

The George Whitefield ROCK

George Whitefield
UMC

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As I write this, the 2002 Olympics are nearing the end. It has been thrilling to watch the best athletes in the world compete for gold medals, and it's been sad to hear about unethical behavior among the judges. I was especially interested in the women's skating competition. Michelle Kwan was clearly favored to win the gold medal, but in the end she "only" won the bronze. I say "only" because winning a bronze, silver, or gold requires the same amount of commitment, years and years of disciplined training, clear focus, and a lot of support from family, friends, professional coaches, and many others. In fact, just to make it to the Olympics requires tremendous discipline and commitment. In this highly competitive environment, there are clearly winners and losers by the standards of the games. A lifetime of training doesn't guarantee that one will be a winner.

Compare this with the Christian life. If we believe in Jesus Christ and put our trust in him, we are all winners. No amount of spiritual discipline, no roster of good works, can earn salvation for us. That was accomplished for us on the cross. The victory is ours through the One who rose victorious over death.

However, that doesn't mean we should sit on our laurels. Salvation is a free gift, but in order to use that gift to its fullest, we need commitment and discipline and teaching. In the Wesleyan/Methodist understanding, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are "justified" by our faith; that is, we are placed in right relationship with God, forgiven of our sins, and given new life in Christ. That's the beginning of our journey, not the end. Just like newborn babies, we need to grow into maturity as Christians. The Wesleyan expression is "going on to perfection." To do this, we need to engage in a disciplined life of prayer, Bible study, worship, fasting and abstinence, mutual accountability, and acts of justice and mercy. All of this is designed to shape our lives in conformity to Jesus Christ. Our disciplines don't earn us salvation, but they do enable us to grow as Christians more and more into the perfect love to which we are called.

The apostle Paul occasionally spoke of the Christian life using the image of a sports competition. In Philippians 3: 12-14 he writes (referring to the resurrection from the dead): "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.... This one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." And in I Corinthians 9: 24-25 he writes: "Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one."

Lent and Holy Week are wonderful times to engage in spiritual training, to practice spiritual disciplines that help us to strengthen our faith and grow toward Christian maturity. They help us to prepare to celebrate the greatest victory of all – the Resurrection. Thanks be to God!

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The Church and You

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The United Methodist Men meet on the 1st Tues. of each Month at 6:33 PM at the church. We have enjoyed having the Chief of Police and the Principal of the Elementary School as speakers. We need to know what kind of programs you would like. We support an Indian Child with the dues we collect each month. We also have a bible study led by Rev. Harvey Collins every Thurs. at 7:00 PM .. It meets at participants houses during the winter.

EASTER FLOWERS

Memorial flowers for Easter--6 bud plants from the florist will be \$11.50 and sign-up deadline is March 17--- Sign up sheet at church or call Dell Marona. Second sign-up sheet to bring your own flowers also at church.

LENTEN SEASON 2002

Study on Racism – Sunday evenings at church, 6:30 p.m.
Trip to Weston Priory – Saturday, March 23, leave church at 7 a.m.
Palm Sunday Worship – Sunday, March 24, 9:30 a.m.
Holy Thursday Seder Supper and Communion – 6 p.m.
Good Friday Tenebrae Service – 7 p.m.
Easter Sunrise Service on Foster Hill – 6 a.m.
Easter Worship – 9:30 a.m.

COFFEE HOSTS FOR MARCH

3/3---Al & Gloria Reid
 3/10---Harvey & Annalee Collins
 3/17---Ken & Betsy Cloutier
 3/24--Marge & Charlie Reim
 3/31---No Coffee Hour

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.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Tuesday, 19 March 2002 @ 7:30 p.m., the United Methodist Women will host guest speaker Phil Milgrom of The Centered Place in Warren, MA. The subject of his interactive speech and demonstration will be:

If God Wanted You to Touch Your Toes, She Would Have Put Them on Your Knees -- The Benefits of Yoga for Those Who Want to Go Beyond Touching Toes to Touching Souls

Members of the United Methodist Women group will meet at 7:00 p.m. to conduct business, including planning for future events, prior to the speaker's commencement. We ask anyone who has not pledged to Mission for 2002 to do so at this meeting. Now, lets all limber up body and soul and get ready for a great night of laughter and learning. Bring some friends!!!

