

FIRST  BAPTIST
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



The Message
April 2026

REV. CATHERINE M. MILLER, PASTOR

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From the Pastor's Desk

April 2026



**Grace and Peace!
Happy Easter!**

Dear Friends of God,

Many of us spent the weeks of Lenten season being strengthened by our intentional 'appointments with God' that we committed to both privately and as the gathered church family. I'm thankful for the strong and steady momentum of our ministries in spite of the snowy weeks: well-attended Sunday services (including 2nd Sundays at The Ellis!), weekend & weekday Bible studies, prayer gatherings, and creative groups. Our administrative and facilities/grounds ministries pressed on without missing a beat! And only you and God know the many other ways you blessed family, friends/neighbors, and strangers this winter!

The Lord is helping our church family to support one another through the onslaughts of negativity that trouble us on many levels. The more wholesome time we spend together with God, our common need for healing and fortification of our *spirit person*, emotions, psyche and physical bodies is recognized. We suffer together, not alone! And Paul's words ring in my ears always through unsettled or overwhelming days: ***"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (I Corinthians 15:57)***

The Holy Spirit is truly *living* among us at FBC Westwood. This is clear! God is surfacing fresh appreciation for one another so that we join our strengths and stand firm! God made us a part of each other's lives by this one identity: we all belong to Christ! Jesus Himself introduced each of us to each other as family! And Jesus is not ashamed to name us His brother, sister, family! ***"Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters."* (Hebrews 2:11)**

As we watched the mountains of snow pile up and the world around us rage, the Holy Spirit was *very present*, keeping our homes and the church environment infused with grace and peace. God's energizing Presence overflows us with His love when we gather. And hallelujah! that we only missed one Sunday due to the snow and no one was injured in the hazardous weather.

Now as we emerge from what also has been a season of personal self-examination we can breathe in the celebratory joy and promises of Easter/ Resurrection Sunday!
For there is no joy comparable to what comes with knowing soul peace and inner relief that we receive when God grants us a new, clean heart and eternal life through His Son!

This is not to dismiss serious concerns and troubles that are unresolved. But my prayer is that gratitude from God's liberating Easter joy will put suffering and trials in their place, for: "...*through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*" (Romans 8:2); and "*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*" (John 8:36)

Our hearts were set free to **release the weight** of pain and exchange it for God's joy!!

* * *

It's a Heart Thing
(*Secret Place Devotions for Daily Worship*)
Spring 2026, Author: Todd Diedrich

Your heart will beat on average 100,000 times per day, or in a lifetime, 2.5 billion times. Your heart circulates the six quarts of blood found in your body an average of three times per minute. The heart is an amazing muscular organ that is responsible for keeping you alive by pumping blood through your body.

In Matthew 5:8, Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Greek work for "pure," *katharos*, means clean, blameless, and free from guilt. A pure heart reflects sincerity, integrity, and a desire to please Jesus, free from malice, envy or hidden motives.

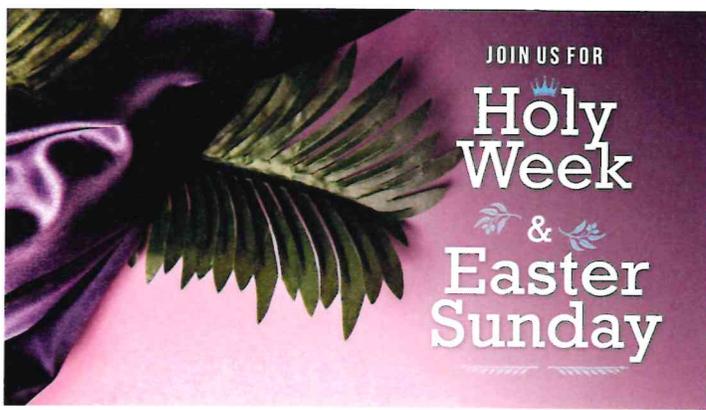
But purity of heart is not something we can achieve through good deeds alone. Acts of kindness are valuable, but they cannot cleanse the heart. Only Jesus can do that. Through His grace and forgiveness, He offers a new heart, clean and free from guilt.

