

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

December 1, 2024 – 8:30 a.m.

The First Sunday in Advent



Zacharias (?) and the Angel by Rembrandt van Rijn, c. 1635

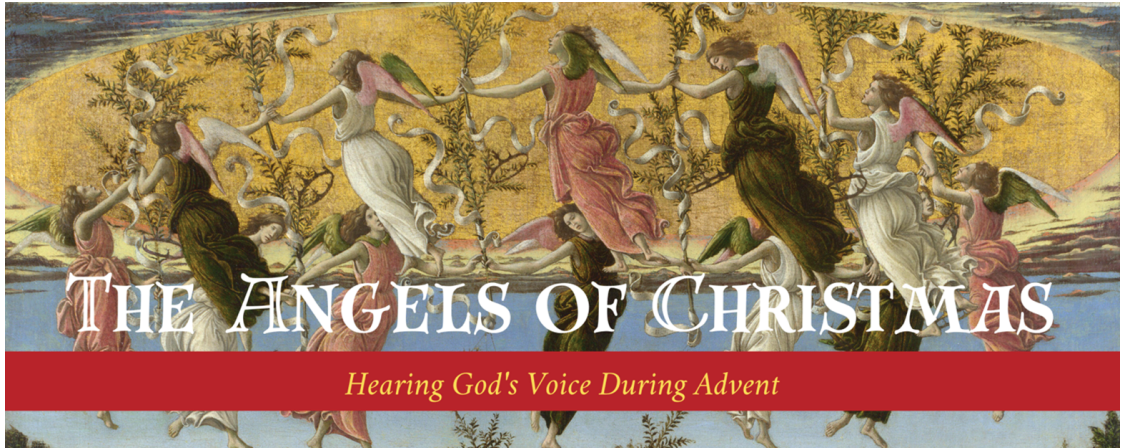
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***United in the Spirit, First United Methodist Church of Belmont exists
to be more like Jesus Christ for our community and beyond***
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THE REVEREND GEORGE RAGSDALE, SENIOR PASTOR

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Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! This morning we begin the season of Advent, a four week time of spiritual reflection preparing us for the coming of Christ, not only at Christmas but his promised return to redeem and renew all of creation. This year we turn our attention to the angels who announce God's good news throughout the Christmas story. In today's Gospel Lesson, the angel Gabriel speaks a calming, hopeful word to Zechariah. Yet, Zechariah's heart is full of fear and he remains doubtful even after hearing Gabriel's message. What doubts and fears do we bring to this Advent season? Gabriel's announcement is for us, too: "Do not be afraid." Where do we need to hear and share his words this year?

PRAISE AND PRAYER

*OPENING SONG	<i>"Light of the World"</i>	CCLI Song # 7163734
*PRAYER		Doreen Collins
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS		
LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE		The Beaty Family
MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN		Jennifer Martin

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON	Luke 1:5-25	Brandon Martin
SERMON		The Rev. George Ragsdale

SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

As a forgiven and reconciled child of God, you are invited to give your offerings and gifts to God by placing them in the offering plate when you come forward to receive communion.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*THE PEACE

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

*TAKING THE BREAD AND CUP

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

*BREAKING THE BREAD (gluten free option available)

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

"Light Has Come"

CCLI Song # 7185153

What a wonder God is moving
All around us lift your eyes
In the darkness of this weary world
Hope is starting to rise
God is with us
Behold His Son
Dawn of glory
Light has come
From the midnight of our waiting

Heaven's highest enters in
Oh the splendor of the Promised One
Born in Bethlehem
Hallelujah gloria
He is Alpha and Omega
King of kings and Prince of Peace
Tender Shepherd Holy Lamb of God
Love come to redeem

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*CLOSING SONG

"You Never Let Go"

**Those who are able please stand*

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 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 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!

Today's Bulletin Cover features a drawing of today's Gospel encounter between Zechariah and the angel Gabriel by Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn, generally regarded as one of the greatest artists in the history of Western art. Rembrandt's sketch is an attempt to capture something of the human emotional response to the moment of divine revelation. He does so here by eliminating context and setting. Scholars believe the character in the sketch is Zechariah because he resembles other, clearly identifiable sketches of the same scene by Rembrandt. Here, the angel rises up over Zechariah, gesturing forcefully in a way that is not entirely clear, due to Rembrandt's many revisions. What is unmistakable is the old man's quizzical expression, full of doubt and fear. Promised a long prayed-for son, the viewer can almost hear Zechariah respond, "How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." His lips are parted to speak as he gestures to someone (perhaps his wife, Elizabeth?) not visible in the drawing.

Prayer after each worship service is available in the prayer room off of the Narthex. Our Congregational Care Ministers and retired clergy are available to pray with you.

CHURCH GATHERINGS

The Crossroads Christmas Party for children in fourth and fifth grades is today from 5:30 to 7:30 in the Old Fellowship Hall.

Candy Cane Family Night is Wednesday, December 4 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in Carpenter Hall. Join us after Alleluia Choir for supper, hot cocoa bar, crafts and more. Register today at fumcbelmont.org/candycane.

Men of the church are invited to a time of fellowship, devotion and discussion over breakfast at the First Friday Men's Meeting on December 6 at 6:30 a.m. in the youth house. Contact Brandon Martin at bmartin@atticustechology.com with questions.

Youth Christmas Party is Sunday, December 8 at 12:15 p.m. after the 11 o'clock worship service. Youth will travel to Frankie's Fun Park in Charlotte before returning to the church to assemble lunches for Feeding the Children. Parents should pick up youth at 5 p.m. To sign up, reach Quanna at quanna@fumcbelmont.org.

