

FIRST  BAPTIST
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



The Message
July 2025

REV. CATHERINE M. MILLER, PASTOR

CHURCH OFFICE: 781-461-1730

EMAIL: OFFICE@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG

PASTOR'S STUDY: 781-461-0297

EMAIL: PASTOR@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG

WEBSITE: WWW.FBCWESTWOOD.ORG



From The Pastor's Desk

July 2025



Greetings...

First Baptist Church Westwood & Friends

"The kingdom of God is like this," he said. "A man scatters seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn't know how."
Mark 4:26-27

Praise God for seeing another Summer! I wish you a peaceful Independence Day/July 4th holiday. I'll speak for myself but would guess that you too are thankful to be a citizen of the United States of America. Regardless of the current state of the country, few people in this moment in history take the *weightiness* of their American citizenship for granted.

But dear Christian, do you understand the *weightiness* of citizenship in the Kingdom of God? It was central to Jesus Christ's public teachings shared with multitudes of people and explained in private to His true followers. By His Spirit the early Church believed in the power of God's Kingdom on earth. We must also! God's Kingdom continues to exude supernatural power and action inspiring us to be true to The Great Commission. Our dual citizenship also tethers us to godly guidance in everyday life.

But wait...you already know this, right? Don't we regularly utter to God before Heaven's witness the words: *'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.'*

Pray this joyfully, understanding the words as a petition to God because you're **asking** the Lord to have *full reign* and not just 'out there' in society but inside your heart, mind, in your affairs and in His Church! The Church is saying, "Yes!" to being led by God's Spirit. When taken seriously, the Lord's Prayer models an oath of supreme reverence and submission of human will to the Father's will. It reminds us to relax in total reliance upon God, come what may. We practice refreshing our faith with childlike trust...

***'O! Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now I'm found! Was blind, but now I see!'***

In Mark's Gospel verses we find a fascinating promise! We are of God's Kingdom on earth. The Church is promised vitality and thriving life. In God's economy seeds **will** sprout miraculously... plants **will** grow miraculously ...

crops **will** yield abundance of 30, some 60, some 100 fold miraculously! But the fulfillment of vitality and thriving **even in 'dry' seasons** only happens when we plant the way Jesus said to! Use Gospel seed. As you go this Summer, sow!! your little Gospel seeds. There's good soil (souls) awaiting. One of your simple personal experiences about Jesus will do it, then leave the rest to God. People's hearts are already prepared for your path. Believe! (John 6:29) and take a posture of patient expectancy. We are all poster children for God's transforming love and forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

"And he said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to describe it? It's like a mustard seed that, when sown upon the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on the ground. And when sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the garden plants, and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade.'"

Mark 4:30-32

It's not too late for Summer planting in New England!

"July is a good time to plant beans, cucumbers, and summer squash.
It's also a good time to start seeds for fall harvest vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, and kale!"

* * *

You are good soil because God's Word took root in you. Time to pay it forward and bear fruit. Whose life will you touch this Summer for Jesus? Choose someone to share your story about ***why you love Jesus? Try giving an example of how your faith strengthened you in a trial when no one or nothing else could.*** We talk so much and about many things. Talk to someone about your friend Jesus. This does not require expending a lot of physical energy nor is it about intellect, personality or quoting Bible verses...

Dear Christian simply share *your* testimony. Don't be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your story is your Gospel seed! and God has promised a 30, 60, or 100 return for The Kingdom. God will surely smile upon your courageous efforts.

"He taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them, 'Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow... other seed fell on good ground and it grew up, producing fruit that increased thirty, sixty, and a hundred times. Then he said, 'Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.'"

Mark 4:2,8-9

Do you hear God speaking?

Blessings and happy planting!

Pastor Catherine



Baker Chapel
10:00 a.m.

We are presently enjoying summer services in our outside Baker Chapel. Summer services will continue through August 31st.

