



A Service of Worship
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 19, 2025
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream
We Gather

Prelude *Fanfare on "Mit Freuden Zart"* Brenda Portman

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Rev. Lindsey Odom
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Moment for Mission Lily Claire Jacobus

Introit
*Come, O people, God's great family, gathered in this holy place;
here we meet in joyful worship, here we stand in love and grace.
God receives us, God receives us, hearts renewed in hope's
embrace, hearts renewed in hope's embrace!*

***Call to Worship** Alayna Calderwood

One: From where does our help come?

Many: Our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth,

One: who keeps us when we go out and when we come in.

Many: The Lord is our keeper,

One: who is with us always.

Many: The Lord Jesus Christ is with us and for us in all things.

All: Come, let us worship God!

***Hymn 645** *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* MIT FREUDEN ZART

1 Sing praise to God who reigns a - bove, the God of all
 2 What God's al-might - y power has made God's gra - cious mer -
 3 The Lord is nev - er far a - way, but, through all grief
 4 Thus all my toil - some way a - long I sing a - loud

cre - a - tion, the God of power, the God of love,
 cy keep - eth; by morn - ing glow or eve - ning shade
 dis - tress - ing, an ev - er - pres - ent help and stay,
 thy prais - es, that all may hear the grate - ful song

the God of our sal - va - tion. With
 God's watch - ful eye ne'er sleep - eth. With -
 our peace and joy and bless - ing, as
 my voice un - wea - ried rais - es. Be

heal - ing balm my soul is filled, and ev - ery faith - less
 in the king - dom of God's might, lo! all is just and
 with a moth - er's ten - der hand God gent - ly leads the
 joy - ful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and bod - y,

mur - mur stilled:
 all is right:
 cho - sen band: to God all praise and glo - ry!
 take your part:

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Melissa White

**Gracious God, we confess that we do not keep your word before us
 always. Instead, we turn away from your truth and wander toward**

easier options. Forgive us, we pray, for pursuing our own desires rather than yours. Forgive us for growing weary in following you, for failing to pray and working tirelessly for justice, for losing hope in your ability to transform the powers of this world. Turn our thoughts to the needs of your people, turn our hearts to your commandments and word of grace. Do not remember our sin but remember your mercy forever. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. White

***Response of Praise**

*Glory be to God, the Father, glory be to Christ, the Son,
Glory to the blazing Spirit, ever three and ever one!
God almighty, God almighty, may your work through
us be done, may your work through us be done!*

We Hear and Respond to the Word

Church Family Moment

Rebecca Guzman

1. **Story Connection:** Read *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* by Mo Willems or watch [the animated version](#). In the story, Trixie realizes she left her beloved stuffed bunny at the laundromat and won't stop trying to tell her parents until they understand and help her. Jesus told a story about a woman who kept asking an unfair judge for help until he finally listened. As Sara Anne Berger explains, Jesus isn't saying God is like this judge—unwilling to listen—but reminding us how much more our loving God will hear and respond when we pray and do not lose heart. (Source: [Cece Storypath](#))
2. **Act It Out:** As a family, take turns acting out the story. One person can be the stubborn judge who keeps saying, "No! I will not do what this woman wants!" The other can be the widow who keeps finding new ways to ask for help. Talk about how it feels to keep asking and how it feels to finally be heard.
3. **Craft:** Use this printable from [Bible Study Printables](#) to make a "Five-Finger Prayer." Each finger reminds us of a different kind of prayer—praise, thanks, confession, requests for others, and requests for ourselves. Color your hand and write or draw your prayers on it.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder why the woman kept going back to the judge.
 - b. I wonder what Jesus wants us to learn about being persistent.
 - c. I wonder how it feels to know that God always hears us.



Sacrament of Baptism

Maisy Caroline Reynolds

Daughter of John Reynolds and Caitlin Watkins

Granddaughter of Carol and Rob Watkins

Representing the Session: Patty Stevenson

Baptismal 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.***

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

Prayer for Illumination

Rev. White

First Reading

Psalm 119:97-104

Rev. White

Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is always with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your decrees are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn away from your ordinances, for you have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Anthem

Beloved, Let Us Love One Another

Pepper Choplin

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

Beloved, let us love one another with love that comes from God.

For love is from God and everyone who loves is born of God.

For love is from God and everyone who loves surely knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God for God is love.

So, let us love.

