



A Service of Worship
First Sunday in Lent
February 22, 2026
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

We Gather

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

Prelude *St. Flavian* Day's Psalter

Welcome and Concerns of the Church Dr. Sandy Hull
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Introit *For the Life That You Have Given* Carl Daw, Jr.

Call to Worship (from Psalm 103) Grace Wooley

One: Today, we follow Jesus into a wilderness full of isolation, fatigue,
hunger, thirst, and temptation.

All: We follow, trusting in God's mercy.


One: We recognize God's mercy at work in the face of temptation.

**All: We come to the wilderness together, clinging to the truth that
we are not alone as God is always with us.**


One: We gather to worship God, whose unfailing mercy journeys with
us into the wildernesses of our lives.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

***Hymn 618** *O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High* DEO GRACIAS



1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high, be - yond all
 2 For us bap - tized, for us he bore his ho - ly
 3 For us by wick - ed - ness be - trayed, for us, in
 4 For us he rose from death a - gain; for us he
 5 All glo - ry to our Lord and God, for love so



thought and fan - ta - sy, that God, the Son of
 fast and hun - gered sore; for us temp - ta - tions
 crown of thorns ar - rayed, he bore the shame - ful
 went on high to reign; for us he sent the
 deep, so high, so broad: the Trin - i - ty whom



God, should take our mor - tal form for mor - tals' sake.
 sharp he knew, for us, the tempt - er o - ver - threw.
 cross and death; for us gave up his dy - ing breath.
 Spir - it here to guide, to strength - en, and to cheer.
 we a - dore for - ev - er and for - ev - er - more.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Melissa White

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace (Ephesians 1:7-8)

Rev. White

One: "We have redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us." Friends, hear and believe God's good news.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

*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. **Learn about Lent:** Watch [this short video](#) explaining Lent: Lent is a season when we slow down, reflect, and prepare our hearts to follow Jesus more closely. It is a time to notice how God is at work in our lives and to practice habits that help us grow in faith.
2. **Spiritual Practices for the Journey:** Hopefully, you have started with our daily Lenten texts or Faith Conversation Cards. If not, check out the prompt from yesterday and do it today! During Lent, Sandy will be preaching about spiritual practices. These are things we do to help us grow closer to God. Use the [bingo sheet](#) to mark which practices you already try, and in a different color marker, pen, or highlighter, circle ones you want to explore this season.
3. **Story Connection** Watch [this beautiful visual retelling](#) of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. As you watch, imagine what it might have felt like for Jesus to be alone, tempted, and prayerful in the wilderness. Notice how spiritual practices helped Jesus remain rooted in God.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder why Jesus spent time in the wilderness before beginning his ministry.
 - b. I wonder what spiritual practices help you feel closer to God.
 - c. I wonder why Lent invites us to slow down and pay attention.
 - d. I wonder what practice you might try during this season



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. 399):*

***God welcomes all, strangers and friends;
God's love is strong and it never ends.
(sing twice)***

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

Psalm 119:57-64

Rev. White

The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words. I implore your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. When I think of your ways, I turn my feet to your decrees; I hurry and do not delay to keep your commandments. Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous ordinances. I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes.

Anthem *Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley* arr. Jack Schrader
Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Jesus walked this lonesome valley; He had to walk it by himself.
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him; He had to walk it by himself.
Jesus prayed for his disciples; He prayed alone for you and me.
Oh, nobody else could bear such sorrow; He prayed alone for you and me. Jesus died on Calvary's mountain; He died alone for you and me.
Oh, nobody else could die for sinners; He had to die for you and me.
Jesus rose from death's dark prison; He lives again for you and me.
Oh, nobody else could bring us victory; He is alive to set us free!*

Second Reading Matthew 4:1-11 Dr. Hull

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

Sermon "Joining Jesus in the Desert" Dr. Hull
Why Spiritual Practices Matter

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) A Brief Statement of Faith
Rev. Lindsey Odom

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.

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.**

Offering Invitation

Rev. Odom

Offertory

I Can Do All Things

Mark Burrows

Hosanna and Alleluia Choirs

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.

