

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

December 22, 2024 – 11:00 a.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent



The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds by Thomas Cole, 1834

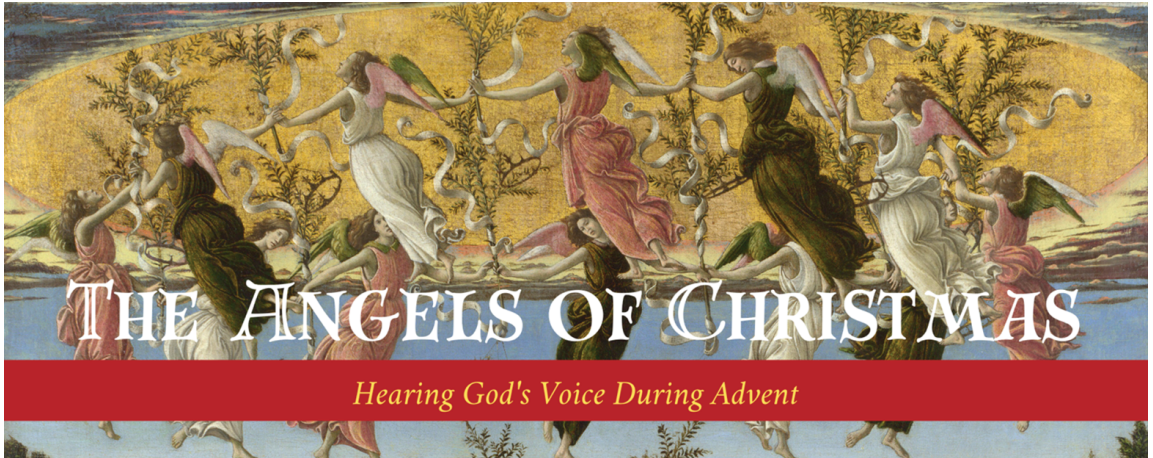
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***United in the Spirit, First United Methodist Church of Belmont exists
to be more like Jesus Christ for our community and beyond***
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THE REVEREND GEORGE RAGSDALE, SENIOR PASTOR

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Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! This morning, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we conclude our series exploring the Angels of Christmas by turning to the angel who appears to the shepherds outside Bethlehem, announcing the birth of the Messiah. Their message is a message for all people, a song of peace and joy born out of an awareness of God's presence with us in Jesus. How can we proclaim the good news—the joy—of God's presence this Christmas season?

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

arr. Lani Smith

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The Murphy Family

Finally, we light the fourth candle on our advent wreath, as we celebrate the message of joy. "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.'" The arrival of Jesus brings joy to the world, a joy that transcends all circumstances.

We rejoice in the gift of Christ, our Savior, who brings joy to our hearts.

This candle represents the joy we find in Christ and our call to share that joy with others.

***Ever-present God, fill us with Your joy this Advent season. May we carry that joy into the world as we celebrate the birth of Your Son.
Amen.***

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 202

"People, Look East"

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Quanna McAllister

Loving God, we confess that in the busyness of our lives, we often fail to make room in our hearts for the peace and joy proclaimed by the angels at Christ's birth. Forgive us for the ways we allow fear, pride, and division to cloud the good news meant for all people. Renew in us the wonder of your gift, that we may share your love with a weary world. By your grace, let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts and the joy of salvation shine through our lives. In Christ's Name, we pray. 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

Jennifer Martin

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-14

Ed Hannigan

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

SERMON

The Rev. George Ragsdale

SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH No. 881

The Apostles' Creed

INVITATION TO PRAYER

"Sing Hallelujah"

***Sing hallelujah Sing hallelujah
Sing hallelujah for the things He has done
Come and adore Him
Bow down before Him
Sing hallelujah to the Light of the World***

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

*After each petition we enter into the prayer together with these words: Lord, in your mercy.
hear our prayer.*

GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offertory

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

arr. Dan Forrest

THANKSGIVING

*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!***

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

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL HYMN No. 240

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"

