



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A Service of Worship
Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2026
10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

We Gather

Prelude *Largo from Enigma Variations* Edward Elgar

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

“Paws” for the CAT Greg Hobby, Camdyn Sheeler

Introit *Come to the Table of Grace* Barbara Hamm

Call to Worship Rebecca Guzman

One: Children of God, do you love the God who made heaven and earth and all that is in it?

All: Yes, you know that we do.

One: Then take care of God’s children. Children of God, do you love the God who became human, Immanuel, God with us, to show the extent of God’s love for us?

All: Yes, you know that we do.

One: Then take care of God’s children. Children of God, do you love the God whose Spirit breathes life into us even right now?

All: Yes, you know that we do. We will take care of God’s children. Amen.

***Hymn 246**

Christ Is Alive

TRURO



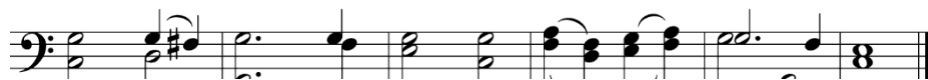
1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No lon - ger bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - ery age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - ery place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.



Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rebecca Guzman

Gracious God, you have chosen us, even as you chose your disciples, to spread your good news, to make disciples, to take care of all of your children. Like those disciples, we have failed you in what we have done, and in what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole hearts. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, we pray. Give us the courage to follow your call, even when the journey is difficult. Make us open to your will and willing to serve. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

Rebecca Guzman

One: Friends, hear the good news. On the shore, after all that had been broken, Jesus did not turn Peter away. Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times, so Jesus met him with grace three times.

All: Lord, you meet us where we are, with grace that restores us and calls us forward. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

*Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.*

We Hear and Respond to the Word

Church Family Moment

Rebecca Guzman

1. **Story Connection:** Watch *The Beautiful Oops* by Barney Saltzberg [here](#). This book reminds us that mistakes can lead to something new and beautiful. In today's scripture, Peter remembers a time when he made a big mistake—he denied knowing Jesus. But instead of turning away, Jesus gives Peter another chance and a new purpose. As Noell Rathbun-Cook writes, Jesus “graciously redeems and redirects” Peter’s life ([StoryPath source](#)). How might God be doing the same for us?
2. **Create:** Take a piece of paper and “mess it up”—crumple it, drip water, tear it, or scribble on it. Then, turn it into something beautiful. Can your scribble become a flower? A mountain? Just like Jesus helped Peter find new purpose, you can turn your oops into something creative.
3. **Game:** Set up two bowls and some breakfast cereal. Place a picture of a lamb on one bowl to make the “lamb bowl.” Give each person a spoon. The goal is to move the cereal from the “feeding bowl” to the “lamb bowl” using only the spoon. When you say “go,” begin scooping and carrying the cereal—try not to drop any! This reminds us of Jesus’ words to Peter: “Feed my lambs,” inviting him to care for others.
4. **Wonder Together:**
 - a) I wonder how Peter felt when Jesus gave him another chance?
 - b) I wonder why Jesus trusted Peter again?
 - c) I wonder how God can turn our mistakes into something new?
 - d) I wonder how we can care for others, like Jesus asked Peter to do?



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. Lindsey Odom

First Reading

Psalm 32:1-7

Rev. Odom

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Selah) Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

Anthem

Grace

Carolyn Hamlin

Chancel Choir; Sarah Abushakra, piano

*Lord, as I seek Your guidance for the day,
I find my thoughts unyielding, confusion crowds my way;
but then when I bow to You, the challenges You guide me through,
Your promises are ever new, I claim them for today.
Your will cannot lead me where Your grace will not keep me,
Your hand will protect me. I rest in Your care.
Your eyes will watch over me, Your love will forgive me,
And when I am faltering, I still will find You there.
Each new day's design is charted by Your hand
and graciously revealed as I seek Your master plan.
Keep my footsteps faithful when from You I go.
Return me to the joy that Your blessings can bestow.*

Second Reading

John 21:15-23

Dr. Hull

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one

who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

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

Sermon "The Gift of Another Chance" Dr. Hull

***The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) A Brief Statement of Faith
Rev. Melissa White

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.

Offering Invitation Rev. White

Offertory *Come Celebrate* Cynthia Dobrinski
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.

***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. White, Rev. Odom

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

Fairest Lord Jesus

Arr. Joel Raney

Sarah Abushakra, piano

The Prayer after Communion

Rev. White

We Go Out to Serve

***Hymn 649**

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

AMAZING GRACE

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved. How pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come. 'Tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures. He will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found, was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

*Charge and Benediction

Dr. Hull

*Congregational Response

No. 542, stanza 1

*God be with you till we meet again;
 loving counsels guide, uphold you,
 with a shepherd's care enfold you:
 God be with you till we meet again.*

Postlude

Hymn to Joy

Arr. Hal Hopson

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

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Sarah Abushakra, organ and piano

Chancel Ringers

Acolyte: Elizabeth Martin, Jones Woodard

A/V Team: Mary Katheryn Zagora, Michael Zagora

Ushers: Andrew Brown, Rich Fuller, Andrew Gaul, Frank Graham, Craig Parrish, Nancy Parrish

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

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 Thursday mornings, contact Adrienne Jaquith, Office and Database Manager, adrienne@smpchome.org. SMPC uses Realm as a church directory and for event registrations. If you are new to Realm or have questions about it, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, and she will be happy to help!

