

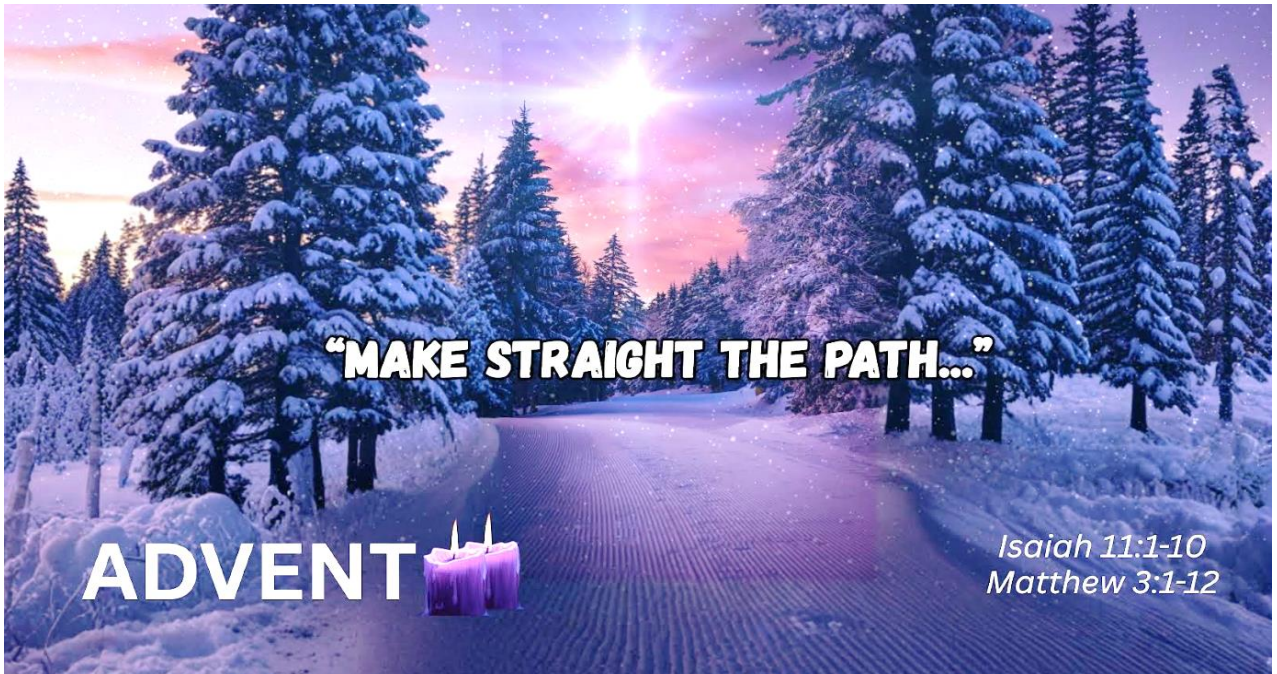


# Williston Federated Church

December 7, 2025

Open and Affirming, Reconciling Pledge

*We, the Williston Federated Church, declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming, Reconciling congregation. With God's grace, we seek to be a congregation that includes all persons, embracing differences of sexual orientation, gender, marital status, age, mental and physical ability as well as racial, ethnic, or social-economic background. We welcome all to share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation. (Adopted by the Williston Federated Church congregation in 2006.)*



Pastor – Reverend Paul Eyer phone: 802-878-5792 email: [pastoreyer@gmail.com](mailto:pastoreyer@gmail.com)

Pastoral (seminarian) Intern – Jill Irvine

Emeritus Associate Pastor – Charlie Magill

Co Lay Leaders – Ashley Dubois and Donna Sue Hain

Church Office Administrator – Pamela Osborne

Music Director – Adam Hall

Organist – Carolyn Pillsbury

Choir Accompanist – Suiong Wong

44 North Williston Road, Williston, Vermont 05495

Church Office: (802) 878-5792

E-mail address: [WillistonFederatedChurch@gmail.com](mailto:WillistonFederatedChurch@gmail.com) Website: [www.steeple.org](http://www.steeple.org)



United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church  
Federated in 1899



**Welcome To All Who Worship Here!**

**December 7, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent / Communion**

Childcare is available downstairs for our youngest children.

