

# The George Whitefield ROCK

George Whitefield  
UMC

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**FROM THE  
PASTOR**

Dear friends,

As we enter the year 2002, I pray that each one of you is entering the new year full of hope and not fear. I offer you several of my favorite prayers which help to sustain me in times of uncertainty and remind me of who is really in charge of my life. May these prayers help you along your spiritual journey in the coming year. And by the way, if you have a favorite prayer, please give it (or send it) to Paul Chicoine for inclusion in future issues of THE ROCK.

## A PRAYER IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen. (from Thoughts in Solitude by Thomas Merton)

## A MORNING RESOLVE

I will try this day to live a simple, sincere and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike faith in God. In particular I will try to be faithful in those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating, and sleep which I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be right. And as I cannot in my own strength do this, nor even with a hope of success attempt it, I look to thee, O Lord God, in Jesus my Savior, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (from Forward Day by Day from Forward Movement Publications)

## A PRAYER WHEN LIFE SEEMS TOO BUSY

Slow me down, Lord. Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory. Help me to know the magical restoring power of sleep. Teach me the art of taking minute vacations – of slowing down to look at a flower, chat with a friend, pat a dog, read a few lines from a good book. Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise, that I may know that the race is not always to the swift – that there is more to life than increasing its speed. Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny. Amen. (Robert Cushing, 1895-1970)

## JOHN WESLEY'S COVENANT PRAYER (a prayer of surrender to God)

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt,  
rank me with whom thou wilt;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee;  
let me be full, let me be empty;

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## The Church and You

*(Continued from page 1)*

let me have all things, let me have  
nothing;  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine.  
So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made  
on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.

### THE SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.  
Amen.

(Reinhold Neibuhr)

### “CHRISTIAN READER” AVAILABLE

We are trying out a new publication called “Christian Reader” which you will find on the table in the back entry-way. If you want to take a copy of this inspirational magazine, just put \$2.00 in the slot in the front of the magazine holder. Please let me (Pastor O’Connor-Ropp) know what you think of the publication.

### COFFEE HOSTS FOR JANUARY

1/6 - Gail Sledziewski and June Theberge  
1/13 - Barbara Smith & Dell Marona  
1/20 - George & Phyllis Warriner  
1/27 - Claire Wirf & Marion Hunt



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.

### THANK YOU FROM THE PASTOR

Once again, your generosity overwhelms me! Thank you to all who contributed to my Christmas gift this year. And thank you for your cards and prayers. It is wonderful to share the joy of Christmas with all of you.

Thank you, also, to everyone who helped to make Christmas a very special time in the life of our church: to Marie and Stew King and the choir, for sharing their gifts of music and time; to Dell Marona, for coordinating the poinsettia donations and arranging them so beautifully in the sanctuary; to all who donated poinsettias; to Al & June Theberge for the extra clean-up efforts during this busy season; to Beth Olson, for helping prepare the actors for the Christmas pageant; to the Sunday School children, teachers, and other volunteers who helped to make the pageant a touching and meaningful experience; to all who read the lessons on Christmas Eve and helped out in many other ways to prepare for that beautiful candlelight service; to Cindy DiSanto for her lovely flute solo “O Holy Night”; and to all of you who do things quietly behind the scenes, not just at Christmas, but all year long. May God bless you with peace and joy in the new year.

### CHRISTMAS AT OUR CHURCH

More than 80 people were present on Sunday, December 23, to share in our annual intergenerational Christmas pageant. While the choir sang anthems of the season and the congregation joined in carols, children, women, and men from ages 2 months to 85 years old acted out the story of Jesus’ birth. Once again, we had a young baby to play the part of the baby Jesus – this year it was Kaylee Armitage, in the arms of her mother Crystal playing the part of Mary. On Christmas Eve, the presence of 23 children, along with 60+ adults, made for a lively and meaningful service of lessons and carols. The children brought the baby Jesus to the stable (a crèche on the altar), and Holy Communion was shared. The service ended with the lighting of candles as the congregation sang “Silent Night.”

