



## FROM THE PASTOR

In Luke's version of the Christmas story, shepherds keeping watch over their flocks were visited by a multitude of angels who sang to celebrate Jesus' birth: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2: 14, New Revised Standard Version). The word "peace" is found in many of our favorite Christmas carols, on greeting cards, and in other expressions of Christmas hope. What is this peace for which we long, especially this year?

For some of us, peace means "peace and quiet." Security and comfort. A life free of worry and want. We expect to find this peace at home. Consumer surveys tell us that sales of house-wares and other "nesting" items are way up this year. People are looking inward, to home and family, for peace. Images of happy families gathered around a table laden with food, or singing carols by the fireplace, are particularly appealing this year as we continue to recover from the shock of September 11. We long for a Norman Rockwell Christmas in which we are happy and healthy and secure, in which nothing disturbs our serenity.

Is this what the Prince of Peace came to bring about on earth? Not according to scripture. Luke's gospel in particular tells us of the radical reversal to be brought about by Jesus. Right after being visited by the angel who tells her she will conceive and give birth to Jesus, Mary expresses her deepest understanding of what this means. With the coming of Jesus, God "has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts... has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly... has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty." (Luke 1: 51-53). According to Luke, God's favor rests upon the poor and powerless, and the message of peace is especially for them.

German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who spoke out about injustice during the terrorism committed by Nazis against Jews, said that "peace is the opposite of security." He said, "There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared. It is the great venture. It can never be safe." Along similar lines, Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann in his wonderful book Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom makes the point that there will be no *shalom*, no deep and lasting peace, until all people and indeed, all of creation, are able to share the resources God has provided. As long as there are poor and hungry people, and rich and self-satisfied people, there will be anger and resentment and violence among those who don't have enough.

Praying and working for peace on earth means that we pray and work for justice and righteousness. Now more than ever, we Christians are called to address the underlying issues that lead to violence and terrorism. Helping to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things, reaching out in love to people who are of a different race or religion or socioeconomic status, living a simple and non-indulgent life style, working on behalf of the poor in this country and around the world... these are all ways in which we can help to bring about peace on earth in Jesus' name.

There's nothing wrong with a serene and cozy Christmas at home, enjoying the company of loved ones. In fact, we all need the comfort that brings. However, let's not get so comfortable that we forget our call to be bearers of *shalom*, of the peace of Christ that is radically different from the world's peace.

- Pastor Mary Jane

### Inside this issue:

<i>The Church and You</i>	2
<i>Calendar</i>	3
<i>You, the Church and The Community</i>	4
<i>Kid Corner</i>	5
<i>Pastoral Letter</i>	6
<i>Advent</i>	7
<i>Readings Anniversaries Birthdays</i>	8
<i>Sponsors</i>	9

## The Church and You

### Shut-in Baskets for Christmas

We will be filling baskets for our shut-in members on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> right after church. Here is a list of ideas for you to donate for the baskets:

Packets of greeting cards, Notepaper and stamps, Candy, Homemade cookies, Packets of cocoa, tea or flavored coffees, Packets of soup Powder, perfumes, after shave, Chewing gum, Fruit- fresh or small cans of fruit or puddings, Crackers (individual packets) Soaps, Men's socks or ladies knee hi stockings.

Any other small gift type things.

### Men's News

The United Methodist men meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each Month at the church at 6:33 PM. The United Methodist Men's Bible Study meets at the church every Thursday at 7:03 PM.

### Prayer and Praise Service

There will be a *Prayer And Praise Service* at the *George Whitefield United Methodist Church* on the third Sunday evening of each month at 7PM led by Rev. Harvey Collins. All are welcome. Come and Praise the Lord with us.

### COFFEE HOSTS FOR DECEMBER

12/2--Betty Hubbard & Terry Paquette  
12/9--Christy & Tom McCann  
12/16--Mary Jane & Steve Ropp  
12/23--Marge & Charlie Reim  
12/30--Dot Bailey

List is also posted on bulletin board in hall between sanctuary & fellowship hall.