Hearing assistance devices are available—please ask an usher for assistance.

A fellowship time follows worship—please join us downstairs in Fellowship Hall.

Mission Statement

*Our church is an inclusive community which enthusiastically welcomes and gathers all people to share the wonder of God's love. Together we seek to find fullness of life through Jesus' teachings, to reach out into the world to live lovingly and justly as followers of Christ, and to respond actively to human needs. (Adopted by the Williston Federated Church congregation in 2024.)*

Call to Worship	One: One: Underneath life's expanding shadows, <b>Many: we call out "Prepare the way!"</b> One: On the dusty roads of life's wilderness <b>Many: we call out "Prepare the way!"</b> One: As we near the top of mountains, rejoicing in the sunlight, <b>Many: we call out "Prepare the way for our God!"</b>	Ashley Dubois, Lay Leader, and congregation
Introit/ Processional	"Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus"	Senior Choir Adam Hall, conducting, and Suiong Wong, piano
Welcome/ Greetings		Pastor Paul Eyer
Lighting the Advent Candle	One: The prophet Isaiah announced God's coming to a people in exile for whom the path home was a parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway	Joe and Sylvia Maloney and congregation

in the desert and make the rough places plain.

*(two candles are lit)*

**All: Shine on us, O God of justice;**

**Guide our path through gloom of night;**

**Bear within us Wisdom's glory;**

**Come to us, O Christ the Light.**

Words of  
Peace

Pastor Paul  
Eyer

Lighting the  
Peace Candle/  
Sharing the  
Peace/Passing  
of the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor Paul  
Eyer and  
congregation

Opening Hymn

“All Earth is Waiting”

UMC (red) Hymnal #210 (sing verses 1 and 3)  
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LICENSE #A-740093. All rights reserved)

Congregation  
and Suiong  
Wong, piano

Prayer for  
Forgiveness

One: O God, we confess that we have not  
always lived the way you might have us  
live. There might be times when we sit in our  
lonely lives feasting on bitterness, when we  
could be feasting with those we are told not to  
trust. We sometimes wait for all our desires to  
be taken care of by you, while you hope we  
would fill the lives of others with your grace  
and hope.

**All: Forgive us, God of this holy season, and  
help us to be willing to draw near to others,**

Dr. Jill Irvine  
and  
congregation

**so we might help heal their brokenness, touch their loneliness, embrace their grief, and love them as you did when you came to us so long ago.**

Silent  
Confession

Words of  
Grace

One: Here is the good news: speak with the whispers of hope until it silences despair; sing the carols of compassion until all join in the chorus; shower others with wonder and delight and join in God's dance of grace.

**All: Thanks be to God. We are forgiven! So, let us welcome others with open arms, just as we have been embraced in God's love and laughter. Amen.**

Pastor Paul  
Eyer and  
congregation

Anthem

"The Birth of Life"

Words and music composed by Adam Hall

*A seed planted generations ago spoken of in reverence to children as they grow. The world dry and cracking it gives little sign of what lies within it, waiting for its moment to arrive.*

*Watered by faith and fed by hope, we shine our lights so the seed may grow.*

Senior Choir,  
conducted by  
Adam Hall,  
Suiong Wong,  
piano

*Watching and waiting for a shoot to appear,  
and when we least expect it it's finally here, the  
birth of life! The birth of life!*

*A sprout, budding from beneath the snow,  
reminds us all of what we used to know. Our  
souls, bruised and battered, we give little sign  
that we sit in promise, promise of life divine.*

*Watered by faith and fed by hope, we shine our  
lights so the seed may grow.*

*Watching and waiting for a shoot to appear  
and when we least expect it it's finally here the  
birth of life!*

*How can it be that we should see what our  
world has waited for since before you and me?  
What once was dead is now green instead!  
Blossoming and flowering and branching  
overhead, the birth of life!*

*In a dying corner of a broken world, the birth of  
life! The birth of life!*

Time with  
Children of all  
ages

Pastor Paul

Scripture in  
Song

“Comfort Ye” and “Every Valley” from Handel’s  
Messiah

Adam Hall,  
tenor;