*POSTLUDE

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

Dale Wood

**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 Thomas Cole's *The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds*. A founder of the Hudson River School, influenced by Romanticism and the natural beauty of the United States, Cole painted it in 1834 to gain attention and earn additional commissions. Bursting through the clouds, an angel announces the birth of Jesus to awe-struck shepherds. The light surrounding the angel serves as a symbol of spiritual awakening. The shepherds, for example, represent three successively higher states of spiritual response to the angel's message, beginning with the stunned fear of the praying youth and culminating in the quiet understanding of the standing elder. Some scholars have noted that the middle shepherd bears a resemblance to Cole and may be an idealized self-portrait. His presentation of the Mediterranean terrain draws on his travels in Italy, allowing us a vivid journey through this vast space before reaching the glowing cave where the Holy Family awaits.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS This morning we are blessed to welcome new members into our church family. Joining today at our 8:30 service by Profession of Faith is Cindy Tilley. Her husband Kent is an Ordained Elder in our Western North Carolina Annual Conference who is also affiliating with our congregation. If you would like more information about joining our church family, please call or email Pastor George (704-249-0645 or george@fumcbelmont.org) or speak with him after the service today.

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

First Kids are invited to dress in provided costumes and participate in our nativity retelling at the 4:00 Christmas Eve service. Please email jennifer@fumcbelmont.org to sign up.

First Kids and families are invited to Snowless Tubing at Crowder's Chutes on Saturday, January 4 from 6:00-7:00. The link to purchase tickets can be found at www.fumcbelmont.org/kids.



LET'S CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR

JANUARY 5TH
1-2:30

Meet at 103 Sacco Street,
Belmont

Youth Hike at Rocky Branch Trail

Connect begins again on January 12 from 5:30 to 7:30 in Carpenter Hall. Join us for a few rounds of Groq and other fun games!

Youth are invited on January 19 for a day of service where we will help our fellow church member with her yardwork. We will meet from 2 to 4 pm for a time of service and fellowship. All hands are needed. Contact Quanna today to sign up and for the address.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

Today is your last day to purchase ***Gifts that Matter*** for Christmas. You can support our Children and families of our ZOE Empowerment community in Rwanda for as little as \$10. Visit the ZOE table in the narthex after worship to help transform the life of a child and honor a loved one at the same time.

The offering collected on Christmas Eve 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.

The Dahlia Grove Community Cafe' will be closed for Christmas this week and next. They will reopen January 9th.

Feeding the Children ministry is actively serving over 250 children in our community. Sign up to serve December 26th, 30th or January 2nd. Visit fumcbelmont.org/feedthechildren to sign up.

Our next Room in the Inn night is December 28th as we partner with Christ UMC in Charlotte. Learn more and sign up to help at fumcbelmont.org/roomintheinn



Thanks to those who have faithfully provided a dinner for our families at ***Catherine's House*** throughout the year. Our December and January schedule is full but we need meals starting in February. To read more about this feeding opportunity or to sign up go to fumcbelmont.org/catherineshouse

Thank you for our record donation to the BCO this month. We were able to provide the BCO with over 400 pounds of non-perishable foods this December. Our next ***Stock the BCO*** Sunday is January 5th.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, December 22

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

Monday, December 23

- Feeding the Children
- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

Tuesday, December 24

- 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship
- 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship

Wednesday, December 25



Merry Christmas!
Church Office Closed

Thursday, December 26

Feeding the Children



Church Office
Closed Today

Friday, December 27

Saturday, December 28

Room in the Inn

Sunday, December 29

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

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Linda England

Danielle Kelly's father

The family of Teresa who passed away (Beverly LaBoone)

Trevis Lunsford's sister, Shirley Hunt

Ronnie and Susan Clements (Barbara Byrum)

Chris, friend of Teri Wilson

Greg Stanforth

Barb Lange and family upon the passing of her brother, Bob Shaffer

Friends, Richard & Judy Treneer (Nicole Stanforth)

Jaxon Forbes

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family

You can submit prayer requests to
prayers@fumcbelmont.org

COME CELEBRATE WITH US

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24 | 4 & 6 p.m.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT
TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS



A Light to the Nations

Experiencing and Sharing the Light of Christ

Begins January 5



feed the hungry

www.fumbelmont.org/missions/activities

OUR MISSION IS TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

*Current Opportunities:

- Cook a meal for Catherine's House
- Help cook a meal for Room in the Inn
- Sign up to help with Soup for the Soul
- Volunteer with Feeding the Children
- Donate food for the BCO

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