

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



## SERVICE OF WORSHIP

March 2, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

Transfiguration Sunday



*Transfiguration by Fra Angelico, 1400-1455*

.....  
*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're so glad that you have joined us for worship today. We're concluding our worship series celebrating the light of Christ for all the world, turning today to Luke 9:28-43. We join the disciples on the mountaintop, where the glory of Christ is revealed in dazzling light. In this sacred moment of Transfiguration, we are invited to open our hearts to the presence of God, who transforms and renews us. As we worship, may we be ready to listen, to behold Christ's glory, and to carry His light into the world.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

*"Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart"*

arr. Roy Brunner

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Doreen Collins

Come, let us go up the mountain to meet God!

***We come in awe, seeking God's glory.***

In mystery and wonder, Christ is revealed,

***And we are invited to listen and behold.***

Let us lay aside our need to explain and control,

***And instead, worship with hearts open to God's presence.***

God's light shines upon us, transforming and renewing,

***Let us worship in wonder, lifted by God's glory!***

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 173     *"Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"*

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

***Holy and wondrous God, we confess that we often fail to recognize Your glory in our midst. Like the disciples, we struggle to stay present in awe and instead try to contain Your mystery within our own understanding. We focus more on rules and righteousness than on true worship and wonder before You. Forgive us, O Lord, and open our hearts to behold Your presence, that we may be transformed by Your radiant love. 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

Jennifer Martin

## PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

\*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 9:28-43

James Harris

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

*"Spirit Divine"*

Nancy Ruth Durance

Elizabeth Boney, soloist

Open my eyes, that I may see  
glimpses of truth Thou has for me;  
place in my hands the Wonderful key  
that will unclasp and set me free.

Silently I wait for Thee,  
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!  
Open my mind, that I may read

more of Thy love in word and deed.  
What shall I fear when Thou dost lead?  
Only for light from Thee I plead.  
Open my way that I may bring  
Trophies of grace to Christ, my King;  
Echoed in love, Thy word shall outring  
Sweet as the note that angels sing.  
I am ready, my God.

## 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!***

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*THE LORD'S PRAYER (Hymnal No. 895)

## LENTEN PREPARATION: BURNING OF THE PALMS

\*RECESSIONAL HYMN NO.

*"Over My Head"*

*During the singing of the hymn the congregation will follow the cross and choir to the lawn outside, bringing palm branches. Additional palm branches are available in the narthex.*

***Over my head I see trouble in the air.  
Over my head I see trouble in the air.  
Over my head I see trouble in the air;  
There must be a God somewhere!***



***Over my head I hear music in the air.  
Over my head I hear music in the air.  
Over my head I hear music in the air;  
There must be a God somewhere!***

***Over my head I hear singing in the air.  
Over my head I hear singing in the air.  
Over my head I hear singing in the air;  
There must be a God somewhere!***

***Over my head I see glory in the air.  
Over my head I see glory in the air.  
Over my head I see glory in the air;  
There must be a God somewhere!***

\*PRAYER

***God of tender mercy, you fashioned us from the dust of earth and bid us follow your Gospel call in the company of the Church. Look on us with kindness as we prepare the ashes which will mark the beginning of our Lenten journey. Grant that we who make the desert pilgrimage might come to the font of rebirth with a renewed passion for justice. May our alms serve your people and bring us peace, may prayer sanctify all our deeds, and may we come at last to the table you set in the place where you reign with Christ and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.***

\*READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 58:5-10

\*ANTHEM

"Sunday's Palms Are Wednesdays Ashes"

As the choir sings, you are invited to place your palm branch in the fire bowl.

\*PRAYER OVER THE PALMS

\*BURNING OF THE PALMS

**GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD**

\*BENEDICTION

*\*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 Fra Angelico's *Transfiguration*, a masterpiece that bridges the worlds of sacred iconography and Renaissance naturalism, inviting us into the mystery of Christ's divine revelation. Rooted in the Gospel account of Luke 9:28-43, the painting captures the radiant moment when Jesus, flanked by Moses and Elijah, is transfigured before the awestruck disciples. Like an icon, it is not merely a depiction but a window into the divine, guiding us into contemplation rather than mere observation. The golden light surrounding Christ symbolizes His divine nature, while the disciples' postures—ranging from wonder to fear—reflect our own responses to God's revelation. Through this work, Fra Angelico invites us to move beyond intellectual understanding into worship, beholding the mystery of God's presence that transforms both vision and heart.

**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.

**LENT BEGINS ON WEDNESDAY** The Season of Lent, the forty-day season leading to Easter, begins this week on Ash Wednesday. Join us for worship at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service includes the imposition of ashes, which we will prepare at the conclusion of today's eleven o'clock service from the palm branches we waved on Palm Sunday last year. Their burning is a reminder of our brokenness and mortality – and of the transforming power of Christ, whose light shines always, even in the darkness, setting us free for a new future of hope.



**Meet  
in the  
Middle**

Please sign up to help serve  
or clean up at  
[fumcbelmont.org/meetmiddle](http://fumcbelmont.org/meetmiddle)

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

**March 5: Corn chowder and butternut squash  
soup, grilled cheese sandwiches and  
dessert.**

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

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## CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS

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**The Anxious Generation Book Club** meets tonight from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the Old Fellowship Hall. Please read chapters 5-8 prior to our meeting.

