

Tri-Angles

AUGUST 2025

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT



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

Welcome August

Changes to Our Wednesday Night Programming

One of the gifts of the Christian journey is the call to ongoing discernment — to listen deeply for where God is leading and to be courageous enough to respond. Over the past year, our Strategic Planning Team has invited us into this work of discernment together, encouraging us to do some important "pruning work" as one of the central tenets of our Strategic Plan for ministry.

As good gardeners tell me, pruning isn't about cutting back for the sake of cutting back; it's about creating space for new life to flourish. It's an act of hope and faith — trusting that God will bring forth new growth in the right season.

This past spring and summer, our staff and ministry teams spent time evaluating all areas of our ministry, asking where we are seeing fruit, where we sense energy and excitement, and where we may need to reimagine. Through this process, it became clear that our Wednesday night "Meet in the Middle" meals and small group gatherings for children and youth, while once vibrant, have required an enormous amount of staff time and countless hours of commitment from dedicated lay leaders — all while serving fewer and fewer participants.

In light of this, we have decided to take a pause this fall from our Wednesday evening fellowship meals and children and youth small groups. Our adult offerings will continue on a smaller scale, and we will continue to explore new opportunities for connection and growth.

This is not an ending but rather an opportunity and invitation to reimagine how we might best nurture fellowship and spiritual formation during the week. We believe God is calling us to this time of discernment and we warmly invite your feedback, ideas, and dreams for what could emerge in this season ahead. Please share with us!

Thank you for your openness, your prayers, and your ongoing involvement and support in the life of our church. I'm so grateful to be your pastor and look forward to how God leads us into a new chapter of week-night ministry!

Peace,

George



COMING UP IN WORSHIP



As members of FUMC Belmont, we promise to serve God with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service—and our witness. But in a recent congregational survey, nearly 40% of us admitted that witness is the hardest part. How do we talk about our faith without feeling awkward or uncertain? How do we share Jesus in ways that are kind, authentic, and true to who God is calling us to be? This August, join us for a new worship series exploring how to overcome fear and reluctance, build real relationships, and become the kind of people others might actually want to hear from. It's not about having all the right words. We start with love, built trust, tell our story and invite with joy.

August 03 – Start with Love (Luke 7:36–50)

See people the way Jesus does. Evangelism begins not with answers or arguments—but with love. Jesus sees a woman whom others condemn, and he responds with mercy. What if our witness began by seeing others with compassion, not critique?

August 10 – Build Trust (Luke 19:1–10)

Relationship comes before invitation. Before Jesus ever said a word about salvation, he shared a meal. When we take time to build trust, we make space for real transformation. Whose table are you being called to sit at?

August 17 – Tell Your Story (Luke 8:26–39)

Telling the truth about what God has done in your life. Jesus tells the healed man to "go home and tell what God has done for you." That's it. You don't need to have all the answers—just your story of grace, healing, and hope.

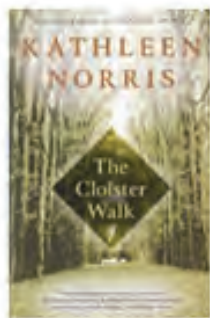
August 24 – Invite with Joy (Luke 10:1–12)

We're sent only to bless. Jesus sends his followers to bring peace. We are invited to do the same—joyfully, courageously, and without fear. Who might say yes to Jesus if you simply made the invitation?

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER



Last year, we journeyed through powerful stories of faith, doubt, and transformation—and we're doing it again this fall! Spiritual memoirs help us see how God shows up in real lives, in unexpected places, and often in our own stories, too. Each month, we'll read the life story of someone who has dared to tell the truth about their journey with God. Then we'll gather on Sunday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. to reflect, discuss, and deepen our understanding of grace at work in the world and in our own lives. This year's books include:



The Cloister Walk by Kathleen Norris (September 7): A writer and poet's unexpected journey into Benedictine spirituality opens up a contemplative view of time, prayer, and presence in everyday life.

