



South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 1, 2026

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude

Adoration

Florence Price

Welcome and Concerns of the Church

Dr. Sandy Hull

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

Introit

Listen, God is Calling

Kenyan

Call to Worship (from Psalm 103)

Rev. Melissa White

One: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

All that is within me, bless God's holy name!

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Do not forget all his benefits!

One: As the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is the Lord's steadfast love
for those who fear him.

**All: As far as the east is from the west,
so far the Lord removes our transgressions from us.**

One: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

One: Let us worship God!

***Hymn 515**

I Come with Joy

DOVE OF PEACE

(Stanzas 1-4)

1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and
 2 I come with Chris-tians far and near to find, as all are
 3 As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion
 4 The Spir - it of the ris - en Christ, un - seen, but ev - er
 5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound by all that God has

(Asus) (Am) (G) (F#m) (D)
 Csus Cm B^b Am F

free, the life of Je - sus to re - call, in
 fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in
 ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and
 near, is in such friend - ship bet - ter known, a -
 done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the

(Em) (D/F#) (G) (A) (Am7) (D)
 Gm F/A B^b C Cm7 F

love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.
 Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.
 strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.
 live a - mong us here, a - live a - mong us here.
 love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Prayer of Confession *(unison)*

Rev. White

Loving God, you shower us with grace, but we have been stingy about passing on that grace to others. We are quicker to criticize than to compliment. We carry grudges and cherish resentments. We self-righteously refuse to forgive. Forgive us, we pray, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. By your Spirit, help us to live out Christ's love. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace (Micah 7:18-19)

Rev. White

*Response of Praise

No. 447

***We are forgiven. We are forgiven.
 Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.
 (sing twice)***

We Hear and Respond to the Word

Church Family Moment

Rebecca Guzman

1. **Story Connection:** Watch [this retelling](#) of today's Bible story together. In this passage, Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone. Jesus' answer shows us that forgiveness is not about keeping count, it is



about letting go and choosing love over and over and over. Talk together about what forgiveness is, why it can be hard, and how forgiving can sometimes set us free.

2. **Game:** Choose one person to be the leader and have everyone else line up across the room or yard. When the leader holds up a **green card**, players may hop, skip, jump, crawl, or tiptoe toward the leader. As soon as the **red card** is raised, everyone must freeze. Anyone who keeps moving goes back to the start. After a few rounds, pause and talk about how forgiveness gives us chances to begin again. Then invite everyone back into the game and play once more. This works for any game where people have to get “out.”
3. **Craft:** Write the word **FORGIVENESS** in big letters on a piece of paper. Draw small squiggles or circles all around the word. Color them in while slowly counting—young children to 7, older children to 70, everyone else to 490. As you color, remember Jesus’ words about forgiving over and over, and how forgiveness fills our lives with grace.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder why Jesus said we should forgive so many times.
 - b. I wonder when forgiveness feels hardest.
 - c. I wonder how forgiving someone can help set us free.
 - d. I wonder who God might be inviting you to forgive

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

Rev. White

First Reading

Matthew 18:21-35

Rev. White

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave

released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Anthem *Forgive Us, Lord, For We Know What We Do* Mark Burrows
Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*You have molded us in Your image, we compress You into ours.
Then we claim that our gifts and graces are the work of our own powers.
For the times we have held to falsehoods, when You showed us what was true:
Forgive us, Lord, for we know what we do.
You have called us to feed the hungry, we resist, we turn away.
You have told us to love our neighbor, still we struggle and we stray.
For the blessings of Your abundance which are shared with far too few:
Forgive us, Lord, for we know what we do.
We sing our hymns, we lift our prayers, we proclaim Your holy Word;
While the deeper message of Your love too often we've ignored.
Forgive us, Lord.
For the grace You have freely given, when in turn we offered none.
For the promises we have broken, for the good works left undone.
For the times we have chosen our way, when we could have chosen You:
Forgive us, Lord, for we know what we do.*

Second Reading Ephesians 4:25-32 Dr. Hull

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

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

Sermon

“The Freedom of Forgiveness”

Dr. Hull

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

Heidelberg Catechism

Rev. Lindsey Odom

One: What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

All: My only comfort, in life and in death, is that I belong – body and soul, in life and in death – not to myself, but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Offering Invitation

Rev. Odom

Offertory

Spirit Song

arr. Tom Fettke

Lori Schellin, soprano

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.***

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

Dr. Hull

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Odom

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise. (*Pastor's prayer*)

. . . (*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.

The Words of Institution

Rev. Odom, Dr. Hull

The Bread and the Cup

You are invited to come forward (see diagram) to receive the elements of communion by intinction. When receiving the elements by intinction, you are

invited to take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, and return to your seat. If you are not able to come forward, you will be served at your seat. Servers with gluten-free elements are located at the back of the sanctuary.

Communion of the People

You Are My All in All

arr. Joel Raney

The Prayer after Communion

Dr. Hull

We Go Out to Serve

*Hymn 445

God, How Can We Forgive

LEONI

1 God, how can we for - give when bonds of love are torn?
2 When we have missed the mark, and tears of an-guish flow,
3 Who dares to throw the stone to damn an - oth - er's sin,

How can we rise and start a - new, our trust re - born?
how can you still re - lease our guilt, the debt we owe?
when you, while know - ing all our past, for - give a - gain?

