

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

March 23, 2025 – 8:30 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.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

*OPENING SONG

"Open Up the Heavens"

CCLI Song # 6304702

*PRAYER

Quanna McAlister

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Jennifer Martin

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

*GOSPEL LESSON

John 7:2, 14 and 8:12

SERMON

The Rev. George Ragsdale

SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

As a forgiven and reconciled child of God, you are invited to give your offerings and gifts to God by placing them in the offering plate when you come forward to receive communion.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*THE PEACE

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

*TAKING THE BREAD AND CUP

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

*BREAKING THE BREAD (gluten free option available)

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

"You Keep Hope Alive"

CCLI Song # 7125876

Days may be darkest But Your light is greater
You light our way God You light our way
When evil is rising You're rising higher
With power to save with power to save
You keep hope alive You keep hope alive
From the beginning to end Your word never fails
You keep hope alive because You are alive
Jesus You are alive
Death had a stronghold But Your life was stronger
Rose from the grave rose up from the grave
When evil is rising You're rising higher
With power to save with power to save
There's hope in the morning Hope in the evening
Hope because You're living Hope because You're breathing
There's hope in the breaking Hope in the sorrow
Hope for this moment My hope for tomorrow

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*CLOSING SONG

"You Said I Am"

CCLI Song # 7239702

**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.



Meet in the Middle

Please sign up to help serve
or clean up at
fumcbelmont.org/meetmiddle

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 WORKDAY

March 29th at 9:00 a.m.

Help prepare our church for Easter!
Bring tools for outside yard work.
Questions? Contact Doug Moody doug@fumcbelmont.org

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

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.



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

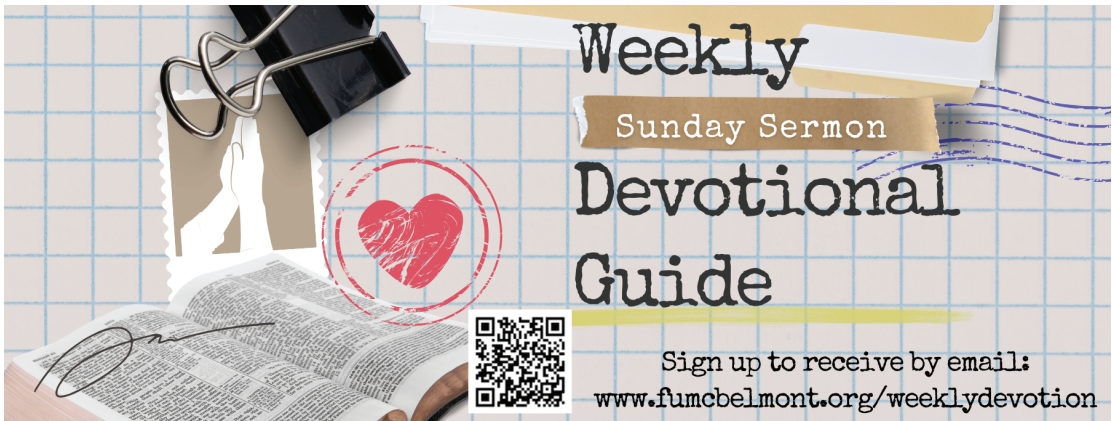
- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:00 a.m. Charge Conference
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 12:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting
- 4:00 p.m. The Walking Club
- 5:30 p.m. Connect

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.

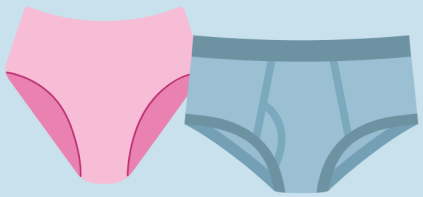
*You can submit prayer requests to
prayers@fumcbelmont.org*



Weekly Sunday Sermon Devotional Guide

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

DROP YOUR DRAWERS



**Underwear drive for
Rice and Beans**

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.

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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