

Tri-Angles

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT



APRIL 2025

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

Dear FUMC Family,

As we continue on our Lenten pilgrimage, I want to share a poem I recently encountered that speaks beautifully to the journey of this season—and to the whole of the Christian life. It is called *Maps* by Holly Ordway:

Maps
*Antique maps, with curlicues of ink
As borders, framing what we know, like pages
From a book of travelers' tales: look,
Here in the margin, tiny ships at sail.
No-nonsense maps from family trips: each state
Traced out in color-coded numbered highways,
A web of roads with labeled city-dots
Punctuating the route and its slow stories.
Now GPS puts me right at the center,
A Ptolemaic shift in my perspective.
Pinned where I am, right now, somewhere, I turn
And turn to orient myself. I have
Directions calculated, maps at hand:
Hopelessly lost till I look up at last.*

One of the most revolutionary discoveries in human history came when Copernicus revealed that the earth is not the center of the universe. Our planet is but one among many, orbiting a distant sun—upending the Ptolemaic view that had shaped human understanding for centuries.

Ordway's poem traces a similar shift in the way we navigate our world. From ornate antique maps to the practical road atlases of family road trips (a staple of my childhood travels with my father!), we now rely on GPS, which, ironically, places us back at the center of everything. No matter where we go, we are the fixed point on the screen.

But in this technological advancement, have we actually become *pinned down*—trapped in a worldview that places us at the center? As Ordway hints with a clever turn of phrase, for all our progress, we are still prone to losing our way. I was reminded of this recently on an afternoon visit to Stowe Park. Many people around me were glued to their phones, seemingly oblivious to the beauty of the day. Too often, I am among them.

Poet and Anglican priest Malcolm Guite echoes the wisdom of Zen masters: "*The map is not the reality.*" The same is true for us in our spiritual lives. Our Lenten practices—fasting, prayer, and acts of devotion—are meant to orient us, to help us navigate the journey of faith. But they are not the destination. At the heart of Lent, and of our entire Christian walk, is not a set of practices but a person—the Risen Christ—who calls us to be rooted in grace and to live out that grace in love and service. John Wesley often warned early Methodists not to mistake the means of grace for the end itself. Our ultimate goal is not simply to follow religious disciplines but to encounter the living God.

So, as we continue our Lenten journey—and the lifelong journey of faith—may we remember to look up. May we resist the temptation to place ourselves at the center and instead fix our eyes on the One who truly is. And in doing so, may we find ourselves not lost, but found—grounded in grace, guided by love, and moving ever closer to the heart of God.

George





Jesus in His Own Words Lent 2025 | First UMC Belmont

April 6 – "I AM the True Vine" (John 15:1-8)

With spring in full bloom, we turn to a powerful image of our life in Christ: Jesus as the vine, and we as the branches. What does it truly mean to abide in Christ in a world dominated by technology and distraction? How are we called to bear fruit for the glory of God? And what in our lives might need to be pruned so that new, good, and life-giving things can take root and grow? Join us as we explore these questions and reflect on what it means to stay deeply connected to the source of all life.

April 13 – "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:1-7 – Palm Sunday)

On Palm Sunday, we follow Jesus on his way to the cross. As we step into Holy Week, we marvel at the journey he takes for us—standing in the gap for truth before Pilate, freely offering his life on the cross so that we might have new life in him. His way is not always easy; it is a narrow path. Yet, as the "pioneer and perfecter of our faith," Jesus shows us the way to true and abundant life. Come and worship as we begin this sacred journey together.

April 20 – "I AM the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:17-26 – Easter Sunday)

Join us on Easter Sunday as we celebrate the hope of resurrection! In John 11, as Jesus stands at the grave of his friend Lazarus, he reminds us how often our hopes are too small. Lazarus is brought back to life, but he will one day face death again. Jesus, however, is resurrected—never to die again. Easter is not just about returning to life as it was; it is the beginning of something entirely new. In Christ, death is defeated, and all things are being made new. Come rejoice in the victory of resurrection and the promise of new life!

HOLY WEEK OFFERINGS

Palm/Passion Sunday April 13 | 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Join us for worship as we remember Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, marking the beginning of his final week leading to the cross.

