



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A Service of Worship
Third Sunday in Lent
March 8, 2026
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

We Gather

Prelude *In the Garden* arr. Dan Miller

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 Jones Woodard

One: We gather to be still,

All: to listen for God in the silence.

One: Beneath the noise of our lives, God is speaking,

All: in the gentle whispers of our hearts.

One: Here we pause,

All: to hear God's voice of love and grace.

One: Be still and know that God is near.

All: We turn our hearts to you, O God, and worship you together.

***Hymn 410** *God Is Calling through the Whisper* W ZŁOBIE LEZY



1 God is call-ing through the whis-per of the Spir - it's deep-est sighs,
 2 God is call-ing through the voic-es of our neigh-bors' ur-gent prayers,
 3 God is call-ing through the mu-sic of sub-lime and hu-man arts,



through the thrill of sud-den beau-ties that can catch us by sur-prise.
 through their long-ing for re-demp-tion and for res-cue from de-spair.
 through the hymns of earth and an-gels, and the car-ols of our hearts.



Flash of light-ning, crash of thun-der; hush of still-ness, rush of won-der:
 Place of hurt or face of need-ing; stri-dent cry or si-lent plead-ing;
 Lift of joy and gift of sing-ing; days and nights our prais-es bring-ing:



God is call-ing—can you hear? God is call-ing—can you hear?
 God is call-ing—can you hear? God is call-ing—can you hear?
 God is call-ing—and we hear! God is call-ing—and we hear!



Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

Merciful God, Jesus prioritized prayer, but we have not followed his example. We allow almost anything to keep us from making time to pray. We have overstuffed schedules and undernourished souls. And even when we do pray, our prayers are often hasty and superficial. Forgive us, we pray, through the sacrifice of your Son. Help us to live in the grace and power of a prayer-saturated life.

Assurance of God's Grace (Colossians 1:13-14)

Rev. Odom

One: "God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have

redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” 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

Rev. Odom

- 1. Story Connection:** Listen to [If You Want to See a Whale](#) by Julie Fogliano. In this story, a little boy wants to see a whale. But to see something so big and beautiful, he must learn to be patient, to stop chasing distractions, and to be still. [Krista Lovell](#) reminds us that Elijah, full of fire and zeal, once found himself alone and discouraged. God was not in the dramatic wind, earthquake, or fire—but in “a sound of sheer silence.” The Psalmist echoes this invitation: “Be still and know that I am God.” When did the boy finally see the whale? When he got still and waited. What a beautiful lesson for all of us. Be still and know.
- 2. Game:** Invite everyone to sit in a circle. The goal is simple: stay as still and quiet as possible. Players may blink but may not hide their faces. The leader watches and calls out anyone who moves or makes a sound. The last person remaining still and quiet wins. Play 3–5 short rounds. Afterward, notice together: Was it easy or hard to be still? ([Source](#))
- 3. Craft:** You will need 2 pipe cleaners and 3–7 beads. Twist the two pipe cleaners together and bend them in half. Slide 3–7 beads onto the pipe cleaners. Shape the ends into a heart and secure them by twisting the ends together (adults may need to help). To use: As you breathe in, move one bead slowly along one side of the heart. As you breathe out, move a bead along the other side. Let the movement help your body grow quiet and still. ([Source](#), [Instructional Video](#))
- 4. Wonder Together:**
 - Name a time when you got distracted from something you were doing or looking for. What was your distraction? How did you regain your focus?
 - What keeps you busy most of the time?
 - How do you make time for stillness in your life?
 - When have you experienced quiet that helped you notice something important?



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. Melissa White

First Reading

Luke 6:12-16

Rev. White

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Anthem

Be Still

Mary McDonald

Chancel Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am with you.
Be still and know that I will comfort you when you come to Me in your
hour of need. Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I
am here for you; And I will wipe your tears; you will be renewed.
Come unto Me, My child, be still, and know that I will give you rest.
I am present in your pain and I always will remain your Comforter and
Friend. My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Be still.*

Second Reading

1 Kings 19:11-13

Dr. Hull

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

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

Sermon

"Beyond Words"

Dr. Hull

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

A Brief Statement of Faith

Rev. White

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. 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.**

Offering Invitation Rev. White

Offertory *You Are My All in All* arr. Joel Raney

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** Mia Smigiel
Gracious and merciful God, in the stillness of this moment, we offer you our gifts and offerings. In a world full of noise and distraction, you invite us to slow down and listen. Receive these offerings as signs of our trust in you and send us out to live faithfully, serve generously, and reflect your grace in all that we do. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 451** *Open My Eyes, That I May See* OPEN MY EYES

1 O-pen my eyes, that I may see glimps-es of truth thou hast for me.
 2 O-pen my ears, that I may hear voic - es of truth thou send-est clear.
 3 O-pen my mouth, and let me bear glad - ly the warm truth ev-ery-where.

