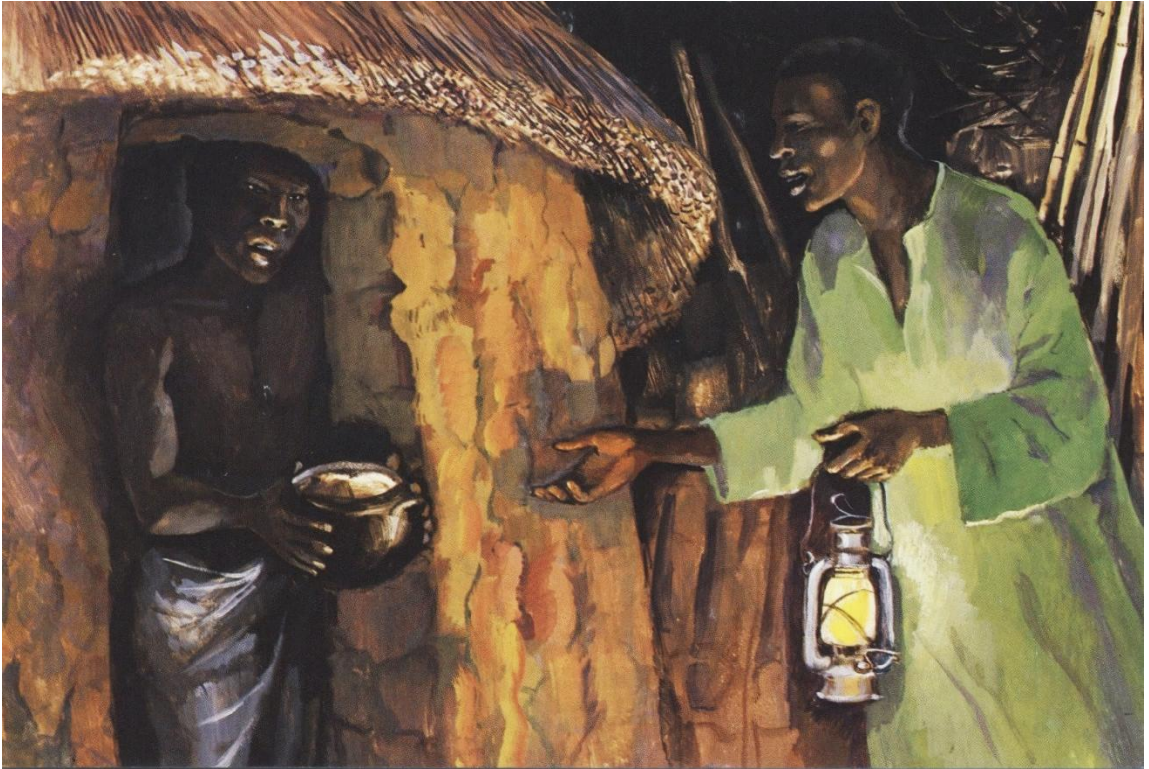


FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

September 6, 2026 – 11:00 a.m.
The Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost



The Insistent Friend, by JESUS MAFA (Cameroon), 1973

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

THE REVEREND GEORGE RAGSDALE, SENIOR PASTOR
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www.fumcbelmont.org

**THE
FIFTEENTH
SUNDAY
AFTER
PENTECOST**



Good morning and welcome to worship at First United Methodist Church of Belmont! We're glad you are here! Today, we turn to powerful words from Jesus in Matthew's Gospel about what it means to be the church. In fact, today's passage includes one of only two uses of the word "church" in the entire Gospel, suggesting that these words are crucial for our life together. Notice that Jesus never promises this life together will be easy, but he does promise to be present whenever his people gather in his name. Today we reflect on the difficult and grace-filled work of being the church: telling the truth, extending mercy, seeking reconciliation: learning, essentially, to live the forgiven life. As we worship, may Christ meet us and form us into a community through which God's kingdom becomes visible on earth.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

Prelude on "Lasst uns erfreuen"

arr. Roger C. Wilson

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on Psalm 130

Jennifer Martin

If you, O Lord, should mark our iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

***But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.***

We wait for the Lord; our souls wait,
and in God's word we hope.

***With the Lord there is steadfast love
and great power to redeem.***

People of God, place your hope in the Lord.

***For the Lord is merciful,
and with God there is abundant redemption.***

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 660

God Is Here

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, you have reconciled us to yourself through Jesus Christ and called us into a life of grace with one another. Yet we avoid difficult truths, nurse old wounds, and withhold the mercy we ourselves have received. We bind what you would loose and allow pride, fear, and resentment to diminish our common life.

