

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

December 8, 2024 – 11:00 a.m.

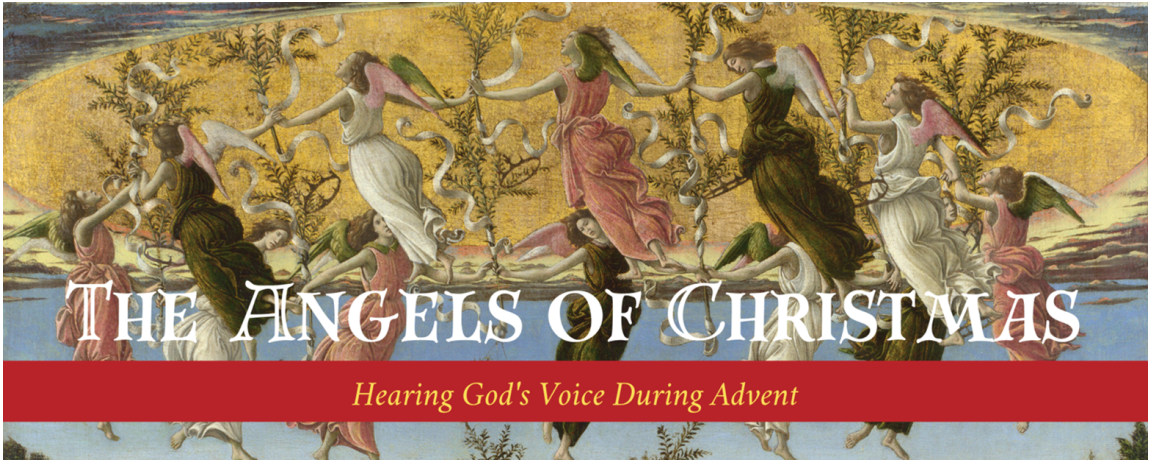
The Second Sunday of Advent



Ecce Ancilla Domini! by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

.....
***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
807 South Point Road // Belmont, NC 28012
P: 704-825-2106 // F: 704-825-2176
www.fumcbelmont.org



Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! This morning we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent, a season of spiritual devotion preparing us for Christ's coming at Christmas and his promised return in God's good future. At the heart of the Christmas story are angels, proclaiming the news of God's work in our lives. Today we turn to Luke's account of the angel Gabriel's visit with Mary, announcing that she would bear a son who would be the savior of the world. The angel's words begin Mary's faithful work to make room for God in her womb. His words invite us to do the same, making room for God in our lives and in our world.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella"

Howard Helvey

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The Acheson Family

Today, we light the second candle on our Advent wreath and celebrate the message that God calls us His own and claims us for His purposes. "The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'" God calls each of us by name, just as He called Mary.

We respond to God's call with open hearts and willing spirits.

This candle represents our willingness to embrace God's calling in our lives, no matter how daunting it may seem.

Holy Spirit, ignite within us a passion for Your calling. Speak words of faith and courage into our lives, that we may be open to Your guidance, ready to say "yes" to the opportunities to serve You, just as Mary did. Amen.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 214

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jennifer Martin

Loving God, we come before you acknowledging the times we have hesitated to answer your call because of fear and doubt. We confess the moments we have resisted saying, "Here I am, Lord," and instead clung to our own understanding. Forgive us for allowing our own plans and desires to crowd out space for you in our hearts. Teach us to trust in your promises and to embrace your calling with humility and faith. Fill us with Your grace so that we, too, may make room for you to work through us for your glory. In Jesus' 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

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

Liz Gray

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

"Gabriel's Message"

Nancy Grundahl

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

His wings as drifted snow

His eyes as flame

"All hail" said he "thou lowly maiden Mary

Most highly favored lady, " Gloria, Gloria

"For known a blessed mother thou shalt be

All generations laud and honor thee

Thy Son shall be Emanuel

By seers foretold

Most highly favored maid, " Gloria, Gloria

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head

"To me be as it pleaseth God, " she said,

"My soul shall laud and magnify His holy name."

