

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

March 23, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

The Third Sunday in Lent



Starry Night Over the Rhône by Vincent van Gogh, 1888

.....
*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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Jesus in His Own Words

Lent 2025 | First UMC Belmont

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! Whether you are a longtime member or a first-time guest, we are grateful you've joined us for worship this morning! Today is the Third Sunday in Lent, a season of reflection and preparation, a 40-day journey toward the cross and resurrection of Jesus. During this sacred time, we seek to grow in faith, turning our hearts toward Christ. As we continue our sermon series, *I AM: Jesus in His Own Words*, we hear Jesus declare, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). On the pilgrimage of life, Christ is the light who guides our way, illuminating truth and leading us in love. Today, we ask for courage, dedication, and humility to recognize and follow the light of Christ.

MUSIC

"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?"

arr. Lloyd Larson

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"Pastorale for Flute and Bells"

Bob Burroughs

Bellissimo Handbell Choir

Jennifer Martin, flute

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on John 1, John 8, Psalm 27 and Psalm 119

Quanna McAlister

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

The Lord is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear?

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

We will worship in the brightness of His glory!

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 188

"Christ Is the World's Light"

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Radiant Lord, we confess that we have wandered in darkness, trusting in our own dim vision instead of your guiding light. We have been afraid to face your truth, negligent in our relationship with you, and blinded by arrogance that keeps us from seeing your way. Forgive us, O Christ, and shine upon us again. Illumine our hearts, cleanse our spirits, and lead us in the way of righteousness. Like the morning sun disperses the night, may your mercy rise within us, that we may walk as children of light, to the glory of your name. 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

MUSIC

"The Welcome Song"
Alleluia Choir

Toni Sullivan

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Jennifer Martin

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

John 7:2, 14 and 8:12

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

***We behold, we believe,
You are the Lion and the Lamb, the Prince of Peace.
We adore, we confess,
You are the one who died and rose again, the Great I Am.
You're the great I Am. You're the great I am.***

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

"You Make the Sun to Rise"

Craig Courtney

You make the sun to rise with heav'nly glory;
You fill the deep with life no eye has seen;
You speak, and trees applaud and stars assemble
To hear Your mystery spoken once again.
We do not hear the praise creation offers
When we believe that we alone can sing.
How will we sing when words have lost all meaning?
How can we serve those needs we will not see?
How can our mind contain so great a yearning
unless Your Spirit burns in us anew?
With You, we'll soar on wings reserved for eagles.
With You, we'll come to shores beyond our sight.
When we alone will name the wrong before us,
But no one else will make our cause their own;
When, in defeat, we flee into the desert,
Lord, set a table for our weary souls.
Come, take and eat, all you who faint with hunger,
Then rise and seek your purpose once again.
As once Your word flew out across the waters,
So, still it broods above our groaning land,
And sings a song of justice, peace and mercy,
Inviting all to join it's healing song.
For we can sing and worlds come into being;
May our voice rise in harmony with You.

THANKSGIVING

*ACT OF PRAISE

"Doxology"

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts!
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

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

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL HYMN

"Walk in the Light"

arr. Andre Thomas

All:
***Walk in the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.
(Repeat)***

Solo: *From the darkness came the light*
Choir: *Jesus, the light of the world.*
Solo: *Taught us how to share his love.*
Choir: *Jesus the light of the world.*

All:
***Walk in the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.***

Solo: *Hail Christ Jesus Prince of Peace!*
Choir: *Jesus the light of the world.*
Solo: *Christ the everlasting Lord!*
Choir: *Jesus, the light of the world.*

All:
***Walk in the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.***

***Walk in the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Jesus, the light of the world.***

*POSTLUDE

"Walk in the Light"

arr. Andre Thomas

**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 Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night Over the Rhône*, painted in 1888 during his time in Arles. The deep blues of the night sky contrast with the golden glow of gas lamps, their reflections shimmering across the Rhône River. Van Gogh's bold, expressive brushstrokes capture not just the scene, but the tension between light and darkness that marked his inner world. In his letters written at the time to his brother Theo, he spoke often of his struggles with despair, yet also of moments of solace found in the light that pierced through the shadows—whether from the stars above or the lamps below. This interplay of light and darkness became a symbol of hope for him. Similarly, Christ, the Light of the World, offers us that same hope, guiding us through our moments of uncertainty. Just as the shimmering lights on the water bring movement and depth to van Gogh's work, Christ's light reaches us even in our darkest times, illuminating the way forward with grace and hope.

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.

