

Why This Work Matters

Over the past 18 months, FUMC Belmont has engaged in deep listening — with our congregation, community members, school leaders, and peer churches — to discern where we can add the greatest value and reach those not currently connected to church.

What We Learned (Key Themes)

1. Practical Presence Builds Trust

The community is asking for tangible support: tutoring, mentoring, food, transportation, and safe spaces — offered consistently and without strings attached.

2. Youth Are a Strategic Opportunity

After-school hours represent the greatest unmet need for both middle and high school students. Schools cannot meet this need alone, and FUMC Belmont's location is a significant asset.

3. Inclusion and Welcome Matter Deeply

People value churches that are open, non-judgmental, and authentic, while also holding firm theological grounding. This tension must be navigated with humility and clarity.

4. Visibility Shapes Engagement

Improved communication, digital presence, and signage are essential. People cannot engage what they cannot find or understand.

5. Transportation Is a Hidden Barrier

Transportation challenges — especially for elderly adults and youth — limit access to existing services and ministries.

What This Is (and Is Not)

This is:

- A call to discern our future identity and witness
- An invitation to become a trusted community anchor
- A long-term, relational approach to mission

This is not:

- A single new program proposal
 - A short-term growth strategy
 - A replacement for worship or discipleship
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Strategic Questions for Leadership

- Who is God calling FUMC Belmont to become in this season?
 - Are we willing to experiment with ministry that looks different from traditional church?
 - Where are we willing to be uncomfortable for the sake of mission?
 - How will we define faithfulness and success?
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Emerging Recommendations

- Focus on **one flagship community initiative** (e.g., after-school support)
 - Start small, build trust, and grow sustainably
 - Separate outreach from recruitment
 - Invest in infrastructure, partnerships, and volunteers
 - Measure success through trust, impact, and transformation
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