



# South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A Service of Worship**  
**Ascension Sunday**  
**May 17, 2026**  
**10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestream**

*\*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## **We Gather**

**Prelude** *Celebration* James Mansfield

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church** Rev. Melissa White  
The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

**“Paws” for the CAT** David Huss

**Introit** *I've Got Peace Like a River* African American spiritual

**\*Call to Worship** (Psalm 97) Will Hollingsworth

One: The Lord is king!

Let the earth rejoice!

Let the distant coastlands be glad!

**All: The heavens proclaim the Lord's righteousness;  
every nation sees the Lord's glory.**

One: Those who worship idols are disgraced—  
all who brag about their worthless gods—  
for every god must bow before the Lord.

**All: For you, O Lord, are supreme over all the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods.**

One: You who love the Lord, hate evil!

The Lord protects the lives of his godly people  
and rescues them from the power of the wicked.

**All: Light shines on the godly,  
and joy on those whose hearts are right.**

One: May all God's people rejoice in the Lord  
and praise God's holy name!

All: Praise the Lord!

\*Hymn 268

Crown Him with Many Crowns

DIADEMATA

1 Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne;  
2 Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side,  
3 Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scep - ter sways  
4 Crown him the Lord of years, the po - ten - tate of time;

hark, how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own!  
rich wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glo - ri - fied:  
from pole to pole, that wars may cease, ab - sorbed in prayer and praise.  
cre - a - tor of the roll - ing spheres, in - ef - fa - bly sub - lime.

A - wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,  
no an - gel in the sky can ful - ly bear that sight,  
His reign shall know no end; and round his pierc - ed feet  
All hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For thou hast died for me;

and hail him as thy match - less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.  
but down - ward bends his burn - ing eye at mys - ter - ies so bright.  
fair flowers of par - a - dise ex - tend their fra - grance ev - er sweet.  
thy praise shall nev - er, nev - er fail through - out e - ter - ni - ty.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Rev. White

**Almighty God, you have raised Jesus from the grave and crowned him Lord of all. We confess that we have not let him reign supreme in our lives. We have gone along with the way of the world. We have often given more loyalty to earthly rulers than to King Jesus. Forgive us, and raise us from sin, that we may be your faithful people, obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ, who rules the world and is head of the church, his body.**

Assurance of God's Grace (Isaiah 44:22)

Rev. White

One: "I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud," declares the Lord, "and your sins like the morning mist." Friends, hear and believe God's good news.

**All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

**\*Response of Praise**

No. 582, stanza 1

*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

- Bubble Prayers and Cloud Gazing:** Blow bubbles outside or lie on a blanket and watch the clouds. As you watch bubbles rise and clouds drift through the sky, think about Jesus ascending into heaven. Talk together about how the disciples may have felt as they watched Jesus disappear into the clouds and how Jesus promised they would not be alone.
- Story Connection:** Listen to [The Invisible String](#) by Patrice Karst. In Acts, the disciples may have wondered if Jesus was leaving them alone. In *The Invisible String*, the children learn that love keeps people connected even when they are apart. In the same way, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will remain with the disciples and with us. [Source](#) (Credit: Joshua Andrezjewski with Storypath)
- Craft:** Print and cut out this [Ascension Flipbook template](#). Illustrate each page, then use it to retell the story of Jesus' ascension to someone else. As you tell the story, think about what Jesus asked the disciples to do while they waited for the Holy Spirit.
- Wonder Together:**
  - I wonder what it means to be a "witness" to Jesus.
  - I wonder what Jesus wants us to do while we wait and hope.
  - I wonder how you experience the Holy Spirit in your life.



**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. White

**First Reading**

Ephesians 1:15-23

Rev. White

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Anthem***Fairest Lord Jesus*

arr. Craig Courtney

Chancel Choir; Sarah Abushakra, piano

*Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nations,  
O thou of God and man the Son,  
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,  
thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.  
Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,  
robed in the blooming garb of spring:  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer  
who makes the woeful heart to sing.  
Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,  
and all the twinkling starry host;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer  
than all the angels heaven can boast.  
Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,  
now and forevermore be thine! Amen.*

**Second Reading**

Acts 1:1-11

Dr. Sandy Hull

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this

the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

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

**Sermon** "Why the Ascension Matters" Dr. Hull

**\*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** *The Light of God's Love* Mark Burrows  
Alleluia and Hosanna Choirs; Sarah Abushakra, piano;  
Lilly Hall, percussion

*As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at [www.smpchome.org/give](http://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.***

**\*Prayer of Dedication** Natalie Guy

Holy God, you have blessed us in order that we might share our blessings with others. We return our many gifts as tokens of our commitment to know you, to love you, and to serve you. May our lives, dedicated alongside these gifts, bear witness to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

## We Go Out to Serve

\*Hymn 265

*Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun*

DUKE STREET

(Verses 1, 4, and 5)

1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun does its suc -  
 2 To him shall end - less prayer be made, and prais - es  
 3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - ery tongue dwell on his  
 4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er he reigns: the pris - oners  
 5 Let ev - ery crea - ture rise and bring hon - ors pe -

ces - sive jour - neys run; his king - dom stretch from  
 thron - e to crown his head; his name, like sweet per -  
 love with sweet - est song, and in - fant voic - es  
 leap to loose their chains; the wea - ry find e -  
 cu - liar to our King; an - gels de - scend with

shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.  
 fume, shall rise with ev - ery morn - ing sac - ri - fice.  
 shall pro - claim their ear - ly bless - ings on his name.  
 ter - nal rest, and all who suf - fer want are blest.  
 songs a - gain, and earth re - peat the loud A - men!