Stations Wednesday, April 16 through Easter Sunday, April 20

Prayer stations will be set up in the Sanctuary and in the Narthex. This will give you an opportunity to reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross and ultimate sacrifice for us, and what God is calling you to let go of this season.

Maundy Thursday Service of Worship Thursday, April 17 | 7:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday is named for the mandatum (Latin for "commandment") Jesus gave on this night to love one another as he shared his Last Supper with the disciples. This year, we gather on this night to feast with him again in the celebration of Holy Communion. The service includes beautiful music and a "stripping" of the altar, removing ornamentation and color from the chancel to mark the solemnity of the occasion.

Community Cross Walk Friday, April 18 | 12:00 noon | Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

Join our brothers and sisters in Christ from around Belmont for a moving, walk through downtown Belmont, remembering Christ's journey to the cross. The walk concludes at First Presbyterian Church.

Good Friday Tenebrae Service Friday, April 18 | 7:00 p.m.

Our Tenebrae Service, or "Service of Shadows" retells the story of Good Friday through Scripture, music and a gradual dimming of the sanctuary to total darkness. We remember on this night what makes Good Friday good, for on this day God's deepest love for us was revealed in the death of Jesus Christ.

Community Easter Sunrise Service Sunday, April 20 | Greenwood Cemetery

We'll gather as a community with our brothers and sisters from around Belmont to celebrate the resurrection.

Easter Sunday Service of Worship Sunday, April 20 | 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Join us for Easter Sunday Worship with Holy Communion and special music. It will be a grand day as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death and claim our place as God's "Easter People!"

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER



Sundays at 4:00. Meet in the Breezeway.
Everyone is welcome.
Contact Cat Ragsdale with questions.
704-242-4248

March Men's Meetings at the Youth House: Friday April 4 at 6:30 a.m. This is a time for devotional, growing in community and friendship.

Ruth Circle will combine with the Holy Walkamolies group on Sunday April 6th at 4 p.m. All women are welcome! Meet at the church for a fun time of fellowship and walking! RSVP to Paige Dunigan paige1210@gmail.com

**CELEBRATE
SPRING**
with a special lunch and
music from
"THE KEY OF D"
at the community cafe on
APRIL 10TH
11:45-
1:15
At the
cafe
Dahlia Grove



Square 2 Meeting Thursday April 10th at 7pm April Showers



Join the women of Square Two in the Route 66 classroom. Bring bath robes (all sizes), shower shoes (all sizes), and/or mesh bath caddies for the residents of Catherine's House. You can bring more than one item.

All women are invited!
RSVP to Cindy Jenkins: cwjenkins@carolina.rr.com

The Anxious Generation Book Club Our FINAL meeting is April 13 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Old Fellowship Hall. Read chapters 9 through 12.

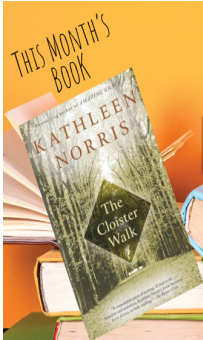
Easter Morning Stations in the Narthex on April 20 during the Sunday School hour. All ages are invited.

Join the Primetimers at Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park for a picnic, games and fellowship on Tuesday April 29 at noon. Our Primetimers group is for everyone age 60 and older. Contact Doreen Collins to sign up doreen@fumcbelmont.org

THIS MONTH'S BOOK
KATHLEEN NORRIS
The Cloister Walk

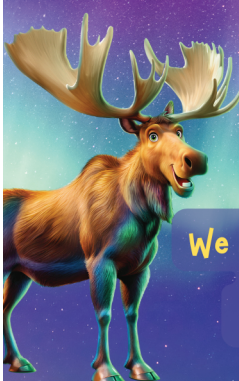
STORIES TO LIVE
EXPLORING SPIRITUAL MEMOIRS

Sunday, May 4 at 6:00
with Pastor George



Spiritual Memoirs Small Group – May 4

Join Pastor George for the next gathering of our Spiritual Memoirs Small Group on May 4 in the Narthex Meeting Room, where we will explore *The Cloister Walk* by Kathleen Norris. This beautifully reflective memoir invites us into the rhythms of monastic life, weaving together personal faith, poetry, and deep spiritual insight. Whether you've read the book before or are discovering it for the first time, come for a meaningful discussion on how contemplative practices can shape our everyday faith. All are welcome!



