



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Service of Worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross* arr. Cathy Moklebust
Gaudete Ringers

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

Introit *The God of Abraham Praise* arr. David Abramsky
Belinda Hull, cello

***Call to Worship** Adams Spafford

One: Rejoice, people of God, this is our Sabbath day.

All: Rejoice, friends in Christ, this is our time for worship.

One: God ordained the Sabbath, rest, and restoration.

All: Let us come away from our work and worries to find rest.

One: Come, lay down your burdens and your busyness, and receive
God's gift of rest.

**All: We gather to honor the Lord and find our rest in God. Let us
worship God. Amen.**

***Hymn 402** *How Lovely, Lord* MERLE'S TUNE



1 How love - ly, Lord, how love - ly is your a - bid - ing place;
2 In your blest courts to wor - ship, O God, a sin - gle day
3 A sun and shield for - ev - er are you, O Lord Most High;



my soul is long-ing, faint - ing, to feast up - on your grace.
is bet - ter than a thou - sand if I from you should stray.
you show - er us with bless - ings; no good will you de - ny.



The spar - row finds a shel - ter, a place to build her nest;
I'd rath - er keep the en - trance and claim you as my Lord
The saints, your grace re - ceiv - ing, from strength to strength shall go,



and so your tem - ple calls us with - in its walls to rest.
than rev - el in the rich - es the ways of sin af - ford.
and from their life shall riv - ers of bless - ing o - ver - flow.

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 (1 Peter 2:24)

Rev. White

One: "Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." Friends, hear and believe God's good news!

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

***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:** In Genesis, God rests on the seventh day and makes that day holy. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus reminds people that "the sabbath was made for humans." Sabbath is a gift, a time to stop, rest, and remember God's love. Listen to a readaloud of the story [Come Sunday](#), which shows the rhythm of a family's Sunday and the joy of rest, worship, and time together.
2. **Spiritual Practice:** One way to think about Sabbath is the **REST** acronym from Minno Kids (learn more [here](#)):
R – Remember God loves you
E – Enjoy God's gifts
S – Stop from your usual work
T – Trust God
3. **Song:** Listen to the song [Come to Me](#) together and consider the words about Jesus inviting us to come, rest, and find peace.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder what Jesus meant when he said that the sabbath was made for humans.
 - b. What does Sabbath mean to you?
 - c. I wonder what feels restful to you. The APA describes [seven types of rest](#). Which one do you need the most right now.
 - d. I wonder how your family might observe Sabbath this week.



3rd Grade Bible Presentation

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

Mark 2:23-3:6

Rev. White

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to

his companions." Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath." Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Anthem

Come to Me

Dan Forrest

Chancel Choir; Collin Sinclair, tenor; Belinda Hull, cello;
Ann Carney, piano

*Come to Me, all you who labor
come to Me, and I will give you rest;
come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened
and you will find rest for your souls.
Come, my child, learn my heart:
for I am gentle and lowly.
See how great my love for you
that I have called you my child.*

Second Reading

Genesis 2:1-3

Dr. Hull

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

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

Sermon

"For God's Sake, Stop!"

Dr. Hull

The Spiritual Practice of Sabbath

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

The Apostles' Creed

Rev. Lindsey Odom

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

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 *Just as I Am, Without One Plea* arr. Lynette Maynard
Jubilate Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
Just as I am, thy love unknown has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

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** Landon Gwyn
Gracious God, on this Sabbath day, we offer these gifts to you as an act of trust, devotion, and rest. Bless what is given, and use it for your purposes of love and renewal. We place all that we have and all that we are in your hands, resting in your abundant grace. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 182** *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* KINGSFOLD



1 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Come un - to me and rest;
 2 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly give
 3 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's light;



lay down, O wea - ry one, lay down your head up - on my breast."
 the liv - ing wa - ter, thirst - y one; stoop down and drink and live."
 look un - to me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."



I came to Je - sus as I was, so wea - ry, worn, and sad; I
 I came to Je - sus, and I drank of that life - giv - ing stream; my
 I looked to Je - sus, and I found in him my star, my sun; and



found in him a rest - ing place, and he has made me glad.
 thirst was quenched, my soul re - vived, and now I live in him.
 in that light of life I'll walk till trav - eling days are done.



***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

VI. Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

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

Collin Sinclair, tenor; Belinda Hull, cello; Ann Carney, piano

Jubilate Choir; Blythe Kinsey

Gaudete Ringers; Helen Castle, Gayle Ireland, co-directors

Landon Gwyn, Adams Spafford, liturgists

A/V Team: Mary Katheryne Zagora, Michael Zagora

Ushers: Bob Cushman, Jenny Gates, Curtis Guy, Elizabeth Rose, William Rose, Michael Zagora

Welcome Team: Braxton Kasmer, Jack Hess, Jennifer Hurlburt

This Sunday we continue in our 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.

