



A Service of Worship  
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  
August 24, 2025  
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**We Gather**

**Prelude** *Jesus Loves Me* arr. Jason Payne

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church** Dr. Matthew S. Brown  
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

**Moment for Mission** Kathy Rasimas

**Introit** *Come, Bring Your Burdens to God* South African melody

**\*Call to Worship** Jordan Booker

One: Our lives are in the care of God.

**Many: God has given us abundance and hope.**

One: We have come to praise and thank God for all that God has done for us.

**Many: We gather to celebrate God's love and to offer our lives in service.**

One: Come, let us open our hearts to the Lord!

**Many: Let us rejoice in God's goodness and love. Amen.**

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

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*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

God of hope and promise, we admit that our faith falters. We want to trust you, understand you and experience your love, but sometimes our doubts overwhelm us. We struggle to comprehend our own suffering and that of others. Pardon us when we lose faith in you and in ourselves. Guide us back to harmonious relationships. Encourage us to stay engaged and committed to meaningful dialogues filled with grace and peace. Help us to recognize your love and your grace, which is new every day. Challenge us to move in the direction of justice and hope for all people. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

*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. Read Aloud: [The Library Lion by Michelle Knudsen](#) is

about a lion who loves the library and works hard to follow all the rules. One day, however, the librarian is hurt, and the lion has to break the rule of silence to roar for help. He thinks he can never go back because



he broke a rule, but later the staff welcome him again because he acted with love and care. This story connects to the Scripture we read today from Luke 13, where Jesus reminds us that rules are good, but showing compassion is even more important. This is a good reminder as school begins, and we are going to be learning a lot about rules this week!

#### 2. Mock Interview: Pretend to interview the woman Jesus healed. Ask questions like: "What was it like to be bent over?" "How did it feel when Jesus called you over?" "What do you think about being healed on the Sabbath?"

#### 3. Craft: Make a paper chain. On each link, write or draw something that weighs us down—like sadness, fear, or unfair rules. Then take turns breaking the links to remember that Jesus sets us free.

#### 4. Wonder Questions:

- I wonder why the woman was bent over and unable to stand up straight?
- I wonder if you have ever had to follow a rule that didn't make sense. What did you do?
- I wonder what you think it means for Jesus to set us free.

### Blessing of the Backpacks

Rebecca Guzman, Rev. Odom

*As the children four years old through third grade gather for the Blessing of the Backpacks, 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.***

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

**Congregation: God be with you there.**

Children:            God be with you here.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Rev. Odom

**First Reading**

Isaiah 61:1-3

Rev. Odom

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

**Anthem**

*For All Who Craft Their Words with Skill*

Chancel Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*For all who craft their words with skill to make your story heard,  
For those who study, write, and preach: we thank you, Christ our Word.  
And we rejoice in those whose speech extends the Spirit's breath  
To build a shelter for the lost and summon life from death.  
For all who host the holy meals to keep the faithful fed,  
For those who bless and break and share: we thank you, Christ our Bread.  
And we rejoice in those whose feasts defy each fence and wall,  
Where hunger is the only fee and room is made for all.  
For all who lead your hymns of praise to make weak voices strong,  
For those who practice, tune, and sing: we thank you, Christ our Song.  
And we rejoice in those whose ears are trained by love and care  
To help all find their note of hope in seasons of despair.  
For all who live the words they preach, and practice what they sing,  
For all whose lives are raised to you, a living offering.  
For all who hear your holy call and will not be deterred,  
We thank you Christ, the source of life: our Song, our Bread, our Word.*

**Second Reading**

Luke 13:10-17

Dr. Brown

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents

were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

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

**Sermon**

Initiative

Dr. Brown

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

The Apostles' Creed

Rev. Odom

**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**

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**

*Amazing Grace*

*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**

Elizabeth Martin

**Holy God, receive these gifts as a symbol of gratitude for all that you have given us. We do not know the impact these gifts will have, but we ask that you multiply and use our gifts, just like you use us to do your work in this world. Amen.**