If you cannot serve coffee the day you are listed please make arrangements to swap days with someone. Coffee, cream and punch will be supplied, the rest is up to you. Refreshments can be home baked or from the store or doughnut shop. Choice is yours. Thanks for your cooperation.

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY SEEKING INFORMATION

Do you know the whereabouts of any of the following people? If you do have information, please give it to Judith Bartlett, membership secretary. We are still trying to sort out the membership of the former West Warren and Whitefield churches.

**Marilyn McBain Craig Nichols**  
**Mark Conrad Bradford Couture**  
**Brenda Couture Belinda Couture**  
**Elizabeth Faford Richmond Laisure**  
**William Laisure Harold Laisure**  
**Susan Laisure Lenkarski ?**  
**Merrill Family Dale Nutter**  
**Jackie Scott Frank Stekuer**  
**Susan Smith Jennifer Wilk**  
**M/M Alan Stone Kelly Wilk**  
**Carol Wickens Tracy Williams**  
**Betty Jean Koss Phillip Taylor**  
**Francesanne Dufault**

Please send the information to  
Judith Bartlett  
150 Shea Road  
West Brookfield, MA 01585

### Whitefield Village Fair update—

As of 11/27/01 the total profit is \$2400.00

Isn't that great? Thanks again to all who worked to make it a success.

Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> during the "White Lights in West Brookfield" celebration we will have a mini-craft fair at the church.

Mulled cider and goodies will be served from 2:00-4:00pm..See you there!

### PASTOR'S VACATION

Pastor Mary Jane and Steve will be away on vacation from Monday, December 10 through Sunday, December 16. They will be back in time for Christmas caroling on Sunday evening. On Sunday, 12/16 the guest preacher will be the Rev. Stacey Lanier, former pastor of the United Parish of Lunenburg, who is now on family leave and living in Ayer with her husband, Rev. Stewart Lanier, their three children, and Stacey's mother.

### CHARGE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Our annual Charge Conference with District Superintendent Gwen Purushotham was held on Monday, November 5. George Button, District Lay Leader, also attended and helped us to reflect together on what our ministry is all about. This year, our discussion centered on why we are doing what we are doing. We reflected on who is being transformed by our church's ministry, and how we might be more intentional about reaching out to others in the name of Jesus Christ. Everyone agreed that it was a very positive experience. Thanks to all who attended and submitted reports on time.



# December 2001

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

January 2002						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**December Calendar**

- Sundays during Advent**—Carol sing at 9:15 am
- Saturday 12/1** 10:00-12:00 Advent Family Workshop at church light lunch served
- Sunday 12/2** Noon -8:00 pm White Christmas in W. Brookfield  
At Whitefield 2:00-4:00 - Mulled cider and goodies
- Saturday 12/8** 9:00 am-Noon - Advent Mini-Retreat at church
- Sunday 12/9** - Living Nativity at Overlook Farm-Rutland  
Leave church at 1:00pm
- Sunday 12/16** 5:00 pm - Christmas Caroling - start at church  
Fill shut-in baskets right after church
- Friday-12/21** 7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service –  
First Congregational Church- W. Brookfield
- Sunday, 12/23** 9:15 am - Carol Sing  
9:30 am—worship—Christmas pageant  
3:00-5:00 pm—Open House at parsonage
- Monday-12/24** 5:00 pm - Service of lessons and carols at church

**CALENDAR – REGULARLY SCHEDULED**

- Every week (unless otherwise noted):
- ? Sunday at 9:30 a.m. - Worship with Sunday School
  - ? Wednesday at 10 a.m. – Bible study on Book of Acts at the home of Annalee Collins
  - ? Wednesday at 2:15 p.m. – Prayer Group at Parsonage
  - ? Thursday at 3 p.m. – Lectionary Bible Study at Parsonage

## You, the Church And the Community

### RETIREMENT PASTORS SUNDAY

Sunday, October 28 was designated as the "official" Retired Pastors' Sunday at last June's Annual Conference. However, churches may celebrate it on another Sunday. Since we did not observe it on 10/28, we will celebrate the ministry of our retired pastors on "Heritage Sunday," April 28th. As you probably know, we are honored to have three retired pastors in our congregation: The Revs. Harold Smock, Harvey Collins, and George Warriner.

