

# RAM

## Reformed At Millstone

*The historic church with the ageless mission:  
Joyfully Embracing Christ and Community*

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*From the* **PASTOR**—

December 22, 2008

**“ . . Behold, I make all things new . . . ” – Revelation 21:5**

Dear Members and Friends,

I write this just before Christmas and am reflecting on the year ahead of us. It may be a year of trial.

We are watching the world-wide economy stagger. People often want to know how the church is doing and what things may be like next year.

I can tell you how things will be next year – God will be with us. Jesus will be walking ahead of his church bidding us to follow him. We will be a community of love, devoted to God and caring for one another.

In the media, people are writing and talking about how this Christmas season might be simpler. They are wondering if the usual frenzy of spending will be lessened because of financial hardship facing many families.

While no one wants difficult times, these times might help us to remember what really matters. Faith. Hope. Love.

Whatever comes in the first quarter of 2009, we know Jesus will be with us. We will be at worship on Sundays. We will be heeding the call to follow him; to continue growing to be more like him. God will continue blessing us.

Our church believes in the power of prayer. Over and over we have seen prayers answered, often in amazing, unexpected ways. We can grow in our trust of God. The Psalms say God is the stay of our hand – God holds us up. When we trip and fall, God picks us up and helps us along.

With you I look forward to a 2009 of blessing. We will worship, give ourselves in service and love one another as Christ has commanded. No matter what, it will be a good year because it will be filled with our God.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Fred*

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## NEWS from our HRC COMMITTEES

### BUILDING AND GROUNDS NEWS

Much news emanates from the Building and Grounds Committee this time. To begin with we would like to announce the addition of Meg Cortelyou to the church staff as our new Custodian. Meg will see that the church buildings are in order and clean during the week; Mark Jameson will continue his Sunday duties. We welcome Meg along with her expertise to these important duties.



I would personally--and on behalf of the congregation, like to thank those persons who donated their time and talent in the maintenance of our church inside and out in the lengthy time between custodians: thanks to Rich and Audrey Fredericks, Jayne Czaplicki, Maryanne Devoti and others who assisted them. Thank you also to Colleen and Brandon Eberhardt for their past services.

Tony Cole and Maryanne Devoti

### EDUCATION - CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PRESENTED

Thank you to the HRC Sunday School which presented to the congregation its Christmas Pageant during worship on Sunday, December 21. Thank you to Akiko Hosaki, each young participant, to the teachers and Colleen Eberhardt. Each person attending worship was treated to a beautifully relevant retelling of the Christmas gospel.

### FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Millstone Café will reopen after a one week break, beginning January 4 immediately following worship. Please stop by for coffee (we've had delicious baked goods!) and chit-chat. Why hang out in the pews? Visit the popular Millstone Café!

Maryanne Devoti

### ADOPT-A-CLASSROOM PROJECT

The Building and Grounds Committee and Consistory offer a program idea to give HRC members an opportunity to help make the Sunday School classrooms more pleasant and ideally inviting for our children. It is an *ADOPT-A-CLASSROOM* project to be completed in January which will allow a church family to select a classroom or office downstairs to clean and repaint, fixing up that room. "Your" room may be painted any pastel color you wish. Room window curtains and/or door curtains are the family's choice as well. Paint, materials and labor to complete the room will be provided by each family. A plaque would be hung on the room door designating the family who provided the classroom beautification/transformation. The B & G Committee is responsible for the main room after all rooms are completed. For information and sign up, please contact Tony Cole or Pastor Fred.



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## MORE HRC ACTIVITIES, EVENTS & UPDATES

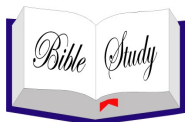
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### HRC BIBLE STUDIES - ALL IN SESSION

Women's Bible Study

The Women's BIBLE Study - The new study "Woman of God" meets **the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, (January 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>) and February 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>**. Questions? Contact Jayne at 908-359-5717.



The Daytime TOUR of the BIBLE continues in Memorial Hall each **Wednesday in January and February at Noon—except February 25, Ash Wednesday**. Questions? Call Pastor Fred.

The Tuesday Evening TOUR of the BIBLE continues the **first and last Tuesdays, meeting 7-8 PM, January 6 & 27; February 3 & 24**. Questions? Call Pastor Fred.

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### WWW.GOD WOMEN'S GROUP - PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Shawls and quilts have been made by women in our church and dedicated in prayer by our congregation. These wonderful items are available to persons who are experiencing challenging times in their lives. These range from medical, family loss, transition, depression, loneliness, issues with loved ones, crisis of any kind.

If you know someone, near or far, who would be encouraged and blessed by one of these shawls call Jeanne Bowlby (359-2949 ) or place the name of the recipient and your name for delivery information, along with the title "prayer shawl ministry" in the collection plate on Sundays.

Thank you in advance for your compassion and caring for members, friends, neighbors or relatives who would benefit from this outpouring of love from our hands and hearts.

Ginger Butler



### DEADLINE

The **March 2009 RAM** submission deadline is **Sunday, February 15**. Kindly send information, articles, etc. for **March** events to Sue Cole via email if possible to [tandscole@optonline.net](mailto:tandscole@optonline.net), via regular mail, or they may be left in her HRC mailbox which is labeled, "Financial Secretary." They may also be sent to/left with Joanie Panek in the church office.

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### YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

These are a few things to look forward to which involve our Youth Groups:

Hoagie Sale - Sunday 2/1/09 - look for sandwich order forms shortly in the Narthex

Warwick Teen Retreat - 2/20/09 to 2/21/09

Chris Claus and Margo Myer

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### Red's Thoughts . . .