## **We Go Out to Serve**

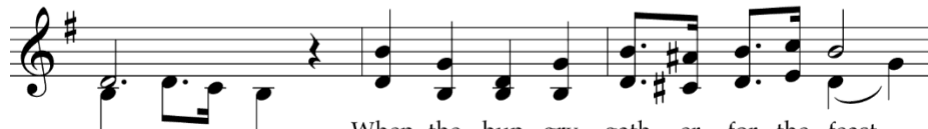
**\*Hymn 852**

***When the Lord Redeems the Very Least***

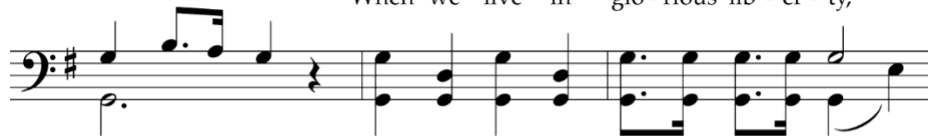
I'LL FLY AWAY



1 When the Lord re - deems the ver - y least,  
2 When the Lord re - stores the sick and weak, we will re -  
3 When the Lord re - vives the world from death, we will re-joyce, will re -  
4 When the Lord re - turns in vic - to - ry,



joyce. When the hun - gry gath - er for the feast,  
joyce, will re-joyce. When the earth is giv - en to the meek,  
When the word of God fills ev - ery breath,  
When we live in glo - rious lib - er - ty,



we will re-joyce. We will re-  
we will re-joyce, will re-joyce, will re-joyce. We will re-joyce, will re-



joyce with glad-ness. We will re-joyce.  
joyce with glad-ness. We will re-joyce, will re-joyce with glad-ness. All our



We will re-joyce!  
days we'll sing to God in praise. We will re-joyce, will re-joyce, will re-joyce!



**\*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**

*Toccata on "Amazing Grace"*

J. Christopher Pardini

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## **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

Blythe Kinsey, piano

Jordan Booker, Elizabeth Martin, liturgists

Judy Jones, Trinity Bell Toller

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

**Ushers:** Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Jenny Gates, Jonathan Mangels  
Evan Mangels, Michael Zagora

**Welcome Team:** Elizabeth Rose, Harrison Rose, Lydia Rose, William Rose

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.

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 today at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, [melissa@smpchome.org](mailto:melissa@smpchome.org) or 704-887-7488.

## **Congregational Notes** (as of August 21, 2025)

### **Remember in Prayer**

- Students, parents, teachers, and administrators, as the school year begins.
- Wayne Harrison as he recovers from surgery.
- Jeff and Maria Davis and their family as Jeff's mother, Virginia (Ginny) Davis, entered the Church triumphant on August 15.
- Hiley Davis as she recovers from surgery.
- All those affected by conflict, displacement, and unrest around the world and at home.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti, that God's peace, protection and justice may prevail amid the crisis, chaos, and despair 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)

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

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

**Laura Black, Ministry Associate for Children and Music**

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

**Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist**

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

**Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation**

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

**Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager**

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

**Cheryl Perry, Director of Communications**

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

**Steve Stevenson, Facility Administrator**

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

**Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate**

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

**Dr. Tammy Winchip, SMPC Preschool Director**



tammy@smpchome.org  
**Mary Katheryne Zagora, Financial Administrator**  
mkzagora@smpchome.org

**Church Office Hours:**  
**Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Friday: Closed**

Realm Connect is our church communications app that allows you to register for events, receive mobile updates, update your gifting or communicate with others in the church. Learn more and download the app via the QR code.



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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

## 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  
**AUG. 24**  
10:00 a.m. -  
11:45 a.m.

**Scout Troops 119 and 219 BBQ & Veggie Chili Sale Church Parking Lot, Before and After Worship**  
The best BBQ and veggie chili! Scouts are taking orders today and will here on Sundays, September 7 and September 14. You can also order online via QR code. Pick up is at the church on Saturday, September 20, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and Sunday, September 21, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Contact: Roy Bivens, troop119clt@gmail.com.



today  
**AUG. 24**  
11:10 a.m.

**Smithfield Elementary Service Opportunities Church Parlor**  
Learn more about how you can serve Smithfield Elementary School this year through classroom support, Heart Math tutoring, or Augustine Literacy Project (ALP) Charlotte tutoring. No experience necessary. Scan QR code to let us know you're interested. Contact: Kathy Graham, kathyspeech@carolina.rr.com.



today  
**AUG. 24**  
11:30 a.m. -  
1:00 p.m.

