



(optional)

1 God of the a - ges, whose al-might - y  
 2 Thy love di - vine hath led us in the  
 3 From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti -  
 4 Re - fresh thy peo - ple on their toil-some

hand leads forth in beau - ty all the star-ry band  
 past. In this free land by thee our lot is cast.  
 lence, be thy strong arm our ev - er sure de-fense.  
 way. Lead us from night to nev - er - end - ing day.

of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,  
 Be thou our rul - er, guard - ian, guide, and stay:  
 Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease.  
 Fill all our lives with love and grace di - vine,

our grate - ful songs be - fore thy throne a - rise.  
 thy word our law, thy paths our cho - sen way.  
 Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.  
 and glo - ry, laud, and praise be ev - er thine.

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

Rev. Odom

Loving God, we confess that we have not always loved as You love. You call us to care for the least of these, yet we turn away from those in need. You invite us to be partners in Your work of justice, yet we grow comfortable in our own security. We see the struggles of families and children longing for safety, food, and education, yet too often we remain silent, comfortable, or distracted. Forgive us, Lord, for the times we have closed our hearts to Your children who are most vulnerable. Forgive us, Lord, for the ways we have ignored Your voice, failed to seek justice, and chosen our own paths instead of Yours. Renew us by Your Spirit, and lead us to live with compassion,

generosity, and courage so that every child may know Your love and care, and the hope and safety of Your love. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

\*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:** Read *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister (or watch this [read-aloud](#)). At first, Rainbow Fish keeps all his shiny scales for himself, but he is lonely. When he begins to share, everyone has enough, and they can all enjoy life together. This connects to Amos's message: God is not pleased when some people have everything, and others are left with nothing.
- 2. Activity:** Draw a big fish outline on paper. Cut out shiny paper "scales" (or use sticky notes). As a family, write down ways you can share fairly with others — like sharing toys, food, time, or kindness — and glue or stick them onto the fish. Watch as the fish becomes more beautiful when everyone adds their part.
- 3. Game:** Now, for a different type of scale! Try this online pan balance game: [Balance the Scales](#). Move weights onto each side until the scale balances. Talk together about how fairness is like balance — when things are even, everyone has what they need, and that makes God glad.
- 4. Wonder Questions:**
  - I wonder why God cares so much about fairness.
  - I wonder how it feels when things are unfair.
  - I wonder what we can do to make sure others are treated justly.
  - I wonder how God feels when we share with people in need.



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**

Pastor Actionnel Fleurisma

**First Reading**

Luke 16:19-31

Pastor Fleurisma

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house— for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

**Anthem**

*God Is Our Refuge*

Allen Pote

Chancel Choir; Kyle Gavagan, trumpet

*God is our refuge and strength; a present help in times of trouble.*

*Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,*

*Though the waters roar and foam, we will not fear.*

*Come and behold the work of the Lord,*

*The awesome acts of God.*

*He is in the midst of his people, in all the earth.*

*He is the word, we are his hands, he will lead us.*

*He is the air, we are his song,*

*We will celebrate his presence all the day long.*

*He is the rain, we are the stones, he will cleanse us.*

*He is the air, we are his song,*

*We will celebrate his presence all the day long.*

**Second Reading**

Amos 8:4-8

Dr. Matthew S. Brown

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat." The Lord has sworn

by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who lives in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?

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

**Sermon**

The Balance

Dr. Brown

**\*The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*)      A Brief Statement of Faith, 27-51  
Rev. Odom

**We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.**

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

Rev. Odom

One: Our Father, who art in heaven,

**Many: May every child know Your love and care.**

One: Hallowed be Thy name.

**Many: May Your name be glorified as we care for the least among us.**

One: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**Many: May every child experience the hope, provision, and joy of Your kingdom.**

One: Give them this day their daily bread.

**Many: Please provide food, clean water, and nourishment for every hungry child.**

One: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

**Many: Heal the hearts of every child who has suffered loss, pain, or injustice.**

One: Lead them not into temptation but deliver them from evil.