Each one of these men served the United Methodist Church faithfully during their active ministry, and continue to serve in their retirement years, in the local church and beyond. We are grateful for their presence among us and for their many gifts which they so willingly share. You don't have to wait until April 28 to celebrate their ministry - let them know how much you appreciate them at any time!

### REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Christmas is a good time to remember (with a card or a visit) the following members of our church who are either confined to home or in a nursing home.



Beata Anderson, 52 Central Street, West Brookfield 01585  
 Isabel Carpenter, Quaboag-on-the-Common, West Brookfield 01585  
 Ruth Carpenter, Reed's Landing, 807 Wilbraham Road, Springfield 01095  
 Hazel Masterman, Pleasant Street, West Warren 01092  
 Edith Swett, Quaboag-on-the-Common, West Brookfield 01585  
 Priscilla Toppin, 114 West Main Street, West Brookfield 01585  
 Janet Vamum, Masonic Home, Charlton 01507  
 Frank Whittemore, Quaboag-on-the-Common, West Brookfield 01585  
 Nina Williamson, Quaboag-on-the-Common, West Brookfield 01585  
 Alice Wirf, 28 Chapman Avenue, West Brookfield 01585

### THANKS TO....

- ????The United Methodist Men who prepared a scrumptious breakfast on Sunday, November 18 after church to help us celebrate Consecration Sunday
- ????All who donated filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Our church filled more than 80 boxes – well over last year's level! Thanks also to the United Methodist Men who rented a truck, loaded more than 500 boxes onto it, and helped transport them to the Middletown, CT distribution site
- ????All who donated used clothing for the Maine Economic Ministry in Salem, Maine, all who helped fill a pickup truck with trailer, two vans, and one station wagon, and those who transported the clothes to Epworth UMC in Worcester where we loaded them onto a Ryder truck
- ????All who worked so hard to make this year's Christmas Fair on 11/10 a success

### The Sharing Tree



Once again we will have a Sharing Tree, with names of local residents who might not have such a great Christmas. On Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will choose a name tag from the tree and will need the gifts brought in with in two weeks.

### VISIT TO MAINE ECONOMIC MISSION

On Monday, November 19, two sleepy people – Pastor Mary Jane and Liz Sanford – left home at 3:00 a.m. for Worcester. At 3:45 we joined eight others (including former Whitefield/West Warren pastor Matt Wissell and seven members of Epworth UMC) for a 5 ½ hour trip to Salem, Maine. Our "convoy" consisted of a big Ryder truck, two vans, and two pickup trucks full of used clothing and household goods, along with Liz's PT Cruiser bringing up the rear. After a breakfast stop in Augusta, we traveled west to the mission headquarters in Salem. There we unloaded a seemingly endless number of bags, first into a small cottage and then into a shed, filling all the available space. The clothing from this trip will bring in more than \$5,000 in retail sales for the Economic Ministry's thrift shop. Our church continues to support this ministry through our penny collection. The ministry serves a large area north of the Rangeley Lakes with clothing, food, jobs, and other forms of assistance for the very poor in this economically depressed area. They host work camps in the summer with volunteers who do home repairs and other building work. If you are interested in going on a work project this summer, please let Pastor Mary Jane know.

# Christmas Treasure from Trash

*You can make pretty Christmas ornaments from old Christmas cards.*

**You will need:**

- \* old Christmas cards
- \* scissors
- \* glue
- \* 3" or 4" circle pattern (cut from cardboard or just trace a coffee cup)
- \* hole punch
- \* yarn and ribbon
- \* glitter
- \* trims — rick-rack, ribbon, sequins, beads

**How to do:**

Trace the circle on two cards. Cut out and glue the backs of the cards together.