Pastrix by Nadia Bolz-Weber (October 05): With fierce honesty and biting humor, this tattooed Lutheran pastor tells her story of grace, recovery, and finding God among misfits and sinners.

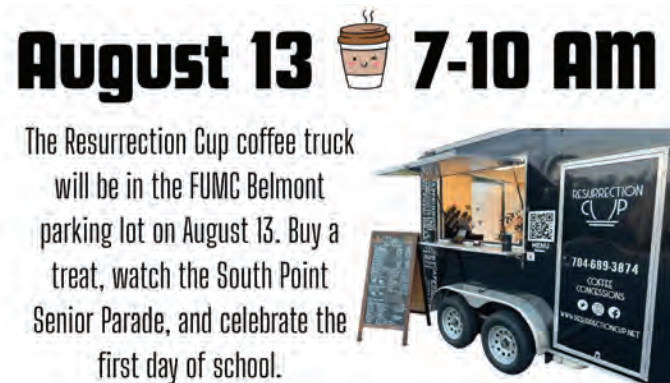
My Life with the Saints by James Martin, SJ (November 02): A Jesuit priest introduces the saints who shaped his life—offering stories of faith, friendship, and the surprising relevance of holy lives from the past for us today.

Darling by Richard Rodriguez (January 11): Part memoir, part cultural meditation, Rodriguez explores God, desert spirituality, and religious identity in the modern world.

This Here Flesh by Cole Arthur Riley (February 08): A deeply poetic and powerful meditation on dignity, lament, and liberation by an African American writer who invites us to encounter God through embodied Black experience and ancestral memory.

The Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton (March 22): This modern spiritual classic traces Merton's journey from worldly success to monastic life, offering a timeless portrait of the soul's search for God.

Whether you joined last year or are new to the group, all are welcome at any time for any conversation about any book. To learn more or sign up, email Pastor George at george@fumcbelmont.org.



Have you always wanted to learn how to sing? On Wednesday, August 20 from 7 -8:30 pm. **Professor Craig Allen** will be leading a **Vocal Workshop**. A singer, dancer, actor, director, and choreographer, Craig has been described as an exemplary soloist (Kansas City Star) with a brilliant nimble voice (KC Metropolis). He is on the music faculty at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. When he is not teaching, he is an active performer, recently seen in Carmen with Opera Carolina and Next to Normal at Theatre Charlotte. Contact Ellen at ellen@fumcbelmont.org for more information.

Ebenezer UMC - 120 Belmont-Mt. Holly Rd. Belmont, NC 28012

Aging Together GRACEFULLY

Join us August 23rd @ 10:30 am for an introduction to our new monthly seminar addressing the practical aspects of aging!

Upcoming Sessions

Medicare 101

Healthy Eating as a Senior Adult

How to Spot a Scam

Coffee and Light Snacks Provided!

<https://www.ebenezerumcbelmont.com/>



Reading Women – a book group for women who like to read and discuss a wide variety of books that make us think and enlarge our world! We begin the year on Monday, September 15 at 7 pm with **Happy Land** by Dolen Perkins-Valdez. We will then meet the second Tuesday of each month in October through May. For more information, contact Ellen at ellen@fumcbelmont.org

Save the Date! Wednesday Evening Small Group

Six week study

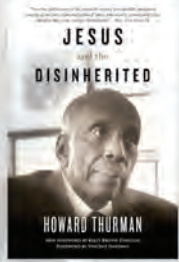
Beginning September 17 – 6:30 pm

Lead by Tony Wilson

Hatred does not empower--it decays.

Only through self-love and love of one another can God's justice prevail.

Daytime small group will begin
Thursday September 18th – 11 am



The Western North Carolina Conference is hosting **BEYOND a conference** focused on invitation, inclusion, and growth on October 3-4 at University City UMC in Charlotte. Space is limited. Reserve now www.wnccumc.org/beyond-2025 The cost is \$99 for both days.

Amazing speakers, inspirational worship, connections and possibilities! We believe in leaders full of energy, purpose, and hope for the future. We're looking beyond to a church full of revival, innovation, and passion for a strategy that is both deeply evangelical and unapologetically inclusive.