Second Reading

Luke 18:1-8

Rev. Odom

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

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

Sermon

Persistent Faith, Public Witness

Rev. Odom

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

The Belhar Confession

Rev. White

We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged. That God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. 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

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

arr. J.D. Frizzell

Chancel Ringers

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**

***Praise the Source of every blessing, praise to Christ who sets
us free, praise the Spirit, ever calling, shaping us in unity.
God of glory, God of glory, all our thanks we give to Thee,
All our thanks we give to Thee!***

***Prayer of Dedication**

Generous God, we thank you for all of our many blessings, and offer these gifts back to your service, so that this church might continue to shine your light into the world. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

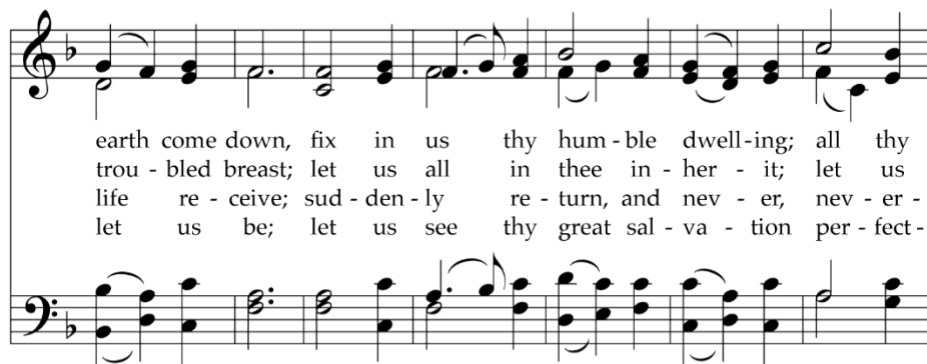
***Hymn 366**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

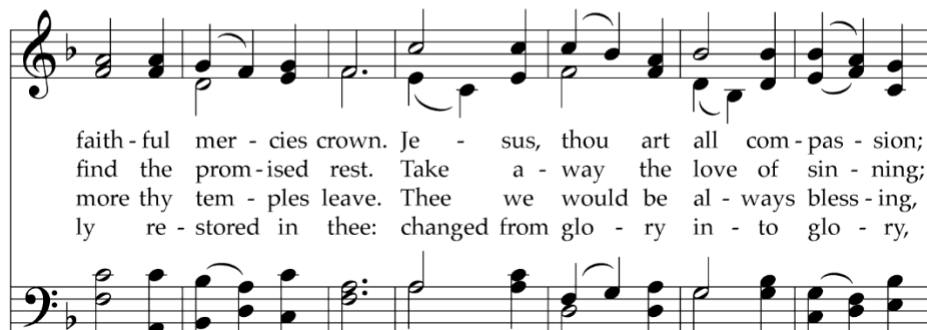
HYFRYDOL



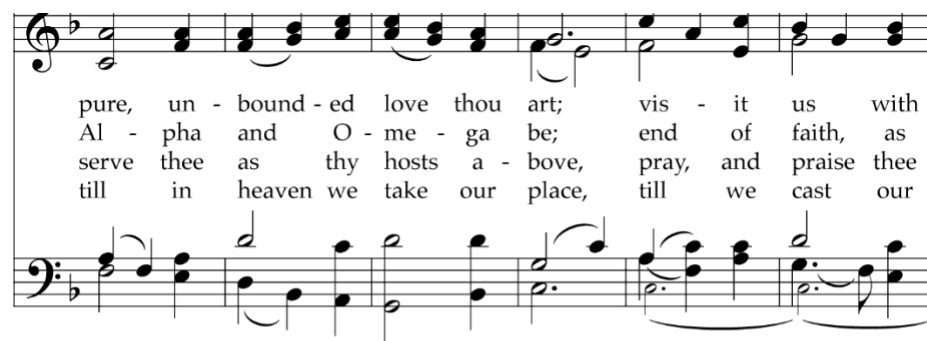
1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heaven, to
 2 Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - ery
 3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
 4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less



earth come down, fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing; all thy
 trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
 life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion;
 find the prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
 more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
 ly re - stored in thee: changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
 Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion; en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

***Charge and Benediction**

Rev. Odom

*** Congregational Response**

*Called to serve in love and justice, sent to share the hope
we know, we will live as Christ has taught us, shining light
where'er we go. Go in Spirit, go in Spirit, let God's grace
and mercy show, let God's grace and mercy show!*

Postlude

Toccata on "Hyfrydol"

J. Christopher Pardini

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

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

Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate for Congregational Care &
Connection

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir, Chancel Ringers, Ann Carney, piano

Alayna Calderwood liturgist

A/V Team: Brad Alford, Dylan Booker

Ushers: Mitchell Davis, Jenny Gates, Bjorn Hansen, Curt Ireland, Evan
Mangels, Charlie Metzler

Welcome Team: Elise Cates, Grant Cates, Trisha Cates

All service music in today's worship service is originally written by Zach Bowyer and set to the tune CWM RHONDDA by John Hughes.