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? To learn more about membership and the process of joining, contact Rev. Melissa White, Parish Associate, melissa@smpchome.org or 704-887-7488.

Congregational Notes (as of April 29, 2025)

Remember in Prayer

- Janet Dunlap as she recovers from a fall.
- Carol Watkins as she recovers from surgery.
- Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist, as he enjoys time for rest, reflection and spiritual renewal while on sabbatical.
- 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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Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian); Instagram: [@southmeckpres](https://www.instagram.com/southmeckpres)

WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies near Coffee Grounds. 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
MAY 3
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Third Thirty, Sunday
The Commons, Ages 60-90
In this session, the group will explore wills and estate planning. You can 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.

today
MAY 3
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

BAM! Bible and Music
Sanctuary, Ages Kindergarten-5th Grade
During BAM!, children sing, creatively engage with Bible stories, and explore various instruments in peer age groups. Pizza is served. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

today
MAY 3
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

May BYG (Big Youth Group)
Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers
Fifth graders are invited to May BYG! They'll be paired with a youth mentor. We'll have hot dogs and hamburgers. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

monday
MAY 4
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Writing Your Legacy
McQueen Room
Led by SMPC member Melinda Ferguson. Participants receive guidance in writing about family memories and history. Open to everyone. Register via QR code. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



tuesday
MAY 5
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
MAY 5
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

SMPC Tuesday Mahjong
Narthex
All levels of mahjong players are invited to join this group that meets weekly on Tuesdays. Contact Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org, to be added to the email list.

tuesday
MAY 5
11:30 a.m.

Lunch Bunch
The Office Craft Bar and Kitchen, Stonecrest
This is an informal group that meets four times a year. All are welcome - invite a friend! Register on Realm or via QR code. Contact: Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com.



wednesday
MAY 6
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 beginning a new series on the last twelve books of the Bible. May 6 is on Obadiah. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

New! SMPC now texts! If you would like to receive occasional texts from SMPC, including updates on the pastoral transition, scan QR code. Please note: if you signed up for the Lenten devotions via text, you will also need to opt in to this! Contact: Cheryl Perry, cheryl@smpchome.org.



thursday
MAY 7
1:15 p.m. -
3:15 p.m.

**SMPC Thursday Mahjong
Narthex**

All levels of mahjong players are invited to join this group that meets weekly on Thursdays. Contact Mary Katheryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org, to be added to the email list.

thursday
MAY 7
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.

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

**Adult Study: 'Slow Theology'
McQueen Room or Zoom**

An 8-week class where we'll practice slowing down, asking deeper questions, and listening more carefully to Scripture, tradition and one another. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday
MAY 10
10:10 a.m.

**Desserts for Center of Hope
Sanctuary**

Every month SMPC donates desserts to Center of Hope, a residence for women and children. Let's make their Mother's Day extra special! Sign up at smpchome.org/serve-our-community. Contact: Terry Gaines, terryg@carolina.rr.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Caregiver's Journey, Tuesday, May 12, 1:30 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, May 12, 7:30 p.m., Chapel 206 - The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. New faces are always welcome! Contact: Jon Myers, jonmyers2@gmail.com.

Shelter Ministry, Thursday, May 14, 9:30 a.m., Mecklenburg Hall - This group meets on the second Thursday of every month to fill empty medicine bottles with body wash for Roof Above. Contact: Carol Morgan, morganc43@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, May 13, 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.

Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, May 15, 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.

Ballantyne Families Helping Neighbors In Need Pantry Tour & Service Project, Sunday, May 17, 9:00-9:50 a.m., Community House Middle, All Ages - A tour of the facility and a hands-on service project using donated food items. Register and more info on Realm or QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



Center of Hope Breakfast, Saturday, May 16, Meet at SMPC at 5:15 a.m. - On the third Saturday of each month, SMPC preps, cooks and serves breakfast for guests at the Center of Hope. Volunteers are back at SMPC by about 9:00 a.m. Scan QR code to serve or donate. Contact: Lee Martin, leewilsonmartin@gmail.com.

International Dining Group, Thursday, May 21, 6:00 p.m., Aroma Indian Grill, 9648 Red Stone Drive, Indian Land, SC - Everyone is invited to join this group as they sample cuisines around town each month. Space is limited to 24. RSVP via QR code or Realm. Contact: Carol Roan, candwroan@gmail.com, or Brenda Villa, bvilla20@carolina.rr.com.



Nourish Up Warehouse Service - Saturday, May 30, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Nourish Up Warehouse, 901 Carrier Drive, Ages 13 years and older - Volunteers will support food distribution efforts. Register via the QR code, then follow the instructions there to register with the Nourish Up. Space is limited. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.