Forgive us, we pray, and make us courageous in truth, generous in mercy, and steadfast in the work of reconciliation. By the power of your Spirit, form us again into a community in which the life of your kingdom is made visible on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI NO. 70

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 18:15-20

James McSwain

SERMON

The Rev. George Ragsdale

SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH No. 881

The Apostles' Creed

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Come, God, and Hear My Cry

Ruth Duck

***Come, God, and hear my cry; My spirit thirsts for you.
My body withers, weary, dry. Come Spirit God, renew!***

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

After each petition, we enter into prayer together with these words:

Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offertory

When Morning Gilds the Skies

Molly Ijames

(Text may be found in Hymnal #185)

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

*ACT OF PRAISE

Doxology

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!, Alleluia!, Alleluia!***

*TAKING THE BREAD AND CUP

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (Hymnal 17-18)

*THE LORD'S PRAYER (Hymnal No. 895)

*BREAKING THE BREAD

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXTENDING THE TABLE

This morning, lay communion servers come forward to receive consecrated bread and juice from worship to share with homebound members who cannot be present today. We pray for them, remembering God's grace unites us as one within Christ's holy church. If you are aware of someone who would like to receive but cannot be present, speak with Pastor George after service.

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL HYMN

Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen

***Rise, O church, like Christ arisen,
from this meal of love and grace;
may we through such love envision
whose we are, and whose, our praise.
Alleluia, alleluia;
God, the wonder of our days.***

***Rise, transformed, and choose to follow
after Christ, though wounded, whole;
broken, shared, our lives are hallowed
to release and to console.
Alleluia, alleluia;
Christ, our present, past, and goal.***

***Rise, remember well the future
God has called us to receive;
present by God's loving nurture,
Spirited then let us live.
Alleluia, alleluia;
Spirit, grace by whom we live.***

***Service be our sure vocation;
courage be our daily breath;
mercy be our destination
from this day and unto death.
Alleluia, alleluia.
Rise, O church, a living faith.***

POSTLUDE

Recessional on "To God Be the Glory"

Douglas E. Wagner

** Those who are able please stand.*

WELCOME

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! We're glad that you've chosen to worship with us this morning. We invite you to explore all the opportunities we have for children, youth, and adults of all ages. 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 this morning 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!

Weekly Devotional Guides offer daily Scripture readings, reflections, and questions for contemplation and discussion. Each guide follows the theme and content of Sunday's sermon and includes a prayer for the week. Copies of the guides, along with transcripts of today's sermon, are available at the Information Center. You may also sign up to receive the guides by email, along with other church updates, at www.fumcbelmont.org/emails.

Today's Bulletin Cover features *The Insistent Friend*, a 1973 work by JESUS MAFA, a Christian community in Cameroon that interpreted Gospel stories through dramatic reenactment and painting. The image interprets both Luke 11, where a man persistently knocks at his neighbor's door seeking bread, and today's Gospel, in which Jesus calls us to go directly to one another when relationships are broken. Both passages invite us to cross the distance between ourselves and our neighbors rather than give up on them. As we undertake this difficult work of truth, mercy, and reconciliation, Christ is present and God's kingdom becomes visible among us.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

Ways to Give at FUMC Belmont:

Online – visit fumcbelmont.org/online-giving.

By mail – Send your gift to the church address on the front of this bulletin.

In-person – drop your gift in the offering plate or the church office drop box.

***Sign Up Today!
Mission Night
& Potluck
Sept 27 @5:30***

GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

Sign up for a time slot on September 20 for our ***Fishes and Loaves Family Service Project***. We will be preparing freezer meals for foster families. Details and signup at www.fumcbelmont.org/kids.

Crossroads (4th-5th graders) meet Sept. 13, 5:30-7:30 for recreation, supper, & faith conversations.

Sunday School classes available for Birth–5th grade! Email jennifer@fumcbelmont.org for info!

GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

Youth Sunday School–Join us each Sunday at 10 for a reflection and application. High schoolers meet in the Carpenter Hall classroom; middle schoolers meet in the Youth House. All are welcome.

Winter Retreat– Sign up today for our annual youth retreat, February 12-14 at Lake Junaluska. Our guest speaker is Michael Beck, pastor, professor, author, and thought leader. He leads three churches in Florida, and is known to cultivate communities of love and grace. See Quanna for more info!

GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS

Sunday School Options:

Marriage Class: studying *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, [Room 503](#)

Route 66: new study 9/13: *Perfectly Flawed: How God Transforms Our Weakness into Strengths*, [Room 304](#)

Salt & Light Fellowship: reading Scripture and sharing life and testimonies, [Narthex meeting room](#)

Wanderers: studying *Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned; but I Have Several Excellent Excuses*, [Room 502](#)

FALL ADULT SMALL GROUPS THROUGH THE WEEK

Groups begin the week of September 13

Childcare may be available for these groups based on interest and advance registration. Please contact Jennifer Martin (jennifer@fumcbelmont.org) as soon as possible if you will need childcare.