Suiong Wong,  
piano

Scripture	Matthew 3:1-12	Gayle Goodwin
Prayer of Illumination (adapted from Psalm 19:14)	<b>All: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.</b>	Pastor Paul Eyer and congregation
Sermon	“Wheat and Chaff”	Pastor Paul Eyer
Celebrations/ Prayer Requests/ Prayers of the People	Prayer requests may be sent to: <a href="mailto:WFCPrayer44@gmail.com">WFCPrayer44@gmail.com</a> Private prayer requests may be sent to: <a href="mailto:pastoreyer@gmail.com">pastoreyer@gmail.com</a>	Pastor Paul Eyer
Silent Reflection		
Lord’s Prayer	<b>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.</b>	Pastor Paul Eyer and congregation
Offering		

Offertory Hymn	“Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming” UMC (red) Hymnal #216 (sing verses 1 and 2)	Suiong Wong, piano
Doxology	UMC Hymnal #94 (Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-740093. All rights reserved)	Congregation and Suiong Wong, piano
Prayer of Dedication (unison)	<b>All: May your Spirit of generosity rest upon us, Caring God, so that our giving does not end here, but only begins to flow forth in a fountain of hope, of grace, of healing, and of peace to all around us, as well as those we may never meet. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.</b>	Dr. Jill Irvine and congregation
Holy Communion / the Eucharist / the Lord’s Supper	(see communion insert in bulletin)	Rev. Paul Eyer Dr. Jill Irvine  Communion Stewards: Chris Burns DiBiasio Dan DiBiasio
Life/Mission of the Church		Pastor Paul Eyer

Closing Hymn	<p>“Lift Up Your Heads”</p> <p>UMC Hymnal #213 (sing verses 1 and 3)</p> <p>(Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-740093. All rights reserved)</p>	Congregation and Suiong Wong, piano
Benediction/ Blessing		Pastor Paul Eyer
Postlude		Suiong Wong, piano
Liturgical Resources	<p>The <b>Call to Worship</b> was adapted from “Praying with Joy: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent Year C” by Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul’s United Church of Christ in Belleville, Illinois, found at UCC “Worship Ways” found at <a href="https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-2c-december-8/">https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-2c-december-8/</a></p> <p>The <b>Prayer for Forgiveness</b> and <b>Words of Grace</b> and <b>Prayer of Dedication</b> are adapted from “Liturgy w/communion for December 7, 2025) <u>Lectionary Liturgies</u> by Thom Shuman, found at <a href="https://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/">https://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/</a></p> <p>The <b>Advent candle litany</b> is adapted from “Withering Grace...Standing Word: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent, Year B” by Mia McLain, found at UCC “Worship Ways” at <a href="https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-2b-december-10/">https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-2b-december-10/</a></p> <p>The <b>Service of Holy Communion</b> was adapted by Rev. Eyer building on a liturgy from Gord Waldie entitled “The Banquet of Hopeful Expectations” found at his blog “Worship Offerings” located at <a href="http://worshipofferings.blogspot.com/2008/01/banquet-of-hopeful-expectation-advent.html">http://worshipofferings.blogspot.com/2008/01/banquet-of-hopeful-expectation-advent.html</a> The invitation includes language adapted from Seekers Church, a Christian community in the tradition of the Church of the Savior, in Washington, D.C. <a href="http://www.seekerschurch.org/liturgies/communion2005.htm">http://www.seekerschurch.org/liturgies/communion2005.htm</a></p>	



*Ushers: Donna Goodheart and Chris Stewart*

*Greeter(s): Jane Stickney and Jude Hersey*

*Coffee Hour: Ruth Magill*

*Online Greeter: Jackie Lingelbach*

*Online Prayer Coordinator: Ashley Dubois*



*To give online, use the QR code above.*

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## **This Week and Beyond at Williston Federated Church**

### **Williston Community Tree Lighting – TODAY!**

The Williston Community Tree Lighting will be held Today, Sunday, December 7th 4:30-5:30pm on the Williston Village Green. Joined by the Williston-Richmond Rotary Club—and indeed the whole community—we will light the tree, sing Christmas carols and enjoy cookies and hot cocoa. Our very own Children's Choir will provide special music and the SD Ireland holiday truck will bring some extra cheer. Please bring a donation of new hats, mittens, gloves or socks for the Williston Community Food Shelf.

