



A Service of Worship
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2026

10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Nearer, My God, To Thee* Lowell Mason

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

Introit *Go Down Moses* arr. Bragi Valsson
Jordan Booker, tenor saxophone

Call to Worship Haley Davis

One: We gather in worship called to follow Jesus with our whole lives.

All: We offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

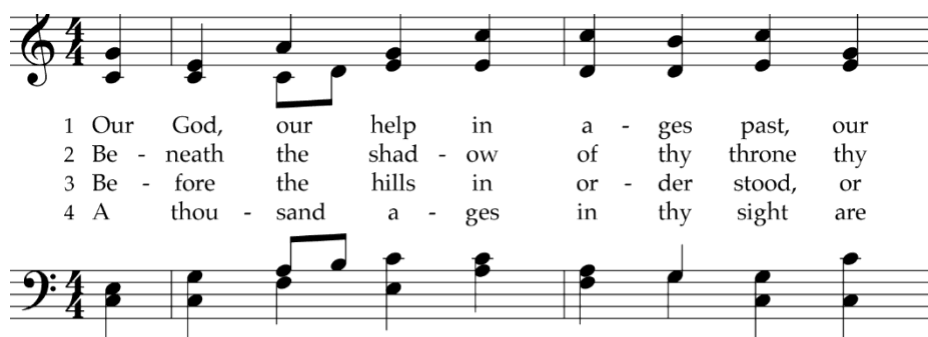
One: Renew our hearts and minds, O God.

All: Help us listen for your faithful voice.

One: Lead us to discern what is good and pleasing in your will, for our lives, for this congregation, and for how we are called to love and serve.

All: Guide our worship and our daily living. Amen.

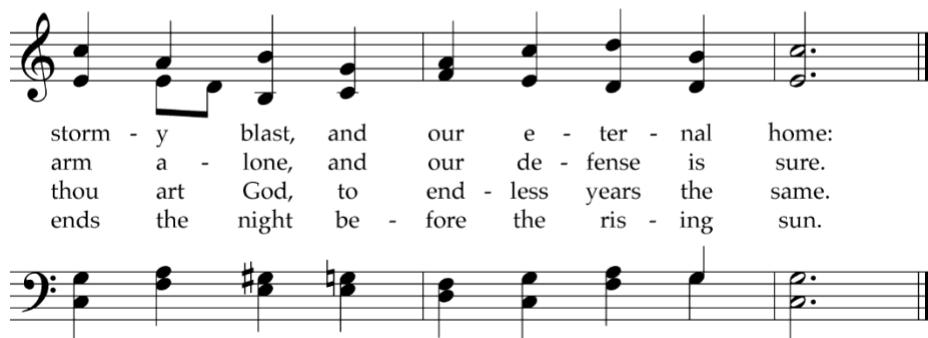
***Hymn 687** *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past* ST. ANNE
(stanzas 1-3: all; stanza 4: choir only; stanzas 5-6: all)



1 Our God, our help in a - ges past, our
 2 Be - neath the shad - ow of thy throne thy
 3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, or
 4 A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight are



hope for years to come, our shel - ter from the
 saints have dwelt se - cure; suf - fi - cient is thine
 earth re - ceived its frame, from ev - er - last - ing
 like an eve - ning gone, short as the watch that



storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
 arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
 thou art God, to end - less years the same.
 ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever rolling stream,
 bears all our years away;
 they fly forgotten, as a dream
 dies at the opening day.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,
 our hope for years to come,
 be thou our guard while life shall last,
 and our eternal home.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. Lindsey Odom

Holy God, we confess that we do not always listen for your voice. We rely on our own understanding and follow paths shaped by comfort and convenience rather than placing our trust, hope, and faith in you. We are slow to seek your guidance, slow to accept your leading, and hesitant to follow when your call challenges us. We close ourselves off from your wisdom and resist the work of your Spirit within us. Forgive us, O God. By your grace, teach us to discern what is good and pleasing to you, that we may live in ways that bring glory to you and reflect the love of Christ. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Odom

One: Hear the good news: God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

***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. **Prayer Practice:** Try this child-friendly [version of the Examen prayer](#), a practice that helps us notice where God has been present in our day. This activity uses beads and simple questions to guide reflection. As you pray, think about moments when you felt close to God and moments when you struggled to notice God's presence. Our older kids made these in BAM recently.
2. **Story Connection:** Listen to the [story](#) *Where Are You, God?* by Laura Alary. This story invites us to wonder where God might be present in ordinary moments. As you listen, think about times when God felt easy to notice and times when God seemed hidden. How does thinking about where God is invite us to learn from God's wisdom? A conversation guide for families is [here](#).
3. **Game:** Play a game of "Follow the Guide." One person closes their eyes while another gently guides them around the room using only their voice. Afterward, switch roles. Talk about how it felt to trust someone's guidance, and how listening carefully can help us notice where God might be leading us.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a. I wonder how we can learn to listen for God's guidance.
 - b. I wonder why it is sometimes hard to know what God wants us to do.
 - c. I wonder what helps you notice God's presence in your day.