**SMPC Youth Fall Kickoff Pool Party The Sheelers' House, Middle and High Schoolers**  
Join us for pool time, lunch and games to kick off the new school year and fall season. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

wednesday  
**AUG. 27**  
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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Handiworkers Group, Tuesday, September 2, 10:00 a.m., Palmer Building, Room 104** - Back after a summer break! 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.

**Cub Scout Pack 119 Open House, Tuesday, September 2, Drop in 6:00-8:00 p.m.**, Mecklenburg Hall, Kindergarten-5th Grade - The Cub Scouts Pack 119 is hosting an Open House for all kindergarten-5th graders to come check out what they're all about! We are blessed to support the Scout Troop 119 and 219! Contact: Brian Hooper, cmpack119@gmail.com.

**Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, September 5, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel 206** - This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are starting a new book in September, *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. It's the perfect time to join. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com

**SMPC Youth Middle School Retreat, Beloved @Bethelwood, Saturday, September 6 and Sunday, September 7, Camp Bethelwood and SMPC** - All middle schoolers are invited to join us for our fall retreat as we spend Saturday at Camp Bethelwood and Sunday at SMPC. More details and register on Realm by Monday, September 1. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

**The Third Thirty - "Accepting the Inevitabilities of our Health and the Consequences," Sunday, September 7, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., The Commons, Ages 60-90** - Join us for the sixth session of The Third Thirty! We'll enjoy a light lunch, conversation and knowledge! All are welcome - you don't have to attend every session. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**BAM! (Bible and Music) Kickoff, Sunday, September 7, 5:00-7:30 p.m., Meet in the Narthex, Children in Kindergarten-5th Grade** - We can't wait to see you for a new year of BAM! 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.

**Shelter Ministry, Thursday, September 11, 9:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall** - This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty prescription bottles with body wash for our neighbors at Roof Above. All are welcome. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

**New Adult Study! Words of Love: A Healing Journey with the Ten Commandments, Sundays beginning September 14, 9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom** - This ten-week, thought-provoking study reclaims the Ten Commandments not as a list of rules, but as a path toward healing, wholeness, and deeper love for God and neighbor. All are welcome. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**September BYG (Big Youth Group), Sunday, September 14, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers** - 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.



**Lunch on the Grounds, Sunday, September 14, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall** - Join us after worship for a delicious lunch catered by Brown Bag. Adults - \$12; Children 4-11 - \$6; Children 3 and under - free. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**New Small Group! "Writing Your Legacy," Mondays beginning September 15, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., McQueen Room or Zoom** - Over five weeks this fall, participants will receive guidance in writing about family memories, history, and more. Led by SMPC member Melinda Ferguson. All are welcome. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**International Dining Group, Thursday, September 18, 6:00 p.m., Ilios Noche, 11508 Providence Road (Near Rea Farms)** - All are welcome to join this group that likes to sample different cuisines around town! Please RSVP on Realm or via QR code by Monday, September 8. Contact: Carol Roan, candwroan@gmail.com.



**Making Space Mom's Group Kickoff, Thursday, September 18, Drop in anytime between 7:30-8:30 p.m., Fountains at Blakeney** - Join us for a casual evening to connect with other moms and learn more about the Making Space Mom's Group! This group gathers on the first and third Thursdays for fellowship, study, and service. Light refreshments, including adult beverages, will be provided at the kickoff. Contact: Allison Reeves, allison.tarwater@gmail.com.

**SMPC Youth High School Fall Retreat, Friday, September 19-Sunday, September 21, Lake Tillery** - All high schoolers are invited to join us for the fall retreat! More details and register on Realm by Monday, September 1. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



**2025 SMPC Golf Tournament, Tuesday, September 23, 1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start, Sun-City Carolina Lakes Golf Club** - Open to all levels and ages. Captain's Choice Best Ball (team bogey max). Range balls will be provided at 12:00 p.m. Cost: \$50 per person, which includes range balls & prizes. Register and more info on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Ron Morgan, colronmorg@gmail.com.

## **NEW! SIGN UP TO BE A TRINITY BELL TOLLER!**

**NEW from our Music Ministry!** Each Sunday, a Trinity Bell Toller will ring the bell three times before the prelude—a simple yet powerful reminder of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, calling us to center ourselves as worship begins. No experience necessary. More information and sign up via QR code. Contact: Zach Bowyer, zach@smpchome.org.



## **UPDATES ON PASTORAL TRANSITION**