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### **The Giving Tree**

Christmas is a joyous time of year for most of us, but for many in our community who are financially challenged, it can be exceedingly stressful. We at Williston Federated Church have the opportunity to make this a happier holiday by providing gifts to children from Allen Brook and Williston Central Schools. We invite you to participate in The Giving Tree by purchasing a gift card or cards that the families may use to select the “perfect” Santa gift, e.g. a toy, a game or art supplies, AND winter clothing items for their child(ren). This provides a level of autonomy and dignity to folks to be able to actually pick out the gifts for their children, which they may not be able to do otherwise.

The Giving Tree will be set up as usual in the hallway outside the sanctuary beginning on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, with \$25 gift tags attached. Please take one or more tags and purchase a gift card or cards from the store indicated on the back. There is no sign-up necessary. We trust that if you remove a tag, that you will purchase a gift card and return it. Please place your gift card(s) in an envelope and drop it in the decorated box next to the Giving Tree outside the sanctuary. All gifts should be returned to church by Sunday, December 14th and will be delivered to school on Monday, December 15th. A white dove will be hung on the tree for each gift received. Thank you so much for your abundant generosity. Your gifts will bring much joy to many children in our community. If you have any questions or need help selecting a tag or returning the gift to church,

please contact Chris Burns-DiBiasio, cburnsdibiasio@gmail.com, 419-230-4417 or Sue Hook, hooksuzanne4@gmail.com, 201-694-7890. And a very Merry Christmas and happy holiday to you.

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**Christmas Poinsettias**

It's time to place your orders for poinsettias that will adorn the church on Christmas Eve. Follow [this link](https://forms.gle/FauX3vdaxP5VseC79) (<https://forms.gle/FauX3vdaxP5VseC79>) for the order form. Questions? Contact Ashley [ashley0705@gmail.com](mailto:ashley0705@gmail.com)

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**Special Offering Christmas Eve at the 7:30pm service**

The special offering collected at the 7:30pm service on Christmas eve will be equally divided between support for the vital ministries of Williston Federated Church and the important work carried out by Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity. The mission of Habitat for Humanity is to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus Christ. Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity is the affiliate that works with local families and community volunteers to build and sell affordable homes in Northwest Vermont. The service area includes Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Lamoille Counties. Habitat homebuyers help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through the affiliate’s efforts, over 120 families have achieved the strength, stability, and independence needed to build a better life for themselves and their children. Gifts can be made with cash, check or an online giving form at <https://onrealm.org/WFC/-/form/give/Christmas>. For convenience, you can use the QR code by pointing your phone’s camera at it and follow prompts to open the link in a browser.

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Williston Federated Church  
Christmas Eve Special Offering

**Friends in Need**

Many of you have expressed concerns for our Afghan and Congolese friends, given recent pronouncements, policies, and proposals from the federal administration regarding refugees and immigrants. At the moment, there remains considerable uncertainty about what policies will go into effect, and how USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) will respond locally. Our desire is to help ensure the safety and well-being of these our fellow Vermonters.

Local organizations such as Afghan Alliance and national organizations which advocate for newcomers suggest that public support for immigrants is important and effective. Thus we encourage you to make your voice heard in the public square on these important issues.

Here at the church, we have been in direct contact with the families we know well, and have a team of members providing support to them and keeping informed of policy changes that may affect these families. If you would like further information or have questions, please contact Carol or Bruce Wyatt.

Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger, and we have done so and will continue to do so at Williston Federated Church. So we encourage your prayers and your actions in support of our newcomer friends.

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### **Winter Arrangement**

Donna Fellingner has put a winter flower arrangement on the altar in this Advent season in memory of her mother, Emma May Schmidt.

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### **New Ministry for Widows or Widowers**

We are hosting our 2nd Widow/Widowers Support Group Ministry Monthly Meeting monthly from 11-1 in the Choir Room. Please come and join us. The next date is December 14 so you can mark your calendar. We look forward to seeing you. Ministry Leaders: Kathy Quesnel, Carol Burbank and Ursula White

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### **Christmas Pageant – Save the date!**

This year's Christmas pageant, "Christmas Store Window," will be presented on December 21st. Rehearsal schedules and casting details will be shared soon. We look forward to celebrating the season together through this special story of light and hope.