CALLED CHARGE CONFERENCE There will be a called meeting of the Charge Conference, our church's governing body, on Sunday, March 30, 2025 at 10:00 AM in the sanctuary. Our District Superintendent, the Reverend David Christy, has authorized this meeting in order to complete two items of business: 1) approving Tracee Pearson as a Candidate for Ministry, and 2) changing the Senior Pastor's housing compensation from parsonage to housing allowance. All voting members of the Administrative Council are asked to attend.



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

Mar. 26: Club sandwiches, potato chips, fruit and dessert.

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



CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS

Sunday School

Disciple: Be a part of the church wide study "Practicing the Way." No book needed, just come watch a video and discuss how to be with Jesus, become like Him, and do as Jesus did.

Route 66: Studying "Entering the Passion of Jesus" by A.J. Levine. Explore the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. Levine points out how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions.

Salt & Light Fellowship (new class): A place to have real conversations and build relationships.

They will begin with a Scripture devotional and then talk about how God is moving in their lives that week.

Wanderers: Studying "24 Hours: That changed the world." by Adam Hamilton. Hamilton reviews the last 24 hours of Jesus' life and talks about the theological reasons behind his suffering and death.

Join **Ruth Circle** on Thursday, March 27 at 6:30 p.m. We will go out to eat at Marrelli's. Please bring a monetary donation for a Catherine's House meal. RSVP Paige Dunigan paige1210@gmail.com

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

Attention Seniors and Parents: Graduation is right around the corner. We will recognize all high school and college graduates at the 8:30 service on May 4, 2025. If you would like for your youth to be recognized and/or participate in this service, please email Quanna McAlister at quanna@fumcbelmont.org by April 8th.

Connect

- All youth are invited on March 30 for Game Night! We will play one of our favorites, GROG! Everyone needs to bring a plain white t-shirt that we will decorate and wear for the game.
- Please join us on Sunday night, April 6, for games, dinner, and Bible study.
- Youth will travel to various church members' houses and nursing homes on April 13.

Good Friday Community Crosswalk and Lunch -All youth are invited to meet April 18 around 11:50 at Lutheran Church of Holy Comforter to walk together on Good Friday. We will go out to lunch at Pita Wheel afterwards.

Youth Crowders Mountain Hike All 8th-12th graders are invited on a Spring Break Hike to Crowders Mountain on Saturday, April 26. We will meet at the church at 9:30 and ride together. We plan to hike, chat, and invigorate ourselves all the while enjoying the beautiful scenery. We will stop to eat afterwards at Taxco.

Middle School Spring Break Outing All middle school youth are invited to an outing on Sunday, April 27 to Altitude Trampoline Park in Gastonia. We will eat a quick lunch at the Youth House at noon and then travel together to Altitude Trampoline Park. Please sign up and pay by April 16.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

Crossroads (a group for 4th-5th graders) meets today in the Old Fellowship Hall from 5:30-7:30. Join us for games, supper, a lesson on friendship and more.

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



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND SERVE

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.

Our next **stock the BCO** Sunday is April 6th. Pick up your black FUMCB food bag today as your leave worship today and return it on or before Sunday April 6th.

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.

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, March 23

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 4:00 p.m. Holy Walkamolies Walking Club
- 5:30 p.m. Crossroads
- 6:00 p.m. Stories to Live By w/Pastor George

Monday, March 24

- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Racial Healing & Reconciliation

Tuesday, March 25

Wednesday, March 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 Rehearsal
- 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m. Small Groups
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 27

- 11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'
- 6:30 p.m. Ruth Circle

Friday, March 28

Saturday, March 29

Sunday, March 30

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:00 a.m. Charge Conference
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 12:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting
- 4:00 p.m. The Walking Club
- 5:30 p.m. Connect

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Ellie Delany

Scott Richards, on the death of his wife Diane
(Nicole Stanforth)

Lenny Jansen (Linda Piltch)

