

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

February 23, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

The Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany

Youth Sunday



Photographer, Renee Fisher
chosen by Claire Ragdsdale, art student at South Point High School

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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*
.....

THE REVEREND GEORGE RAGSDALE, SENIOR PASTOR

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A lighthouse beam shining against a blue sky.

A Light to the Nations

Experiencing and Sharing the Light of Christ

Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! This morning we continue our series exploring and celebrating the light of Christ extended to all people. In Luke 6:27-38, Jesus calls us to a radical way of living in His light—one shaped by love, mercy, and generosity. He challenges us to love our enemies, forgive freely, and give without expecting in return, reflecting the boundless grace of God in our daily lives. Today is also Youth Sunday and we give thanks for all of our youth and their families as they lead us in worship this morning. If you would like more information about our youth ministry, reach out to our Director of Youth Ministries, Quanna McAlister, who would be thrilled to talk with you!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"O God, Beyond All Praising"

Gustav Holst

Will Ross, trumpet, James McSwain, alto saxophone

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Ella Beaty

Come, all who seek the way of Christ,

We gather to learn love's true path.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

We come to follow the way of mercy.

Be merciful, just as God is merciful,

We worship the Lord who calls us to grace!

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 150 *"God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens"*

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Ella Beaty

Merciful God, we confess that we struggle to love our enemies and bless those who curse us. Too often, we judge and condemn rather than forgive and show mercy. We hold tightly to resentment instead of extending the grace you so freely give. Forgive us, O Lord, and transform our hearts to reflect your boundless love. Teach us to give without expecting in return, so that we may live as true children of your mercy. 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

Greta Martin and Ella Beaty

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 6:27-38

Vera Boney

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

SERMON

Katie Fangman, Owen Harris and Katelin Vaher

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

Abbey Smith and Saundra Fann

*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

"Song of Light"

Marianne Forman

Clair Dunigan, soloist

The tune of the lark awakens the dawn,
Melodies rising and shadows are gone.
Come hear nature's choir, its anthem begun,
Welcome a new day!
Now morning has come.
A song in the air, the music of light,
Golden sun rising to vanquish the night.
Then hope is alive when darkness is done.
Lift your voices, join in the singing,
Raise the chorus dawn is bringing!

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. 549

"Where Charity and Love Prevail"

*POSTLUDE

"Concluding Voluntary"

R.G. Thompson

**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!

Receiving the Sacrament of Holy Baptism this morning at our 8:30 service are Olivia Michelle Tyson, Ivy Pearl Tyson and Miles Stanley Tyson, children of Aaron and Carolyn Tyson. With joy and thanksgiving we welcome Olivia, Ivy and Miles as members of the family of Christ.

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. 26 meal: Pancake breakfast for dinner.

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

Many thanks to everyone who has served in our **Room in the Inn** ministry this season. We have two more Saturdays to serve in March and our schedule is already full. Thanks to Mary and Pete Ruteledge who lead this ministry and make sure we have met the needs for our neighbors without homes.

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** on Sunday, March 2 and 9 for games and small group devotions. Please join us!

Youth Luncheon All youth are invited to go out to lunch together on Sunday, March 16. We will leave campus around 12:15 and return by 2:30. Let's enjoy Qdoba, Sweet Frogs, and fellowship together! Please bring five nonperishable items and money for lunch. Sign up online to reserve your spot.

Youth Missions Night Youth are invited on Saturday, March 22 to travel together to Christ Church in Charlotte to support our church's mission with Room in the Inn. We prepare beds, serve dinner, and eat with our neighbors in need. We will leave FUMC on the minibus at 3:30 and return by 7:30. Signup online today to reserve your spot.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

Crossroads (4th-5th graders) meets tonight in the Old Fellowship Hall from 5:30-7:30. Join us as we begin a series that will help preteens navigate the world of friendships. We'll have supper, games, lessons and more.

First Kids (birth-5th grade) are invited to join us 6:30-7:30 on Wednesday nights for small groups.

Everyone is invited to **The Anxious Generation book club** on Sunday, March 2 from 6:00-7:30. We'll discuss chapters 5-8 in the Old Fellowship Hall. Email jennifer@fumcbelmont.org with questions or to join.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

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 are continuing to take orders for our annual **Pine Needle Sale** which is March 7th and 8th. The cost of bales are \$5.75 and delivered for free if you buy 20 bales or more. Order forms are located in the narthex or use the QR code on the back of your bulletin to place your order.

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 location for the **Gaston County Warming Center**. Any night when the projected temperature will drop below 32 degrees, FUMCG will open their family life center to take in overnight neighbors. Sign up to drop off food or stay and be a hospitality host. If you would like to help care for our neighbors 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

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Monday, February 24

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

Tuesday, February 25

7:00 p.m. Finance Meeting

Wednesday, February 26

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 27

11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'

Friday, February 28

Saturday, March 1

Sunday, March 2

8:30 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship

6:00 p.m. The Anxious Generation Book Club

Dee Walton, Maggie Moore's sister-in-law

Darrell Moody, Doug Moody's brother

Carolyn Glenn (friend of Kathy Johnston)

Shirley Hunt, sister of Trevis Lunsford

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)

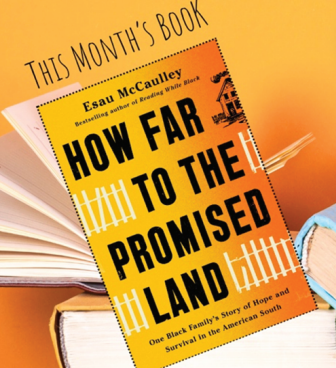
Cooper Ritchie

Charles Motsinger

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family

You can submit prayer requests to prayers@fumcbelmont.org



THIS MONTH'S BOOK

Esau McCauley
Bestselling author of *Reading Like a Black Man*

HOW FAR TO THE PROMISED LAND

One Black Family's Story of Hope and Survival in the American South

STORIES TO LIVE

EXPLORING SPIRITUAL MEMOIRS

Sunday, February 23 at 6:00
with Pastor George



Transfiguration Sunday

RETURN YOUR PALM BRANCHES
ON MARCH 2, 2025 at 8:30 or 11:00



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



OUR STAFF

Carole Bertino | Administrative Assistant | carole@fumcbelmont.org
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