Talk to Kim Ingram (704-714-2354) if you want more information.

WAYS TO SERVICE AND PARTICIPATE

THE
CARING
CONGREGATION



Nominate Someone for the Congregational Care Ministry

If you know someone who is empathetic, a good listener, and is committed to serving our community nominate them to be one of our Congregational Care

Ministers. Forms are located at the information desk and online at

fumcbelmont.org/signup

Find more information on the ministry at fumcbelmont.org/care-compassion



Looking for a place to serve? Come be a part of the team that provides welcome for all who enter our doors. What does it involve?

- Welcome and distribute bulletins
- Coordinate offering collection
- Provide assistance/guidance and answer questions
- Commit to at least one month each calendar year

Contact Ellen at ellen@fumcbelmont.org for more information!

Like to engage with people? You would be a perfect fit for our Hospitality Ministry of Greeters and Information Center Hosts. What does it involve?

Greeters offer a friendly face and welcome to those arriving for worship.

- Help guests with questions and directions
- Commit to at least one Sunday a month

Information Center Hosts greet guests at the Information Center for 10 minutes prior to and 10 minutes after the worship service

- Make sure first-time visitors receive a welcome bag
- Help guests with questions and directions
- Commit to at least one Sunday a month

Contact Ellen at ellen@fumcbelmont.org for more information!





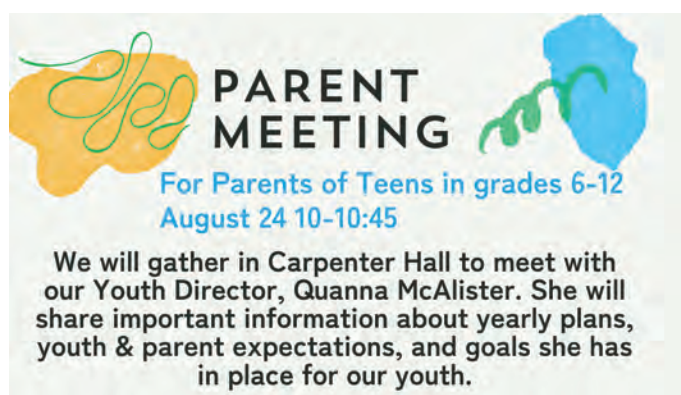
Do you enjoy technology? Then you should join our A/V Team who ensures that our audio and visual content runs smoothly at each service. What does it involve?

- Full training on cameras/projectors, soundboard and livestreaming
- Monitoring PowerPoint presentation
- Commit to one Sunday each month

Contact Ellen at ellen@fumcbelmont.org for more information!



GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH



Confirmation Class 2025-2026

'Begins with an opening retreat October 24 and 25th

Students in grades 7-12 are welcome to participate. Please email Quanna for more information.



What a great summer we've had as youth of FUMC Belmont. Mission Mania was an awesome opportunity for us to connect as a group and with our community. On Tuesday, June 3, we served at the Gaston Co. Animal Care and Enforcement Center, Least of These Carolinas, Holy Angels, and Page Primary. On Wednesday, June 4, we served lunch and worshipped at Haywood Street Church in Asheville.

