

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

February 16, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

The Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany



The Beatitudes by Marina Silva

.....
*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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A Light to the Nations

Experiencing and Sharing the Light of Christ

Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! We continue our worship series exploring the light of Christ that shines for the whole world. Today we hear Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain" from Luke 6. Like Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount," in Matthew, Jesus summarizes the nature of God's kingdom. Unlike Matthew, which focuses on blessings to the poor, hungry and rejected, Luke also includes the woes Jesus speaks to those who are rich, full and well thought of in this world. Jesus' words instruct us on how to share Christ's light with others. Only as we empty ourselves will we be truly filled, shining with the good news of God's kingdom.

MUSIC

"Bell Jubilee"

Anna Laura Page

Bellissimo Handbell Choir
Genora Cheshire, flute

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"Thy Presence My Light"

Sandra Eithun

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Doreen Collins

Come, all who are empty, for God longs to fill you with grace.

We come, seeking the blessings of God's kingdom.

Blessed are the poor and the hungry, for they will be satisfied.

We open our lives to Christ, who fills us with love and mercy.

Let us worship the One who emptied Himself for our sake.

Let every tongue in heaven and earth confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 166 *"All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine"*

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

***Merciful God, we come before you confessing the ways we have sought
fullness in the things of this world while neglecting the riches of your
kingdom. We have chased after comfort, wealth, and praise, forgetting that
true blessing is found in humility, justice, and dependence on you.
Forgive us for turning away from those who hunger and weep while satisfying
ourselves with temporary abundance. Empty us of selfish desires and
fill us instead with a hunger for righteousness. By your Spirit, transform our
hearts so that we may rejoice in your blessings and live as faithful
disciples of Christ. 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 6:17-26

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

***Light of the World Treasure of Heaven
Brilliant like the stars in the wintry sky
Joy of the Father reach through the darkness
Shine across the earth send the shadows to flight
Light of the World from the beginning
The tragedies of time were no match for Your love
From great heights of glory You saw my story
God You entered in and became one of us***

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

"Blessed Are You"

Craig Courtney

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)

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL HYMN NO. 434

"When the Poor Ones"

*POSTLUDE

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

arr. John Zundel

**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 Nicaraguan artist Marina Silva's *The Beatitudes*. Her work embodies the vibrant, naïve-style art of Solentiname, a Nicaraguan island where faith and creativity merged under the influence of Catholic priest Ernesto Cardenal. Reflecting the island's tradition of using art for spiritual and social transformation, Silva once said, "Art has the power to open hearts to God's justice and love." In *The Beatitudes*, Jesus stands among the poor and humble, surrounded by lush landscapes and radiant colors, symbolizing the kingdom of God breaking into everyday life. The painting's simplicity and warmth invite viewers to see Christ's blessings as both comfort and a call to action, embodying a faith that uplifts the oppressed and seeks justice.

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.



Midweek Fellowship Meals
Wednesday - 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

**Feb. 19 meal: Chicken Alfredo,
zucchini & squash, Chicken nuggets
and dessert.**

Meals cost FUMC \$10 per adult, \$5 for children. We ask those who join us to contribute what they can.

Join us for a Mardi Gras pancake dinner on Wednesday, February 26 at 5:30 p.m. in Carpenter Hall.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS

Ruth Circle's Great Strawberry Bake Off! February 20th at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Paige Dunigan. Bring your favorite strawberry dessert and everyone votes for the best one. RSVP to: paige1210@gmail.com

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

All youth are invited to **Connect** tonight to prepare for Youth Sunday next weekend. Please see Quanna if you would like to participate in either or both services.

Sunday Connect 5:30-7:30 - All youth are invited to join us on the following Sunday nights for games, dinner, and Bible study: February 16, March 2, March 9, March 30, April 6, April 13, and May 4.

New Date Alert! The Youth's Mission Mania trip will be Tuesday, June 3rd to Wednesday, June 4th. Please sign up to participate by the end of this month. All youth who participate in the pine needle sale will receive a reduced price.

Harvest of Hope Youth Mission Trip: All current 6-12 graders invited on July 23-27 for this opportunity to take action, get involved in hands-on activities, and rescue and share good food with people in need. We will glean and distribute produce remaining in fields after harvest each morning and learn about the realities of hunger each evening. Bible study and dynamic worship round out days of Christian community and service, providing a basis for ongoing commitment to ending hunger. We will end our trip with a day and night at Carowinds. Email Quanna at Quanna@fumcbelmont.org with any questions or to sign up.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

All 4th-5th graders are invited to **Crossroads** on Sunday, February 23 from 5:30-7:30 in the Old Fellowship Hall. We'll enjoy games, supper, Bible talks and more!

