

The George Whitefield ROCK

George Whitefield
UMC

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February 2001

FROM THE PASTOR

Last month I talked about the difference between New Year's resolutions and a rule of life. This month I will describe some ways in which we can go about making a rule of life for ourselves that accomplishes the goal of helping to deepen our relationship with God. Next month I will talk about developing a rule of life with the goal of bringing more balance into our lives. Some of us may be put off by the term "rule of life" with its potential for legalistic interpretation ("Don't break the rules or you will be punished"). The word "rule" comes from the Latin "regula" or "pattern." A rule of life is a pattern for living which guides us to fullness of life. It's meant to be invitational and not dictatorial.

Probably the simplest rule of life is this: think of one thing you do that helps you experience God's presence in your life, and do more of it. For example, if you feel close to God when taking a walk, then walk every day. If you experience God's presence in worship, then worship at least once a week with your church community and perhaps find a way to enjoy simple worship with your family at home. If watching the sunrise with a cup of coffee helps you to connect with God, then make it a daily ritual.

Conversely, think of the things that interfere with your relationship with God, and find ways to eliminate them or work around them. If you are too busy in the morning for prayer and meditation, then find some time later in the day, or find some ways to simplify your morning – perhaps by doing some preparation the night before, or getting up a half hour earlier. Turn off the car radio and use travel time for a prayerful conversation with God. Or instead of trying to wrestle some free time out of a busy schedule, do what a monk named Brother Lawrence did – learn to "practice the presence of God" throughout the day. Turn your thoughts to God with gratitude and be aware of God's presence in the activities of everyday life.

Another suggestion for a "mini-rule" is to keep Sabbath time every day by devoting 1/7 of each day to some intentional spiritual practice such as Bible reading, prayer, journaling, meditation, or worship of some kind. The Sabbath pattern as laid out by God in the creation narrative in Genesis is six days of work and one day of rest. Making this a daily pattern would set aside about three hours each day for "resting in God" or being in communication with God in some way. Some people do this by turning to God in prayer for a few minutes every hour, or at designated times in the morning, at noon, and at night.

Keeping a Sabbath day each week is yet another "rule of life" practice you may want to consider. Setting aside one day a week to "be" rather than "do" helps to remind us that the world can get along just fine without us – at least for one day.

When developing a rule of life, it is wise to start slowly and simply, with one or two changes in your daily routine. Lent begins on the last day of this month, February 28. You may want to design a simple rule of life that you can try out during Lent. Pray for God's guidance as you begin, and remember that God honors our smallest baby steps in the direction of a deeper relationship with the Holy One.

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The Church and You



WHAT TO GIVE UP FOR

LENT (more thoughts from the Pastor)

When I was a child, we Protestants didn't pay much attention to Lent. That was for the Catholics. But I did know that during Lent, you're supposed to give up something (like chocolate, or swearing, or being mean to your little brother). Now that I have learned that Lent is a wonderful time for self-examination and repentance (or turning toward God), I have some different ideas about what we might give up for Lent.

GIVE UP... constant noise. Turn off the radio or the TV. Receive silence as a gift.

GIVE UP... criticizing others, either with words or thoughts. Try to see the

Christ in everyone you encounter. GIVE UP... time spent indulging your own desires and GIVE some time to helping others.

GIVE UP... self-effacement and self-criticism. You are beautiful and God loves you just as you are.

GIVE UP... worrying about the future. Worry never changed anything.

GIVE UP... rehashing the past. It's gone, and it's too late to change anything.

GIVE UP... gossiping. Gossip is "a polite form of murder by character assassination" according to A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

GIVE UP... trying to change other people and instead focus on changing yourself

SPECIAL CHARGE CONFERENCE

A special Charge Conference session will be held after worship on Sunday,

February 11, for the purpose of receiving year-end financial reports and the year-end report of the Membership Secretary, and filling any vacant leadership positions. All members of the George Whitefield UMC are invited and may vote after the meeting is convened as a Church Conference.

VISIT BY DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Our District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Gwen Purushotham, will be with us for worship on Sunday, February 25. After worship, she will meet with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Gwen was unable to be with us at our regular Charge Conference on November 1st and was not able to meet with the SPRC at that time.

COFFEE HOSTS

Feb 4th - Neata & Warren Campbell
11th - Mae & Paul Chicoine
18th - Pam & Ray Andrews
25th - Carol & Alan Varnum

Mar 4th - Dot Bailey & Edith Mongeon
11th - Barbara Smith & Marie King
18th - Karen Farrell & Mildred Silverberg
25th - Marge & Charlie Reim

Prayer, Ashes, the Bible!

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

There will be a special ecumenical worship service at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church on Friday, February 2. This service, sponsored by Church Women United, celebrates the ministry of women around the world. The worship service this year was written by the women of Samoa. The theme is "Informed Prayer & Prayerful Action." All are invited.



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 28 this year. An Ash Wednesday worship service will be held at 7:00 p.m., with ashes available for those who wish. This service represents a call to observe a holy Lent in union with Christians around the world. We hope you will join us.