Have you asked Jesus to transform your heart? Today is the perfect time. It is not about trying harder. It is about letting Him do what only He can do.

* * *

As we continue to pray for Divine peace to touch the world, we must be diligent in prayer for Divine peace to fill the spirits of friends, loved ones, and people around the globe. Pray that they come to know *The Christ of Easter* being awakened to God's fullness of love as we know it! We know firsthand that nothing will ever be found more *liberating, life-changing*, nor more *life-securing*, than receiving a new heart from God through Christ!

Joy to you on Easter and always!
Pastor Catherine



all services will be Livestreamed – go to our website, fbcwestwood.org, & click on “worship services” for the links

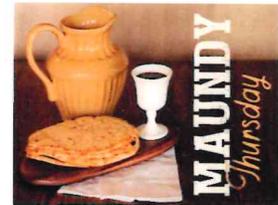
Sunday, March 29 - Palm Sunday: Worship at 10:00 a.m.



Wednesday, April 1 -Wednesday Intercessory Prayer

in the sanctuary from 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday: Solemn Assembly @ 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Let's gather to hear a special reflection by Donna Folsom about the meaningfulness of this day. We'll sing and pray together, then close with sharing The Lord's Table.



Friday, April 3 – Good Friday:

The sanctuary will be open for prayer from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.



Sunday, April 5 – Easter:

6:30 a.m. - Join the early risers to greet the Easter morning at an outdoor service in Baker Chapel to celebrate the Risen Christ.

7:00 a.m. – Following the Sunrise Service, there will be a hot breakfast served in Fellowship Hall. Please RSVP to the church office at office@fbcwestwood.org by Tuesday, March 31st.

10:00 a.m. – Then, at the usual hour of worship a more formal Easter celebration will be held in the sanctuary with music provided by the Westwood Ringers and Chancel Choir.

All are welcome!





“Let’s Talk” group discussion and Holy Communion

Hello everyone!

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

We 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.

March sessions will be on **Thursday, April 23rd and 30th.**

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: April 23, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

April 30, 2026 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-7ztmZbqqdcnOzMDRNNrZLJE_hLZ5BtGODT

Join Zoom Meeting

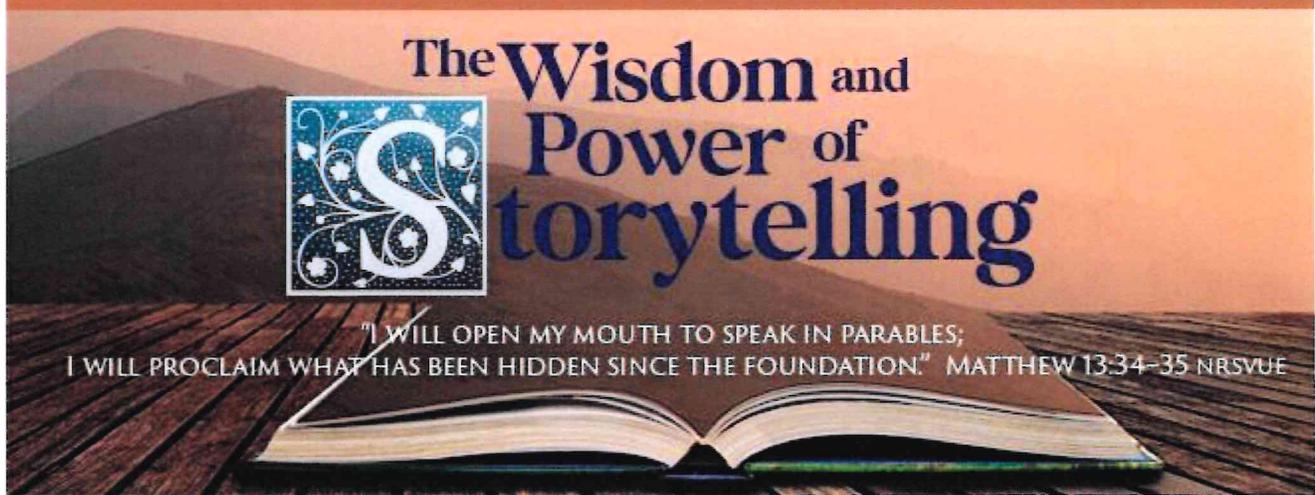
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83516637472?pwd=EvL6pkHvrpuOfst9Pyl3PKEydXFVak.1>

