



A Service of Worship  
Sixth Sunday of Easter  
May 25, 2025  
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

**Prelude**      *Partita on Nettleton: II. Hymn, I. Invocation*      Jeffrey Blersch

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

**Introit**      *Smilin' Mr. Dile*      Rosemary Byers  
Clara Guzman, piano

**\*Call to Worship**      Caroline Angerer

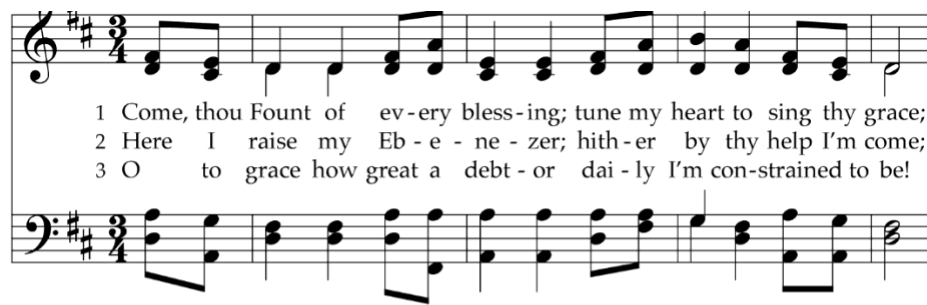
One: Let the peoples praise you, O God;

**Many: Help us to praise you!**

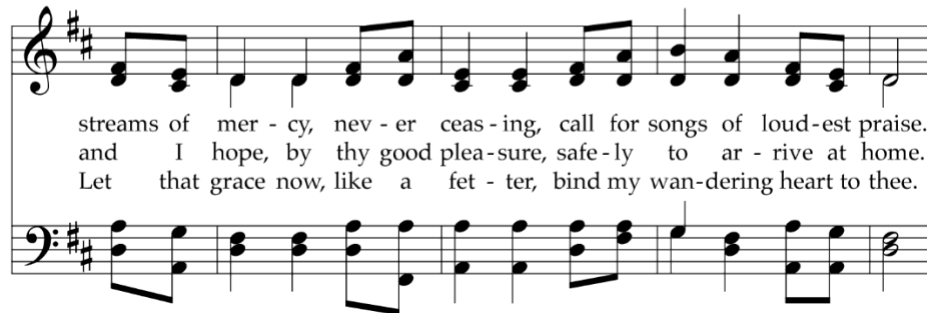
One: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples  
with equity and guide the nations on earth.

**Many: Let us praise you, O' God, by worshipping together!**

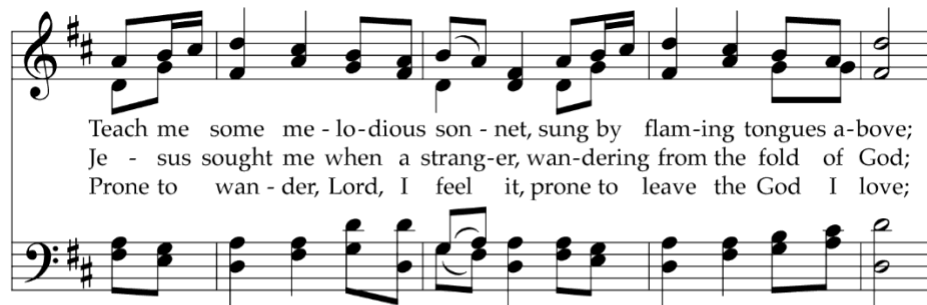
**\*Hymn 475**      *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*      NETTLETON



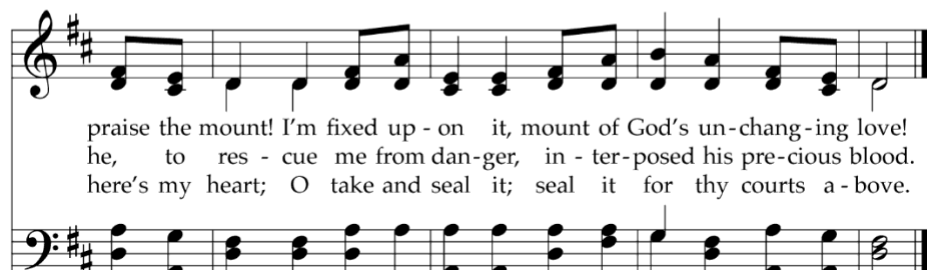
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
 2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;  
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.  
 and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.  
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;  
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;  
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!  
 he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.  
 here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

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

Rebecca Guzman

Gracious God, you call us to listen and follow, yet we often ignore your leading and choose our own path. Like Paul, you send us to those who need your love, but we hesitate or turn away. You open hearts, like Lydia's, yet we sometimes close ours to your word and to others. Forgive us for our resistance, our lack of hospitality, and our silence when we should speak. Open our hearts again, that we may receive your grace and share it freely. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Rebecca Guzman

**\*Response of Praise**

No. 482, stanza 2

*Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,  
 dead in the tomb with Christ our King;*

*one with his rising, freed and forgiven,  
thankfully now God's praises we sing.*

## **We Hear and Respond to the Word**

### **Church Family Moment**

Rebecca Guzman

- 1. Story Time:** Listen to a [readaloud](#) of *Bear Came Along* by Richard T. Morris. In this story, Bear meets new friends as he floats down the river. They discover life is better together. Paul also met someone new—Lydia—and shared Jesus' love with her. Like Bear and his friends, Paul and Lydia learned that God brings people together to build joyful, loving communities.