LENTEN STUDY

Some of us have read the Bible all our lives and others of us are just beginning to explore this ancient text that is always new and relevant. No matter if

we are new to the Bible or have read it for years, some of us don't know how the Bible came to us – its origins, the kinds of writing found within its pages, the historical and religious contexts in which it evolved. On four Sunday evenings during Lent (March 4, 11, 18 and 25) Pastor Mary Jane will lead "BIBLE 101: INTRODUCTION TO GOD'S WORD" for all who are interested in learning more about this sacred text. There will be a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall and in the narthex for those who are interested in being part of this study group.

February 2001

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 2001						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

CALENDAR – REGULARLY SCHEDULED

Tuesday at 7 pm – Companions in Christ (at parsonage)
 Wednesday at 9 am – Companions in Christ (at church)
 Wednesday at 2:15 pm – Prayer Group (at parsonage)
 Wednesday at 7 pm – Choir Rehearsal (at church)
 Thursday at 3 pm – Lectionary Bible Study (at parsonage)
 Friday – Pastor’s day off

Last Sunday of the month – Hymn Sing at 9:15
 First Sunday of the month – Holy Communion

Last Monday of the month – Wings and Hands Craft Group at 7 pm (at church)
 First Thursday of the month – Holy Communion at Quaboag Nursing Home with Pastor O’Connor-Ropp, 10:30 am

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Thursday, Feb. 1 – NO BIBLE STUDY
 Friday, Feb. 2 – World Day of Prayer Service at First Congregational Church, 7 pm
 Sunday, Feb. 11 – Special Charge Conference at Church, 11 am
 Tuesday, Feb. 20 – Martha Circle at Church, 1:30 pm
 Sunday, Feb. 25 – District Superintendent here for worship and Staff-Parish Relations Meeting
 Wednesday, Feb. 28 – NO CHOIR REHEARSAL; Ash Wednesday Service at Church, 7 pm

Special dates

Black History Month
 Groundhog Day, February 2, 2001
 Boy Scout Sunday, February 4, 2001
 Valentine’s Day, February 14, 2001
 Presidents’ Day, February 19, 2001
 Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week, February 18-24, 2001
 Ash Wednesday, February 28, 2001

Words to Share!

A nature fix

Recently a pastor and his wife had such a memorable vacation that the pastor simply had to write about it when they returned home. They had visited many national parks and natural wonders throughout the western United States — Zion National Park, the Grand Canyon, Rainbow Bridge and others.

The pastor described the wildlife they had seen, the glory, wonder and beauty of God's gifts found in nature. He wrote: "We were overwhelmed by the grandeur and beauty of nature and left simply with 'Wow!' It was a good and needed connect, a nature fix that led us to praise and worship of the Creator of all that is."

Finally, he told of speaking to a couple who were sitting transfixed by the vast and colorful Grand Canyon. The pastor said to them, "It's hard to take it all in, is n't it?"

"Yes," the man replied, "like trying to get a drink from a fire hydrant."

An apt description of the overwhelming wonders of God's creation. —Adapted from Pastor Al Gephart's note to his congregation

Say, "I love you."

All of us who have ever loved or been loved know that the words "I love you" can never be spoken too often. For some of

us who have weathered the hurts of broken relationships, saying, "I love you," for the first time again is one of the most frightening things we will ever do.

Saying "I love you" out loud is an important milestone in any relationship — whether you are whispering it to a new sweetheart, promising it to a new child, admitting it to an estranged parent, offering it to a lonely friend, revealing it to a rival sibling.

Saying "I love you" once is never enough. It is just the beginning. We



Bible Quiz

Complete the Bible verses below by using letters from the phrase:

BE MY VALENTINE.

1. "The ___ ___ ___ has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near." — Mark 1:15
2. "For where two or three come together in my ___ ___ ___, there am I with them." — Matthew 18:20
3. They will ___ ___ ___ their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. —Micah 4:3
4. "Peace I ___ ___ ___ ___ with you." —John 14:27

Answers: 1. time 2. name 3. beat 4. Leave

must say "I love you" over and over again — we must hear "I love you" over and over again — before we begin to trust the reality of those words and before we can feel the weight of the love that lies behind them.

—Homiletics

Finding oneself

An elderly gentleman once asked Dr. Norman Vincent Peale to pray for him. Dr. Peale said, "Sure, I'll pray for you, but why?"

"I'm trying to find myself," the man answered.

"How old are you?" the minister asked.

"Eighty-five."

"In that case," Dr. Peale responded, "we need to pray right now!"

—From the sermon: "The Power of Discovery"

Doing something for Lent

Some years ago there was the story about a family who was visited by an older aunt during the season of Lent. The aunt was a devoted Christian who liked to read mystery stories, especially murder mysteries. The family made sure there was a supply of such books in her room.

Toward the end of the aunt's stay, the family noticed that she had not touched a single book.

"What's the matter," asked a nephew, "don't you like our selection of books?"

"Oh, no, it's not that," she replied. "It's just that I've given up murder for Lent."