Meeting ID: 835 1663 7472

Passcode: 618284

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

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2026



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As we begin the campaign for the 2026 America for Christ Offering (AFC), we are called to reflect on this powerful theme: “The Wisdom and Power of Storytelling.” Scripture reveals how God’s truth and love are passed down through generations, often through the simple yet profound and powerful gift of storytelling. Stories have always been God’s way of shaping faith, identity, and vision.

Jesus chose stories—parables—to reach people’s hearts. Matthew 13:34–35 reminds us that His words were not just lessons but living testimonies that have connected listeners across time, culture, and experience. Similarly, we are called to share our faith, our history, and our vision for the future with those who come after us.

This year’s campaign encourages us to celebrate storytelling as a form of ministry. Sharing the stories of our churches, families, and faith communities helps strengthen the present and sow seeds of hope for the future.

Together, we can make AFC 2026 a season of storytelling that bridges generations, deepens faith, and advances God’s mission of love and justice. Thank you for your faithful partnership in this vital ministry.

In Christ’s service,
Rev. Catherine M. Miller, Pastor
Jen Cromack, Missions Coordinator

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2026 Please give today! www.abhms.org/afc

* Please make your check payable to *FBC Westwood* and note in the memo section “for AFC”, if you are making a donation at a worship service or by mailing to the church office.

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA



March 1, 2026

Rev. Catherine M. Miller, Pastor
First Baptist Church of Westwood
40 Church Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Dear Rev. Miller and First Baptist Church of Westwood Congregation,

On behalf of the American Baptist Churches USA Office of the General Secretary, it is our pleasure to congratulate you and your congregation on being ranked #92 in United Mission giving throughout the entire denomination of approximately 5,000 churches for the calendar year ending December 31, 2025! Congratulations, and thank you for your generous support of \$11,050 in 2025!

ABCUSA deeply values the faithful generosity of First Baptist Church of Westwood in Westwood, MA. Your congregation's generosity is a shining example of faithful stewardship and service, inspiring ministries throughout our denomination. Your faithful commitment to United Mission is greatly appreciated!

Through your church's generosity, many programs and ministry opportunities are made possible within your region and across the nation. Two-thirds of United Mission receipts are dedicated to your local region. United Mission also provides support to continue the work of the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary, which includes: promoting American Baptist identity and values; supporting Caucuses, Task Forces and Commissions; bringing together the American Baptist family for the Biennial Mission Summit, Engage event, National Leadership Council meetings; and more. Your church's support of United Mission also provides your church and many others with the ability to be part of the ABCUSA Group Umbrella 501(c)3 Tax Exemption coverage through the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary.

Please save the date for the 2027 Biennial Mission Summit, which will be held June 10–13, 2027, in Rochester, New York. During the 2027 Biennial. We invite you to select and send your maximum number of Church Delegates to participate in the Business Session during the biennial, where the official business of the denomination takes place.

We also invite you to visit www.abc-usa.org to stay up to date on our programs, grants, and upcoming events.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to support United Mission! We are proud to be *United in Christ + Together in Mission* with you!

With deep gratitude and blessings,

Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA



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 1,600 tabs in one pound.

The Aleppo Shrine Center has processed over 10 TONS of pull-tabs collected from throughout Eastern Massachusetts.

Funds generated in the pull-tab program are used to transport children and their parent or guardian, free of charge to a Shriners Hospital for Children. Volunteers from local shrine organizations use specialized vans, small buses and automobiles and give freely of countless hours of their time providing transportation to and from doctor's visits. One very important mode of transportation this fund pays for are the life-saving med-flights transporting children from all over the world to a Shriners Hospital when their life is in the balance. These specialized med-flights cost tens of thousands of dollars, but when a child's life hangs in the balance, money is no object. Parents of injured children admitted to a Shriners Hospital for Children do not see a single bill for transportation provided through this fund.