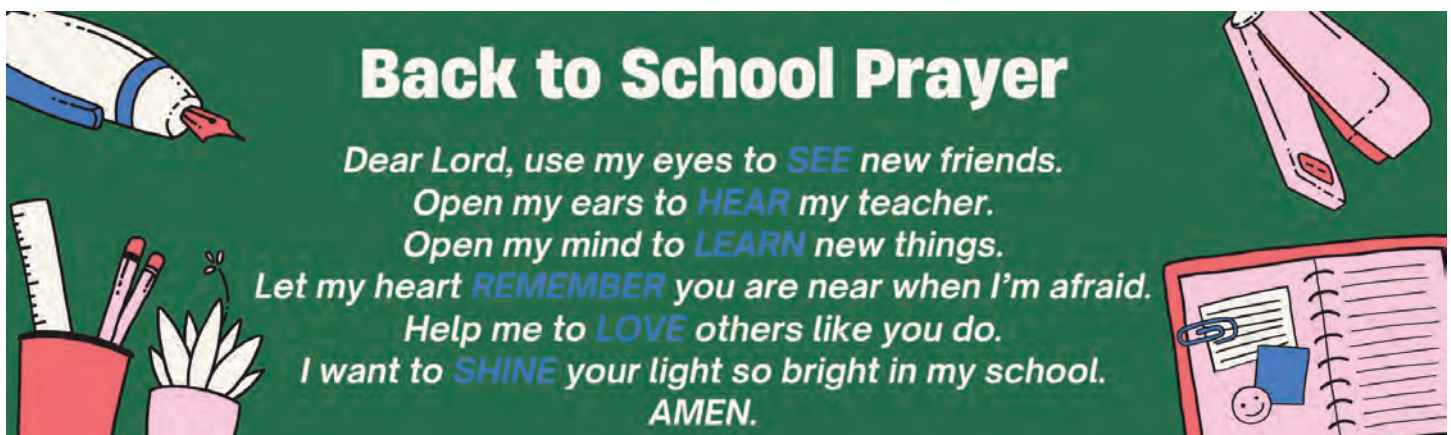
On June 12 our youth group enjoyed kayaking together at the Whitewater Center in Charlotte. It was a beautiful day on the water. On July 1 an awesome group of us got together for a fun night of games and fellowship.

I hope and pray that all youth are excited about the upcoming youth year. We have a fun kickoff event on August 24 on our playground with a HUGE water slide, cookout dinner, dessert, and games. We will also enjoy youth t-shirts this year with the Bible verse, "Do Everything in Love" 1 Corinthians 16:14.

Thanks to everyone at our church for your prayers, presence, and support of our youth program.

Engage Sunday School-All youth are invited to the Youth House in August and September. Let's enjoy a six session Bible study called Jesus Loves Nerds: Bible Studies for Nerdy and Geeky Media We Love. The author is one of our clergy, Nathan Webb, who is the pastor of Checkpoint Church – an online church for nerds, geeks, and gamers. We will examine the connection between movies, tv, games, and Anime with our relationship with Jesus.



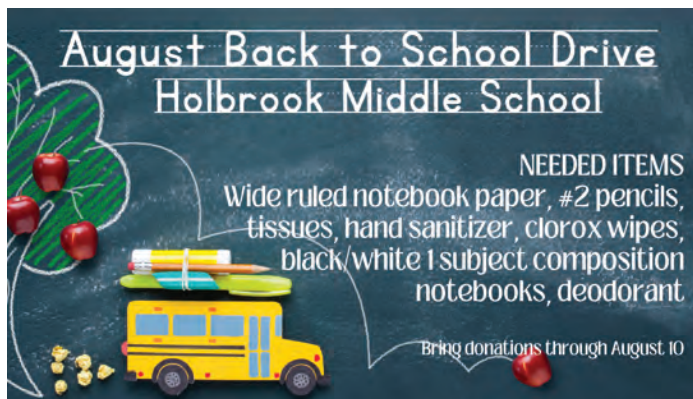


TRUE NORTH VBS 2025

We welcomed over 70 children to our church during VBS this year. It was a fantastic week exploring the Alaskan wilderness and learning that when we wonder, when we feel alone, when we feel powerless, and when we need help, we can **TRUST JESUS**! VBS happens every year because of the generosity of time and resources of over 60 volunteers! Thank you, Church!



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE



We are excited to welcome back the Dahlia Grove Community Café to Carpenter Hall on Thursday, August 7 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Come enjoy a delicious lunch, warm hospitality, and the chance to support an incredible mission.

Dahlia Grove is a Charlotte-based nonprofit that empowers women who are survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, and addiction by providing safe housing, job training, and holistic support. Their mission is grounded in dignity, healing, and hope—and the Community Café is one of the ways they invite the broader community to be part of that story.

The Café is a pay-what-you-can lunch experience featuring fresh, homemade food prepared and served by the women of Dahlia Grove. Your donation directly supports their journey toward healing and self-sufficiency.