Most highly favored lady, Gloria, Gloria

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born

In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn

And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say

Most highly favored lady, Gloria, Gloria

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. 206

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

*POSTLUDE

"The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns"

arr. Austin Lovelace

**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 Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1850 reimagination of the Annunciation (from the Latin for "announcement"), described in today's Gospel Lesson. Mary is portrayed as a youthful and vulnerable figure, sitting in quiet submission on her bed. Her body language reflects both humility and apprehension at the angel Gabriel's message. The stark, minimalist composition, dominated by white tones, emphasizes purity and divine intervention of the angel's appearance while allowing the spiritual tension to unfold in the simplicity of the moment. Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelite style imbues the scene with a sense of spiritual immediacy, inviting us to contemplate Mary's courageous faith in accepting God's call.

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

Today is the last day to sign up 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.

Engage Sunday School will meet at the Youth House at 10:00 a.m. today and on the 15th and 22nd. Our Advent study is Reality vs. Expectations.

Youth Christmas Party is today 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.

First Kids Movie Meet Up is 1:15 p.m. today at Franklin Square Regal in Gastonia for the screening of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. For more information contact Jennifer Martin at jennifer@fumcbelmont.org.

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.

Come make ANGELS! Help us make angel Christmas ornaments to be given out to all families that attend our Christmas Eve services. These are easy yet lovely mementos of the season, as we have shared about the angels in our midst. We will meet in Carpenter Hall December 12th at 10:30 a.m. We should be finished in time to eat at the Community Cafe together at noon.

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 Adult Luncheon: All college students and young adults will gather for lunch at Spruced Goose Station on December 20 at 11:30. Let's catch up and spend some quality time together! Contact Quanna at quanna@fumcbelmont.org with questions.

New Year's Hike: All current youth are invited to kick the 2025 year off with a hike at Rocky Branch Trail in Belmont on January 1st. We will spend time in nature reflecting on God's blessings on our lives with our friends and faithful youth leaders. Drop off at 113 Succo Street at 1 pm and pick up at 2:30.

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 today. Remember to bring non-perishable food items to benefit our neighbors in need and drop them off in the narthex.

Room in the Inn began this month as we again partner with Christ UMC in Charlotte to provide emergency housing for our neighbors without a home on December 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.

Through your generosity we are able to help support the functioning of a **Warming Center at the Gastonia Farmers Market** on nights when the temperature drops below 32 degrees for neighbors without shelter. You can also assist by working a shift greeting the neighbors and providing them with what is available to help bring comfort for the night. To sign up go to www.fumcbelmont.org/warmingcenter.

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 Matter 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.

Feed the House. Help care for mothers and children at Catherines House by dropping off a simple meal to them once a year. Help us fill up our calendar by signing up at www.fumcbelmont.org/catherineshouse

WEEKLY CALENDAR

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

Monday, December 9

10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
5:00 p.m.	Square Two
6:30 p.m.	Service & Missions

Tuesday, December 10

10:00 a.m.	Feed the Children Packing Event
12:00 p.m.	Feed the Children Packing Event
1:30 p.m.	Advent Small Group

Wednesday, December 11

6:00 p.m.	Handbell Rehearsal
7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 12

10:30 a.m.	Ornament Making
11:45 a.m.	Community Cafe'
7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir

Friday, December 13

Saturday, December 14

Sunday, December 15

8:30 a.m.	Worship
9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Breakfast
10:00 a.m.	Sunday School
11:00 a.m.	Worship
4:00 p.m.	Christmas Concert and Dinner

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Friends, Richard & Judy Treneer (Nicole Stanforth)

Jaxon Forbes

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

*You can submit prayer requests to
prayers@fumcbelmont.org*

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



**Deadline
to sign up for dinner
is TODAY**

COME CELEBRATE WITH US

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24 | 4 & 6 p.m.



*feed the
hungry*

www.fumcbelmont.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