presbyterian Church in Rumson, New Jersey. While we will deeply miss her presence, leadership, and care at SMPC, we celebrate this new opportunity for Whitney and trust that God is leading her into this next chapter of ministry. Whitney's last Sunday with us will be March 30. We will celebrate her with a reception - more to come on that! Scan the QR code to read more from Janet and Whitney.