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. Odom

First Reading

Mark 1:29-39

Rev. Odom

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Anthem

Wayfaring Stranger

arr. Craig Courtney

Chancel Choir; Laura Schelhammer, flute; Blythe Kinsey, piano

*I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger while traveling through this world below;
yet there's no sickness, toil, nor danger in that bright land to which I go.*

I'm going there to see my Father, I'm going there no more to roam.

I'm just a-going over Jordan, I'm just a-going over home.

*I know dark clouds will gather o'er me, I know my way is rough and steep;
yet golden fields lie out before me, where weary eyes no more shall weep.*

I'm going there to meet my mother. She said she'd meet me when I come.

I'm just a-going over Jordan, I'm just a-going over home.

I want to wear a crown of glory when I get home to that good land.

I want to shout salvation's story in concert with the heav'nly band.

I'm going there to meet my Savior, to sing His praise forevermore.

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger while traveling through this world below;

I'm just a-going over Jordan, I'm just a-going over home,

I'm going over home.

Second Reading

James 1:5-8

Dr. Hull

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

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

Sermon

"Receiving God's Guidance"

Dr. Hull

The Spiritual Practice of Discernment

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

Belhar Confession

Rev. Melissa White

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects, and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought; one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain.

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

Lamentation

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.

***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**

Caroline Brown

Gracious and sovereign God, from you come all things, and we return to you what is already yours. By the power of your Holy Spirit, use our offerings to further your work in the world, to build up your church, and to bear witness to your justice, mercy, love, and grace. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 450**

Be Thou My Vision

SLANE

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true Word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise;
 4 High King of Heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

(A) (D) (G) (A)
 B $\flat$ E $\flat$ A $\flat$ B $\flat$

naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

(G) (D) (F $\sharp$ m7) (G) (A)
 A $\flat$ E $\flat$ Gm7 A $\flat$ B $\flat$

thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tower;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

(Bm) (D/F $\sharp$) (G) (D)
 Cm E $\flat$ /G A $\flat$ E $\flat$

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heaven - ward, O Power of my power.
 High King of Heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

***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

VIII. Blessed Are They Who Are Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

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; Laura Schelhammer, flute; Blythe Kinsey, piano

Chancel Ringers

Jordan Booker, tenor saxophone

Haley Davis, Caroline Brown, liturgists

A/V Team: Dylan Booker, Chris Wilcox

Ushers: Bjorn Hansen, Jonathan Mangels, Evan Mangels, Tom Schorr, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

Welcome Team: Hannah Angerer, Alicia Bickett, Kathy Galati, Adrienne Jaquith

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).

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 11, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- 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

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. 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.



today

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 Smithfield and Sterling Elementary. Easter Egg Hunts for youth and children will follow. Registration and donation info via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



monday

MAR. 16

6:30 p.m. -

8:00 p.m.

DivorceCare McQueen Room

A weekly seminar and support group that will help you heal from hurt. 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.



tuesday

MAR. 17

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

MAR. 18

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.

thursday

MAR. 19

12:30 p.m.

Food for Thought Book Group McQueen Room

This group is reading *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali. All are welcome. Contact: Kathy Paquette, khespaquette@aol.com.

thursday

MAR. 19

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. 19

7:30 p.m.

Making Space Mom's Group & Rain or Shine Chapel 206

These two small groups are meeting together 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

MAR. 20

7:30 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
MAR. 20
7:30 p.m.

Stateline Community Orchestra's 'Wondrous Women' 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!

saturday
MAR. 21
5:15 a.m.

**Center of Hope Breakfast
Meet at SMPC at 5:15 a.m.**

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



saturday
MAR. 21
8:30 a.m. -
1:30 p.m.

**Charlotte Presbytery Day of Mission
CN Jenkins Memorial Presbyterian Church**

Choose from a variety of service options, and lunch is provided. All ages are welcome. Register by today, March 15. More info and register via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smphome.org.



sunday
MAR. 22
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@smphome.org.

sunday
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@smphome.org.

sunday
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@smphome.org.

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. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smphome.org.

Maundy 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. New this year: a more substantial meal! 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@smphome.org.



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



Writing Your Legacy, Mondays beginning April 13, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. - A workshop led by SMPC 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@smphome.org.