**OUR SYMPATHY TO** the family and friends of Arvid Silverberg, who died on Friday, December 7. A celebration of his life was held at the church on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

# 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		

## February 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		

### January Calendar

- ? Tuesday, 1/8 6:33 p.m. – Men’s Group with Guest Speaker at church
- ? Sunday, 1/20, 7 p.m. – Prayer and Praise service at church
- ? Monday, 1/21, 7 p.m. – West Brookfield Ecumenical Council at church
- ? Tuesday, 1/22, 7 p.m. – Worship Committee at parsonage
- ? Thursday, 1/24, 7 p.m. – Administrative Council at church (reports from Christian Education and Trustees)
- ? Finance Committee, Trustees, and Christian Education Committees – meetings to be scheduled in January – date and time T.B.A.

### CALENDAR – REGULARLY SCHEDULED

Every week (unless otherwise noted):

- ? Sunday at 9:30 a.m. - Worship with Sunday School
- ? Wednesdays at 10 a.m. – women’s Bible study at the home of Annalee Collins
- ? Wednesdays at 2:15 p.m. – prayer group at parsonage (no prayer group on 1/30)
- ? Thursdays at 3 p.m. – lectionary Bible study at parsonage
- ? Thursdays at 6:33 p.m. – men’s Bible study (at homes during winter months)

## You, the Church And the Community

### ECUMENICAL PRAYER CALENDAR

In the year 2002, the Massachusetts Council of Churches is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They are inviting Christian congregations throughout Massachusetts to pray regularly for each other and for Christian unity. The prayer they have suggested is this:

*Holy One, whose being-in-community is the root of our unity, we come to You this day with thanksgiving for (name of church and leader) and for the spiritual gifts these sisters and brothers in Christ share with all Your people. Bless them and their congregations in their life and ministry. When they struggle, sustain them. Help us to stand with them as a sign of Your unity in community, and as a witness to Your care and compassion. When they celebrate, help us to rejoice with them as a sign of Your love. We pray for the day when the causes of our separations should affect our relationships with each other no more than they do in your dealing with us. Help us to celebrate our diversity, heal our divisions, and manifest the unity we share through You. This we pray in the name of the One who calls us to be one, Your Son our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

In January 2002 we are asked to pray for: the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. Donald G. K. Ming, Presiding Prelate, and Rev. Herbert L. Eddy, Presiding Elder; and the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, Bishop Susan Wolfe Hassinger.

Please note that the week of January 18-25 has been designated as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

### SAVE THE DATE – INTERFAITH PROGRAM ON FEBRUARY 3<sup>RD</sup>

In light of growing interest in the religion of Islam, the West Brookfield Ecumenical Council will present a program on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6 p.m. at First Congregational Church featuring the Rev. Whit Bodman, a United Church of Christ minister who has studied Islam as part of his doctoral studies at Harvard Divinity School. This is an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the fastest-growing religion in the world, and to separate fact from fiction concerning Islam's beliefs and practices. Additional details will be available soon.

### The path to peace

To be glad of life, because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars; to be satisfied with your possessions, but not contented with yourself until you have made the best of them; to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgusts; to covet nothing that is your neighbor's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and every day of Christ; and to spend as much time as you can, with body and with spirit, in God's out-of-doors — these are little guideposts on the footpath to peace.

—Henry Van Dyke

### CHRISTMAS GIVING

Our church experienced the joy of giving to others in several ways this year. As is our custom, people donated items for Christmas baskets for our homebound members and those in nursing homes. These were packed up by a group of volunteers on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> and delivered to people before Christmas. Many of the baskets were delivered by the children during our Christmas caroling on December 16<sup>th</sup>. An enthusiastic group of nine adults and six children brought Christmas joy to our members and friends at Quaboag-on-the-Common and Brook Haven Rest Home, as well as to five homebound members, when we went a-caroling. It's wonderful to see the faces light up as we sing the familiar songs of Christmas. Most of the people we visit join us in singing.

We also provided Christmas gifts to children and parents at Olde Village Place in West Brookfield. Mr. and Mrs. Santa (a.k.a. Steve and Pastor Mary Jane) delivered the gifts at a party arranged by Marion Hunt and her daughter Karen on Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. In addition, we provided gifts to troubled teen boys at Oxford House. Thank you to everyone who took a tag (or two or three) off the tree in the sanctuary and bought a gift for this special Christmas outreach of our church.

In a letter dated 12/24, Oxford House Program Director Sean Klingaman writes:

Dear Congregation,

On behalf of the clients at Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc. – Oxford House, I would like to thank all of you for your generous donations of clothing, radios, and toys. As you are aware, this is a group home for underprivileged adolescent boys and Christmas is always a very trying time. As the focus for many in our world is on happiness and family, many of our boys struggle with the unhappiness with which they remember their lives at home. Anything that anyone can do that is positive and caring helps put a smile on an often sad and angry face. Thank you again for your generosity.

