

# THE STEEPLE

## Williston Federated Church

*An Open and Affirming, Reconciling Congregation*

### Pastor's Message

“Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened...” (Matthew 2:1-3)

What a pleasure it was for me to celebrate with you during the Christmas season, as we joyfully affirmed again that God has come to us, is coming to us, and will come to us. Yet now that Christmas is over, I'm reminded that not everyone celebrates the presence of Emmanuel — God-with-us.

That was true in Jesus' day. Herod was suspicious of this child whose birth was revealed to him through the visit of the magi. At first, he kept his distance and, later, he slaughtered the innocents to ensure that the baby wouldn't grow up. The child escaped that attempt on his life, but religious elites and the Romans succeeded where Herod failed. Jesus was a threat to Herod's reign, a threat to the civic order commanded by the Emperor Augustus, and a threat to those of his countrymen who used religion to serve their own interests.

God's presence in the world through the birth of Jesus continues to be a source of threat. That God has come to us and is present with us is an awesome, even fearful thing when we consider it. For the God who comes to us in love also makes demands of us.

As cute as we may imagine that little baby born in a Bethlehem stable to have been, as an adult, Jesus called God's people to a new righteousness. One of his central messages was that we should show others the same extravagant, gracious welcome God offers each of us — no matter who we are. Sad to say, in our own day, some religious authorities and politicians who would pose as religious authorities, as well as countless eager followers looking to blame others for their misfortunes, are threatened by such a message.

My uncle, Edgar L. McCormick, speaks of this threat in his poem, "Contemporaries":

Herod survives,  
Dreading the Child  
That God conceived.

Augustus thrives,  
Denying the One  
Zacchaeus believed.

Pity their lies,  
And ours, deceived  
By fear and dust  
On Christmas Eve.

This congregation has done much to issue a wide invitation and to ensure a warm welcome to all. My fervent hope as we enter a new year together is that we will live ever more fully in the joy of what Jesus' message of God's love really means — continuing to shake off the deceptive dust of learned prejudice and narrow-minded intolerance, and moving ever more beyond our fear of those who are different from us to recognize in them what Jesus spent his entire ministry trying tell us — they are our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

God comes to us. May we not be threatened by God's presence in Christ, but rejoice that such inclusive love — embracing those different from us, strangers, outcasts, even enemies — means that each us, with all our imperfections, is a beloved child of God as well.

Peace, Jonathan



**JANUARY**  
**2007**

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Sunday Worship  
Service:  
9:30 AM

**Interim Pastor:**

Rev. Jonathan New  
**Director of Children's  
and Youth Ministries:**

Laurie Chipman

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Brenda Racht

**Organist and Junior  
Choir Accompanist:**

Carolyn Pillsbury

**Music Director:**

Martin Hain

**Nursery Caregiver:**

Michelle Davis

## Whist Night

## Peace Vigil - Why We Do It

Once a month, currently the first Tuesday at 5:15, for half an hour, a few of us stand on the front steps of the church holding a peace vigil. This practice was started by our Peace and Non-Violence Task Force, a small group of WFC members who wish to devote time to finding peace and justice in our daily lives. At the vigil we sing a little, pray a little, share our concerns, and discuss local events that address peace and justice.

What is a peace vigil? Webster says that, among other things, a vigil is a "watch kept." We call it a peace vigil because we are keeping watch, waiting and praying for an end to the war in Iraq.

You probably wonder why anyone would want to attend a peace vigil. Our lives are already very busy with work and family, children's events, and not enough time for ourselves. Others of us may have fewer time constraints or different priorities. Those of us who go to peace vigil stand to remind others that we are at war and that we oppose the war.

We would love to see you at the vigil. You are welcome to bring your children if you wish to show them by your action that you feel strongly about our cause. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us about the vigil: Ruth Painter, Ruth Magill, Carol Burbank, Gayle Goodwin, or myself. In future editions of The Steeple we will try to keep you informed of other opportunities or events concerning peace and justice issues.

Peace be with you, Sally Metro

## Giving Tree Thanks

**Thank You** to everyone who took a tag off the Giving Tree! Your generosity helped make Christmas joyful for many local families.

**There will be a whist night** on Friday, January 26 at 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall. This is a fun and easy card game that will be taught that night. Desserts will be provided by the Membership Committee. For more information or if you need a ride, call Coleen McBournie at 878-0809. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board. Hope to see you there!

## Women's Book Group

**The next Women's Book Discussion Group** will meet Wednesday January 10th at 5:30 at Ellen Walker's 192 Lamplite Lane in Williston. We will be discussing The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards. All women are warmly invited to this informal potluck & book discussion. Please join us even if you don't get a chance to read the book. Questions: Call Robin Coletta (Ellen's daughter) at 878-2012

## Alternative Christmas Gift Shop

*The Mission and Social Concerns committee thanks all who supported our Alternative Christmas Gift Shop. To date we have mailed out over \$3,000, shared with 20 different agencies that are working to bring comfort, health, and safety to God's people in need. What a meaningful way to celebrate the birthday of Baby Jesus!*

## LECTIONARY

Each Sunday we join Christians from many faith communities in hearing God's Word as selected from the *Revised Common Lectionary* ~ readings that over a period of 3 years take us through much of the Bible. Following are the Lectionary readings for this month ~ one or more are read aloud during the service.