“FAT SUNDAY” SUPPER AND TALENT SHOW

On Sunday evening, February 10th, 25 children and adults gathered for a delicious potluck supper and talent show. Along with the talented cooks who prepared the food, several others shared their gifts with an appreciative audience. Pastor Mary Jane warmed up the audience with some jokes, and then Estalene Buzzell presented her own special version of “When I Am Old I Shall Wear Purple” (complete with purple dress and red hat). Next, Rebecca Chicoine treated us to a cheer-leading demonstration. Phyllis Warriner told an amusing story about her grandson, with a surprise ending. Harold Smock had us rolling in the aisles with some more jokes. Annalee Collins played the autoharp, April Learned sang a tender *a capella* version of “The Rose,” and Harvey Collins read a poem by Edgar Guest. *The Chocolatiers* (a.k.a. Dell Marona and Judy Bartlett) gave a demonstration of how to make chocolate candy baskets and chocolate roses (the kids really loved this one!). Pastor Mary Jane wrapped it up by reading a couple of poems by her great-grandfather James O’Connor. It was a wonderful evening and a good way to celebrate before entering the Lenten season.

HOLY WEEK

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24th. On Holy Thursday we will observe our Lord’s last supper with his disciples with a traditional Seder meal and Holy Communion around the table. This will begin at 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. On Good Friday, we will have a service of Tenebrae – a moving service in which we recall the last hours of Jesus’ life and extinguish candles as a symbol of the darkness of the events surrounding his crucifixion. This service begins at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.



March 2002

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31						

April 2002						
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MARCH CALENDAR

- *Sundays (except March 3rd) – Racism study at church, 3 p.m.
- *Friday, March 1 – Church Women United’s World Day of Prayer at East Brookfield Baptist Church, 7:30 p.m.
- *Tuesday, March 5 – United Methodist Men at church, 6:33 p.m.
- *Wednesday, March 6 – NO PRAYER GROUP
- *Thursday, March 7 – Holy Communion with Pastor O’Connor-Ropp at Quaboag-on-the-Common, 10:30 a.m.
- *Thursday, March 14 – Staff-Parish Relations Committee at parsonage, 7 p.m.
- *Sunday, March 17 – Ecumenical Brunch at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 10:45 a.m.
- *Monday, March 18 – West Brookfield Ecumenical Council at church, 7 p.m.
- *Tuesday, March 19 – United Methodist Women at church, 7 p.m.; Board of Trustees at church, 7 p.m.
- *Thursday, March 21 – Church Council at church, 7 p.m.
- *Saturday, March 23 – Trip to Weston Priory; leave church at 6:45 a.m.
- *Sunday, March 24 – Palm Sunday
- *Monday, March 25 – Wings & Hands Craft Group at church, 7 p.m.; Red Cross Blood Drive at First Congregational Church, 2-8 p.m.
- *Thursday, March 28 – Holy Thursday Seder Supper and Holy Communion at church, 6 p.m.
- *Friday, March 29 – Good Friday worship service at church, 7 p.m.
- *Sunday, March 31 – Easter Sunday; sunrise service on Foster Hill at 6 a.m.; breakfast at Brookfield Congregational Church, 7 a.m.; Easter worship celebration at church, 9:30 a.m.

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 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)

the Church And the Community

EASTER SUNDAY – HE IS RISEN!

Easter Sunday celebrations begin with a sunrise service at the Whitefield Rock on Foster Hill at 6 a.m. The Rev. Pat Glore, Interim Minister at First Congregational Church, will bring this year's message. This will be followed by a breakfast at Brookfield Congregational Church. Our festive worship service begins at 9:30 a.m. This service will feature special music and a dance presentation by the children of the church.

