

Church News

Local pastors offer sermons

Healthful Resolutions Part 2

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was an American revivalist, philosopher and theologian who served as a key figure in the Great Awakening.

Each New Year I entertain his writings, as he wrote at length on the theme of healthful resolutions. Consider the following as we enter into 2026:

1) Soul-Searching
What did Edwards resolve on the practice of searching his soul before God? “Resolved, to inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent [or] what sin I have committed. . also at the end of every week, month and year.” It is clear that Edwards took ongoing review of his spiritual condition seriously! This is something we see often in Scripture:

Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)
40 Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.

Sin, by nature, separates us from the Lord. Thus, let us resolve to repeatedly assess the state of our soul and repent in kind.

2) The Fight Against Sin
What did Edwards further note concerning the battle against sin? “Resolved, whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.” Do we so live? Consider the words of Christ on the matter of resisting sinfulness:

Mark 9:43, 45, 47-48
43 “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.. 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where ‘the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched [cf. Isa. 66:24].”

3) Living in Light of Eternity
What did Edwards resolve on living in the light of eternity? “Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.” The revivalist also said: “Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.” Scripture warns us concerning the manner in which we live. Are the things we are living for worth dying for? Should you die or Christ return today, are you prepared?

Matthew 25:31-46
31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me,

I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

37 Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

40 The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

41 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.”

44 They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?”

45 He will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.

46 Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. Should you have any comments or questions, feel free to contact me at your convenience using the information below.

Also, feel free to check us out online at www.NewLifeBarre.org or visit us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We hope to see you soon.

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Second Sunday after Christmas
“The True Light Came into the World”
Scripture Reading:
John 1 v 1-18

I. Introduction
I truly believe that it is essential for us to listen to one another’s viewpoints on various topics so that we can truly understand each other.

Someone else’s version of the truth might be different from our own understanding of the truth. When we truly listen without resisting the other’s perspective, that’s when real understanding happens, like a light bulb going off that moment of insight, revealing how we did not understand each other’s beliefs / or truths all along.

On the other hand, if we do not take the time to listen to each other, it may lead to misunderstandings and erode trust eventually causing divisions that hinder genuine communication. Such circumstances result in confusion, turmoil, and uncertainty, and feelings of darkness, making it difficult to connect, resolve issues and be reconciled with one another.

II. The True Light Came into the World
God knew all about chaos, confusion and darkness. In this Chapter 1, John the Baptist describes how God spoke a word into the darkness at the beginning of time. Things were rough and unorganized and uninhabited, and through God’s word there was life and light, and the light shone into the darkness. But even then, those who started wandering

around did not comprehend this light coming from the Maker of heaven and earth.

Over time in many Old Testament stories, divine light was met with internal resistance, resulting in darkness overtaking life. While the darkness continued its path of chaos and destruction, God’s word continued to shine the light of God’s loving intention with God’s creation, God’s people.

John now introduces the same Word of God which, through the act of Incarnation, resulted in God’s Son to becoming flesh and dwelling among humanity. Jesus was God’s fullest disclosure to humanity, God’s act of salvation and love for the world. But the world then did not recognize this divine act and the divine light Jesus was shining. Edward Klink describes it as follows, “The light of the world is met with direct and robust confrontation by the darkness.”

John the Baptist is the one who would bear witness to this True Light coming from God, the One who would give light to every person... the light of love and care and compassion and understanding and kindness. God’s intent was to heal the world by sending the Son to shine the light that would eliminate the darkness of evil, of hate, of suffering, and unwillingness to understand each other. Those who brought Him to be crucified, would not have any of this True Light. And those who crucified Him, were already caught up in the evil of darkness.

III. Conclusion
Today, the world at large is struggling to recognize the True Light of Christ, a light that is loving, authentic and genuine. The Son of God taught us the values that make for a loving and caring world. However, it appears that we are living in a world facing widespread turmoil and uncertainty.

We are striving, not without challenges, to shine the light in our homes and communities and our churches, but the moment we look beyond the safety of our dwellings, the darkness, unkindness, hate and division, violence and war stare us in the face.