**Many: Protect every child from harm, abuse, and despair and surround them with Your love.**

One: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

**Many: May our prayers and sponsorship bring light to every child's life, for Your glory. Amen.**

**Offertory**

*Be Still, My Soul*  
Kyle Gavagan, trumpet

arr. Gary Lanier

*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**

Adams Spafford

**Gracious God, we dedicate these gifts and our lives to Your work of love and justice. Use our offerings, and our sponsorships to bring hope, nourishment, and opportunity to children and others in need, especially those in Haiti and beyond. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

**We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn 376**

***When All Is Ended***

YOGANANDA

*(stanza 1: all; stanza 2: high voices; stanza 3: all;  
stanza 4: low voices; stanzas 5-6: all)*



1 When all is end - ed, time and trou - bles past,  
 2 As in the night, when light - ning flick - ers free,  
 3 A - gainst all hope, our wea - ry times have known  
 4 Then do not cheat the poor, who long for bread,  
 5 With earth - y faith we sing a song of heaven:  
 6 With all cre - a - tion, pain and an - ger past,

(D) (Bm) (Em) (B) (Am) (B)  
 F Dm Gm D Cm D



shall all be mend - ed, sin and death out - cast?  
 and gives a glimpse of dis - tant hill and tree,  
 wars end - ed, peace de - clared, com - pas - sion shown,  
 with dream - worlds in the sky or in the head,  
 all life ful - filled, all loved, all wrong for - given.  
 e - vil ex - haust - ed, love su - preme at last,

(Em) (C) (D) (G) (C) (Am) (Em)  
 Gm Eb F Bb Eb Cm Gm



In hope we sing, and hope to sing at last:  
 each flash of good dis - clos - es what will be:  
 great days of free - dom, ty - rants o - ver - thrown:  
 but sing of slaves set free, and chil - dren fed:  
 Christ is our sign of hope, for Christ is risen:  
 a - live in God, we'll sing an un - sur - passed

(D) (G) (D) (Em) (Am7) (Dsus) (D) (G)  
 F Bb F Gm Cm7 Fsus F Bb



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

**\*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**

*When All Is Ended*

arr. Kevin Hildebrand

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## Worship Service Notes

**Leading Worship this Morning**

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Pastor Actionnel Fleurisma, Director of OFCB Ministries  
Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth & Missions/Outreach  
Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist  
Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation  
Chancel Choir  
Kyle Gavagan, trumpet  
Braxton Kasmer, Adams Spafford, liturgists

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

**Ushers:** Mitchell Davis, Andrew Gaul, Craig Parrish, Elizabeth Rose, Williams Rose, Michael Zagora

**Welcome Team:** Braxton Kasmer, Karen Keough, Eamon Palmer, Kristina Palmer, Sacha Palmer, Skye Palmer, Taika Palmer, Lilliana Smigiel, Maria Varela

In lieu of flowers, a donation to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church has been made by Alan Chadd to the glory of God and in memory of his parents, Charles and Beverly Chadd.

Today's postlude was written and commissioned for the occasion of this past June's Hymn Festival and in honor of the South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church Music Ministry who consistently follow God's calls for justice, hope, and peace as we search for our unsurpassed alleluia.

**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](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 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 September 25, 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](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 in your pews. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps speak to someone you haven't met!

### THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today  
**SEPT. 28**  
10:10 a.m.

**Pastor Actionnel Fleurisma Visits SMPC!**  
We extend a heartfelt welcome to our friends, Pastor Actionnel Fleurisma, and his wife, Yolande, from our mission in Bayonnais, Haiti. We are grateful for this special opportunity to worship together today. Please greet them and introduce yourselves after worship. We encourage you to visit the tables in the narthex with information about sponsoring students.



sunday  
**SEPT. 28**  
3:15 p.m.

