

## 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

---

## 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?

---

## 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

---