- **Sunday 12:30 pm:** The Emotionally Healthy Woman
Led by Patty Hayward and Emily Lyons
- **Monday 6:30 pm:** The Seven Principals For Making Marriage Work
Led by Leigh and Mike Nance
- **Tuesday 6:30 pm:** Disciple - Led by Pastor George and Catherine Ragsdale
- **Wednesday 6:30 pm:** Building Beloved Community
Led by Kim Ingram and Janet Jones
- **Wednesday 6:30 pm:** Men's Group: Engage
Led by Matt Gillespie
- **Thursday 11 am:** The Shape of Living - Led by Pastor Ellen

The number of weeks per class vary
For more details go to fumcbelmont.org/smallgroups

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, September 6

8:30 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship

Monday, September 7

Church Office Closed for Labor Day

Tuesday, September 8

Wednesday, September 9

5:30 p.m. Alleluia Choir

Thursday, September 10

7:00 p.m. Square Two

Friday, September 11

Saturday, September 12

Sunday, September 13

8:30 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Pastries with the Pastor

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship

12:30 p.m. Small Group: Emotionally Healthy

5:30 p.m. Crossroads

5:30 p.m. Youth Group

HELP FLOOD VICTIMS



Consider donating
\$75 to help us achieve
our goal to make 72
buckets this year on

MISSIONS NIGHT |
Sept 27th @ 5:30

Donations can be
made by check or
[www.fumcbelmont.org/
floodbuckets](http://www.fumcbelmont.org/floodbuckets)



PRAYER REQUESTS

Jack Acheson (Chris' brother)

Mary Rutledge's mother, Alberta

Jim Griffin

Jimmy Turner's family upon his passing (Cindy
Griffin's brother)

Alex Underhill (Cindy and Jim's nephew)

Betty Kupneski (Matt Gillespie's grandmother)

Amanda Owens and her family: Derek, Bentley,
Haley, and Hunter

Sarah DesJardins (Teri & Claude Wilson's friend)

Teri and Claude Wilson's friend, R

Bill Walton (Maggie Moore's brother)

Carol Tomlinson's family upon her passing

Steve Redmond's family upon his passing
(Shane Redmond's father)

Beulah Mullinax

Taylor Hayward

Patty Gibson

Jeff Farris (Alice Farris' brother-in-law)

Ginger Feimster

Murphy Clark and family

For the Zoe communities in Rwanda, especially

Emmanuel (19) head of household, and
siblings Liliane (15) and Jean Claude (12)

Submit prayer requests to:
prayers@fumcbelmont.org
Prayers remain on this list for 4 weeks.
For continued prayers, please
submit a new request.

SQUARE TWO

All ladies are invited
September 10 - 7 pm
At FUMCB

*Make this fun
cork pumpkin*
For more info
Contact Pam Stowe 704-678-4685



*Bring a
hot glue gun!*

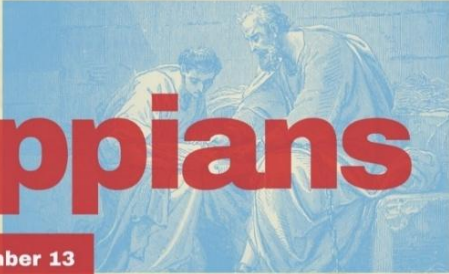
REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS

THE LETTER TO THE

Philippians

New Series Begins September 13

AGAIN I WILL SAY, REJOICE




**Small
Groups
Begin
Next Week!**

fumcbelmont.org/all_in

STOCK the BC

Sept. 13

Drop off
non-
perishable
goods

8:30-12



Pastries with the Pastor

• • • • •

Newcomers & Guests! Join Pastor George and members of our staff and congregation for casual conversation and fellowship! All are welcome!

Sept 13 | 10:00 am | Carpenter Hall



OUR STAFF

Doreen Collins | Director of Adult Discipleship | doreen@fumcbelmont.org
 Rebekah Huffstetler | Business Administrator | rebekah@fumcbelmont.org
 Jennifer Martin | Director of Children's Ministry | jennifer@fumcbelmont.org
 Quanna McAlister | Director of Youth Ministry | quanna@fumcbelmont.org
 Boyce O'Tuel | Director of the Child Development Center | boyce@fumcbelmont.org
 Marsha Patton | Administrative Assistant | marsha@fumcbelmont.org
 George Ragsdale | Senior Pastor | george@fumcbelmont.org
 Ellen Robison | Minister of Worship and the Arts | ellen@fumcbelmont.org