July and August Communion Sundays will be celebrated inside (in the sanctuary) and they will be held on the 2nd Sundays rather than the traditional 1st -

- July 13th
- August 10th

We are looking forward to another summer of joining with First Parish Congregational Church and St. John's Episcopal Church for Westwood Clergy Ecumenical services:

Sun. July 6th @ First Baptist Church
Preaching: Rector V. Michael Bousquet

Sun. July 20th @ St. John's Episcopal
Preaching: Rev. J.T. Hill

Sun. August 17th @ First Parish Congregational Church
Preaching: Rev. Catherine M. Miller

* * * * *

In Baker Chapel there are several benches for seating, but we encourage you to bring your own chair, as these may fill up quickly. There will be folding chairs available for those without their own.

In the case of inclement weather (rain or extreme heat outside), worship will be held in our air-conditioned sanctuary.

If you are unable to join us on a particular Sunday, worship is livestreamed and also video-taped so it may be viewed at a later time. The livestream and YouTube link can be found on our website, fbcwestwood.org, by clicking on "Worship Services" and then choosing which service you'd like to view. In addition, an all-church email will be sent out a few days prior to the upcoming service with that service's link. If you are not on our email list and would like to receive the link to our services, please email Donna Metcalf at office@fbcwestwood.org.



Let's Talk" group discussion and Holy Communion

Hello everyone!

Pastor Catherine hosts an in-person and Zoom Bible discussion where she will present a topic for us to reflect upon and there will be open discussion for sharing and learning from each other, with the Holy Spirit's guidance.

We'll close with The Lord's Supper, so bring your bread and juice!

The sessions are held in the Reception room and on Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

On July 3rd, we will be meeting on Zoom only but will return to meeting hybrid on July 17th (both on Zoom & in-person in the Reception room).

Hope you can join us!

For those attending by Zoom, Rev. Catherine M. Miller is inviting you to the scheduled event.

Topic: Let's Talk: Bible Study & Holy Communion w/ Pastor Catherine

Time: July 3, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

July 3, 2025 07:00 PM

July 17, 2025 07:00 PM

August 7, 2025 07:00 PM

August 21, 2025 07:00 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZcodu-urTwuHdac3InSTEQ_Ezi5BrhXckDa/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGrqzosHNeStB6FRpwqGYj4M-7ztmZbgqdcn0zMDRNNRzLJE_hLZ5BtGODT

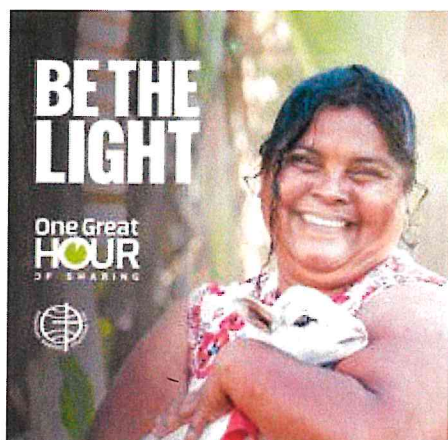
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83516637472?pwd=EvL6pkHvrpuOfst9PyI3PKEydXFVak.1>

Meeting ID: 835 1663 7472

Passcode: 618284

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/k1OBxoEcM>



**One Great
HOUR
OF SHARING**

A LETTER FROM YOUR WORLD RELIEF OFFICER

Dear American Baptist Church members,

I love Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of these verses in Matthew 5, and the clear commission they give to show up brightly in the world and be generous with our lives. That is the invitation extended in this year's One Great Hour of Sharing theme, Be the Light.

The scriptures tell us that huge crowds were gathering, drawn to Jesus by his teachings and the miracles of healing he performed. So, Jesus climbed a hill and delivered his "sermon on the mount." He opened his message by bestowing beautiful blessings that must have been like balm for those hearing it, and then he described a life of discipleship. He commands us in those verses to be light-bearers, to raise that light high and cast it wide.

Our giving to One Great Hour of Sharing is one way we can heed that call. When we participate in One Great Hour of Sharing, we shed light in places where circumstances make it difficult to imagine a future with hope. We create possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety and new promise. We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities and overturn lives. We empower partners around the globe in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has wrought despair and destruction.