\*Charge and Benediction

Dr. Hull

\*Congregational Response

No. 545

*Lord, bid your servant go in peace;  
 your word is now fulfilled.  
 These eyes have seen salvation's dawn,  
 this child so long foretold.*

## 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

Alleluia and Hosanna Choirs; Lilly Hall, percussion

Natalie Guy, Will Hollingsworth, liturgists

**A/V Team:** Luke Estes, Chris Wilcox

**Ushers:** Mitchell Davis, Phil Eatherton, Jonathan Mangels, Evan Mangels, Brett Thompson, Linda Thompson

**Welcome Team:** Andrew Gaul, Ethan Gaul, Kaitlin Gaul, Madelyn Gaul

In lieu of flowers, a donation has been made to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church, given to the Glory of God and in memory of George Garner on his birthday on May 18, by his wife, Kathy Garner and family.

We light a candle celebrating the birth of Baird Averett Lackey, on May 6. Congratulations to parents, Nina and Austin Lackey, and grandparents, Leisa and Clint Lackey.

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](mailto: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](mailto:melissa@smpchome.org) or 704-887-7488.

## Congregational Notes (as of May 13, 2026)

### Remember in Prayer

- Lindalee Macauley, as she is hospitalized for various heart conditions.
- 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](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org)

**Church Office Hours:**

**Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Friday: Closed**

*We photograph and record worship services and events for church use. We may use these materials in church communications. 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](http://smpchome.org)

Facebook: @southmecklenburgpresbyterian; Instagram: @southmeckpres

## WELCOME!

### WE'RE ALL EARS (AND WHISKERS)! CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL (CAT) SURVEY IS OPEN!

This survey is an opportunity to share your experiences and priorities for our congregation. If SMPC has your email, you should have received emails from the church with a link to the survey. We estimate that it will take about 20 minutes to complete, and it must be completed in one sitting. Computers and paper copies are available in the church office or Connection Center. You can also scan the QR code to complete the survey on your phone. If you love SMPC and are 13 years or older, we want you to participate!



Children: We also want to hear from you! *CAT for Kids* is a survey specifically "tailored" for children. There is one for ages 9 and under and one for ages 10-12. The surveys can be found at the Connection Center. Please return your completed *CAT for Kids* to the basket at the Connection Center today through Sunday, May 31.

## THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today  
**MAY 17**  
11:30 a.m. -  
1:00 p.m.

**Lunch on the Grounds**  
**Mecklenburg Hall and Church Grounds**  
Everyone is welcome! Join us after worship for a delicious lunch, catered by Brown Bag. We've also extended the invitation to our friends at Mosaic of Charlotte! More information and register via QR code or Realm. Contact: Melissa White, melissa@smpchome.org.



sunday  
**MAY 17**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**BAM! Bible and Music - End of Year Party!**  
**Sanctuary, Ages Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
Dinner, water games, and lots of fun as we wrap up the season. We'll end the night with a waterslide from 6:30-7:00 p.m.! Parents are invited to join us during that time if their child would like to participate. We will also sing in worship on Sunday, May 17 - watch your email for details. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

sunday  
**MAY 17**  
5:00 p.m. -  
6:30 p.m.

**SMPC Youth Summer Kickoff Event**  
**Mecklenburg Hall, Middle and High Schoolers**  
It will include an inflatable waterslide, cornhole, spikeball and fellowship! Pizza will be served! Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday  
**MAY 19**  
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, jgjaxon@gmail.com.

tuesday  
**MAY 19**  
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.

wednesday  
**MAY 20**  
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 studying the last twelve books of the Old Testament. May 20 is on Habakkuk. All are welcome! If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Adrienne Jaquith, adrienne@smpchome.org.

**thursday** **SMPC Thursday Mahjong**  
**MAY 21** **Narthex**  
All levels of mahjong players are invited to join this group that meets weekly on Thursdays. Contact Mary Kathyryne Zagora, mkzagora@smpchome.org, to be added to the email list.  
1:15 p.m. -  
3:15 p.m.

**thursday** **International Dining Group**  
**MAY 21** **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.  
6:00 p.m.



**thursday** **Making Space Mom's Group & Rain or Shine - Social!**  
**MAY 21** **Fire pit behind the Palmer Building**  
Join us around the fire pit for conversation and fellowship. Moms of all ages are invited to join in - it's never too late! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.  
7:30 p.m.

**saturday** **Bag Lunches for Roof Above**  
**MAY 23** **In front of Mecklenburg Hall**  
It's Memorial Day weekend, so our lunch signups are a little lower than usual! If you have room to serve this month, please consider making lunches for our neighbors in need! Contact: Julie Durham, julierdurham@gmail.com.  
9:30 a.m.



**sunday** **Slow Theology**  
**MAY 24** **McQueen Room or Zoom**  
A class where we practice slowing down, asking deeper questions, and listening more carefully to Scripture, tradition and one another. This is not about having the right answers, but about growing in curiosity, trust and faith. This study will meet until June 7. Register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.


**sunday** **Pentecost Sunday**  
**MAY 24** **During 10:10 a.m. Worship**  
Sunday, May 24, is Pentecost Sunday! We encourage you to wear red as it represents the "tongues of fire" associated with the Holy Spirit's descent upon the Apostles.  
10:10 a.m.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Men's Evening Study Group, Tuesday, May 26, 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.

**Men's Breakfast Group, Thursday, May 28, 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.

 **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.

**Friday Morning Men's Group, Friday, June 5, 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.

**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.

