



A Service of Worship
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 31, 2025
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

We Gather

Prelude *Partita on "All Are Welcome"* Charles Lenz
 II. Andante, III. Capriccio

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

The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Introit *I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table* *Spiritual*

***Call to Worship** Clara Guzman

One: Creator God, you call us to hospitality and to give generously to others

Many: The table of God's hospitality is set before us, and all have a place at the table.

One: Loving God, you call us to give you glory through the compassion we show to each other.

Many: This includes loving without judgment, of ourselves or of others.

One: We gather as one Body, seeking to walk in the way you have set for us.

Many: We gather as one Body, to worship the one who is Love.

***Hymn 301** *Let Us Build a House* TWO OAKS

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can
 2 Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, and words are
 3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter,
 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the
 5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and

(D) (A) (D) (Bm7) (Em) (A)
 F C F Dm7 Gm C

safe - ly live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell
 strong and true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek
 wine, and wheat; a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground
 wood and stone to heal and strength-en, serve and teach,
 vi - sions heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed

(Em) (A7) (G) (D) (F#m) (Bm)
 Gm C7 Bb F Am Dm

how hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
 to dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
 where peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
 and live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
 as words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and

(Em) (A) (D) (G)
 Gm C F Bb

vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the
 wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as
 Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we
 strang - er bear the im - age of God's face; let us
 laugh - ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace; let this

love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
 one we claim the faith of Je - sus:
 share in Christ the feast that frees us: all are wel - come;
 bring an end to fear and dan - ger:
 house pro-claim from floor to raf - ter:

(F#m) (Em) (D) (Em) (A7) (D) (G) (D)
 Am Gm F Gm C7 F Bb F

all are wel - come; all are wel - come in this place.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dr. Brown

Self-giving Lord, through your Son Jesus Christ, you made clear that equality with God is not something to be grasped or exploited. Jesus, Lord of all things, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, born in human likeness, yet, in a mercenary world where striving and

climbing are celebrated, we are easily drawn to the web of entitlement and privilege. We push to the summit, ignorant of or indifferent to those we may step on as we climb. Our pursuit of privilege renders us blind to a world in need. Forgive us, Lord, for our spirit of entitlement and our expectation that the world bend to our inflated notions of what we deserve. Grant us hearts capable of selfless love, so that we may honor Jesus Christ. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Dr. Brown

*Response of Praise

No. 582, stanza 1

*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. **Story Connection:** Listen to a [readaloud](#) of *Yertle the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss. In this story, Yertle tries to stack all the turtles beneath him so he can feel more important. But he learns that putting others down isn't the way to be great. This connects to Jesus' parable of the banquet, where we learn that we should not try to make ourselves look better than others.
2. **Hospitality at Home:** If you're together on a holiday weekend, talk as a family about who else might need to feel included like a neighbor, a classmate, or someone from church. Choose one way to help them feel welcome, such as inviting them over, sending a kind message, making a special card, or baking some cookies.
3. **Game:** Play a backward version of musical chairs. Instead of taking a chair away each round, add an extra chair and invite someone else to join the game. Celebrate making more room instead of less! Connect this to how Jesus tells us to make space at the table for others, especially those who might be left out.
4. **Journal, considering the following:**
 - I wonder how it feels to sit in the lowest seat at a table.
 - I wonder why Jesus wanted people to invite those who usually get left out.
 - I wonder if you have ever felt especially welcome. Who made you feel that way?
 - I wonder how we can make space for others the way Jesus did.



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

Dr. Brown

First Reading

Psalm 112

Dr. Brown

Praise the Lord! Happy are those who fear the Lord, who greatly delight in his commandments. Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever. They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright; they are gracious, merciful, and righteous. It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever. They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord. Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes. They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever; their horn is exalted in honor. The wicked see it and are angry; they gnash their teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked comes to nothing.