"I live by this credo: Have a little laugh at life and look around you for happiness instead of sadness/ Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Even in your darkest moment, you usually can find something to laugh about if you try hard enough. If I can make people laugh, then I have served my purpose for God."

—Red Skelton

## STEPHEN MINISTRY



We currently have four Stephen Leaders – Fred Butler, Nancy Dawson, Jean Thomas and me. We spent a week training to lead the Stephen Ministry program and have been at it for over two years. Joanie Panek currently works with the Stephen Leaders as administrative liaison.

Stephen Ministry has broadened and deepened the pastoral care ministry of our church. Every week, anywhere from six to nine hours are devoted by our Stephen Ministers to provide Christ-like caring for our members. Stephen Ministry has opened a whole new dimension of caring that has helped us to be a church characterized by loving care. My own pastoral care and counseling has been greatly broadened and deepened because of Stephen Ministry. I cannot tell you how much this has expanded the caring ministry of our church.

Stephen Ministry is set up so there is constant supervision and evaluation. In the process of evaluation and affirmation, one theme comes up time and time again. Our Stephen Ministers all say they get more out of the work than they give. That is just how life is – we are designed by God to be loving and caring. When we help others, we reap the awards.

Who should accept Stephen Ministry? You. Me. We all face times in life when we need someone to walk with us – to be the living breathing presence of Jesus Christ. None of us should ever try going it alone. God has given us each other. God works through us. We are the care-givers, God is the cure-giver.

We are currently looking for one or more persons to train to be a Stephen Leaders. (We have one person looking to take the training). We are always recruiting Stephen Ministers. We anticipate our next training class being in September. And we are always looking for people who could use a Stephen Minister at this point in their lives.

If you count Stephen Leaders, Stephen Ministers and Care Receivers, over fifteen percent of our congregation has been directly involved in Stephen Ministry. That is amazing! But Stephen Ministry is a ministry of the whole church. We ask for your prayers. We ask for your help in identifying Care Receivers (this ministry is absolutely confidential!). We ask you to consider whether or not God is calling you to be Stephen Leader or Stephen Minister.

Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers are always on stand-by to answer any question you may have. Please visit our display with resources in the SE corner of the sanctuary.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Fred

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## COMING EVENTS for JANUARY and FEBRUARY

### Sunday, January 4

8:15 AM Early Worship Service

10:00 AM worship and Installation and Ordination of Church Officers

### Sunday, January 11 First Sunday in Epiphany

10:00 AM Worship and Holy Communion

### Sunday, February 1

8:15 AM Early Worship Service

### Wednesday, February 25–Ash Wednesday

worship service, 7:30 PM in the Sanctuary

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# REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

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## **The Anatomy of a Christian**

HEIGHT:	Tall enough to see over today's problems into the future filled with the promises of God.
VISION:	Clear and undistorted. Tears not unusual.
HEARING:	Can listen for long periods of time. Able to distinguish between what is necessary to remember and what is best to forget.
VOICE:	Quick to speak of Jesus Christ. Often breaks into laughter.
HANDS:	Ready to help 24-hours a day.
SHOULDERS:	Broad enough to carry responsibility.
FEET:	Ready to walk anywhere in order to speak for Christ. Often seen trying on other people's shoes.
HEAD:	Frequently bowed in prayer.
MIND:	Open. Filled with the Word of God.
HEART:	In love with God. Full of concern for others.
SPIRIT:	Alive.
OVERALL SUMMARY:	Controlled by the Spirit of God. Bears resemblance to Jesus Christ.

*—author unknown*

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## **BLESSING FOR THE NEW YEAR**

### **The Benediction**

And now may Almighty God  
in His mercy and in His love,  
Bless all those who are  
newr and dear to us,  
In our work by day  
and in our homes by night.  
And keep us all in His peace  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Marshall, Catherine. God Loves You Avon Books: 1973.

# HYMNS 4 HIM

## Epiphany Hymn, AS WITH GLADNESS, MEN OF OLD by William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

As with gladness men of old / Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light, / Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we / Evermore be led to Thee.

As with joyous steps they sped / To that lowly manger bed,  
There to bend the knee before Him whom heaven and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet / Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare At the manger rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, / Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring, / Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day / Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past, / Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright / Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, / Thou its sun which goes not down,  
There forever may we sing / Hallelujah to our King.

The Church has traditionally celebrated the coming of the wise men two weeks after Christmas. But on Epiphany Sunday in 1860, William Dix was too sick to attend church. At home in bed, he read the story of the wise men and tried to apply the lesson to his own heart. The result was a new Christmas hymn that celebrated while it instructed, one that applied not only to the author, but to future generations of Christians as well. The pattern is obvious: As the wise men did—following, adoring, giving—so should we.

Dix was a brilliant linguist and poet, but he made his living as the manager of a maritime insurance company in Glasgow, Scotland. He knew the rigors of travel and the joy of bringing gifts from afar. Yet rather than focusing on the costliness of the magi's gifts, Dix emphasized the magi's finding of what they sought and their worship of the Christ child.

*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On the coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Matthew 2:10-11*

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Brown, R K and Norton M R *The One Year Book of Hymns* Tyndale: 1995

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## THE WAY OF A CRAB

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The tide had gone out, and two crabs were strolling about on the beach.  
Suddenly, one crab cried out to the other, "I don't like the way you walk. You sway from side to side. It doesn't look nice. Why don't you just walk straight forward?"

"Well," replied the other crab, "you walk straight yourself. Show me what you mean, and I'll walk just as you do."

But as everyone knows, a crab cannot walk straight. Crabs are made so that they have to waddle from side to side.

It's a strange thing that the faults we see most clearly in other people are often the faults we have ourselves.

That's one reason why we should not find fault with other people. Don't tell anyone else to walk straight, unless you can walk straight yourself.



—Catherine Marshall