**What are you doing
July 13-17?**

We need all hands on deck for VBS
this summer! Please email
lbrookins18@gmail.com to
volunteer.

GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

The youth group is "springing" into action in the month of April. We have ample opportunity to spread our love to others in beautiful ways. All youth in sixth through twelfth grade are welcome.

April 6 Connect We will assemble goodie bags for senior members of the congregation.

April 13 Connect The Youth will travel to visit some of our senior members in the community. Sign Up online to go.

April 18 All youth are welcome to attend the Good Friday Community walk at noon at the Lutheran Church. We will walk together and then eat lunch in downtown Belmont.

Attention High School Seniors and Parents: Graduation is right around the corner. Please put this date on your calendar. If you would like your youth to be recognized and/or participate in this service, please email Quanna McAlister at quanna@fumcbelmont.org by April 8th. All high school and college graduates are invited.

CROWDERS MOUNTAIN SPRING BREAK HIKE

SAT, APRIL 26

9:30

FUMC PARKING LOT



We will hike Crowders and then go out to lunch afterwards.

8th through 12th Graders

Sunday,
April 27

JUMP INTO FUN AT ALTITUDE TRAMPOLINE PARK

Meet at the
Youth House
for
Taco Salad
Lunch
@ 12:00



Middle
School
Youth
Event

12:00
to
3:45

FIRST KIDS

Countdown to Easter *Lent Small Groups for Kids*

First Kids are invited to follow the steps of Jesus on Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:30.

April 2 - April 16

www.fumcbelmont.org/lent



CROSSROADS (4TH/5TH GR)

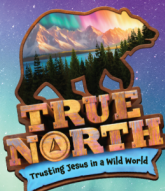
SUNDAY, APRIL 6

5:30-7:30

JOIN US FOR SUPPER, GAMES
AND TALKS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP



All First Kids are invited
to meet in the Narthex
prior to worship on April
13 and join our Palm
Sunday processional.



**VBS is
July 13-17**

4 year olds – completed 5th grade
Registration opens Easter Sunday
www.fumcbelmont.org/vbs

NEWS FROM OUR CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



March Madness at the CDC! We used books instead of basketballs this month as we celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday and invited community guest readers for our annual Read Across America Week. Principal Bill Kessler from Page Elementary, South Point Raiders football team, South Point championship swim teams, Belmont Middle School and South Point cheerleaders and many CDC parents stopped in to read stories with our children. Ms. Kathy Johnston also stopped by to share some of her favorite Dr. Seuss stories. Our preschoolers worked hard on building leprechaun traps in hopes of catching Lucky the Leprechaun but we didn't have good luck. He was too tricky! Lucky did leave us some shiny gold coins and yummy treats for a special St. Patrick's Day.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE



Collecting non-perishable food to help those without adequate food resources

April 6

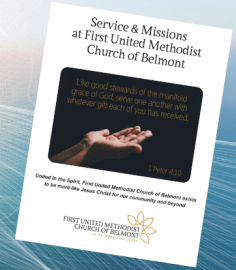
TOP 20 REQUESTS

Rice	Crackers
Jelly	Mac & Cheese
Pop tarts	Pasta
Grits	Pasta Sauce
Oatmeal	Dried Beans
Peanut Butter	Corn Muffin Mix
Instant Potatoes	Cookies
Soup	

Canned: Meat, Fruit Tomatoes, Vegetables and Pasta

How do you engage with the missional work of God through FUMCB?

Through our new Missions booklet you can discover all the missional activities at our church and how to become involved in this work. Pick up a copy at the Welcome desk in the narthex.



Drop Your Drawers underwear drive for Rice and Beans: We are collecting new briefs throughout Lent. Leave donations in our collection bin in the narthex. The need is for Hanes or Fruit of the Loom briefs in women's and men's sizes medium or large.