Anthem

Grace

Carolyn Hamlin

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Lord, as I seek Your guidance for the day, I find my thoughts unyielding,
confusion crowds my way; but then when I bow to You,
the challenges You guide me through, Your promises are ever new,
I claim them for today. Your will cannot lead me where
Your grace will not keep me, Your hand will protect me.
I rest in Your care. Your eyes will watch over me,
Your love will forgive me, And when I am faltering,
I still will find You there. Each new day's design is charted by
Your hand and graciously revealed as I seek Your master plan.
Keep my footsteps faithful when from You I go.
Return me to the joy that Your blessings can bestow.*

Second Reading

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Rev. Lindsey Odom

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are

invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

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

Sermon

The Guest List of God

Rev. Odom

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

Dr. Brown

Brief Statement of Faith

Lines 1-26, 77-79

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Brown

. . . (*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

Partita on "All Are Welcome": IV. Adagio

Charles Lenz

As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at 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**

Charleston Bates

Hospitable God, you invite us to a banquet where the last may be first, and the humble and the mighty trade places. We bring our gifts and offerings as a response to your invitation. May our gifts transform our world so that all may find a place at your table and be welcomed with radical hospitality and inclusive love. In the name of Jesus, Christ, we pray. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 692**

Spirit, Open My Heart

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are provided above the notes for accompaniment. The score includes a 'Fine' marking and a 'to Refrain' instruction.

Spir - it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of
(Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7) (Bm) (D/A) (Em)
Dm F/C Bb C7 Dm F/C Gm
liv - ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing
(D) (G) (Em7) (D) (G) (D)
F Bb Gm7 F Bb F Fine
and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.
(D) (G) (D) (G)
F Bb F Bb
1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's
2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my
3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of
(A7) (Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7)
C7 Dm F/C Bb C7
kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and
goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and
sis - ter, broth - er. In the wel - come of
(Bm) (Em7) (D) (G2) (G)
Dm Gm7 F Bb2 Bb to Refrain
fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.
deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
Christ, may we wel - come one an - oth - er.

***Charge and Benediction**

Rev. Odom

***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

Partita on "All Are Welcome"

Charles Lenz

I. Maestoso, VII. Final - Dance

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Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

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

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Ann Carney, piano

Charleston Bates, Clara Guzman, liturgists

Judy Jones, Trinity Bell Toller

A/V Team: Brad Alford, Luke Estes

Ushers: Dick Engle, Andrew Gaul, Bjorn Hansen, Tom Schorr, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

Welcome Team: Jimmy Galati, Kathy Galati, Jennifer Hurlburt

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.



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](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, September 28, 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of August 28, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- 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

SMPC STAFF

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

matt@smpchome.org

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

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Mary Katheryne Zagora, Financial Administrator
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

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smpchome.org

SMPC WEEKLY

AUGUST 31, 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 in your pews. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps speak to someone you haven't met!

NOTE: THE CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED TOMORROW, SEPTEMBER 1 FOR THE HOLIDAY.

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

tuesday

SEPT. 2

10:00 a.m.

Handiworkers Group

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, jgjamason@gmail.com.

tuesday

SEPT. 2

6:00 p.m. -

8:00 p.m.

Cub Scout Pack 119 Open House

Drop in, 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.

wednesday

SEPT. 3

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.

friday

SEPT. 5

7:30 a.m. -

8:30 a.m.

Friday Morning Men's Group

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

saturday

SEPT. 6-

sunday

SEPT. 7

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 tomorrow, September 1. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

saturday

SEPT. 6

4:00 p.m. -

6:00 p.m.

Hops and Vine Around Town

Carolina Beer Temple, Matthews

All are invited to join us for fellowship! This is a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon - seeing familiar faces and maybe meeting some new ones! Friends are welcome and encouraged! Contact: Frank Graham, fgraham@carolina.rr.com.

sunday

SEPT. 7

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 Sunday, 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.



sunday

SEPT. 7

11:30 a.m. -

12:30 p.m.

The Third Thirty - "Accepting the Inevitabilities of our Health and the Consequences"

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.

sunday
SEPT. 7
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! (Bible and Music) Kickoff

Meet in the Narthex, 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, September 9, 1:00-2:30 p.m., McQueen Room - Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Contact: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, September 11, 9:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall - This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill prescription bottles with body wash for our neighbors at Roof Above. All are welcome. Contact: Carol Morgan, morganc43@aol.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, September 11, 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.

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). Register and more info on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Ron Morgan, colronmorg@gmail.com.

**UPDATES ON
PASTORAL
TRANSITION**