First Kids are invited to join us 6:30-7:30 on Wednesday nights for our **Glow in the Dark** small groups. Together we are learning that darkness may be scary, but it's nothing that the light of Jesus can't fix.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

February 22nd is our next opportunity to help **Room in the Inn** serve our neighbors without houses. Serve with us as we partner with Christ UMC in Charlotte. Learn more and sign up to help at fumcbelmont.org/roomintheinn.

Don't forget to pick up your BCO shopping bag in the narthex. March 2nd is our next **Stock the BCO** Sunday. Bring your non-perishable donations any Sunday and leave them in the narthex for our missions team to deliver them to the BCO.

We have kicked off our annual **Pine Needle Sale** to benefit the work of the Men's Group and our Youth Group. The pine bales will be here March 7th and 8th. The cost of pine bales is the same as last year, \$5.75. Don't wait to place your order as we typically sell out before the month ends. Order forms are at the Welcome Center.

Thanks to those who have faithfully provided dinner for our families at **Catherine's House** throughout the year. We need help with a meal on March 10th. To sign up to help go to fumcbelmont.org/catherineshouse

Many hands, feet and trucks are needed to support the Pine Needle sale. If you are able to help please contact Quanna McAlister or go to www.fumcbelmont.org/pineneedles to sign up to help.

First United Methodist Church of Gastonia is the official safe space for the **Gaston County Warming Center**. Any night when the temperature drops below 32 degrees FUMCG will open their family life center to take in anyone in need. Sign up to drop off food or stay and be a hospitality host. Go to www.fumcbelmont.org/warmingcenter for the link to sign up.

Do you have a neighbor who needs some comfort care to help them during a difficult time? If so, we have chicken soup in our church freezer made for them. Pick up a quart of homemade chicken soup prepared by our **Soup for the Soul** cooking team to help you show compassion to others.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, February 16

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

Monday, February 17

- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Women's Ministry Meeting

Tuesday, February 18

Wednesday, February 19

- 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist/Narthex Prayer Rm
- 5:30 p.m. Meet in the Middle Meal
- 5:30 p.m. Alleluia Choir
- 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m. Small Groups
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 20

- 11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'
- 7:00 p.m. Ruth Circle Event

Friday, February 21

Saturday, February 22

- 4:30 p.m. Room in the Inn

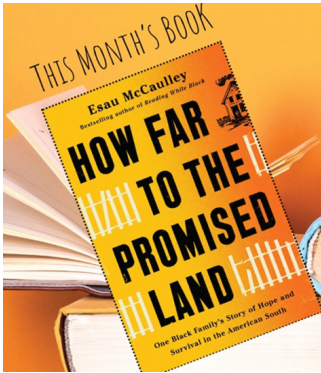
Sunday, February 23

- Youth Sunday
- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 12:00 p.m. Youth Celebration Lunch
- 5:30 p.m. Crossroads
- 6:00 p.m. Stories to Live By

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Darrell Moody, Doug Moody's brother
Carolyn Glenn (friend of Kathy Johnston)
Shirley Hunt, sister of Trevis Lunsford
Kristen Surratt
Carol Tomlinson
Anne Tria
Gavin Hanigan, Gail & Ed Hanigan's grandson
Roger White
Cheryl Sutton's mother, Frances Soule
Beverly Karr's son, Kendall
Beverly Karr
Drucilla Harris, sister-in-law of Sam and Janice Pennington
Laura Abernathy, Leigh Nance's sister
Liz Gray's father-in-law, Charlie Gray
Avery and Emma Tipton's cousin, Hannah
Susan Burnette
Cindy Griffin's nephew, Alex Underhill
Cindy Griffin's sister, Lynda Jenkins
Wyatt Henry Phillips, son of Davis & Erika Phillips and great grandson of Sue Teeter
Mary Grace, wife of Jacob (Mary Rutledge's nephew)
Cooper Ritchie
Charles Motsinger
Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter
Murphy Clark and family

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



STORIES TO LIVE

EXPLORING SPIRITUAL MEMOIRS

Sunday, February 23 at 6:00
with Pastor George



PREORDER PINE BALES

Available March
7th & 8th

Proceeds support the Youth and Men's
Groups. Order with the QR code or a
paper form at the information table




Feed the HOUSE

Help care for mom's and their children at Catherine's House by dropping off a simple meal. March 10th is an upcoming date when we need an individual or group to help us care for the residents at Catherine's House. Sign up at fumcbelmont.org/catherineshouse

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