Catherine's House needs a simple dinner prepared for the mothers and children who live there on April 28th. If you can provide dinner or a gift card to cover the meal for those living in the residential rehabilitation program, please go to www.fumbelmont.org/signup.



BACKPACK FOOD PROGRAM



Forms are in the narthex or scan the QR code

Mother's Day May 11th

Honor your mother or special person by donating to the Backpack Food Program

Update from Missions

This is our most recent update with one of the two Global Missionaries we are partnered with. The full report from Eric Kalumba can be found at www.fumcbelmont.org/globalmissions

The United Methodist Church in Madagascar is witnessing remarkable growth through its Sunday School in Ambodifasika and the emerging faith community in Sambava. The Sunday School provides a vital space for underprivileged children to grow spiritually while also addressing their educational needs. Led by dedicated teachers, this ministry not only nurtures faith but also supports families struggling to afford schooling. Special events, such as Christmas celebrations, bring joy and hope, yet the need remains great for resources to continue this transformative work.

Meanwhile, in Sambava, a single testimony has sparked a movement, leading to a new worshiping community that has grown from five to 68 members. Despite legal and logistical challenges, these believers remain steadfast in their faith, gathering in homes and longing for a permanent place of worship. Efforts are underway to establish the first United Methodist Church in Sambava, but support is crucial. Through prayer, encouragement, and generosity, we can help build a foundation for lasting ministry and expand God's kingdom in Madagascar.





Join the TEAM!

Want to help those devastated by hurricane Helene?

Join our disaster relief team. We will be sending a team this summer. Sign up if you are interested in learning more.

www.fumcbelmont.org/signup

Update on the Parsonage and Pastor's Housing Allowance

As many of you know, our church parsonage sustained severe fire damage on September 28 of last year. The Board of Trustees continues to work closely with our insurance company to assess the full scope and cost of repairs. A restoration specialist has been contracted, and cleanup, along with necessary demolition work, is underway in preparation for reconstruction.

After much prayer and consideration, Pastor George and Catherine have made the difficult decision not to return to the parsonage, given the trauma of the fire and the heartbreaking loss of their pet. In the United Methodist tradition, the church is responsible for providing housing as part of our clergy's compensation. Pastor George's rental insurance has covered his temporary housing through April, and this month, he and his family will be moving into a new home they are purchasing in Belmont.

In consultation with our District Superintendent, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) recommended that the church provide Pastor George a housing allowance to assist with these costs. This recommendation was unanimously approved by the SPRC, Finance Committee, Administrative Council and will be presented to a called Charge Conference on March 30 (after this newsletter went to print). The current plan is for the Board of Trustees to rent the parsonage once repairs are complete, using the rental proceeds to help cover the cost of the housing allowance. In the interim, we have applied for grants from the Catawba Valley District to assist with these expenses.

Pastor George and Catherine share, "We are grateful for the support and care of our church family during this transition. Please continue to keep us and our church leadership in your prayers as we move forward together."

Sincerely,
Alex Bryant, SPRC Chairperson
Doug Moody, Trustee Chairperson



Interested in composting your food waste? A pilot composting program for Belmont residents has been extended through June 30, 2025! The City of Belmont Council voted to extend the program with the hope of increasing the number of participants. There are five food waste drop-off sites with designated collection bins located throughout Belmont. A local company, Crown Town Compost, picks up the food waste and will process it into nutrient rich compost. Here is an opportunity to recycle food waste, reduce solid waste going into the landfill and to produce more compost for use in the City of Belmont!

To learn more about how the program and to sign up, see

<https://www.cityofbelmont.org/belmontcomposts/> or contact Maria Portone of the Environmental Sustainability Board at mariaportone@hotmail.com

THANK YOU

The missions committee would like to thank all who volunteered this winter at Room in the Inn and the Warming Center. With such an unusually cold winter it took many people to keep these ministries operating. A special thanks to the coordinators Lynn Hansen and Mary and Pete Rutledge.

The flood buckets you prepared finally made their trip to the Disaster Response Center in Terrell thanks to many volunteers. Many thanks to the youth who loaded all the buckets into the bus and to Keith Moore, Missy and Roger White for delivering the bucket to Terrell, NC. Due to the relief work being done in NC they had to move all 72 buckets without any assistance from the center. Thank you for your service.