**Square 2 ladies** will meet March 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Narthex meeting room. We will have a time of devotion, fellowship and fun games. RSVP to Doreen: [doreen@fumcbelmont.org](mailto:doreen@fumcbelmont.org)

**Men's Meetings:** Friday March 7 at 6:30 a.m. and/or Saturday March 15 at 8:30 a.m. in the Youth House. We will meet for a time of devotion, growing in community and friendship. Attend one or both meetings, whichever fits your schedule.

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## CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

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**Youth Engage Sunday School** Lent Study-God's ultimate invitation to us is to get closer to Him in Christ and let the Holy Spirit work within us, transforming us to look more like Jesus. Christian spiritual disciplines and practices are all about making that happen. Join Kim and Tresca each Sunday in the Youth House in March and April for this exciting study during Lent.

All youth are invited to **Connect** tonight 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.

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## CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

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Families, **The Final Road Trip** (Family Lent Packets) are available for pick up from the children's shelf in the narthex. First come first serve.

**Lent Car Talks** Use the QR code to sign up for daily texts during Lent designed to engage your family in conversation.



**Crossroads** (4th-5th grade) meets Sunday, March 9 from 5:30-7:30 in the Old Fellowship Hall. We'll eat and play games together and continue our conversations about friendship.

**Countdown to Easter** (Lent Small Groups for Kids) begins March 12 from 6:30-7:30. Small groups are available for preschool-5th grade.

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## OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

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**Our annual Pine Needle Sale** to benefit the work of the Men's Group and our Youth Group is next weekend. We ordered an extra truck this year so we are capable of taking your order! If you want your bales delivered you need to turn in your order TODAY otherwise you can buy them off the truck on Saturday, March 8th, on a first come basis starting at 9am.

**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/signup](http://www.fumcbelmont.org/signup) to sign up to help.

**Stock the BCO Sunday** If you forgot to bring your BCO shopping bag to church today, that's OK. Bring your non-perishable donations any Sunday and leave them in the narthex to be ready for our next delivery.

**The Community Cafe** will be open this Thursday for lunch from 11:45-1:15. You can drop in and dine here with us in Carpenter Hall or pick up a meal to go. All donations for the meal help pay the salaries for the cooks who are residents in a two year recovery program at Dahlia Grove. When you eat here at FUMCB you are supporting women recovering from human trafficking, abuse or drug addiction.

First United Methodist Church of Gastonia needs our support to open the **Gaston County Warming Center** nights when the temperature will drop below 32 degrees. Sign up to drop off a crock pot of soup, sandwiches or stay and be a hospitality host. Go to [www.fumcbelmont.org/signup](http://www.fumcbelmont.org/signup) to offer your help.

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.

Our sign up is active and ready to receive your support for our **Feeding the Children program**. Three days over the school spring break we will gather to deliver a hot meal and bags of non-perishable meals to the homes of children. If you would like to help pack the grocery bags, cook or deliver the meals go to [www.fumcbelmont.org/signup](http://www.fumcbelmont.org/signup).

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

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
- 5:30 p.m. Connect
- 6:00 p.m. Anxious Generation Book Club

Monday, March 3

- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Administrative Council

Tuesday, March 4

- 12:00 p.m. Congregational Care Minister Mtg.

Wednesday, March 5

- 11:00 a.m. Ash Wednesday Service
- 5:00 p.m. Staff Parish Relations Committee
- 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist/Narthex Prayer Rm
- 5:30 p.m. Meet in the Middle Meal
- 5:30 p.m. Alleluia Choir Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service
- 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 6

- 11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'
- 6:30 p.m. Square Two Gathering

Friday, March 7

- 1:00-7 p.m. Pine Needle Sales
- 6:30 a.m. Men's Meeting

Saturday, March 8

- 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Pine Needle Sales
- 4:30 p.m. Room in the Inn

Sunday, March 9

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 5:30 p.m. Crossroads
- 5:30 p.m. Connect

## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Jessica Murray

Brenda Austin

Shirley Hunt, Trevis Lunsford's sister

Roger and Missy White's friend, Cherie Braun

Kendall Karr

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

Darrell Moody, Doug Moody's brother

Carolyn Glenn (friend of Kathy Johnston)

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

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family

*You can submit prayer requests to  
[prayers@fumcbelmont.org](mailto:prayers@fumcbelmont.org)*



# ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

MARCH 5 | 11:00 AM AND 6:30 PM

## Practicing the Way

Be with Jesus  
Become like him  
Do as he did

**John Mark  
Comer**

New York Times bestselling author of  
The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry



## Lenten Churchwide Adult Small Group Study



Join in on the discussion;  
how do we become more like Jesus?  
Join a small group discussion  
on Wednesday evenings and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m.  
March 12 - April 16

Sign up at [fumcbelmont.org/smallgroups](http://fumcbelmont.org/smallgroups)

## OUR STAFF

Carole Bertino | Administrative Assistant | [carole@fumcbelmont.org](mailto:carole@fumcbelmont.org)  
Doreen Collins | Director of Adult Discipleship | [doreen@fumcbelmont.org](mailto:doreen@fumcbelmont.org)  
Heather Gaskins | Director of the Child Development Center | [heather@fumcbelmont.org](mailto:heather@fumcbelmont.org)  
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