- 2. Play “Pass the Message”:** Whisper a short message like “Jesus loves you!” down the line. See how it changes—or stays the same! Talk about how the good news of Jesus spreads from person to person, just like it did from Paul to Lydia.
- 3. Share the Love:** Write or draw a message to someone you care about. It could be a card, a note, or a simple picture. Just like Lydia shared the message of Jesus with others, we can too—through words and kindness.
- 4. Wondering Questions:**
- I wonder how Paul felt when he had his dream.
  - I wonder why Lydia wanted to follow Jesus.
  - I wonder how we can tell others about Jesus.

### **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**

Melissa White

#### **First Reading**

Psalm 67

Melissa White

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.

### **Anthem**

*Shall We Gather at the River?*

arr. John Carter

Chancel Choir; Joanna Alford, soloist; Ann Carney, piano

*Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod;  
with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God?  
Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river,  
gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God.  
Ere we reach the shining river, lay we ev'ry burden down;  
grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown.  
Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river,  
gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God.  
Deep river, my home is over Jordan,  
deep river, I want to cross over into campground.  
Soon we'll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease;  
soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace.  
Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river,  
gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God.*

## **Second Reading**

Acts 16:6-15

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

## **Sermon**

Providence Plays with Coincidence

Dr. Brown

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

The Apostles' Creed

Melissa White

**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** Melissa White

. . . (*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** *Come Now to the Water* Alexander Peters

*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. 482, stanza 1

*Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,  
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;  
heirs of salvation, trusting the promise,  
faithfully now God's praises we sing.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication** Hannah Angerer

God, bless these gifts for your good purpose, that they might multiply your good works in all the earth. Amen

## We Go Out to Serve

**\*Hymn 295** *Go to the World!* SINE NOMINE

1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.  
 2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - ery place.  
 3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;  
 4 Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,  
 Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,  
 Go live the word of God's re - deem - ing grace.  
 the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.  
 for I am with you till the age shall end,  
 bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.  
 Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.  
 As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.  
 when all the hosts of glo - ry cry "A - men!"  
 Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**\*Congregational Response**

No. 482, stanza 3

***Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,  
 marked with the sign of Christ our King;  
 born of the Spirit, we are God's children;  
 joyfully now God's praises we sing.***

**Postlude**

*Partita on Nettleton: IV. Dance*

Jeffrey Blersch

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## Worship Service Notes

### Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Melissa White, Director of Hospitality and Connection

Chancel Choir

Joanna Alford, soloist; Ann Carney, piano; Clara Guzman, piano

Caroline Angerer, Hannah Angerer, liturgists

**A/V Team:** Brad Alford, Nicholas White

**Ushers:** Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Jon Myers, Craig Parrish, Gwen Volker, Jim Williams

**Welcome Team:** Heather Carpenter, Jackson Carpenter, Jack Hess

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 26, in recognition of the Memorial Day holiday.

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.



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 today 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 May 22, 2025)

#### **Remember in Prayer**

- Aimee and Ryan Gravender and their family, as Amy's mother, Sande Smith, entered the Church triumphant on May 21.
- 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)

# SMPC WEEKLY

MAY 25, 2025

## 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

**Please note: The church office is closed tomorrow, May 26, for the Memorial Day holiday.**

**tuesday**  
**MAY 27**  
**10:00 a.m.**

### **Handiworkers Group**

**Palmer Building, Room 104**

All levels of knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited. This will be the last meeting before the group takes a break for the summer. They will reconvene in the fall.  
Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

**tuesday**  
**MAY 27**  
**7:30 p.m.**

### **Men's Evening Study Group - SOCIAL**

**Middle James Brewery, 400 N. Polk St., Pineville, NC**

All men are invited to join this group for it's summer kickoff social! After this meeting, the group will take a break for summer and will reconvene in the fall on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com

**wednesday**  
**MAY 28**  
**9:30 a.m.**

### **Conversations with Dr. Matt Brown**

**McQueen Room or Zoom**

Join us as we discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. All are welcome! Contact Matt Brown, matt@smpchome.org, for Zoom info.

