



**South  
Mecklenburg**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 6, 2025

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

**Prelude** *In the Garden* arr. Dan Miller

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

**Introit** *Jesus, We Are Here* Patrick Matsikenyiri

**\*Call to Worship** Rev. Lindsey Odom

One: When all we have hoped for and trusted in has let us down,

**Many: there is Christ who reaches out to us.**

One: When the world seems dark and despair threatens to close in upon us,

**Many: there is Christ, reaching out for us.**

One: Come and let us worship the Lord who is always ready to reach out to us.

**Many: We humbly come before the Lord in faith, hope, and love.  
Amen.**

**\*Hymn 846** *Fight the Good Fight* DUKE STREET

1 Fight the good fight with all thy might.  
 2 Run the straight race through God's good grace;  
 3 Cast care a-side; lean on thy guide.  
 4 Faint not nor fear: God's arms are near.

Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.  
 lift up thine eyes, and seek Christ's face.  
 God's bound-less mer-cy will pro-vide.  
 God chang-eth not, and thou art dear.

Lay hold on life, and it shall be  
 Life with its way be-fore us lies;  
 Trust, and thy trust-ing soul shall prove  
 On-ly be-lieve, and thou shalt see

thy joy and crown e-ter-nal-ly.  
 Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.  
 Christ is its life, and Christ its love.  
 that Christ is all in all to thee.

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

Rev. Odom

**Ever-Present God, you offer us restoration and wholeness, yet we resist it. We reduce the purpose of this life to the amount of stuff we can retain, and we disregard the damage done to our world, our neighbors, and to ourselves in the process. We confess that we would rather remain as we are than risk the change that results from your presence in our lives. In this season of Lent, help us to realize just how much we depend on one another. Guide us to reorient our lives towards your goodness and your joy. And as you do, we ask that you renew us, restore us, and remain with us, as you always have. Amen.**

***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. **Imagine the Possibilities:** In *Imagine* by Juan Felipe Herrera, the author invites us to dream about what life could be like as we grow. Watch the read-aloud [here](#). Paul also reflects on loss, gain, and transformation in Christ. Just as the book encourages us to dream, Paul reminds us that our greatest hope is found in Jesus (Credit: Katie Barrett Todd, [Storypath](#)).
2. **Remembering Communion:** Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is more than a meal—it's a way to be with Jesus. Presbyterians believe Jesus is mysteriously present. Communion connects us with all Christians and gives us the strength to serve others. At home, set a special table with a cloth or candle. Talk about how Communion is more than eating—it's a reminder of God's love.
3. **Pressing On – A Craft:** Paul describes faith as a journey. Create a "Path of Faith" collage by drawing or cutting out footprints. On each, write or draw ways you grow in faith—praying, learning, helping, or showing kindness. Arrange them as a path to remind you that following Jesus is a lifelong adventure.
4. **Journal, considering the following:**
  - a. What do you imagine about your life in Christ as you grow and change? Do you think you will be surprised?
  - b. Paul talks about pressing forward toward the goal. What is something you are working hard to learn?
  - c. How does Communion connect us to people near and far?
  - d. What is one way we can live out what we receive at the Lord's Table?



### 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**

Rev. Odom

**First Reading**

Isaiah 43:16-21

Rev. Odom

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

**Anthem***When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

arr. Gilbert Marin

Chancel Choir

*When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.  
Forbid it Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.  
See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?  
Were the whole realms of nature mine, that were a present far too small;  
Love, so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all! Amen!*

**Second Reading**

Philippians 3:4b-14

Dr. Brown

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

"I want to know Christ"

Dr. Brown

\*The Affirmation of Faith (*unison*)

The Nicene Creed

Rev. Odom

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Offertory

*Meditations on the Cross*

Michael Helman

Exultate 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.*

## **Celebration of the Lord's Supper**

Invitation to the Table

Dr. Brown

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Odom

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: **We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** (*Pastor's prayer*)

*. . . (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.

**The Words of Institution**

Rev. Odom, Dr. Brown

**The Bread and the Cup**

*You are invited to come forward (see diagram) to receive the elements of communion by intinction. When receiving the elements by intinction, you are invited to take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, and return to your seat. If you are not able to come forward, you will be served at your seat. Servers with gluten-free elements are located at the back of the sanctuary.*

**Communion of the People**

**Hymn 769**

**For Everyone Born**

FOR EVERYONE BORN

*(Please join in singing when able)*



1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,  
 2 For wom - an and man, a place at the ta - ble,  
 3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble,  
 4 For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble,  
 5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,



for ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread,  
 re - vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share,  
 a voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
 a - bus - er, a - bused, with need to for - give,  
 to live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be,



a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,  
 with wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er,  
 the hands of a child in hands that are wrin - kled,  
 in an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy,  
 to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,



for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,  
 for wom - an and man, a sys - tem that's fair,  
 for young and for old, the right to be - long,  
 for just and un - just, a new way to live,  
 for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,

**The Prayer after Communion**

Dr. Brown

**We Go Out to Serve**



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true Word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise;  
4 High King of Heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