Doug Moody and family upon the passing of
Doug's brother, Darrell

Butch Harris, Becky Fortenberry's brother

Jennifer Stiver, friend of Elizabeth Boney

Bruce & Robin McCarter, friends of Mark & Dottie
Moore

Jill Atkins, Chris & Connie Atkins' sister/sister
in-law

Emma Bowen, Chris & Connie Atkins' grand
daughter

The family of Shirley Hunt, Trevis Lunsford's sister,
who passed away

Jessica Murray

Brenda Austin

Roger and Missy White's friend, Cherie Braun

Kendall Karr

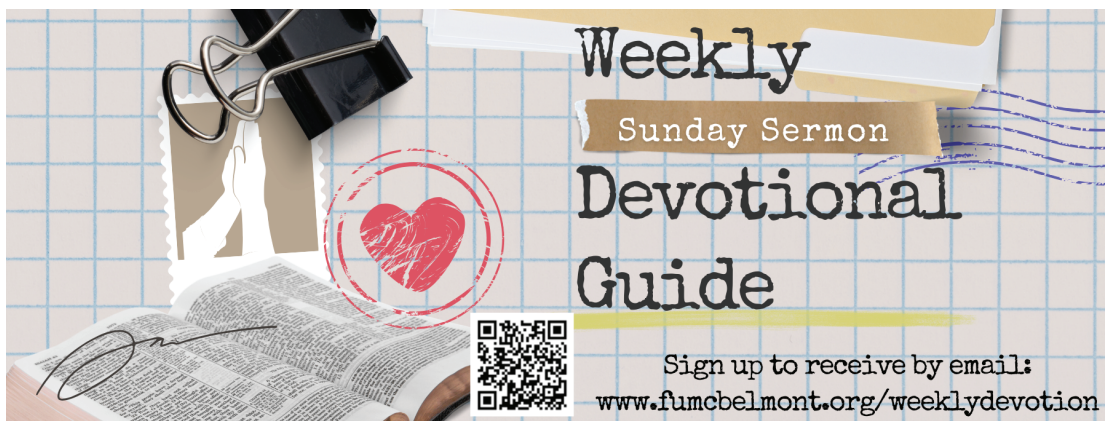
Dee Walton, Maggie Moore's sister-in-law

Erin Carver, Renee and Tim Painter's daughter

Murphy Clark and family

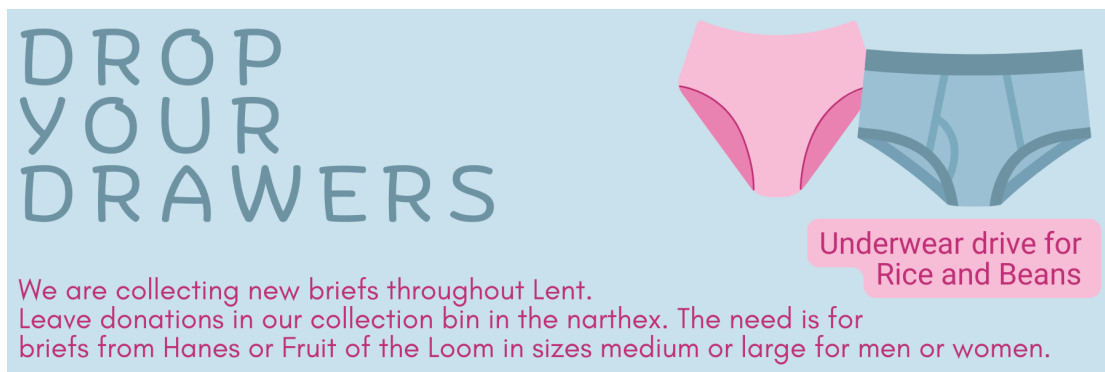
*Prayers remain on this list for 4 weeks. If your
loved one needs continued prayers, please
resubmit a new request.*

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



Weekly
Sunday Sermon
Devotional
Guide

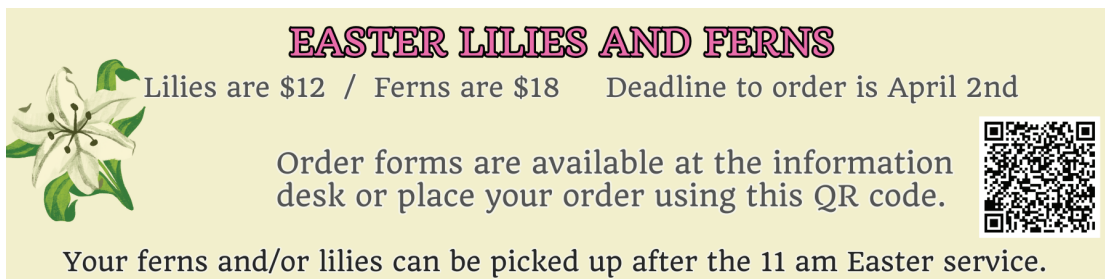
Sign up to receive by email:
www.fumcbelmont.org/weeklydevotion



**DROP
YOUR
DRAWERS**

We are collecting new briefs throughout Lent.
Leave donations in our collection bin in the narthex. The need is for
briefs from Hanes or Fruit of the Loom in sizes medium or large for men or women.

Underwear drive for
Rice and Beans



EASTER LILIES AND FERNS

Lilies are \$12 / Ferns are \$18 Deadline to order is April 2nd

Order forms are available at the information
desk or place your order using this QR code.

Your ferns and/or lilies can be picked up after the 11 am Easter service.

OUR STAFF

Carole Bertino | Administrative Assistant | carole@fumcbelmont.org
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