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 Sunday, October 26, at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate for Congregational Care and Connection, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of October 16, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Erin and Josh Schardt, and big brother, Will, as they welcome baby Jake home after a hospital stay.
- Tara Garrity and her daughters, Rachel, Abby, and Sophia Lebda following the tragic death of Doug Lebda, a former member of SMPC.
- Mary Anne Thacker and her family, as her husband, Don, entered the Church triumphant on October 12.
- Gwen Ferguson and her family, as her husband, Cullen, entered the Church triumphant on October 11.
- 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

lindsey@smpchome.org

Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate for

Congregational Care & Connection

melissa@smpchome.org

Laura Black, Ministry Associate for Children & Music

laura@smpchome.org

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

zach@smpchome.org

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

rebecca@smpchome.org

Adrienne Jaquith, Office & Database Manager

adrienne@smpchome.org

Cheryl Perry, Director of Communications

cheryl@smpchome.org

Steve Stevenson, Facility Administrator
steve@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

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-735003. All rights reserved.

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 introduce yourself to someone new!

2026 OPERATING FUND CAMPAIGN

Our 2026 Operating Fund Campaign, *Called to Community*, inspired by 1 John 4:7, is in full swing! The Operating Fund Campaign is SMPC's primary fundraising campaign and supports all our ministries and programs--everything you love about our church is funded by the annual Operating Fund Campaign. If you were not able to pick up your stewardship packet at church, you should have received it by mail. Make a pledge via the QR code or by returning your pledge card. Contact: Mary Kathyne Zagora, mkzagora@smcphome.org.



THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today
OCT. 19
10:10 a.m.

Nourish Up Food Drive Bags Available Narthex

We are collecting canned and dry goods for the Nourish Up food pantry! Return bags through Sunday, November 2. Monetary donations also appreciated - donate via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smcphome.org.



today
OCT. 19
2:00 p.m. -

CROP Hunger Walk Providence Baptist Church

It's not too late to walk with us or donate to our team to end world hunger! Please note, the CROP Hunger Walk will start and end at Providence Baptist Church! Scan QR code to sign up to walk with us or donate. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smcphome.org.



today
OCT. 19
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! (Bible and Music), Sunday 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@smcphome.org.

tuesday
OCT. 21
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.

wednesday
OCT. 22
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@smcphome.org, for Zoom info.

thursday
OCT. 23
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.

saturday
OCT. 25
9:30 a.m.

Bag Lunches for Roof Above
Drop off in front of the Palmer Building.
Each month, SMPC provides 100 bag lunches for Roof Above to help feed those in need. Sign up to bring bag lunches via QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



sunday
OCT. 26
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. 26
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

SMPC Youth Halloween Party and Bonfire Night
Mecklenburg Hall

We'll have a costume contest, Halloween-themed games, S'mores and more! Bring a friend! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, October 28, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 - The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Making Space Mom's Group, Thursday, October 30, 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.

American Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, November 1, 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., The Commons - There are plenty of spots open to donate blood or volunteer at the drive. Go to smcphome.org > Serve our Community. Contact: Bill Ramsey, bill.john.ramsey@gmail.com.

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, November 7, 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.



Dr. Matt Brown's 65th Birthday, Sunday, November 9, After 10:10 a.m. Worship - We hope you'll join us for cake to celebrate Matt's birthday!

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 and savory bites, punch, and live music with jazz guitarist Walk Kuchinski

Updates on Pastoral Transition: We are excited to announce that Dr. Sandy Hull has accepted the Transitional Pastor position, effective Monday, December 1, 2025. His first Sunday at SMPC will be December 7, 2025. Find more information via QR code.



IS YOUR REALM PHOTO CURRENT?



As we welcome new members this fall and will soon welcome Dr. Sandy Hull as Transitional Pastor, this is a PERFECT time to make sure your Realm profile photo is current! Please see instructions via QR code. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smcphome.org.

ADVENT SAVE THE DATES!

Bell Ringing for Salvation Army - Belk, SouthPark Mall, Saturdays, Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13 & 20. Slots open 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Angel Tree Tags Available - Sunday, Nov. 30. Gifts due Sunday, Dec. 14.

"Calling All Angels" Adult Study - Begins Sunday, Nov. 30, 9:00-10:00 a.m., McQueen Room or Zoom

Women's Advent Tea - Saturday, Dec. 6, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall

Festival of Carols - Sunday, Dec. 14, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship - 3:00 p.m. Family; 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion

More to come!