Decorate the edges of the cards with glue and glitter or scraps of ribbon.

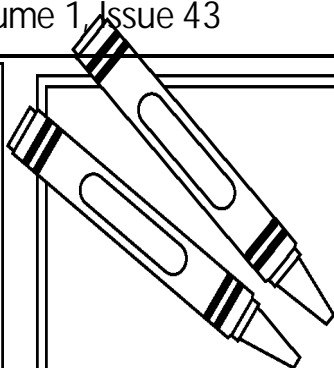
Punch a hole in the top.

Insert a piece of yarn or ribbon.

You may also make small ones for gift tags.

Just cut your circles smaller.

Leave the back white and write "To:" and "From:" on it.



# Just for KIDS

## Telling the Christmas Story

These words are all part of the Christmas story. First, find them in the puzzle below. Circle them. You may find them → ← ↙ ↘ ↗ ↖ ↕ ↓. There will be 12 letters that remain uncircled. Write them in the order found on the lines below. You will find a special Christmas message! Then use the words from the list to tell the story to someone!

- |           |              |           |          |         |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| joy       | hay          | men       | inn      | wise    |
| Lord      | star         | baby      | king     | east    |
| Mary      | gold         | angel     | taxes    | Jesus   |
| sheep     | myrrh        | three     | manger   | Savior  |
| donkey    | Caesar       | Joseph    | birthday | Messiah |
| shepherds | frankincense | Bethlehem | Augustus |         |

B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	P	S	M	A	R	Y
I	A	N	G	E	L	E	G	O	L	D	E	C	A	E
R	C	B	J	S	M	Y	R	R	H	R	S	A	E	K
T	J	O	Y	E	H	E	T	S	A	E	S	E	M	N
H	T	A	X	E	S	E	N	O	I	H	I	S	A	O
D	A	G	N	I	K	U	E	N	N	P	A	A	N	D
A	E	Y	W	R	A	T	S	P	N	E	H	R	G	R
Y	A	U	G	U	S	T	U	S	T	H	R	E	E	O
F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	A	R	L
R	O	I	V	A	S	R	T	H	J	O	S	E	P	H

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

## Pastoral Letter

### A Pastoral Letter to the Whole Church



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace be to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The sad and terrible events in the United States of America, on Sept. 11, 2001, and beyond, compel us to speak words of hope and peace to United Methodist people in the 120 annual conferences in more than 50 countries of the world. Stunned and shattered by terrorist attacks in the United States and the threat of bioterrorism, we, your bishops, call upon the church to join us in seeking solidarity with victimized peoples throughout the world.

Our fervent and constant prayers are for those who grieve because they have lost companions and loved ones; for military chaplains and for those persons who are providing the ministry of presence, comfort, healing and hope; for public servants and countless volunteers who have demonstrated selfless generosity; for all who are redemptively reaching out to those persons who have been erroneously connected to terrorism; for the people who have been placed in harm's way and their loved ones; for President Bush and the leaders of all the nations that they may have wisdom and courage to lead people toward justice and peace. We pray for innocent victims who have experienced injuries, loss and death. We also pray for those who wish to do harm. We pray that violence, terrorism and war will cease. We ask you to join us in prayer.

We are extremely concerned for the thousands of people who live in fear and terror and those displaced by war and poverty. We sincerely believe that every conceivable effort must be used to protect those who are innocent and most vulnerable. We are persuaded that we must use the spiritual and human resources of The United Methodist Church to respond in a loving and caring way. We commend churches around the world for their contribution to the appeal, "Love in the Midst of Tragedy," and all other humanitarian offerings.

We, your bishops, believe that violence in all of its forms and expressions is contrary to God's purpose for the world. Violence creates fear, desperation, hopelessness and instability. We call upon the church to be a community of peace with justice and to support individuals and agencies all over the world who are working for the common good for all of God's children. We also call upon the church to study and work toward alleviating the root causes of poverty and the other social conditions that are exploited by terrorists.