January 7, 2007

Isaiah 43:1-7  
Psalm 29  
Acts 8:14-17  
Luke 3:15-17,21-22

January 14, 2007

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 36:5-10  
1Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

January 21, 2007

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10  
Psalm 19  
1Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Luke 4:14-21

January 28, 2007

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Psalm 71:1-6  
1Corinthians 13:1-13  
Luke 4:21-30

## THE TRUSTEE'S CORNER

### Storm Windows

The restoration of the Church windows is complete! Thanks to the efforts of Jeff Fellingner, we now have fully operational windows, shutters and storm windows with screens. That means, come Summertime, we can open the windows for cross ventilation and the counter-weighted shutters can be moved up and down to block the sun when needed. Try one and see for yourself.

### Howard Carpenter

We just learned that our fellow Trustee, Howard Carpenter, has had a Pacemaker implantation. Let's all wish him the best! Why don't you send him a get-well card?

### Snow Removal

Although we hire Howard's 14 year old grandson to scrape the snow when he is not in school, there will be times when sudden storms will create slippery conditions. The Trustees are going to place boxes of eco-friendly calcium chloride near the doors with scoops for scattering. We will urge all Church visitors to help out with a little shake when needed so we don't have to hire someone full-time . Calcium chloride will be more effective and less messy than just scattering sand, so get to shakin' folks!

### Parsonage

We hired a contractor to do a walk-through of the Parsonage and make recommendations to improve insulation. He urged us to install modern double-paned windows throughout the house and to insulate the attic floor. This will be one of our big future projects.

### The Holiday Season

Your Trustees wish each and every one of you're a joyous Holiday Season. We will see you next year, same time and same corner!

Brian Goodwin; Jeff Dreibelbis; Bob Shepard; Bret Powell; Howard Carpenter; Ruth Skiff; Tom Johnson; John Willis; Paul Gurney and Scott Sears.

## Women of the Church Business Meeting

Women of the Church will have a short business meeting in the sanctuary immediately after church on January 21, 2007. Come and help decide how to spend our money.

# JANUARY 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <b>Happy New Year!</b>	2 10-12 Senior Exercise <b>5:15 pm Peace Vigil</b>  7:00 pm Membership  7:30 pm Trustees	3  7:30 pm AA  7:00 pm Education	4 7:30 am Rotary  10-12 Senior Exercise  Choir 6,7, 8:15	5 6:30 am Men's Bible Study  9 am Caring Circle	6
7 9:30 am Worship  <b>11-1 All Youth Planning Mtg. 6-8 Sr. High Night</b>  <b>Heifer begins</b>	8 7 pm Search Committee	9 10-12 Senior Exercise  7:00 pm Official Board	10 7:30 pm AA  <b>5:30 pm Women's Book Group</b>	11 7:30 am Rotary  10-12 Senior Exercise  Choir 6,7, 8:15	12 6:30 am Men's Bible Study	13
14 9:30 am Worship  <b>11-1 All Youth Planning Mtg.</b>	15 7 pm Search Committee  <i>Steeple deadline</i>  <b>Martin Luther King Day</b>	16 10-12 Senior Exercise  7 pm Music & Worship  Dismas Meal	17 7:30 pm AA	18 7:30 am Rotary  10-12 Senior Exercise  Choir 6,7, 8:15	19 6:30 am Men's Bible Study	20
21 9:30 am Worship <b>11 am WOC Business Meeting</b>  <b>11-1 Jr. High Youth 6-8 pm Sr. High Night</b>	22 7 pm Search Committee	23 10-12 Senior Exercise  7:00 pm Missions	24 7:30 pm AA	25 7:30 am Rotary  10-12 Senior Exercise  5:30 pm Pastor/ Staff Relations  Choir 6,7, 8:15	26 6:30 am Men's Bible Study  <b>7 pm Whist Night</b>	27
28 9:30 am Worship  <b>11-1 Jr. High Youth 6-8 pm Sr. High Night</b>	29 7 pm Search Committee	30 6:30 am Men's Fel- lowship Breakfast at the Lincoln Inn  10-12 Senior Exercise	31 7:30 pm AA			



**The Steeple  
Williston Federated Church**

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RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED



**Come, Meet Christ, Go Serve**

Label goes up to the line  
covering these words.  
Thanks

**Inside this issue:**

Youth Ministry	P.3
Lectionary	p.2
Pastor's Message	Cover
Peace Vigil	P.2
Church Calendar	insert
Christian Education	insert
WOC Business Mtg	insert
Trustee Corner	insert
Whist Night	P. 2
Book Group	P.2