Whether you're grabbing lunch with coworkers, meeting a friend, or simply want to be part of something good, we hope you'll join us. Every plate served and every dollar given is a step toward restoration and renewed life. Learn more about Dahlia Grove's mission and impact at www.dahliagrove.org

save
the
date

 **ZOE**
Breakfast
not-so-silent **AUCTION**

Sunday, October 26, 2025
during Sunday breakfast
and Sunday School



**Mamba
Empowerment
Group, Rwanda
Partnered with
FUMC, Belmont,
January 2025 –
December 2027**

Ikizere "Hope"

MISSIONS UPDATE from Rev. Eric Kalumba in Madagascar

As a covenant mission partner with Rev. Eric Kalumba, FUMC Belmont is honored to share in the transformative work of the gospel unfolding in Madagascar. What follows is a summary of his most recent report, a powerful testimony to the Spirit's movement in the region of Sambava.



This spring, a remarkable spiritual awakening has taken root in Sambava, a town in northeastern Madagascar, where a new United Methodist community is emerging with resilience and hope.

Since November 2024, Rev. Kalumba has received messages from Sambava filled with both excitement and pain—excitement about a desire to formally join The United Methodist Church, and pain following the destruction of Cyclone Dikeledi in January. Sensing a call from God, Rev. Kalumba traveled more than 1,100 kilometers to be with them.

What began as a pastoral visit quickly became a season of church planting. Despite tropical heat and heavy rains, people gathered daily in a borrowed schoolroom to study Methodist doctrine, history, and faith. Within two weeks, 82 people were baptized and confirmed after intentional catechesis. A wedding held in the makeshift sanctuary sparked a wider movement toward Christian marriage and deeper discipleship.

The Sambava Region of Madagascar

Through the generosity of mission partners, the community received sound equipment and Bibles—often out of reach due to cost. Following the devastation of Cyclone Dikeledi in January, UMCOR provided food assistance to 123 households, reaching more than 750 people.

Worship continues in a rented classroom, supported by sacrificial giving from church members. The community now dreams of a permanent sanctuary and of planting new congregations in nearby towns—two of which are already worshipping, led by local leaders.

Rev. Kalumba invites us to pray: "We believe the miraculous growth of this mission in Madagascar relies first and foremost on deep spiritual support." The full report is available at fumcbelmont.org/missions. We encourage you to read it, pray for this growing church, and give thanks for the Spirit's work through our global partnerships.



The people of Sambava receiving support from UMCOR following Cyclone Dikeledi.

Happy
Graduation



ZOE NEWS

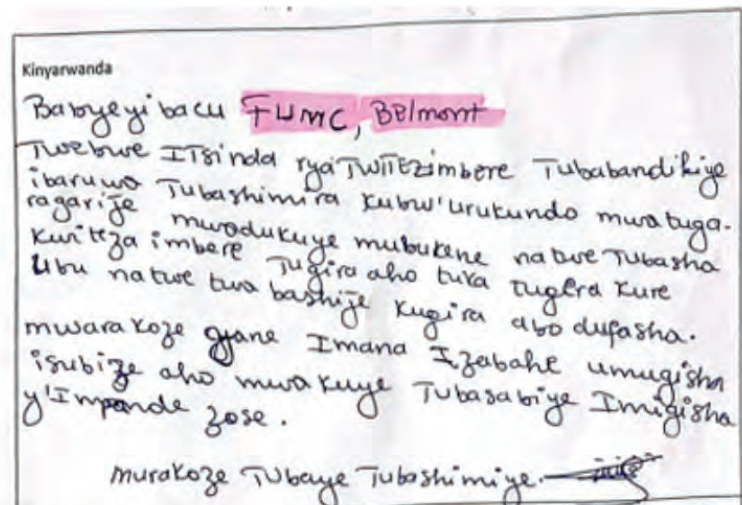


Twitezimbere “Progress” Bwisige Empowerment Group, Rwanda
Partnered with FUMC, Belmont, January 2022 – December 2024

Letter of appreciation to the partner:

Dear Parents FUMC Belmont,

We, Twitezimbere Group, write to you this letter thanking you for all the love bestowed upon us. You took us from poverty and made us become very important people who have now changed and developed our lives. Today we are able to give the same support and help to others in the community like the way you supported us. Thank you so much for all and may God add more to your blessings. We love you.