(A) (D) (G) (A)  
B<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>



naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

(G) (D) (F#m7) (G) (A)  
A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> Gm7 A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>



thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tower;  
thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

(Bm) (D/F#) (G) (D)  
Cm E<sup>b</sup>/G A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup>



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heaven - ward, O Power of my power.  
High King of Heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

\*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*

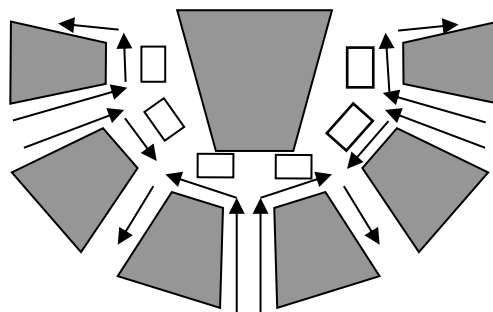
*his glory. Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure."*

Postlude

Voluntary on "Slane"

Jason Payne

Communion Diagram



**Main floor:** Ushers will direct by row; please follow the arrows.

**Balcony:** Ushers will direct worshippers to a communion station.

## **Worship Service Notes**

### **Leading Worship this Morning**

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth & Missions/Outreach

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Exultate Ringers

**A/V Team:** Kari Case

**Ushers:** Andrew Brown, Frank Graham, Judy Jones, Craig Parrish, Donna Podgorny, Bob Williamson

**Welcome Team:** Donna Brown, Blair Choren, Brooke Choren, Marla Choren, Michael Choren

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](https://www.instagram.com/southmeckpres) and Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/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, April 27 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 April 3, 2025)

### **Remember in Prayer**

- Geoffrey and Jeana Lee and their family, as Geoffrey's father, Gregg Lee, entered the Church triumphant on April 1.
- 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).

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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 outside. 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. 6**  
11:30 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m.

**Third Thirty: A Candid Spiritual Exploration of Realities and Challenges We Face in the Years 60-90 - The Commons**

This 12-week study will meet one Sunday a month over a light lunch after worship. Come to as many sessions as your schedule allows! More information and register via QR code or Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



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

**SMPC Youth Mission Project Night - Easter Meal Kits and Egg Hunt, Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers**

We'll make Easter Meal Kits and Easter cards for students at our partner school, Smithfield Elementary. We'll also have an Easter Egg Hunt. The Easter Egg Hunt will be limited to just SMPC Youth. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday  
**APR. 8**  
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  
**APR. 8**  
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: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com

tuesday  
**APR. 8**  
7:30 p.m.

**Men's Evening Study Group  
Chapel 206**

This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

wednesday  
**APR. 9**  
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  
**APR. 10**  
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  
**APR. 10**  
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.

**thursday** "From Wilderness to Glory" - Lenten Adult Study  
**APR. 10** Chapel 204 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.  
**10:00 a.m.** - Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.  
**11:00 a.m.**

**saturday** **Spring Campus Workday**  
**APR. 12** **SMPC Campus**  
Many hands make light work! Join us as we get our beloved church campus spruced up for spring! Contact: Collin Sinclair, collinbsinclair@gmail.com.  
**8:00 a.m.** -  
**10:30 a.m.**

**sunday** "From Wilderness to Glory" - Lenten Adult Study  
**APR. 13** **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.  
**9:00 a.m.** - Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.  
**10:00 a.m.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Food for Thought Book Group - Thursday, April 17, 12:30 p.m., McQueen Room**  
- This group is reading *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. All are welcome. Contact: Kathy Paquette, khessaquette@aol.com.

**Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, April 17, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206** -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 Morning Men's Group, Friday, April 18, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206** - This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are reading *Amazing Grace* by Bruce Hindmarsh All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

### ATTENTION CLASS OF 2025!

We're celebrating the high school and college Class of 2025 on Graduate Sunday, June 1, during 10:10 a.m. worship. Graduates (or parents), please complete the form via QR code so the graduate's information can be printed in the bulletin on Graduate Sunday. Please complete by Sunday, May 11. High school graduates are also invited to Senior Breakfast immediately following worship on June 1 in Mecklenburg Hall. Link to sign up is also via QR code. | Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



### HOLY WEEK AT SMPC

**Palm Sunday, Sunday, April 13, 10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**



**Maundy Thursday Supper & Communion, Thursday, April 17, 6:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall** - Join as we continue our journey through Holy Week. We will share supper and communion and remember our Lord's gathering with His disciples on the night of His arrest when they broke bread together. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org

**Good Friday Tenebrae Service, Friday, April 18, 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary & Livestream** - Scripture, Taizé Music, and Extinguishing Candles

### EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP - APRIL 20

**9:00 AM - CHANCEL CHOIR & CHANCEL RINGERS**

**11:00 A.M. - CHANCEL CHOIR, CHANCEL RINGERS, YOUTH CHOIR & CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

Sanctuary & Livestream | Childcare provided for ages 3 and under



**SMPC'S HYMN MADNESS**