**Blessing of the Animals**  
**SMPC Parking Lot**  
All furry and feathery friends are invited to join us for a special blessing! Please make sure pets are leashed or crated and are comfortable in social settings! Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

sunday  
**SEPT. 28**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**SMPC Youth High Seas Miniature Golf**  
**10001 Charlotte Hwy, Fort Mill, SC, Middle and High Schoolers**  
Join us for a fun night of mini golf! Cost is \$12.00 per person. Option to bring extra cash to enjoy a Pelican's SnoBall. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, [lindsey@smpchome.org](mailto:lindsey@smpchome.org).

monday  
**SEPT. 29**  
10:00 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m.

**"Writing Your Legacy"**  
**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](mailto:melissa@smpchome.org).

tuesday  
**SEPT. 30**  
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, [jgjaxmeson@gmail.com](mailto:jgjaxmeson@gmail.com).

wednesday  
**OCT. 1**  
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](mailto:matt@smpchome.org), for Zoom info.

thursday  
**OCT. 2**  
7:30 p.m.

**Making Space Mom's Group**  
**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](mailto:allison.tarwater@gmail.com)

friday  
**OCT. 3**  
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 reading *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. Contact: Curt Ireland, [irelandcurtis00@gmail.com](mailto:irelandcurtis00@gmail.com).

saturday  
**OCT. 4**  
9:00 a.m. -  
12:00 p.m.

**Parents' Morning Out**  
**Meet in the Narthex, Ages 3 through 2nd Grade**  
Children will play games, create crafts, watch a Bible story movie, and enjoy a snack. Cost is \$10/child (covers materials). Older siblings welcome. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org).

**saturday**  
**OCT. 4**  
4:00 p.m. -  
6:00 p.m.

**Hops and Vine Around Town**  
**Kit's Trackside Crafts, 330 Main St., Pineville**  
Join this group for fellowship and fun! Contact: Frank Graham,  
frank.graham@us.forvismazars.com.

**sunday**  
**OCT. 5**  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.

**Words of Love: A Healing Journey with the Ten Commandments**  
**McQueen Room or Zoom**  
This ten-week, thought-provoking adult 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. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

**sunday**  
**OCT. 5**  
11:30 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m.

**The Third Thirty - "End of Life Decisions and Advanced Directives"**  
**The Commons, Ages 60-90**  
Join us for the sixth session of this series! 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**  
**OCT. 5**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**BAM! (Bible and Music)**  
**Meet in the Narthex, 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.

**sunday**  
**OCT. 5**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**October BYG (Big Youth Group)**  
**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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, October 7, 11:30 a.m. Trio Restaurant, 10709 McMullen Creek Pkwy** - SMPC Lunch Bunch is an informal group that meets four times a year for lunch and fellowship. This is the first gathering of the year! All are welcome—invite a friend. RSVP by Sunday, October 5, via Realm or QR code. Contact: Ruth Ann Engel, raengle22@gmail.com

**Believing and Belonging, Sunday, October 12, 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, join us for Believing and Belonging! Lunch will be served and childcare will be available. Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



**International Dining Group, Thursday, October 16, 6:00 p.m., Spice Asian Kitchen, 251 Textile Way, Ft. Mill, SC** - Join this group that loves to eat out! Register ASAP on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Carol Roan, candwroan@gmail.com

UPDATES ON  
PASTORAL  
TRANSITION



## LET'S CELEBRATE PASTOR DR. MATTHEW S. BROWN'S RETIREMENT!

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22**

**Parking Lot Party, 4:00-6:00 p.m.**

Food trucks, outdoor games, fellowship and fun for the whole family

**Live Music in the Sanctuary, 6:30 p.m.**

Featuring Rowan Junction, a bluegrass band

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23**

**10:10 a.m. Worship with Dr. Matt Brown**

**Reception in Mecklenburg Hall, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Sweet treats, punch, and live jazz music

**Questions? Contact:**  
Adrienne Jaquith,  
adrienne@smpchome.org