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).

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 or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of March 18, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Sally Luby and her family as Sally's husband, John Luby, entered the Church triumphant on March 16.
- Dial Lentz and his parents, Mary Katherine and Joe, as Dial recovers from surgery.
- All those affected by conflict, displacement, and unrest around the world and at home.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti, that God's abundant love, grace, and mercy would bring peace and protection, provide daily bread, and grant safety, justice, and hope amidst ongoing crisis in their country.

- That God would guide us to serve others with compassion, justice, and mercy within our church, our community, and our world.

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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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

MAR. 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.

today

MAR. 22

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

March BYG (Big Youth Group)

Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers

BYG meets once a month during the school year and brings our youth together for faith, fun, small groups, good food, and great community. We will explore how Lent calls us to participate in and engage in spiritual practices together! Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

monday

MAR. 23

6:30 p.m. -
8:00 p.m.

DivorceCare

Chapel 206

A 12-week seminar and support group that will help you heal from hurt. Led by SMPC members Janet and Jeff Goetz. Childcare available upon request. Register via QR code. Contact: Janet Goetz, janetgoetz@carolina.rr.com.



tuesday

MAR. 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

MAR. 24

6:30 p.m.

Men's Evening Study Group - SOCIAL

Ballantyne Ridge High School

This group is meeting at the BRHS's Varsity Baseball game for a social! Spouses and children are welcome. Tickets are \$9 each. Contact Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com, for ticket information.

wednesday

MAR. 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

MAR. 25

1:00 p.m. -
3:30 p.m.

Intro to Mahjong

Narthex

Led by church member Carol Morgan and open to all those who want to learn or are just starting to learn mahjong. Contact: Carol Morgan, morgancc43@aol.com.

thursday

MAR. 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

MAR. 28

9:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

SMPC Campus Cleanup

Many hands make light work! Come help us make SMPC's campus beautiful as we welcome all for Easter Sunday worship! Contact: Andy Burke, handy.andy.nc@gmail.com.

saturday
MAR. 28
9:30 a.m.

Bag Lunches for Roof Above

Drop off in front of Mecklenburg Hall

SMPCh provides 100 bag lunches monthly for Roof Above to help feed those in need. While this month's slots are full, please consider signing up for next month. Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.



sunday
MAR. 29
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

Adult Study: 'Meeting Jesus at the Table'
McQueen Room or Zoom

The last class in a seven-week study using *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.

Palm Sunday Worship, Sunday, March 29, 10:10 a.m.
Sanctuary and Livestream

UPCOMING LENT EVENTS

Journey through the self-guided prayer stations during Holy Week. Monday, March 30-Thursday, April 2, Anytime between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Great for individuals or small groups. Please note that the sanctuary doors will be locked. Please enter through the church office. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smcphome.org.

Maunder Thursday Dinner and Communion, Thursday, April 2, 5:30-6:45 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall - Join us as we worship together, sharing dinner and communion just as Jesus shared with his disciples on the night of his arrest. Dinner buffet, catered by Brown Bag, will open at 5:30 p.m. and will include macaroni and cheese, salad, ham, bread and fruit. Worship and communion start at 6:00 p.m. Free to attend. Register via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



Easter Sunday Worship, Sunday, April 5, 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and Livestream

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Nourish Up's St. Giles Food Pantry, Wednesdays, 12:30-2:00 p.m. or Fridays, 1:00-4:00 p.m., 2027 Emerywood Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210 - Lift and deliver boxes of food from Nourish Up's St. Giles Food Pantry to cars or help with client services. The minimum age to volunteer is 14, and closed-toed shoes are required. Contact: Jane Royther, jroyther@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, April 3, 7:30-8:30 a.m., 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.

Third Thirty, Sunday, April 12, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Ages 60-90 - In this session, the group will explore the issues related to healing loss and will hear from audiologist and church member Allison King. You'll be able to attend this session even if you haven't attended previous sessions. A light lunch will be served. Register on Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



Writing Your Legacy, Mondays beginning April 13, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. - A workshop led by SMPCh member Melinda Ferguson. Over five weeks, participants will receive guidance in writing about family memories, history, and more. This workshop is open to everyone and is appropriate for new and returning group members. Register via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.

STAFF SABBATICAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Easter Sunday will be Director of Music and Organist Zach Bowyer's last Sunday in worship before he begins a three-month sabbatical on Monday, April 6. He will return to the office on Tuesday, July 7, and will be back at the organ console on Sunday, July 12. Scan QR code for a letter from Dr. Sandy Hull regarding Zach's sabbatical.