No regrets

At one time or another we all regret something. You may regret something you said, or that you didn't say something. You may regret that you stayed too late, or that you went too early. You may regret that you won something, or that you lost. But in all your life, you'll never regret being kind.

The soul of Christianity

A Christ-centered life does not mean a life in which one sings hymns, reads Scripture and edifies his neighbors by hanging texts on the walls. One does not become a Christian by doing a good deed a day, nor by go-getting for religion, nor by engaging in economic and political reform movements, even though these things are done from the noblest of human motives. A Christian is one who, believing that Christ is the Son of God, has that Christ-life in his soul.

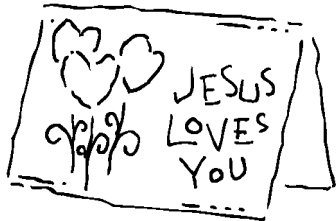
—Fulton J. Sheen
in Lift Up Your Heart



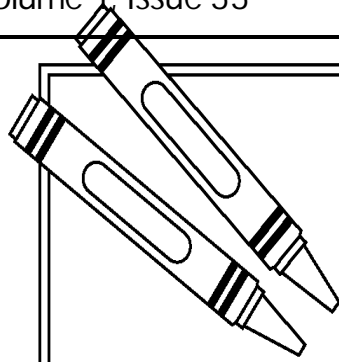
Make tray favors for a local hospital, nursing home, nutrition project or home-delivered meal program.

You will need for each:

- white, unlined index cards (4"x6")
- red & pink construction paper
- markers — green, black
- glue or glue stick



- ♥ Fold card in half
- ♥ Cut 3 hearts from colored paper. Make them about 1 inch high.
- ♥ Glue the hearts on the left side, overlap a little.
- ♥ Use marker to make "stems" from the hearts — they'll look like a bouquet of flowers.
- ♥ On the right side print a message or a verse, such as "Jesus Loves You."



Just for KIDS

A Special Message

During the month of February we focus on special feelings and people. We see hearts everywhere and send cards and greetings to friends and family. We need to do this every month!



Use the code to find a special message from God. It's good for any day — any month!



CODE

(A ¹ D)	(H ² I)	(O ³ R)	(U ⁴ V)
(G ¹ E)	(N ² L)	(T ³ S)	(Y ⁴ W)

“

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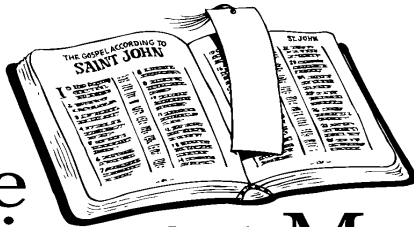
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Scripture Readings: Notice

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*

February Scripture Readings:

- 4th - **Isaiah 6:1-8**
 Paul **Psalm 138 (UMH 853)**
 Chicoine **1 Corinthians 15:1-11**
Luke 5:1-11
- 11th - **Jeremiah 17:5-10**
 Gail **Psalm 1 (UMH 738)**
 Sledziewski **1 Corinthians 15:12-20**
Luke 6:17-26
- 18th - **Genesis 45:3-11,15**
 Stewart **Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 (UMH 772)**
 King **1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**
Luke 6:27-38
- 28th - **Exodus 34:29-35**
 Liz **Psalm 99 (UMH 819)**
 Stamford **2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2**
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

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.

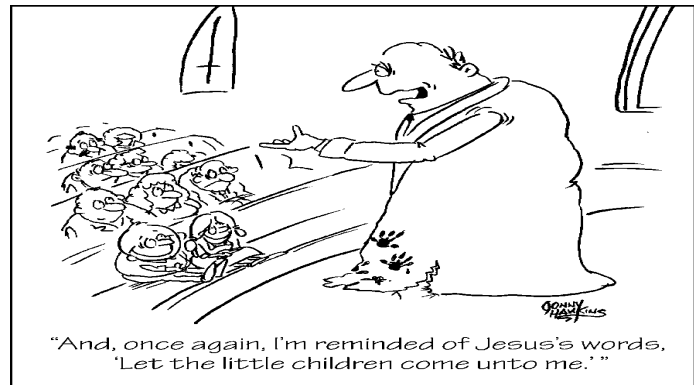
THANKS !!!

**Happy February Birthdays**

Joye Gregg	2/4	William Masterman	2/6
Elizabeth Noppa	2/6	Edith Swett	2/7
Clarice Bartlett	2/7	Jeremy Ducharme	2/8
Kristal Ducharme	2/15	Elizabeth Ploof	2/17
David Arsenault	2/23	Lee Kibbe	2/25
Frank Whittemore	2/27		

Celebrating Anniversaries in February

Dan & Clarice Bartlett	2/25/84
Norman & Phyllis Adams	2/15
Frank & Dorothy Whittemore	2/22/97

**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.

Our Sponsors

This Newsletter is made possible through the contributions of the following organizations:

Peace of Mind.

Everyone knows the value of being prepared. But few people know how to start. We can help you be prepared by answering questions and assisting you with all the details of funeral planning.

Peace of mind is being prepared. Call us today and plan for your future.

MARC A. VARNUM
Funeral Director

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