***Lenten Doxology**

FINLANDIA

***O suffering Jesus, in these forty days.
We view your sorrow, share in your distress.
Our Lenten songs are filled with muted praise;
Yet by your passion, we are truly blessed.
Praise to our God, and praise to you, the Son!
Praise to the Spirit, our God, Three in One.***

***Prayer of Dedication**

Ryan Wooley

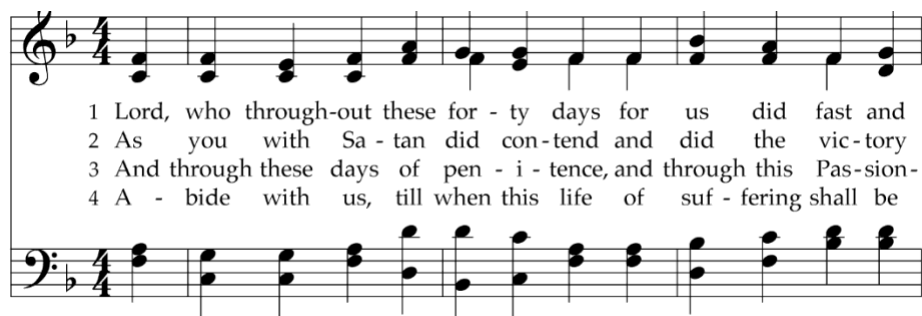
Merciful God, as we bring these gifts before you, we remember that you meet us even in the wilderness, walking with us through temptation, weariness, and doubt. Receive what we offer as signs of our trust in your mercy, and use these gifts, and our lives, to bring hope, healing, and light to our world that is in need of it. We dedicate all that we are and all that we have to you, who journeys with us always. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

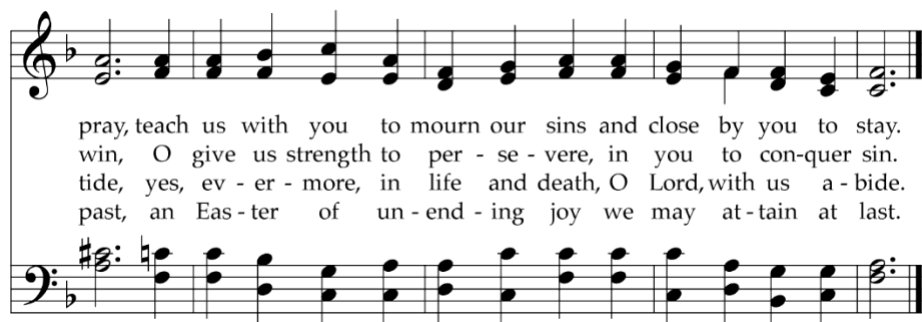
***Hymn 166**

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

ST. FLAVIAN



1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
 2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory
 3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-
 4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be



pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
 win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
 tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
 past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at-tain at last.

***Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Hull

***Congregational Response**

No. 700, stanza 1

I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Postlude

The Beatitudes

Roberta Rowland-Raybold

V. Blessed are the Merciful

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

Laura Black, Ministry Associate for Ministry and Music

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

Hosanna and Alleluia Choirs

Grace Wooley, Ryan Wooley, liturgists

A/V Team: Dylan Booker, Chris Wilcox

Ushers: Bob Cushman, Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Andrew Gaul, Bjorn Hansen, Michael Zagora

Welcome Team: Blair Choren, Brooke Choren, Marla Choren, Michael Choren

This Sunday is the first in a Lenten sermon series, "Living the Life." Jesus said, "I came so that you might have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). This is the life for which we were created, the life Jesus modeled,

and there are age-old spiritual practices that enable us to experience it. This Lent, we will be considering some of these practices and how they can be part of our everyday routine.

There are several options to remember or honor a loved one with the SMPC Flower Ministry! Find more details and sign up to reserve a Sunday via the QR code. Contact: Karen Malmut, karenmalmut@yahoo.com.



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 February 19, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Heather and Mark Briganti and their family, as Heather's father, Gary Wright, entered the Church triumphant on February 14.
- 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.



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 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

sunday

FEB. 22

11:30 a.m.

1:00 p.m.

SMPC Youth Pizza and Paint Party

Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers

We'll paint a ceramic heart ornament and have a devotion on love. We'll also enjoy pizza and snacks! Register on Realm. Contact:

Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

today

FEB. 22

3:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m.