STUDY ON RACISM

The Lenten study on racism in preparation for an act of repentance at the Annual Conference in June is being held during Lent on Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. We are learning about the three separate denominations that were created in response to racism within the Methodist Episcopal Church (the predecessor of the United Methodist Church): the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), AME Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Churches. We are examining our own racism and our need for both personal and institutional repentance. If you are not able to attend the study group but would like to read the study book, please ask Pastor Mary Jane for a copy.

TRIP TO WESTON PRIORY

Once again, we will take a Lenten journey to Weston, Vermont to attend a worship service with the Benedictine monks of Weston Priory, followed by lunch and a visit to the Vermont Country Store. Known as the "singing monks," the brothers at the Priory are hospitable, and their worship services are very popular. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall, or you may call Pastor Mary Jane to make a reservation. We will leave the church at 6:45 a.m. on Saturday, March 23rd, and return by 5 p.m.

Who in the world is Henry?



Norman Neaves, an Oklahoma City pastor, tells of a man who approached him after worship one Sunday and asked — or so Dr. Neaves thought — "Who in the world is Henry?"

A bit confused, Dr. Neaves said, "I don't know. I'm not sure I know what you're talking about." The man pointed to what he called the "word" on the cross in the sanctuary. It was the letters "INRI" which the man seemed to be pronouncing "Henry."

Dr. Neaves could not help but chuckle a little. Finally understanding what the fellow was asking, the pastor explained that the letters "INRI" actually stood for words which were placarded on the cross where Jesus was dying. The letters stand for Latin words.

The letter which looks like an "I" is actually a "J" in Latin and stands for "Jesus." The "N" stands for "Nazareth." The "R" stands for "Rex" which means "King" in Latin. The last "I" stands for "J" again but represents the word "Jews." Thus "INRI" means in Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Actually Pilate had the sign written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek so that everyone who stood at the foot of the cross could read the sign in the language with which he or she was most familiar.

The Resurrection proves that Jesus is indeed King of the whole world as well as Lord and Savior.

ECUMENICAL BRUNCH

This year's Brunch, sponsored by the West Brookfield Ecumenical Council, will be held on Sunday, March 17th at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church from 10:45 on. Proceeds from this brunch go to provide an award to a graduating senior from the area who plans to attend college in the fall. Tickets are available from Marge Reim, Barbara Smith, Claire Wirf, or Pastor Mary Jane.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER CALENDAR

In the year 2002, the Massachusetts Council of Churches is celebrating its 100th 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.

Ecumenical Good Friday Service, 12-3 p.m. at First Congregational Church in West Brookfield. Meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ by area clergy.

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.

**March Scripture Readings:**

3 rd Charlie Riem	- Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 (UMH 814) Romans 5:1-11 John 4:4-42
10 th Crystal Armitage	- 1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 23 (UMH 137) Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41
17 th Gloria Reid	- Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130 (UMH 848) Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45
24 th Allen Reid	- Matthew 21:1-11 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 (UMH 839) Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 (UMH 764)
Passion/ Palm	Philippians 2:5-11 Matthew 26:14 — 27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54
31 th Liz Sanford	- Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (UMH 839) Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-8 or Matthew 27:11-54

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 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 March Birthdays**

Ian Williamson	3/3	Alyce Wall	3/5
Estalene Buzzell	3/11	Betty Prindle	3/11
Gerry Burnham	3/14	Jane Dolan	3/15
Geraldine McKeon	3/15	Jenna Ducharme	3/16
George Plumb	3/17	Catherine Buzzell	3/17
Karen Farrell	3/18	Shane Calkins	3/19
Todd Kibbe	3/22	Josh Wilcox	3/26
Terri Ducharme	3/26	Rev. Ann Roberts	3/27
Don Beichner	3/28	Jill Terrell	3/31
Rev. Mary-Jane O'Connor-Ropp	3/16		

Celebrating Anniversaries in March

Mel & Nina Williamson 3/24

**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

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



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