As people of the resurrection, we believe that peace has been achieved in Christ; however, this peace is yet to be fully realized in human relationships. The message of the resurrection is that love is stronger than all the forces of evil. Furthermore, it is only sacrificial love, not war, which can reconcile people to God and to each other. We call upon the church, leaders, nations and individuals around the world to make room for love so that the patterns of our common life might reveal God's justice.

We offer this letter with the wondrous promise of Advent ringing in our ears: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing to you good news of great joy for all the people.'" (Luke 2:10)

Peace

Bishops of The United Methodist Church

## Advent



# Advent

### ADVENT WREATH

Every year during Advent, we begin our worship service each Sunday with the lighting of the candles in the Advent wreath by one of our church families. This year the following families will take part:

- December 2 – the Ducharme family
- December 9 – the McCann family
- December 16 – the Chicoine family
- December 23 – the Cook family



### CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE-LIGHT SERVICE

The Worship Committee recently conducted a poll of those in worship to see if we should change the time of the Christmas Eve service. Of those voting, the number was evenly divided between 5:00 and 7:00, with a couple of people voting for 11:00. Based on this, we have decided to keep the time at 5:00 p.m. If you would like to try a different time next year, please speak to Phyllis Warriner, Chair of the Worship Committee, or Pastor Mary Jane.



### ADVENT MINI-RETREAT

The word ADVENT means arrival or coming into being. Each year the Christian Church begins its church year with a period of time before Christmas, the season called Advent, to encourage Christians to prepare for three aspects of the arrival of God in Jesus, the Christ: in the PAST, Jesus was born into history; in the PRESENT, Jesus meets us in our everyday lives; and in the FUTURE, Christ will return. This mini-retreat, on Saturday December 8 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, will help us reflect on the coming of Christ and what it means to us today. Our reflections will help us to celebrate the birth of Jesus more deeply, to focus on the present where we meet Jesus in our everyday lives, and to prepare for the future by the way we live today. We will use scripture, prayer and silence to help us focus on the true meaning of this holy season. Bring a Bible and a notebook or journal. This retreat will be led by Pastor Mary Jane.

### What makes Christmas happen?

What makes Christmas “happen” for you? Where does the joy of the season come alive in you? Is it in the carols? The celebrations? The candlelight services? The music of the Advent season? Perhaps you find it in the shopping and gift-giving. Maybe you see the love of the season in the sparkling eyes of a child or feel it in a loved one’s hug.

Whatever it is, during this holiday season with all its frenzied festivities, stop and remember that night in the stable, those mingled smells of animals and hay, that pain and subsequent joy in the birth of one small child. Breathe deep and feel with Mary, with Joseph, the shepherds, the angels. Feel the birth of Jesus. What is it to experience such joy, such peace? Verbally express to someone close to you what the birth of Christ means to you at this point in your life. Be joyful! Experience God’s love and peace.

—Anonymous

### Spread it out

I sometimes think we expect too much of Christmas Day. We try to crowd into it the long arrears of kindness and humanity of the whole year. As for me, I like to take my Christmas a little at a time, all through the year. And thus I drift along into the holidays — let them overtake me unexpectedly — waking up some fine morning and suddenly saying to myself, “Why, this is Christmas Day!”

—David Grayson

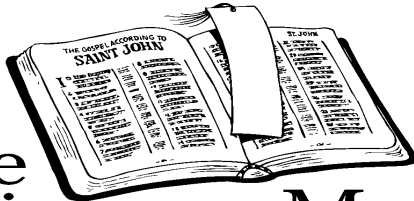


### CHRISTMAS CANTATA AND PAGEANT

This year’s special worship service on December 23, the Sunday before Christmas, will feature an intergenerational presentation of the Christmas story acted out by volunteers from the very young to the young-at-heart, accompanied by the choir singing anthems of Christmas joy and peace. We invite YOU to be a part of this annual event. We need people who would like to sing with the choir, as well as people to take the part of shepherds, angels, wise men, and readers. There are no speaking parts except for the readers, so don’t be shy about volunteering. If you are willing and able to take part, please speak with Marie or Stewart King, or Pastor Mary Jane.