The Zoe model was applied and in 3 years these children
learned and achieved these life changing, self-sufficient skills:

Food Security
Income Generation
Spiritual Strengthening

Housing
Health

Education
Group Activities

Summer Fun at the CDC!

Our CDC friends are having a blast this summer! Check out some of our fun June and July activities.

Our annual Donuts with Dad event was a yummy success. We invited our dads and grand dads to join us for an afternoon snack from Yummm Donuts and gave them special Father's Day gifts. Once again, maple bacon donuts seemed to be the fan favorite!



As the days get hotter, we cool off with Water Play Days. We purchased a big water slide for the preschoolers and sprinklers for our toddlers to enjoy each week. Children come dressed in their water clothes and sunscreen to enjoy getting wet with their friends. Our summer camp friends visit Pinebrook pool each week to swim and dive off the diving board. In patriotic fashion, we celebrated America during the week of July 4th. Children came dressed to impress in their red, white and blue and parents joined us for a parade around our school campus.



We studied camping and made delicious smores for snack. Our children enjoyed pop-up play campers and pretend fires with roasted marshmallows. During princess and pirate week, some lovely princesses (aka South Point cheerleaders) came to visit. Moana, Snow White, Cinderella and Ariel read stories with the children, created artwork and had a dance party. We all took turns learning to walk the plank. Ms. Rachael dressed up as Penny the Pirate and led the children on a treasure hunt. They found a giant gold box filled with candy and toy crocodiles!



We'd like to thank church member Andrew Langley for our new playground addition. Andrew is working hard on becoming an Eagle Scout and put plans in place months ago for a sandbox. This isn't just any old sandbox! It has benches that close up so that no critters can get in while we are away. The children were thrilled to play in the sand. Stay tuned for Andrew's second playground addition coming soon!



CONGRATULATIONS

We celebrate the Reverend Kristen Surratt who was ordained a Deacon in Full Connection by our Bishop, Ken Carter, at the June meeting of our Western North Carolina Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Kristen is a former member of our staff, and she and her family are very active in the life of our congregation. Congratulations, Kristen! We give thanks for you and your friendship and ministry among us!



PRIMETIMERS REFLECTION

The Primetimers had another fun outing in July to "A Little Bit of Art." Each person picked out a piece of ceramic to paint, while connecting with old friends and making a few new ones! We even had a youth and her Mom join us!

If you are 60 and up and are looking for a fun group of people to hang out with, sign up to join them next time!



THANK YOU



The Rice and Beans Team wants to once again thank the congregation at First United Methodist Church - Belmont for their continuing support of the unhoused community in Gastonia. Your donations of clothing, shoes and food are most needed and most appreciated. It appears that Rice and Beans is the only organization that provides a meal to these individuals each week.

Rice and Beans is also pleased to let you know that Plato's Closet in Gastonia has graciously donated clothing to the unhoused community. If you happen to be in the area along Wilkinson Boulevard, please drop in and thank the Plato's Closet team for their contribution to Rice and Beans.

If anyone has any questions about Rice and Beans, wishes to make a donation of used clothing, shoes, food or funding, or would like to help serve a meal on Tuesday evenings at 6PM, just let us know. The unhoused are in need of men's and women's shorts and t-shirts at this time.

With Grateful Hearts,
Michael and Denise Martin



Thank you from S.O.C.K.S. Crisis Ministry

Thank you so much for supporting our ministry and for lending a helping hand to others in need. Your kindness does not go unnoticed. Your donation will be used for utility assistance. May each of you be richly blessed.