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### **Is Choir Calling Your Name?**

Do you like to sing? Adult choir rehearsal takes place each Thursday at 6:45pm in the church sanctuary. The children's choir (Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) rehearses at 9am each Sunday in Fellowship Hall. Let us make a joyful noise to the Lord!

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### **Women's Book Club**

The Women's Book Club will meet on December 17 at 2 pm at Jane Stickney's home at 32 Hickory Hill Rd to discuss 'Queens of Crime' by Marie Benedict. Our January books are two books by Claire Keegan. 'Foster' and 'Small Things Like These' Our book for February is 'Home Front' by Kristin Hannah. Lois Mason [loismason418@gmail.com](mailto:loismason418@gmail.com).

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## **Sunday School Coordinator Needed**

The church is looking for a Sunday School Coordinator who would plan and supervise Sunday School for children aged four years through eighth grade.

Principal duties would include:

- Recruit, train and support Sunday school teaching volunteers
- Provide outreach to children who have attended WFC in the past two years
- Assist with teaching Sunday school when needed
- Welcome new families and supervise Sunday school registration
- Assist the Education committee with special programs, such as fall kickoff, Christmas pageant, Mardi Gras brunch and various mission programs
- Attend monthly meetings of the Education committee
- May also include facilitating parent discussions group and coordinating summer vacation bible school

For more information, contact Brian Goodwin at 802-238-4180 or by email at

[Goodwinjsd@gmail.com](mailto:Goodwinjsd@gmail.com)

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## **Hear Ye! Hear Ye!**

For those who would like to hear the worship service better, we encourage you to sit in one of the first four pews. You are not alone!

There are also two hearing devices to use. Please ask an usher for assistance.

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## **Prayer cards**

Prayer Cards are available to write prayer requests. (You may find them in the pew rack in front of you.) You are invited to place your completed prayer cards in the Prayer Box (crafted by Chris Stewart) that is now positioned on a table in the Gallery area (the space between the stairs and the hallway to the sanctuary. Additional prayer cards can be found on that table as well.)

Written prayers entered in the Prayer Box will be lifted to God in prayer by Pastor Paul throughout the week.

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## **A Note about the Time with Children**

We are delighted to welcome children into our worship service! And we have a special time during the service aimed especially at the youngest among us—and the young at heart! We welcome children to participate in the “Time with Children ” in any of the following ways: remain seated in the pew with their family; gather on the first pew; or sit on the chancel steps. Remember that the worship service is being live streamed to social media. So, if you would prefer that your child not appear in this video on our church’s Facebook page, you can

keep the children with you in the pew or have them sit on the first pew with their back to the camera. If you have no objection to your child appearing in this live streamed video feed, then all of the options are open to you.

And then following the Time with Children, the younger set can head off to join members of the Education Committee who will engage with the children for a time of crafts and learning. It is a joy to welcome children in our midst!

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**Fellowship Time After Worship**

Each Sunday after the worship service, all are invited to the Fellowship Hall (downstairs) for coffee and light refreshments. This is a wonderful opportunity for informal conversation and building community.

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**Morning Centering Prayer Group**

The Centering Prayer Group meets on Fridays on Zoom, opening at 9:45. The meeting begins at 10am and includes 20 minutes of silent prayer, reading of the Gospel Bible passage of the day and centering on a particular part of the passage and sharing personal impressions about the passage. For zoom link or questions contact Donna Fellingier at 802-355-1700 or [donnafellinger@vt@gmail.com](mailto:donnafellinger@vt@gmail.com).

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**Monday Women’s Bible Study**

The Women's Bible Study chooses books of the Bible to discuss, and we have a great time listening to each other as we try to discern God's word. We meet in person and by ZOOM every Monday afternoon from 1:30-2:30. If you'd like to join us, have questions, wish you knew more about the Bible, please contact Sally Metro at [ssmetro9@gmail.com](mailto:ssmetro9@gmail.com). All are welcome!