**Scripture Readings: Notice**

Each month I will publish the readers for each weeks scripture lessons. It is requested that you read from the Lectern Bible. If you can not be in church on the week that you are scheduled to read, please arrange for someone else to read in your place or contact Paul Chicoine or Rev. Mary Jane. Pastor Mary Jane is willing to give tips/lessons to anyone desiring them. Also if you are interesting in being included in the readers list please notify Paul Chicoine at 436-7744.



## Bible Readings for the Month

**November Scripture Readings:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - **Isaiah 2:1-5**  
 Paul **Psalm 122 (UMH 845)**  
 Chicoine **Romans 13:11-14**  
**Matthew 24:36-44**
- 9<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 11:1-10**  
 Marion **Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795)**  
 Hunt **Romans 15:4-13**  
**Matthew 3:1-12**
- 16<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 35:1-10**  
 Harvey **Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199)**  
 Collins **James 5:7-10**  
**Matthew 11:2-11**
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - **CHRISTMAS CANTATA**
- 30<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 63:7-9**  
 Liz **Psalm 148 (UMH 861)**  
 Sanford **Hebrews 2:10-18**  
**Matthew 2:13-23**

**Need a ride to Church???**

If anyone in the local area needs a ride to church on Sundays or to any church function or meeting, please call Judith Bartlett at 867-3002 or the church office at 867-3667 for help in making arrangements.

Also, if you are willing to give anyone a ride, please have your name put on the driver's list in the church office.

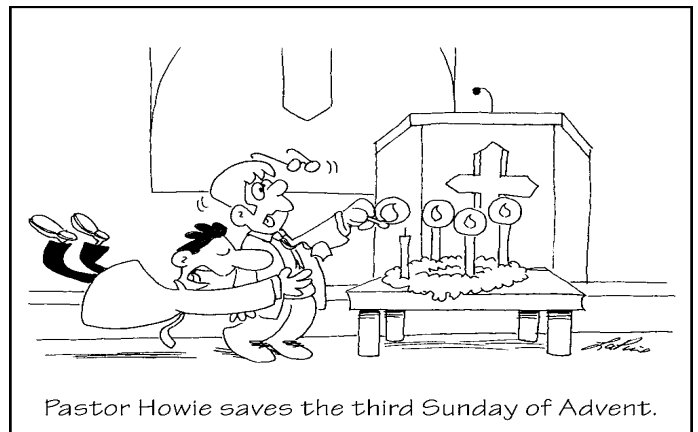
THANKS !!!

**Happy December Birthdays**

Melissa Andrews	12/3	Lynn Dunham	12/5
Amanda McIntyre	12/5	Claire Wirf	12/5
Cheryl McKeon	12/8	Bea Anderson	12/12
Joy LaChambre	12/12	David L. Fazier	12/17
Elizabeth Fraszier	12/21	Judith Bartlett	12/22
Matthew Wissell	12/22	Marc Varnum	12/27
Carol A. Williamson	12/27	Barbara Smith	12/30

**Celebrating Anniversaries in December**

Mark & Carol Ann Williamson 12/8  
 Rev. Mary Jane and Steve Ropp 12/27

**The Grief and Loss Support Group**

**"YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE ALONE IN YOUR BE-REAVEMENT"**

The last Wednesday of each month at 1:00 P.M. Sponsored by the **WEST BROOKFIELD COUNCIL on AGING** at the Senior Center, 27 Front St. Everyone is welcome. For more information call Frank Halloran 867-2497.

**AN OPEN INVITATION**

The George Whitefield Rock welcomes any and all submissions. We reserve the right to edit or reject any material. This is your newsletter, please feel free to make any suggestions to the pastor or the editors. Also if you would like to share your loved ones birthdays and anniversaries please send them for submission to the editor.

Have you visited our web site lately?

[www.gbgm-umc.org/whitefield](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/whitefield)