Place in my hands the won-der-ful key that shall un - clasp and
 And while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev - ery-thing false will
 O - pen my heart, and let me pre-pare love with thy chil-dren

set me free. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy
 dis - ap-pear. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy
 thus to share. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy

will to see. O-pen my eyes; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di-vine!
 will to see. O-pen my ears; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di-vine!
 will to see. O-pen my heart; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di-vine!

***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

III. Blessed Are The Meek

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

Chancel Choir; Blythe Kinsey, piano

Mia Smigiel, Jones Woodard, liturgists

A/V Team: Brad Alford, Luke Estes

Ushers: Dan DeChant, Gena DeChant, Phil Eatherton, Dick Engle, Andrew Gaul, Tim Maguire

Welcome Team: Donna Podgorny, Carol Stillerman, Bob Williamson

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.

Part One of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is The Book of Confessions, which contains twelve faith statements from throughout the history of Christianity. A Brief Statement of Faith, from which today's Affirmation of Faith is taken, was created in 1983 as part of the reunion of the two largest Presbyterian denominations in the United States.

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.
- A glider and changing table are available in Room 301 for mothers who wish to have privacy while nursing.

- 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, March 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 March 4, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Our church family that traveled to Montreat this weekend for the All- Church Retreat, that they experienced community and connection with God and one another.
- 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.

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



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

today
MAR. 8
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. 8
5:15 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.
SMPC Youth Sports Connection Bowling, Laser Tag and Arcade Sports Connection, Middle and High Schoolers
We can't wait for an afternoon of fun together! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday
MAR. 10
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. 10
1:00 p.m.
A Caregiver's Journey
McQueen Room
Finding meaning and purpose as you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Contact: Kathy Garner, kathygarner15@gmail.com.

tuesday
MAR. 10
7:30 p.m.
Men's Evening Study Group
OMB Ballantyne
The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. Notice the different meeting location this month! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com

wednesday
MAR. 11
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. 11
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 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, morganc43@aol.com.

thursday
MAR. 12
9:30 a.m.
The Shelter Ministry
Mecklenburg Hall
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, morganc43@aol.com.

thursday
MAR. 12
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.

sunday
MAR. 15
9:00 a.m. -
10:00 a.m.

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

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.

sunday
MAR. 15
11:30 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.

Believing and Belonging
McQueen Room

For all who are considering membership and/or would like to know more about being Presbyterian and SMPC! Lunch will be served and childcare will be available. Register via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org



sunday
MAR. 15
5:00 p.m. -
6:30 p.m.

All-Church Serves: Easter Meal Kits for Smithfield and Sterling Elementary, Mecklenburg Hall

Join us as we make Easter meal kits and handmade Easter cards for students and their families at Smithfield and Sterling Elementary. Easter Egg Hunts for youth and children will follow. Register via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

DivorceCare, Mondays, 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.



Making Space Mom's Group & Rain or Shine, Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 - These two small groups will combine 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! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, March 20, 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.

Stateline Community Orchestra's 'Wondrous Women,' Friday, March 20, 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary - The Stateline Community Orchestra is back at SMPC with a free concert that honors Women's History Month. Our very own Belinda Hull, wife of Transitional Pastor Sandy Hull, plays the cello in the orchestra! Don't miss it!



Center of Hope Breakfast, Saturday, March 21, Meet at SMPC at 5:15 a.m.

On the third Saturday of each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast Center of Hope guests. Food donations are due Thursday, March 19. Monetary donations are welcome. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lee Martin, leewilsonmarare tin@gmail.com.

UPDATES ON PASTORAL TRANSITION: MISSION STUDY TASK FORCE

The next step in the transition process at SMPC will be the development of our Mission Study. This is the beating heart of what we are called to accomplish during this in-between time in SMPC's history, as we take time to gather information and then pray over and discuss these four questions:

- Who are we?
- Who is our neighbor?
- What is God calling us to do?
- Who is God calling us to be?

This is an extensive process and will unfold over many months.

The Session has appointed a Mission Study Task Force to lead us in this work. The Mission Study Task Force will develop methods to help us answer these questions, inviting broad and deep input from the congregation and then seeking to discern God's guidance as we look toward the future.

The task force will include Mary Elledge, Whitney Gann, Greg Hobby, David Huss, Walton Price, Brett Thompson, and Shelby Ullman, along with Session members Camdyn Sheeler and Gayle Ireland. Please pray for these friends as they take up this important responsibility - and be on the lookout for announcements about how you can be involved! If you have any questions about the Pastoral Transition process, please contact Transitional Pastor Sandy Hull, sandy@smpchome.org.