Thank you to James Harris for cooking the delicious Wednesday evening meals January through March 5th. From savory pasta and meatballs to creamy chicken alfredo and roasted vegetables. We also thank Ed and Gail Hanigan for cooking breakfast for dinner on February 26th.

Our upcoming Wednesday evening meals will be provided by Aaron and Carolyn Tyson, the owners of "The Groovy Beast restaurant." If you see these folks thank them for their service!

A BIG THANKS to all of the youth and adult volunteers who helped with our annual Pine Needle Fundraiser on March 7 and 8. We sold a record 4,150 bales and profited \$7,400 in sales. The money raised will go to both our Youth and Methodist Men's Groups for various missional activities. Thanks also to everyone who bought pine needles to support us. A special BIG THANKS to Jon Boney and Margie Ligon for their leadership.



Dear FUMC Belmont,

Thank you so much for your generous donation to the Client Assistance Fund of Serenity Pastoral Counseling. We truly appreciate how you have, and continue to, support your neighbors in need who could not otherwise afford counseling in difficult times. Your gift of hope and comfort is a reflection of your ministry in our community.

Again, many thanks.

Blessings,

Shelton D. Davis, Pastoral Counselor

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1	Colton Riske	April 10	Ashley Falls	April 21	Becky Fortenberry
	Thomas Taylor		Mark Sutton		Anderson Phillips
April 2	Michelle Edgerton	April 11	Yelana Murphy	April 22	Sam Clark
	Patrick Hays	April 12	Jon Boney Sr.		Alice Farris
	Arthur Ligon	April 13	Andy Harris		Marcia Motsinger
	Boyce O'Tuel		Katie Beth Russell	April 23	Saundra Fann
	Avanna Schwark	April 14	Greg Edgerton		Judy Kalmbach
April 3	Evan Black		Melanie Lowrance		David Tomlinson
	Julie Buehlke	April 15	Jax Forbes	April 25	Hunter Armstrong
	Danny LaBoone		Caroline McGraw		Michael Nance
	Connor Redmond	April 16	Melinda Gibson	April 26	Matthew Langley
	Mary Rutledge	April 17	Madison Blanton	April 27	Alex Cauble
April 5	Blaine Featherston		Jack Fangman		Sarah Lawing
April 6	Keeghan Gaskill		David N. McKinney Jr.	April 28	Kelly Davis
	Rita Greene-Barnard	April 19	Logan Edgerton	April 29	Kristie Marr
	Stephanie Love		Grayson Hansen		Tracee Pearson
April 7	Winter Kincaid		Addison Murphy	April 30	Blake McCarn
	Aria Williams	April 20	Josh Beaty		Evelyn Preisach
April 8	Brad Davis		Tom Shaney		
	Lauren Loper				



CHURCH FLOWERS

If you would like to place flowers in the church for Sunday services to honor, remember loved ones, or for a special occasion, please email Carole Bertino to reserve the date. carole@fumcbelmont.org

Flowers may be ordered from WinterPast Flowers (704-825-5172) or you can provide your own.

No artificial flowers please.

THOUGHTS, PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

Cindy Griffin's brother Jim

Beverly Karr's family upon the death of her mother Sarah Dixon

Tony and Rita Wilson and family

Nancy Smith, Carol Tomlinson's daughter

Ellie Delany

Scott Richards, on the death of his wife Diane (Nicole Stanforth)

Evan Hirschehsohn

Lenny Jansen (Linda Piltch)

Doug Moody and family upon the passing of Doug's brother, Darrell

Butch Harris, Becky Fortenberry's brother

Jennifer Stiver, friend of Elizabeth Boney

Bruce & Robin McCarter, friends of Mark & Dottie Moore

Jill Atkins, Chris & Connie Atkins' sister/sister-in-law

Emma Bowen, Chris & Connie Atkins' grand daughter

The family of Shirley Hunt, Trevis Lunsford's sister, who passed away

Jessica Murray

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family

You can submit prayer requests to prayers@fumcbelmont.org

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