Community Safety Training: 'How Will I Survive an Active Shooting', SMPC Sanctuary

A free safety training led by CMPD. Designed to empower participants with practical, option-based skills to help them respond to a violent incident and stay safe until law enforcement arrives. All are invited - friends welcome. More details and RSVP via QR code. Contact: Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.



today

FEB. 22

5:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music

Meet in Narthex, Ages K-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.

tuesday

FEB. 24

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.

tuesday

FEB. 24

7:30 p.m.

Men's Evening Study Group

Chapel 206

The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month for study and fellowship. New faces are always welcome at the table. Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

wednesday

FEB. 25

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. The group is discussing the book of Ephesians. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

wednesday

FEB. 25

1:00 p.m.

4:00 p.m.

Intro to Mahjong

Narthex

Learn how to play mahjong, the Chinese tile-based game, or just come for mahjong fun with friends! Led by SMPC member Carol Morgan. All levels welcome. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

thursday

FEB. 26

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

FEB. 28

9:30 a.m.

Bag Lunches for Roof Above

Drop off in front of Mecklenburg Hall

Every month we donate bag lunches to help feed our neighbors at Roof Above. Consider signing up for this meaningful service opportunity! Sign up via QR code. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



sunday

MAR. 1

9:00 a.m.

10:00 a.m.

Adult Study: 'Meeting Jesus at the Table'

McQueen Room or Zoom

A seven-week study with *Meeting Jesus at the Table*, which provides Biblical insights along with thought-provoking queries regarding our own time, such as whom we should invite to Sunday dinner and who is left out and left behind in our culture today. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

sunday

MAR. 1

11:30 a.m.

12:30 p.m.

Third Thirty - "Finding a New Purpose in Life and Celebrating SMPC's History," Mecklenburg Hall, Ages 60-90

This group meets once a month to discuss the realities and challenges of life in the "third thirty," ages 60-90. A light lunch will be served. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

sunday

MAR. 1

various times

**Room in the Inn
Sardis Presbyterian Church**

Volunteers will help with dinner, overnight stays or breakfast and cleanup. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Interfaith Iftar Dinner with Mosaic of Charlotte, Wednesday, March 4, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall

- Join us for an interfaith Iftar family dinner with our Muslim neighbors from Mosaic of Charlotte, a local Turkish Islamic community. The Mosaic of Charlotte will provide traditional food for our dinner. We will celebrate diversity and pray for unity. Free to attend, but please register via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



Gathering Together, Thursday, March 5, 6:00 p.m., SouthPark Church - Our friends at Ewo and Friends Empowering Haiti are co-hosting an evening of fellowship, delicious food and drinks to support Bayonnais, Haiti. We hope you'll join other SMPC members at this special event! More info and buy tickets via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

DivorceCare, Mondays beginning March 16-June 1, 6:30-8:00 p.m., SMPC - DivorceCare is a weekly seminar and support group that will help you heal from hurt. It's a warm, caring environment led by SMPC members Janet and Jeff Goetz. This group will meet for 12 sessions. Childcare available upon request. Register via QR code. Contact: Janet Goetz, janetgoetz@carolina.rr.com.



MISSION STORIES: PIERRE WANDER ALCICAT

This February, we are honored to share another SMPC Mission Story, offering a glimpse into the faithful work of our Mission Partners in Haiti. Meet Pierre Wander Alcicat, an ICB graduate fluent in English, who serves as the database operator for the OFCB Bethesda Medical Clinic in Bayonnais. Through his story, you'll see both the challenges and the determination that sustain this rural ministry — from working with an aging desktop computer to serving without a printer or Wi-Fi. Scan QR code to watch video. Thank you to Donna Podgorny and Judy Jones for their hard work on this project. If you would like more information on how to impact our work in Haiti, contact Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Bread Delivery Ministry, Various Friday Mornings - An impactful way to support our neighbors in need! Volunteers pick up the donated bread from SMPC and deliver it directly to Dilworth Soup Kitchen. The process is straightforward, and timing is consistent each week, making it easy to plan ahead. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lisa Gilleland, lsc13@cornell.edu.



'Living the Life' - Lent at SMPC

Join us this Lent as we focus on spiritual practices - what they are and why they're an important part of our faith journeys. Scan the QR code for information on Lenten studies, fellowship, service and more.