

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Christmas Eve – December 24, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.



Adoration of the Shepherds by Gerard van Honthorst (1622)

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***United in the Spirit, First United Methodist Church of Belmont exists
to be more like Jesus Christ for our community and beyond***
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PRELUDE

"The Wexford Carol"
String Quartet

arr. Stephen Decesare

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Doreen Collins

Tonight, we celebrate the good news of great joy for all people:

For to us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets,

But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

The radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of His being, has come to dwell among us.

In Jesus, we see the face of God, full of grace and truth.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those whom He favors!

Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 234

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, on this holy night, we give thanks that you have spoken to us through your Son, the radiance of your glory and the exact imprint of your being. As we remember the angel's proclamation of good news and great joy, may we behold your face in the Christ child and know your peace that surpasses all understanding. Grant that our worship may join the song of the heavenly host, glorifying you through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Jennifer Martin

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Hebrews 1:1-4

MUSIC

"Away in a Manger"
Chancel Choir, Jennifer Martin, flute

Marianne Forman

*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

This is the Word of God for the People of God. ***Thanks be to God.***

HOMILY

The Rev. George Ragsdale

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and loving God, on this sacred night, we marvel at the gift of your Son, in whom we see your face and know your love. Yet we confess that we often fail to seek you in our daily lives, turning instead to petty distractions and overwhelming fears. Forgive us for the times we have ignored your presence in others and in the world you created. Open our eyes and hearts anew, that we may behold your glory and share your light with all. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

"In the Bleak Midwinter"
Small Ensemble

arr. Jay Rouse

*MUSIC

***What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.***

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING No. 17-18

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Communion Music

"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"
"The First Noel"

arr. Stephen Decesare

arr. Stephen Decesare

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Through it may we await in blessed hope for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to share the light of your love with others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Millspaw Family

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In Him was life, and that life was the light of all people.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only Son, full of grace and truth.

Through Jesus, we see the face of God—love made visible, hope made real.

Tonight, as we light the Christ Candle, we celebrate the light that shines in the darkness.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

This light reminds us that God has drawn near. In Jesus, God's face is turned toward us, full of love, mercy, and peace.

May the light of Christ fill our hearts and guide our lives, as we reflect His glory in the world.

HYMN No. 239

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

*BENEDICTION

*HYMN No. 246

"Joy to the World"

*POSTLUDE

"Hallelujah Chorus"

arr. Richard Meyer

*Please stand as you are able

*Merry
Christmas*

Please join us in the Narthex after the service for hot cider and fellowship!

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! We're glad that you've chosen to worship with us tonight. We invite you to explore all the opportunities we have for children, youth and adults of all ages and stages of life. We seek to be a community of faith that welcomes all as we grow to be more like Jesus Christ for our community, loving and serving God and one another in all that we do.

If you are a guest, we are honored to have you with us. Please stop by the information center as you leave tonight to receive a small gift and more information about our church. We look forward to getting to know you in the days to come! Welcome!

ABOUT TONIGHT'S BULLETIN COVER features Adoration of the Shepherds by Netherlandish painter Gerard van Honthorst. It captures the intimate moment of the shepherds worshipping the newborn Christ. Honthorst skillfully contrasts the warm glow of the divine light emanating from the infant with the surrounding darkness, symbolizing the hope and joy that Christ brings to humanity. The expressive faces of the shepherds, filled with awe and reverence, invite us to reflect on our own response to the divine presence in our lives.

Our Christmas Eve Offering The offering collected this evening will go to relieve suffering in the Alan Campos neighborhood mobile home park in Swannanoa, NC, a community that was decimated by Hurricane Helene. Skyland UMC has been doing all they can for this community where many children live. The funds we raise will be used to cover the plumbing and HVAC needs of approximately 20 mobile homes whose owners' personal insurance policies and government FEMA assistance have fallen short. Thank you for your generosity.



2025 SCRIPTURE FOCUS



FIRST AND SECOND PETER

A Light to the Nations

Experiencing and Sharing the Light of Christ

Begins January 5



OUR STAFF

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