Lee Allen
Director
S.O.C.K.S. Crisis Ministry



Thank you from Serenity Pastoral Counseling

Dear FUMC Belmont,
Thank you so much for your generous contribution to the Client Assistance Fund of Serenity Pastoral Counseling! It is with great pleasure that I have served as a pastoral counselor in the halls of this church for more that 15 years and I treasure our partnership in helping our neighbors in need who could not otherwise afford therapy for depression, anxiety, grief, and a myriad of other needs. Your continued support allows us never to turn away a client for financial reasons.

All our thanks,
Rev. Shelton D. Davis and the Board of Directors of Serenity Pastoral Counseling



Thank you from Haywood Street, Asheville

Dear FUMC Belmont,
Thank you for your contribution supporting Haywood Street ministires and designated for the Downtown Welcome Table. Your generosity helps us fulfill our mission, which is, *relationship, above all else*.

Thank you for helping to make it all possible,
Laura Kirby
Executive Director

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 1	Travis Clark	August 12	Pamela Ward	August 24	Elliott Davis
	Laura Pennington	August 13	Lynn Ellis		Suzanne Washam
	Jackson Spivey		Declan Kelly	August 26	Anne Louise Ragsdale
August 2	Kathryn Lewis		Jessica Latchana		Russell Tindall
	Sam Pennington		Chad McAlister		Beth Truesdale
	Tracy Smith	August 16	Angela Adamcik	August 27	Reese Luttrell
August 3	Steve Benedict		Carole Bertino		Anne Tria
	Chloe Cheshire		Robert Grant	August 28	Steven Fulcher
	Richard Thames		Austin Hansen		Connor Jordan
August 5	David Gensch		Melinda Russell		Elle VanGastle
	Bryan Jones	August 18	Elena Benedict	August 29	Elias Williams
	Everett Love		Conner Corcoran	August 30	Emily Black
	Robert McSwain		Lauren Schwark		Jordan Edgerton
	Claire Ragsdale		Barbara Tria	August 31	Gale Collins
August 6	Brenda Austin	August 19	Mel Johnston		Theo Henry
	Alex Bondurant		Quanna McAlister		Linda Piltch
	Wanda Randolph		Erin Washam		Remy Young
August 8	Catherine Armstrong	August 20	Jennifer Martin		
	Dylan Thompson		Colin McAlister		
August 9	Ellen Adams		Joshua Millspaw		
	Jamey Cauble	August 21	Joan West		
	Mitch Wilson	August 22	Lyn Harper		
August 10	Mark Andrews	August 23	Brian Deal		
	Callie Lawing		Claire Dunigan		
	Arlene McMurtry		Colton Jones		
	Betty Pennington		Paul Meilike		
	Eric Pennington		Steve Saunders		
	Sam Pruitt		Jane Washam		
	Olivia Tyson				

THOUGHTS, PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

Brian Holland (Adrian and Trevis Lunsford)
Diane and Paul Kitchens, Dawn Finn's aunt and uncle
Janet Matijkiw (Judy Kelty)
George Bray (Teri and Claude Wilson)
The family of Doretha Cousart, Pastor Reginald Coffey's grand mother, who passed away
Dawn Siebert & Scott McKenzie, friends of Elizabeth Boney
The family of Mary Gillespie, Adam Tipton's grandmother, who passed away
Family and friends of Colby Smith, who passed away

Annette Biddle, Chip Stansell's mom
Kaleb Singleton (Cindy Griffin)
Alex Underhill, Cindy Griffin's nephew
Katy McCombs, Melinda Gibson's daughter
The family of Erin Carver, Tim and Renee Painter's daughter, who passed away
Ginger Feimster
Murphy Clark and family
Our ZOE communities in Rwanda

You can submit prayer requests to prayers@fumcbelmont.org

OUR STAFF

Carole Bertino | Administrative Assistant | carole@fumcbelmont.org
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Ellen Robison | Minister of Worship and the Arts | ellen@fumcbelmont.org
Mark Sutton | Business Administrator | mark@fumcbelmont.org

The 10-3 Rule



Speak to everyone
you can within

10 feet

Spend the first

3 minutes

after worship
meeting NEW people
rather than catching
up with those you
already know