This is not what God intended for this world. God’s word spoke into the darkness at the beginning of time, and God’s Word became flesh in a dramatic way in the birth of God’s Son, to show us the light. John the Baptist reminds us that he bore witness to that light and he could not stop talking about it to the people then.

May God make us all into witnesses of that same light today and may God’s Holy Spirit touch this world in powerful ways that will drive out all intentions of darkness and bring us light and love and peace.

Amen.
Pastor Margaret Keyser
Barre Congregational Church
30 Park St., Barre

NOTICE
ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

Michael “MJ” Publicover, Jr., 19

WINCHENDON – It is with a heavy heart that we announce the untimely passing of the adventurous and compassionate Michael “MJ” Publicover Jr. on Friday, Dec. 26, 2025. Born on Sept. 18, 2006, in Worcester, MJ was a vibrant and energetic spirit who brought joy and laughter to everyone around him. He was a beacon of positivity, always ready with a funny anecdote or a helping hand. His compassionate nature and infectious humor were as much a part of him as his love for family and friends.

MJ attended the Orange School District, he attended Mahar Regional Middle/High School and later transferred to the Quabbin Regional School District where he attended Quabbin Regional High School.

He was an avid athlete, playing baseball, basketball, soccer and his true passion, football. He got his start with football at an early age of five and played nine years of youth football and played until high school. MJ was a natural born quarterback, he could read the field at a level far beyond his age, often making him a lead scorer on

his team, where he perfected his bootleg play.

Between school and sports, MJ made so many friends that he grew with, many of which he was still very close with. He made friends everywhere he went, he was a very extroverted person, who always talked, laughed, you name it with everyone he met.

MJ worked with his father as a carpenter and had recently started working at Trellis Structures in Templeton.

MJ was a cherished son to his parents, Michael and Cheri Publicover and a beloved brother to Jordan Publicover, and his beloved cat, Pennywise. His absence will leave an unfillable void in the hearts of his family, friends and everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. Michael “MJ” lived a life full of love, laughter, and memories that will forever be etched in our hearts.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026 from 2-5 p.m. at the Mack Family Funeral Homes, Athol-Orange Chapel, located at 110 New Athol Road, Orange, Massachusetts, 01364, followed immedi-



DEATH NOTICE

Publicover, Jr., Michael “MJ”
Died Dec. 26, 2025
Calling hours Sunday, Jan. 11 2-5 p.m.
Mack Family Funeral Homes,
110 New Athol Road, Orange
Celebration of Life Sunday, Jan. 11 5-8 p.m.
Ellinwood Country Club,
1928 Pleasant St., Athol

ately with a celebration of life held at the Ellinwood Country Club at 1928 Pleasant St., Athol from 5-8 p.m.

This is an opportunity to pay our respects, share stories and remember the wonderful life of Michael “MJ” Publicover Jr.

We invite those who knew MJ to leave memories and upload photos to the memorial page at www.mackfamilyfh.com. It serves as a testament to his life and the indelible mark he left on all our hearts. Through this, we keep his legacy alive and cherish the moments we had with him.

Mack Family Funeral Homes, Athol-Orange Chapel, 110 New Athol Road, Orange, MA.

Congregational Church to hold Mardi Gras pancake supper

RUTLAND – A Mardi Gras pancake supper will be held Saturday, Feb. 7 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.at the First Congregational Church of Rutland, 264 Main St.,

Rutland. Menu includes pancakes (gluten free will be available) bacon, sausage and fruit. There will be live music and raffles. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for

children and free for ages 3 and under.

Reservations can be made by calling the church office at 508-886-4453.

Legals

A.C 78A

Docket Number:
WO24P3319PM
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Worcester Probate & Family Court

To all persons interested in the estate of Paul S. Jackson, Sr. of New Braintree in the said county, person under conservatorship. A petition has been presented to said Court for authority to sell-private sale - certain real estate of said three-hundred and thirty-two thousand (\$332,000.00)

for maintenance.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the **twentieth day of January 2026**, the return date of this citation.

Witness, **Leilah A. Keamy**, Esquire, First Judge of said Court this twenty-second day of December 2025.

Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
01/08/2026m

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Barre Gazette OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.



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