

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BELMONT



SERVICE OF WORSHIP

March 9, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

The First Sunday in Lent



Moses and the Burning Bush

.....
***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

Good morning and welcome to First United Methodist Church of Belmont! Today marks the First Sunday in Lent, a forty-day season of spiritual preparation leading to Easter on April 20. These forty days echo Jesus' journey in the wilderness after his baptism and the Israelites' forty years in the wilderness after God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. We begin our Lenten journey where the Israelites' deliverance began—with God calling Moses at the burning bush. In this moment, Moses learns God's name, "I Am," a mysterious and holy name that evokes awe and wonder. What does it mean to know the name of God? And what does it mean for Jesus to claim this name for himself, as he does throughout the Gospel of John? This Lent, we invite you to join us as we explore these powerful "I Am" sayings of Jesus, celebrating the good news that such revelation is a sign of God's deep desire for a personal relationship with each of us. As we grow in that relationship, we discover more clearly who we are and the calling God has placed on our lives. May this series draw us closer to the God who is, and transform us as we seek to follow Christ.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"How Firm a Foundation"

arr. Robert Hobby

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Margie Ligon

In the wilderness, on holy ground, God calls to us.

We turn aside to listen, to seek, to know the One who is.

Christ reveals God's presence among us and leads us in the way of humility, mercy and love.

We come to be shaped, to be known, to be made new.

In this season of repentance and renewal, we set our hearts on God.

We worship the One who is our life and our salvation.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 116

"The God of Abraham Praise"

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, you are beyond our knowing, yet you reveal yourself to us. We confess that we resist your mystery, seeking to remake you in our own image. We do not love as You love, nor show mercy as you are merciful. Call us again by your name, that knowing your grace we might be humbled, transformed, and made new. In the name of Christ we pray, 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

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Exodus 3:1-14

Ed Hanigan

*GOSPEL LESSON

John 8:58

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

"Here I Am, Lord"

Daniel Schutte

I, the Lord of the sea and sky, I have heard my people cry

All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will save.

I who have made the stars of the night, I will make their darkness bright

Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.
I the Lord of the snow and rain, I have born my people's pain
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone
I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide Till their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them

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)

GOING FORTH AS WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL HYMN NO. 419

"I Am Thine, O Lord"

*POSTLUDE

"God is My Strong Salvation"

Franklin Ritter

**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 the "Moses and the Burning Bush" mural at Dura-Europos, a Roman outpost in Syria, that dates to around 239 CE. It is one of the most significant early Jewish artworks ever discovered. The painting depicts Moses encountering God in the burning bush, with a divine hand gesturing from above, symbolizing God's presence. This iconography of the hand appears throughout the synagogue, reinforcing God's active involvement in key moments of Israel's history. The mural reflects the deep reverence and awe associated with God's revelation and presence in the lives of the Israelites.

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.



**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.

March 12: Pizza, salad and dessert.

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

You're invited to walk the labyrinth this Lenten season. Our outdoor prayer labyrinth is available to everyone during daylight hours. It is located in the pavilion at the playground area. Labyrinths have been used by Christians for prayer and meditation for centuries. For medieval Christians, walking the labyrinth was imagined to be a spiritual journey to the Holy Land. For others, it provides a metaphor for the Christian journey itself, offering time to listen, discern and respond to God as you walk its sacred path.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS

Men's Meetings: 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.

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 (place to be determined). Please bring a monetary donation for a Catherine's House meal. RSVP Paige Dunigan
paige1210@gmail.com

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR YOUTH

All youth are welcome to come to Sunday night **Connect** tonight from 5:30-7:30. Meet in the back playground and wear comfortable clothes and shoes for a game of Capture the Flag. We will eat at 6:30 and have a time of small group devotion at the end of the night.

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 time 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.

CHURCH GATHERINGS FOR CHILDREN

Crossroads (4th-5th grade) meets today 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.

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 **Lenten collection** will benefit the Rice & Beans ministry. Throughout this season we will be collecting new briefs for women or men in sizes medium or large. Please Drop Your Drawers from Hanes or Fruit of the Loom in our black collection bin in the narthex.

There is a **church wide workday** scheduled for Saturday, March 29 at 9:00 a.m. as we prepare our grounds for Easter and greeting guests. Come, bring the family. There will be something for all ages to do.

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***.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

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

Monday, March 10

- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Service & Missions Mtg
- 6:30 p.m. Children's Council Mtg

Tuesday, March 11

Wednesday, March 12

- 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 13

- 11:45 a.m. Community Cafe'
- 12:00 p.m. April Newsletter Deadline

Friday, March 14

Saturday, March 15

- 8:30 a.m. Men's Meeting

Sunday, March 16

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 12:00 p.m. Youth Lunch

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Sarah Giang

Bruce & Robin McCarter, friends of Mark & Dottie Moore

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

Emma Bowen, Chris & Connie Atkins' granddaughter

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

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

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

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

OUR STAFF

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