I think of the ministries our One Great Hour of Sharing gifts enable as a showering of unexpected blessings, much like those blessings Jesus granted in his sermon on the mount. Our offerings let people know that they are not alone, that people they don't even know see their pain and care enough to respond. They extend a mighty witness of love that is powerful and healing.

I hope you will participate in the One Great Hour of Sharing offering this year with a spirit of joyful generosity! Thank you for 'bringing out the God-colors in the world' by generously sharing your OGHS gifts. This is why we are here: to be shining witnesses of uncommon love and enduring hope, to share abundant blessings with others.

In grateful partnership,

Lisa Rothenberger-Winter

World Relief Officer

Please make donation checks payable to:

"FBC Westwood" and note in the memo section "OGHS".

Donation envelopes can be found in the sanctuary pews and on the Summer Worship Cart in Baker Chapel on Sunday mornings.

You may place your donation in the offering plate or mail to the church office.

Thank you.

Presentation of the "Settled Pastors & their spouses of FBC Westwood since 1810" plaque Sunday worship, June 15, 2025



Researched and created by
Sterling Smith.

Gifted by Sterling & Georgia
Smith, FBC Westwood members
for over 60 years (since 1959).

**the wood frame is circa year 1800, owned by William James Smith, Sterling's
Great Grandfather.*

*The plaque is displayed on the wall above the back pews in the
sanctuary.*

Thank you, Sterling!

Community Herb Garden

David Smith, Building Coordinator, excavated an area near Fellowship
Hall and planted a Community herb and vegetable garden.



These photos are from the early stages of the garden, taken in May
2025. Photo credit to Pastor Catherine

June 2025

Worship services



June 8th

Guest Preacher, Rev Dr David Wright
Sermon title: "Just, Like Joseph"



Guest Soloist,
Shelby Wright



June 15th

Guest Speaker, Robert Folsom
Sermon title: "Father Knows Best"



A HISTORIC BAPTIST DISCOVERY:

Lost Anti-slavery document found after 120 years

(article from June 2025 TABCOM Notes)



We are excited to share some truly extraordinary news from the Baptist Archives at the TABCOM offices in Groton. A long-missing and historically significant document has been found—one that sheds light on the bold witness of Massachusetts Baptists in the fight against slavery.

While cataloguing and organizing archival materials, a small team of dedicated Baptist volunteers had been on the lookout for a document known only from a mention in the 1902 centennial history of the

Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society and the Massachusetts Baptist Convention. The document, titled "*A Resolution and Protest Against Slavery*," was originally written in 1847 under the direction of the Boston Baptist Association and was signed by 116 Baptist ministers—most from Massachusetts and a few from other parts of New England.

Until now, this resolution had only been seen in a published reproduction from that centennial volume. Its physical whereabouts remained a mystery. Efforts to locate the original document at the Massachusetts State Library, Brown University, Harvard University, and the American Baptist Historical Society proved unsuccessful. It was, for many Baptist historians, the "Holy Grail" of abolitionist-era Baptist documents.

Then, on Saturday, May 24, 2025, something remarkable happened. While installing new shelving in the archives, **Rev. John Odams** (First Baptist Church Boston) and **Jen Cromack** (First Baptist Church Westwood) moved a banker's box and discovered a long, narrow archival container. Inside was a carefully rolled scroll—approximately 4 to 5 feet in length and 9 inches wide. Upon opening it, they immediately recognized what it was: the original Resolution and Protest Against Slavery, complete with all 116 handwritten signatures.

Every name on the scroll has since been verified, along with the churches where these courageous ministers served. The document is not only an inspiring testament to our Baptist forebears' moral conviction—it is a powerful witness to the Gospel's call for justice.

A special Juneteenth and Historical Celebration was held on Saturday, June 21st at the TABCOM offices in Groton where people gathered to honor the recovery of this vital piece of Baptist history and view the original document firsthand, along with touring the archives and enjoying fellowship and refreshments.