When hu - man lov - ing fails and ev - ery hope is gone,
The o - cean depth of grace sur - pass - es all our needs.
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.

your love gives strength be - yond our own to face the dawn.
A priest who shares our hu - man pain, Christ in - ter - cedes.
As you, O God, for - give our sin, may we for - give.

*Charge and Benediction

Dr. Hull

*Benediction Response

No. 515, stanza 5

*Together met, together bound
by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.*

Postlude

Postlude on "Leoni"

arr. Michael Burkhardt

Worship Service Notes

Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Sandy Hull, Transitional Pastor

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

Ann Carney, piano; Lori Schellin, soprano; Laura Schelhammer, flute

A/V Team: Kari Case, Xander Case

Ushers: Andrew Brown, Frank Graham, Judy Jones, Craig Parrish, Donna Podgorny, Bob Williamson

Welcome Team: Lorri Hattenhauer, Carol Stillerman, Shelby Ullman, Grace Wooley

This Sunday is the second in a three-sermon series, "Building Beautiful Relationships." The final sermon will be "Jesus' Guidelines for Relationship Repair" on February 15.

Part One of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the Book of Confessions, comprising twelve faith statements from many places and many times in the history of the Christian Church. The Heidelberg Catechism was composed in sixteenth-century Germany to help unify Lutheran Christians and Reformed Christians.

In celebration of Black History Month, we will hear music from composers of African descent each Sunday in February. Today's prelude is "Adoration" by Florence Price, a gifted pianist and composer born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1887. She studied composition at the New England Conservatory and, in 1932, became the first Black woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra when the Chicago Symphony premiered her Symphony in E Minor.

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 and Facebook: @southmecklenburgpresbyterian.

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members Sunday, February 22, at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of January 29, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Donna Wenner as she recovers from a fall.
- 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

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South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

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PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

smpchome.org

WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies near Coffee Grounds. 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!

THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today

FEB. 1

5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

BAM! (Bible and Music)

Meet in Narthex, Kindergarten-5th Grade

BAM! is our Sunday evening program for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Please register on Realm so we know how much pizza to order! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

today

FEB. 1

5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

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. Please bring 12 stuffed Easter eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 15. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday

FEB. 3

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

FEB. 4

9:30 a.m. -
10:30 a.m.

Pastor's Wednesday Morning Bible Study

McQueen Room or Zoom

Transitional Pastor Sandy Hull leads this study that meets weekly. They are discussing the book of Ephesians. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

thursday

FEB. 5

7:30 p.m. -
9:00 p.m.

Making Space Mom's Group & Rain or Shine

Chapel 206

These two small groups are combining until the end of May for a study called *Parables* by Josh Scott. Moms of all ages are invited to join in - new faces are always welcome at the table! Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

friday

FEB. 6

7:30 a.m. -
6:30 a.m.

Friday Morning Men's Group

Chapel 206

This group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month for study and fellowship. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

friday

FEB. 6

7:30 a.m. -

saturday
FEB. 7

High School 'Lock In and Be Lifted'

Friday, 6:00 p.m.-Saturday, 10:00 a.m., Church Spaces, High Schoolers Only

An overnight lock-in designed to help our high schoolers step away from daily stress, worries, anxieties, busy schedules and lean into connection, rest, and renewal right here at our church. Cost: \$50. More information and registration on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

sunday

FEB. 8

9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

Adult Study: "Second Thoughts About the Second Coming"

McQueen Room or Zoom

Join this six-week explorative study using *Second Thoughts about the Second Coming: Understanding the End Times, Our Future, and Christian Hope* by Ronald Allen and Robert Cornwall. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday
FEB. 8
10:10 a.m.

Desserts for Center of Hope

Before 10:10 a.m. Worship, Narthex

On the second Sunday of every month, we provide desserts for the women and children at Center of Hope. Desserts can be store-bought or homemade. Sign up at smpchome.org > Serve Our Community. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.

sunday
FEB. 8
10:10 a.m.

Youth Sunday and Souper Bowl of Caring Sanctuary

A youth-led worship and youth fundraiser. Please bring canned goods and dry food for Nourish Up. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SMPC Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, February 10, 11:30 a.m., Trio Restaurant, 10709 McMullen Creek Parkway, Charlotte, NC 28226

- This group meets four times a year for lunch and fellowship. All are invited - bring a friend! RSVP to Ruth Ann Engle by Sunday, February, 8, raengle22@gmail.com or on Realm via QR code.



A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, February 10, 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

Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, February 10, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 -

The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, February 12, 9:30 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall - Notice

new time! This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. They are always in need of body wash and Rx vials (please, no shampoo or conditioner!) Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, February 12, 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.



Room in the Inn, Sunday, February 15, Various Times, Sardis Presbyterian Church - Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Donations also needed. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

Internal Dining Group, Thursday, February 19, 6:00 p.m., That's Amore, 2018 Bridgemill Drive, Indian Land, SC - All are welcome to join this group that loves to eat out! Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Carol Roan



All-Church Serves and Learns - Time Out Youth, Sunday, February 22, 9:00-10:00 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall, All Ages -

Join us for an all-ages service and learning opportunity as we partner with Time Out Youth. We will welcome their team for hands-on mission, education and connection. We are collecting full-size hygiene products for their Life Essentials Closet and will assemble hygiene kits! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT

All-Church Retreat: 'Created for Community,' Friday, March 6-Sunday, March 8, Montreat, NC

- All ages are invited to join us as we examine how God exists in community and how God designed us to be in relationships with God and one another. More information and register on Realm or via QR code. Please register by Thursday, February 5. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