First Kids Movie Meet Up is December 8 at Franklin Square in Gastonia. We're planning for an early matinee screening of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. For more information contact Jennifer Martin at jennifer@fumcbelmont.org.

Sign up before December 8 for our Annual Christmas Dinner. Tickets are \$15 per adult, \$10 per child or \$45 max for a family of four or more. Sign up at fumcbelmont.org/christmasdinner or using the reservation forms at the narthex information center.

The Ladies of Square 2 will gather on Monday, December 9 to serve a meal at Catherine's House before going out for dinner and fellowship together. All are invited. Contact Cindy Meilike at cindymeilike@hotmail.com to sign up.

Our Primetimers adults over 55 will gather on Tuesday, December 10 from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. for dinner and a drive through the McAdenville Christmas lights. To reserve your spot contact Doreen at doreen@fumcbelmont.org.

Our Annual Christmas Concert on December 15 at 4:00 p.m. will feature all of the musical ensembles at FUMC with guest musicians. The concert is free and all are invited. Our annual Christmas dinner follows.

Young Adults will gather for lunch on December 20 at 11:30 at the Spruced Goose Station. Contact Quanna at quanna@fumcbelmont.org with questions.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

Support Dahlia Grove Community Café on Thursdays from 11:45 to 1:15 p.m. in Carpenter Hall. Dining at the café provides financial support and training for women recovering from human trafficking, domestic violence and drug addiction. Learn more at dahliagrove.org.

Stock the B.C.O. Sunday is December 8. Remember to bring non-perishable food items to benefit our neighbors in need and drop them off in the narthex.

Room in the Inn begins this month as we again partner with Christ UMC in Charlotte to provide emergency housing for our neighbors without a home on December 7 and 28. Learn more and sign up to help at fumcbelmont.org/roomintheinn, where you can also find our Amazon Wishlist with items to donate for our guests, including rain gear, flashlights and toiletry items.

Share the Warmth this Advent season by donating gloves, hats and socks. You can place your items on the tree in the narthex. All items will be donated to the S.O.C.K.S. Crisis ministry in the Springwood community.

Help us Feed the Children! Visit fumcbelmont.org/feedthechildren to sign up to pre-pack, cook and assemble or deliver lunches and bags of shelf-stable food to children during their Winter break.

Give Gifts That Matters this Christmas by supporting the children and families of our ZOE Empowerment community in Rwanda. For as little as \$10 you can purchase a gift that will transform the life of a child and honor a loved one at the same time. Visit the ZOE table in the narthex after worship throughout Advent.

COME CELEBRATE WITH US

Christmas Eve
Worship

December 24 | 4 & 6 p.m.



WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, December 1

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 5:30 p.m. Connect
- 5:30 p.m. Crossroads

Monday, December 2

- Deadline To Order Poinsettias
- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

Tuesday, December 3

- 12:00 p.m. Congregational Care Minister Mtg.
- 1:30 p.m. Advent Small Group
- 6:00 p.m. Charge Conference (Zoom)

Wednesday, December 4

- 5:30 p.m. Alleluia Choir
- 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal
- 6:00 p.m. Candy Cane Christmas Night
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 5

- 11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'
- 6:30 p.m. Hope & Consolation Serv.

Friday, December 6

- 6:30 a.m. Men's Meeting

Saturday, December 7

Room in the Inn

Sunday, December 8

- Deadline for Dinner Reservations
- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 12:30 p.m. Youth Event

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Jaxon Forbes

Barb Lange's brother, Bob Shaffer

Trevis Lunsford's sister, Shirley Hunt (Adrian and Trevis Lunsford)

Richard Rumpfelt and his family (Becky and Tom Fortenberry)

Sister-in-law, Jill Atkins (Chris and Connie Atkins)

Lynda Jenkins, Nancy, Clyde, Adam & Alex Underhill, Patsy Deese, Bill Griffin, Linda & Gerald, along with other family members who are all facing health issues (Cindy and Jim Griffin)

Alice Goins Ratterree (Cindy Goins aunt)

Nicole Stanforth's grandfather

Paul Wallace, Judy Harris' brother and also her friend Herb Carnes

Greg Stanforth

Graham Baakko (Teri Wilson)

Kenneth Harris' father, Larry

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family



Christmas Poinsettias

We will be decorating our worship space with poinsettias during the Christmas season. Each poinsettia is \$10. and the deadline to order is **Dec. 2nd.**

Use this QR code or order forms are available at the information desk.





**Deadline
to sign up for dinner
is December 8**

Christmas Concert & Dinner

December 15 - 4 pm
dinner to follow

*Tickets - \$15 per adult, \$10 per child
or \$45 a family of 4 or more*

*Forms are available at the Information desk
or sign up using the QR code*





Service of Hope and Consolation



A time of reflection, prayer and hope for all
those who have experienced loss this year



Thursday, December 5 | 6:30 p.m.
Refreshments will be served
following the service.



OUR STAFF

Carole Bertino | Administrative Assistant | carole@fumcbelmont.org
Doreen Collins | Director of Adult Discipleship | doreen@fumcbelmont.org
Heather Gaskins | Director of the Child Development Center | heather@fumcbelmont.org
Margie Ligon | Director of Missions | margie@fumcbelmont.org
Jennifer Martin | Director of Children's Ministry | jennifer@fumcbelmont.org
Quanna McAlister | Director of Youth Ministries | quanna@fumcbelmont.org
George Ragsdale | Senior Pastor | george@fumcbelmont.org
Ellen Robison | Minister of Worship and the Arts | ellen@fumcbelmont.org
Mark Sutton | Business Administrator | mark@fumcbelmont.org