Christian Youth Conference 2025 Oceanwood

Christian Youth Conference (CYC) is an exciting, two-week conference held on the beautiful southern coast of Maine. Specifically targeted towards High-school youth, this camp provides students with the tools and faith-building they need to face the challenges of young adulthood in today's society. Since 1915, their campers have experienced inspiring classes and programs, connected with God, and established lifelong friendships in the picturesque town of Ocean Park.

Objectives

- *To introduce students to Jesus Christ and encourage growth in the Christian faith*
- *To help students gain a sense of themselves and their own personal beliefs*
- *To experience together the love of God*

Activities

The men of Camp Judson and the women of Camp Hasseltine build their faith with each other through:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| • <i>Chapel</i> | • <i>Evening programs</i> |
| • <i>Classes</i> | • <i>Community service</i> |
| • <i>Sports</i> | • <i>Formal banquet</i> |
| • <i>Beach time</i> | • <i>Cabin devotions</i> |
| • <i>Campfires</i> | • <i>Communion</i> |

Due to a generous grant from the BBSU (Boston Baptist Social Union), the cost for CYC 2025 has been lowered to \$950.00!

*Scholarships are available
www.cycop.org / info@cycop.org
on Facebook- [ChristianYouthConference](#)
Have any questions, speak with Jen Cromack (CYC's Academic Assistant)*



Donation requests from The Westwood Food Pantry

1. Please do not travel to the stores just to pick up donated items- instead we suggest that you purchase a few donation items during your regular shopping trip, especially if they are on sale.
2. You can bring your items to worship on Sunday.

Suggested items:

- Canned Soups -especially Progresso (Vegetable types, Clam Chowder, etc)
- Canned Vegetables (Peas, Corn, etc.)
- Canned Baked Beans
- Canned Fruit (Pineapple, Fruit Cocktail, Peaches, Pears, Mandarin Oranges, etc.)
- Canned Beef Stew, Hash, Chili with Meat)
- Spaghetti Sauce (small 24 -25-ounce jars)

Other "Always Needed" Popular Items

- Health & Beauty Aids (shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste etc.)
- Diapers
- L or XL Depends
- Cleaning Products (dish detergent, laundry detergent, etc.)
- Cake mixes and frosting
- Canned **White** Albacore Tuna in water
- Canned Chicken (5-ounce cans or small pouches)

Volunteers:

At this time they have all the volunteers they can use, but their needs may change at any time. If you or your high school or college-aged student is interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please email westwoodfoodpantry@gmail.com.
(Sorry, but they are unable to accept volunteers younger than 9th grade.)

How to Apply:

The Westwood Food Pantry is available to all residents of Westwood who are experiencing temporary or long-term food insecurity.

To request assistance from the Westwood Food Pantry or to set up a client visit, please email them at westwoodfoodpantry@gmail.com or call them at 781-269-2008.



Pull-Tabs for Shriners Hospital

Are you aware that for years we've been collecting pull-tabs from beverage cans – and we're still doing it? Why? Here's the story.

Shriners Hospitals in Springfield and Boston have been collecting pull-tabs or "pop-tops" from beverage cans since 1989, recycling them, and putting the money toward programs that directly benefit children. The pull-tabs are the only pure aluminum part of the beverage can, and there are approximately 1,200 to 1,400 tabs in one pound. Since the program's inception, about a half-million pounds of aluminum tabs have been collected and recycled.

We donate the tabs to the Shriners' Burns Hospital – Boston. Neil Patterson coordinates this project, and Ken Shaw delivers the tabs to the hospital. There is a plastic jug in the Reception Room at church where you can leave the tabs you have removed from beverage cans.

Their website reminds us that Shriners' Children's Hospitals are "always here for our patients, regardless of a family's ability to pay or insurance status".

You can help a Shriner help a child. Donate pull-tabs for recycling.





Pastoral Care Meetings (in-person or virtual meetings):

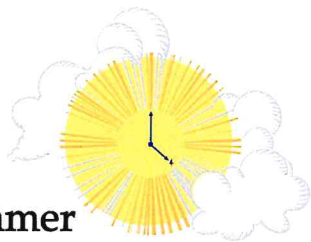
For meetings with the Pastor please

email: pastor@fbcwestwood.org
or call (781) 461-0297.