# Make a Noisemaker to Celebrate Special Days

## You will need:

- empty kitchen matchbox (NO matches)
- foil
- tape
- dried beans or rice
- unsharpened pencil
- 2 rubber bands
- stickers, glue and glitter (optional)

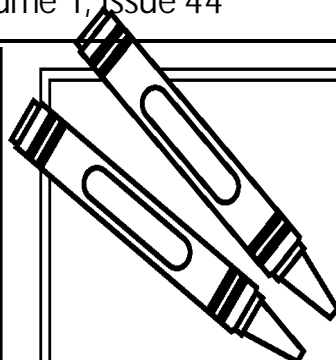


## How to make the noisemaker:

- Put beans or rice in the matchbox, so that it rattles when you shake it.
- Tape the box shut.
- Cover box with foil.
- Poke 2 small holes on opposite sides of the box near one end.
- Stick the pencil into one hole, through the box and out the other hole.
- Wrap rubber bands around the pencil on both sides of the box, so the pencil won't slip through the holes.
- If you want, you can decorate the box with stickers and glitter.

## How to use:

- Hold the pencil and move your wrist to spin the box.
- Make lots of happy noise to celebrate special days throughout the year.



# Just for KIDS

## Special Times for the Israelites



*"This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it ..." Exodus 12:14*

The biblical calendar had many feasts and festivals. They were connected with the changing of the seasons or special events. Below are some of the special days observed by the Israelites.

Use the code to find the name of the special day and the month of the Jewish year in which they are celebrated.

### CODE:

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

Season	Holiday	Month
1. End of Summer	(New Year)	GRSHIR
2. Fall	(Day of Atonement)	GRSHIR
3. Fall	(Festival of Booths)	GRHSIR
4. Winter	(Festival of Rededication)	PRHOVE
5. Winter	(Festival of Lots)	ZWZI
6. Spring	(Feast of Unleavened Bread)	MRHZM
7. Spring	(Feast of Weeks/Pentecost)	HREZM

**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

**January Scripture Readings:**

- 6<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 60:1-6**  
 Paul **Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (UMH 795)**  
 Chicoine **Ephesians 3:1-12**  
**Matthew 2:1-12**
- 13<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 42:1-9**  
 Marion **Psalm 29 (UMH 761)**  
 Hunt **Acts 10:34-43**  
**Matthew 3:13-17**
- 20<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 49:1-7**  
 Harvey **Psalm 40:1-11 (UMH 774)**  
 Collins **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**  
**John 1:29-42**
- 27<sup>th</sup> - **Isaiah 9:1-4**  
 Liz **Psalm 27:1, 4-9 (UMH 758)**  
 Sanford **1 Corinthians 1:10-18**  
**Matthew 4:12-23**

**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.

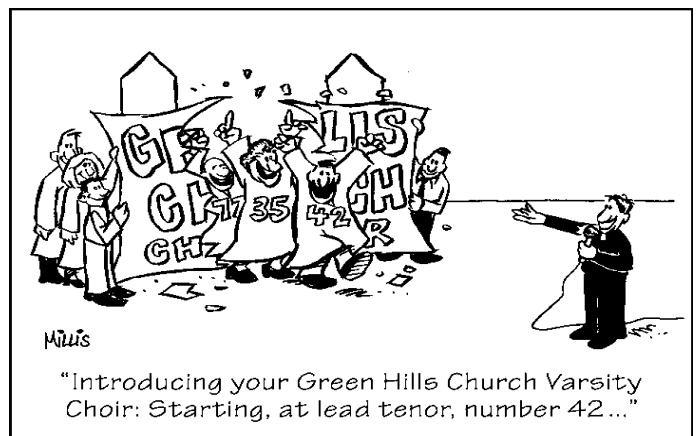
THANKS !!!

**Happy January Birthdays**

Millie Silverberg	1/7	Zachary McCann	1/10
Gail Sledsiewski	1/13	Carol Piesyk	1/28
Paul Chicoine	1/28	Matthew Frazier	1/28

**Celebrating Anniversaries in January**

John & Judith Bartlett 1/30/60

**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.gb-gm-umc.org/whitefield](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/whitefield)