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**Men's Social Breakfast**

All the men of the church are invited to breakfast and chat the last Wednesday of every month. Breakfast starts at 8:00 am; cooking at 7:30 am. Come for one or both. Charlie Magill, [cmagill@vt.aol.com](mailto:cmagill@vt.aol.com).

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**Friday Men's Bible Study**

Men gather weekly to discuss and try to understand God's Word and how it effects our lives. Join the group in the Fellowship Hall every Friday morning at 7:00 am. The sessions are also on Zoom.

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## **Longevity Gathering**

For those who want to live a long, healthy, and happy life, you are invited to be part of the conversation! Helena Katz is leading a "Longevity Gathering" that meets in the choir room the first Sunday of the month following worship. The gathering gets started at 11:00am so that people have a chance to enjoy fellowship and refreshments in Fellowship Hall. Please also see the Longevity Gatherings page on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@LongevityGatherings> Please subscribe to our channel. (NOTE: The choir room is located past the gallery space just beyond the hallway that connects with the sanctuary here on the upper level of the church.)

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## **Dismas House**

Every third Tuesday of the month volunteers from Williston Federated Church provide a meal to the residents and staff at Dismas House in Burlington. We'd like to thank November's volunteers, Carol and Bruce Wyatt, Sara Moran, and Sue Hook for sharing food with Dismas, and we continue to welcome offers for future months. You can find the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board. One volunteer does not need to be responsible for the entire meal, teamwork is always possible! Volunteers can join those at Dismas for the meal, or they can drop the meal off, whatever works best. Thank you to everyone for supporting this very meaningful outreach! Please reach out to Lizzy Pope at [lizzypope@gmail.com](mailto:lizzypope@gmail.com) with questions.

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## **Opportunities For Service**

Are you feeling energetic? Need to get some more steps in? Do you feel the desire to serve this church, but can't make another long-term commitment? Are you new to the church or just returning from being away? Or are you only going to be in the area for a short time? Whatever your motivation, we'll take it!!! We are working on a new way to communicate opportunities for folks to serve this church and our community. They are "Opportunities to Serve". Not on a committee or a board but as a person who appreciates this church and wants to give back, by doing some small bit of work, sharing a talent or ability, or simply lending a hand when another member has a bit of labor that needs doing. There will be a bulletin board at the bottom of the stairs as you exit after worship towards coffee hour or out the door by Fellowship Hall. On it will be written opportunities to serve the church. If you find one there that fits your abilities and your calendar, take it with you. Make contact with the person whose name is on the card and make a plan for how you will fulfill this opportunity. How good it feels to help out!



# 2025 Christmas Worship Schedule



Please join us for the Children's Christmas Pageant Sunday at 9:30am  
**December 21** (in person and live-streamed at [facebook.com/WillistonFederatedChurch](https://facebook.com/WillistonFederatedChurch))



**Wednesday, December 17 at 6:30pm -- Longest Night Service**  
in the Williston Federated Church sanctuary (in person and live-streamed)  
You are invited to a special service designed for those who find the holidays to be a difficult time. Our church cares about you. This brief service offers ample opportunity for quiet worship and reflection.



**Wednesday, December 24 at 5pm -- Family-Friendly Christmas Eve service**  
in the Williston Federated Church sanctuary (in person and live-streamed)  
This family-focused service is designed with the younger ones (and those "young at heart") in mind. Interactive elements to engage the kids will be interspersed amid Christmas carols in this service for all ages.



**Wednesday, December 24 at 7:30m -- Candlelight Christmas Eve service**  
in the Williston Federated Church sanctuary (in person and live-streamed).  
Beautiful music, beloved Christmas carols and candlelight combine to make this service special. After the 7:30 worship service on Christmas Eve, stop by Fellowship Hall to greet friends and enjoy cookies and punch. Donations of cookies are appreciated. They may be placed on the table in Fellowship Hall.



**Wednesday, December 24 at 11pm -- Community Christmas Eve service**  
in the Old Brick Church (in person only)



**Sunday, December 28 "Worship Around the Breakfast Table"**  
Join us on December 28th for an informal worship and breakfast in Fellowship Hall. This wonderful event will combine a breakfast with an informal worship service that will include prayer, Christmas carols, and conversation. If you wish, you are welcome to bring a dish to share. There will be a sign up on the bulletin board to help with planning.