Pastoral Care meetings are held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 1:30 - 4:00 pm.

The Pastor will try to accommodate other times on these days.

(if you call when she isn't there, you can leave a message)



Summer Church Office Hours

Now - August 29th:

Tuesdays & Thursdays
8:00 am - 2:00pm

Donna can be reached
by calling

781-461-1730 or

by emailing

office@fbcwestwood.org



Building will be closed

The facility will be closed from Monday, June 30 – Saturday, July 5. During this time, campus projects will be done while the Westwood Children's School and Westwood Nursery School are taking their vacation week.



Sunday Worship Services

Please check out our website, www.fbcwestwood.org. We post Livestream links and videos of our worship services there, plus other news and devotional materials.



Crafters' Group

The Crafters' Group is taking a summer break.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 10th to prepare for our December Holly Fair. They meet in room 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon.



Digital version of the Sunday Bulletin

We produce a digital version of the weekly Sunday bulletin that is formatted so that it can be easily read on a cell phone, tablet, or computer. This is being emailed to people a day or two ahead of the service. It can be helpful when watching the worship service online or simply to find out what's happening at FBC that week. If you wish to be added to the email list to receive the digital bulletin, please contact Donna Metcalf via email at office@fbcwestwood.org.



Thank you to Carol Ahearn for the potted petunia arrangements at the entrance to our sanctuary.



You are invited to join our Prayer Chain. This is a small group of FBC folk who email one another with prayer concerns of the larger church community and then include those concerns in their prayers. This is beyond the all-church prayers shared by the Pastor. If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, please contact Sunny O'Malley. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at office@fbcwestwood.org.



Church Council and Staff meeting hybrid (Zoom & Reception Room)

July 15th
7:00pm

August "Message"



Material for next month's newsletter is due to Donna in the church office by Wednesday, July 16th

(office@fbcwestwood.org)



If it's easier for you, we accept PayPal payments on our website for offering or other donations. Just click on the "donate" button on www.fbcwestwood.org.

Another option we offer is through using Venmo. Below is our QR code that you can scan.



Congratulations grads!



Steven Cromack has received his Doctorate degree in Education from Northeastern University.

His dissertation explored how to improve learning outcomes in the state's seventeen municipal police academies.

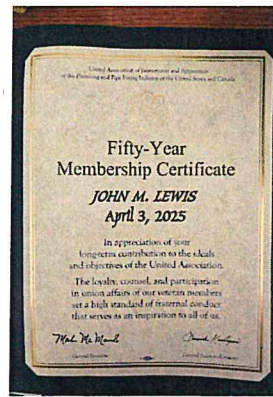


Tommy Ahearn, Carol Ahearn's son, graduated on June 13th from the police academy and is serving on the Bellingham police force.



Carol Ahearn's son-in-law, Matt Phelan, graduated from the fire academy on May 23rd. He is working in Waltham.

Recent Honor



John Lewis was recently honored for his longterm contribution to the ideals and objectives of the United Association of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry. He has been a member for 50 years.

Congratulations, John!



Dear Donna Metcalf,
Thank you for your help in making Mama's service a success. My mother got everything she requested and more.

Your positive attitude and kind words about my mother helped me through the process. I know how much energy and love you put into the day and appreciate all that you do.

Please express my gratitude to Jan Shepperson and other church members (Bev Lowery, Carol Ahearn, Jen Cromack) that donated their time and effort.

With Deep Gratitude,
Brenda Cook (Caroline Thompson's daughter)



Dear Pastor Catherine,
Thank you for officiating at my mother's service (Caroline Thompson). Your leadership, guidance, and support were a great comfort to me. I loved how you put everybody at ease. Your style is personable and laid back. Many guests commented that Mama's service was the best they've ever attended. Her presence was felt.

And I'll never forget when neighbor – friend Peter, age 83, stood with tearfulness and said, "I've been an atheist my entire life BUT today has me thinking." God continues to perform miracles through Mama! Praise God.

Blessings to you and yours.

Love,
Brenda Cook and Family