**saturday**  
**MAY 31**  
**9:30 a.m.**

### **Bag Lunches for Roof Above**

**Drop off in front of the Palmer Building**

SMPC provides 100 bag lunches every month for Roof Above to help feed those in need. While this month is full, you can sign up to bring bag lunches in June via QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



**saturday**  
**MAY 31**  
**3:30 p.m.**

### **Charlotte Chamber Choir: Music From the Heartland: American Music by American Composers**

**Sanctuary**

The Charlotte Chamber Choir will be in the SMPC sanctuary presenting "Music From the Heartland: American Music by American Composers," a concert showcasing the vibrant and varied tapestry of our nation's choral heritage. The event is free to attend, but donations are welcome. Find more on their Facebook page, @charlottechamberchoir.

**saturday**  
**MAY 31**  
**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

### **Hops and Vine Around Town**

**Olde Mecklenburg Brewery (OMB), Ballantyne Bowl**

Join us for fun and fellowship! All are welcome. Contact: Frank Graham, fgraham@carolina.rr.com .

**sunday**  
**JUNE 1**  
**10:10 a.m.**

### **Graduate Sunday**

**Sanctuary and Livestream**

We look forward to celebrating our high school and college graduates! High school graduates are also invited to Senior Breakfast before worship, 9:00-10:00 a.m., on June 1 in Mecklenburg Hall. Please contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org, to sign up.

**sunday**  
**JUNE 1**  
**11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

### **Third Thirty: A Candid Spiritual Exploration of Realities & Challenges We Face in the Years 60-90**

**The Commons**

This 12-week study meets one Sunday a month over a light lunch after worship. This is Session 3: "Being Parents to Parents." Come to any session! More information and register on Realm or scan QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



**sunday**  
**JUNE 1**  
**4:00 p.m.**

**Ordination of Melissa White  
Sanctuary & Livestream**

Join us as Director of Hospitality and Connection Melissa White becomes an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament! Please stay for a reception following the service in the narthex.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Join the SMPC Men's Softball team! The first game is Monday, June 2.** Games are held on Mondays and Fridays throughout the summer and most are played on the SMPC field. The team won the championship last year and has moved up to the league's top division this summer (the 2024 trophy is in Chapel 206!). Contact: Michael Choren, michaelchoren@yahoo.com.

**Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, June 5, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206** - This group meets on the first and third Thursdays of every month. All moms are welcome! Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

**Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday June 6, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206**  
This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are reading the book *Life Is Hard. God Is Good. Let's Dance.: Experiencing Real Joy in a World Gone Mad* by Brant Hansen. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.



**Believing and Belonging, Sunday, June 8, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., McQueen Room** - For visitors, new members and anyone who would like to know more about being Presbyterian and SMPC. Lunch will be provided and childcare available. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**"An Unsurpassed Alleluia," A Festival of Hymns, Sunday, June 8, 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary & Livestream** - The SMPC Music Ministry invites you to this special event that is part of the Charlotte Chapter of the American Guild of Organists' Summer Recital Series! Through robust congregational singing, thoughtful meditations, and stirring music, we will explore the deep truths of our faith. Come sing, reflect, and be renewed. Free to attend and all are welcome. Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.

**SMPC Youth Summer Celebration at Starbucks, Tuesday, June 10, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Starbucks at Stonecrest, Middle and High Schoolers** - Let's celebrate the start of summer! Drop in when you can! Please let Lindsey Odom know you're coming, lindsey@smpchome.org.

**SMPC Youth River Tubing on the Catawba River, Thursday, June 12, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Catawba River Outdoors, Marion, NC, Middle and High Schoolers (Rising 6th Grade through completed 12th Grade)** - Transportation, snacks, and ice cream are provided. We will meet at the church at 8:00 a.m. to drive together. Cost is \$20 to tube. Please bring extra money for lunch. Register and pay on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



## SUMMER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



**SMPC Ushers Needed!** We are looking for new members to join our Usher Team! Usher responsibilities include arriving 30 minutes prior to worship, handing out bulletins before worship, collecting the offering, guiding church members up to communion and cleaning up after worship. Ushers typically work one time a month or every other month. This is a great way for all generations to serve. Contact: Nancy Parrish, cnparrish@bellsouth.net.



**Calling All Graduated High School Seniors and College Students: Serve Breakfast at Center of Hope! Summer Opportunities: Saturdays, June 21, July 19, and August 16, Meet at SMPC at 5:15 a.m.** - This ministry is encouraging graduated high school seniors and college students to serve with us this summer (Center of Hope requires all volunteers to be out of high school.)! Start your Saturday morning off right by serving our neighbors in need! Friends are welcome! Contact: Bob Williamson, bobwill31@hotmail.com.

**Vacation Bible School, Monday, July 21-Thursday, July 24, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., VBS: Ages 3-4th grade; Mission Possible: Rising 5th and 6th Grade** - Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