FBC Westwood donates the tabs to the Shriners' Burns Hospital – Boston. Neil Patterson coordinates this project, and Ken Shaw delivers the tabs to the hospital. There are two plastic bottles 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.



Information from the Shriners Hospital website
-> <https://hospitals.alepposhriners.com/childrens-transportation-fund/>

FAMILY PANCAKE BREAKFAST

**SUNDAY, MAY 3
9AM – 12PM**



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WESTWOOD
FELLOWSHIP HALL
808 HIGH STREET
WESTWOOD**

Join your friends and neighbors at the annual Rotary Club of Westwood Pancake Breakfast.

The Rotary Club of Westwood is a local chapter of Rotary Club International, dedicated to serving the Westwood community by following the Rotary Club's motto of "Service Above Self." In the last twelve months, The Rotary Club of Westwood has supported the community in the following ways:

- Provided a Rotary Academic Scholarship to a senior from Westwood High School
- Collected clothing to benefit those in need and the Epilepsy Foundation
- Worked with the community's senior citizens to create holiday baskets
- Provided funding to The Women's Empowerment Scholarship to support the academic pursuits of a resident of Westwood attending college in 2024-25
- Organized the "Flags For Heroes" initiative, recognizing heroes who have inspired Westwood residents
- Coordinated the annual "Recognize a Youth" initiative, celebrating students for their community service
- Supported Westwood High School's "All Night Grad Party"
- Volunteered at numerous events in Westwood

Please consider joining The Rotary Club of Westwood.



*The Westwood Ringers
In Concert*



*Sunday May 10, 2026
4:00 PM*

*First Baptist Church
808 High Street Westwood, MA*



Pastoral Care

Tues., Wed., Thurs.
between 1:30-4:00 pm

Pastor Catherine holds meetings by appointment during the above times.

They are held in the Pastor's church study; by home visit; or by Zoom, if you prefer.

To schedule time with the Pastor, please

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

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



Sunday Worship Services

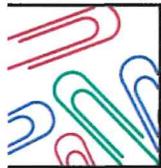
Please check out our website, www.fbcwestwood.org. We post Livestream links and videos of our worship services there, plus other news and devotional materials.



Crafters' Group

The April meeting will be on Wednesday, April 8th at 10:00 a.m.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office at office@fbcwestwood.org.



CHURCH OFFICE

Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

Donna can be reached
by calling

781-461-1730 or

by emailing

office@fbcwestwood.org



Joyful Song & Prayer at The Ellis Senior Residence

Pastor Catherine and Jan Randlett host service and times of musical fun for residents at The Ellis Rehab & Nursing Center, every 2nd Sunday, starting at 2:00 p.m. located at 135 Ellis Ave in Norwood, MA.

The residents and staff join in singing hymns, Oldies but Goodies, & participate in prayer.

*Come join us at the Ellis for our next monthly gathering on
Sunday, April 12th.*



Choir Rehearsal

You are invited to join the Chancel Choir rehearsals on Monday nights at 6:30 p.m. in the Music room.



Volunteers for Sunday Services:
 FBC welcomes volunteers who will usher and greet, and to host coffee hour. Please sign up on the monthly sheets posted in the Reception Room. All help is appreciated!



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.



**Church Council
 and Staff meeting**
 Reception Room
 April 21st
 7:00pm



**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 few days 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.

**News letter
 DEADLINE**

Material for May's "Message" is due to the church office by:
Wednesday, April 22nd

Information can be emailed to:
office@fbcwestwood.org

**TABCOM's
Annual Gathering
(#tag2026)**

**May 1-2, 2026
First Baptist Church, 111 Park Ave,
Worcester, MA 01609**

This year's gathering will include times of meaningful worship and fellowship as we celebrate church anniversaries, ordination anniversaries, and the shared ministry we hold together as American Baptists in Massachusetts.

Registration info will be available soon.



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.



**Join us
Sunday, May 17th
10:00 a.m.**



**Remembrance
Sunday**

Join us as we celebrate the lives of those in our church family who have passed on within the last 12 months and our ongoing memories of them.