

FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



The Message
September 2026

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

September 2026



Greetings... Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ to us all!

*"Let us not give up meeting together,
as some are in the habit of doing,
but let us encourage one another—
and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:25*

Families, couples, friends -- younger and older, excitedly scattered places over the last couple of months. Hopping on a plane, trains or in automobiles for a day trip. All-inclusive vacations, cruises, road trips, fishing trips... slow days by the ocean and grilling outdoors. What a blast! Thank God for all of it, the peaceful 'staycations', slow walks, weekends of late mornings, extended sunlight and ***sweet rest and refreshing*** that resulted.

Even still, walking back through church doors Christians all around treasure the blessing of being *meant for this*. We are *meant* to know, love and worship God; meant to be transformed from hostile strangers to godly friends; meant to prove that Jesus is alive in us. We are meant not only to ***possess*** but to ***express*** the joy of life with Jesus Christ here and now and through eternity. The Father is observing and smiling down on the pure smiles and exchanges between friends, those brought together by His Son. He sees the enthusiasm between people meeting for the first time. They hold the familiar bulletin (though barely ever reading it) and it feels nice in hand. Spirit-led prelude music preps the environment of the Lord's house. Only God knows that an anointed melody is comforting the broken and wounded and confused who sit in quiet contemplation uttering worried prayer. We gather as a reminder of the One on our side. We were made for a sanctuary but *not* one made by hands. Our sanctuary is the living God's. The Holy Spirit. Hebrews verses above teach that gathering to worship God is not just a tradition – but it's ***encouragement in motion***. We don't come back merely to fill a seat but to praise and be built up in faith. We are meant to receive and offer ***encouragement in motion***, through inspired worship. Below prayers are ***encouragement in motion*** for Fall. Enjoy & share!

Prayer for students and young people:

Lord God, with new backpacks they enter new classrooms filled with new faces. Calm anxiety as they step into a fresh chapter. Reassure them that they don't have to write the chapter alone, but that Christ is with them. Remind them of the Church, their home field.

Whatever this year holds—tests they won't study enough for, friendships that shift, moments of feeling lost—bring them back to the worshipping church where they are not too young to matter and where they are not expected to understand it all. But just their desire to be in Your presence is enough to start.

Prayer for college students, near and far:

Lord God, whether unloading boxes into dorms or prepping study spaces at home, protect the students, faculty, and staff who will navigate college campuses and give them wisdom. Wherever students land this Fall, may the prayers of the righteous launch them into this next season. Father, bless their good aspirations and remind each one that You have already made them to succeed! Guide them to the campus or nearby church that you have already chosen and when they feel homesick, remind them that their home church will always have a seat for them.

Prayer for parents and working adults:

Heavenly Father, halfway into August, began to fill up —new schedules, Fall appointments, school and work-related deadlines, and meetings. Rest Your merciful hand upon parents, guardians and caretakers. Grant ease of mind and reassurance that You are smiling upon them. Lord, though it's challenging to prevent worship from slipping to the bottom of the list, speak into their spirits that You alone are the anchor that keeps everything else from overwhelming them. You watch over their days and nights. Urge them to come tired and/or distracted; come transparent in heart; exactly as they are and revive them in Your presence.

Prayer for empty nesters and seniors:

Lord God fill the quieter house with Your abundant Spirit as the season turns. Meet each empty nester and senior where only You know their true need is. Touch the roots of their lives and grant health and vigor; water and refresh them. When the leaves outside begin to let go, I pray they do not retreat but accept your invitation to lean in to worship—to new friendships, to molding a compassionate, godly next generation. Root them in a faith that is less hurried and more settled. Grant them excitement about a new season of being *seasoned* along with all of the Body of Christ. Mold empty nesters in Your wisdom, Your steadiness, Your Presence—the Church needs it now more than ever.

Autumn will arrive in time. The light will shift, the air will carry coolness, the pace of life will increase a bit. Yes, Autumn will unfold and God willing we will all see it— but in this moment right here and now, Jesus extends this simple invitation: Grab your cross. It has enjoyed Summer with you, now come and continue along into tomorrow with Me.

Peace to you...

Pastor Catherine



Thank you and Fairwell Reception for Marcy Merrill and Dan Moore this Sunday

Please join us on Sunday, August 30, following the 10:00 a.m. service, to celebrate and bid farewell to Marcy Merrill (Director of Music) and Dan Moore (Westwood Ringers Handbell Director) as they move on to new opportunities. We look forward to wishing them well as they will be missed at First Baptist.



Save the Date



Sunday, September 13th

Join us for Rally Day at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Directly following worship, we will be having an extended coffee hour with sandwiches. Details to follow in upcoming Sunday bulletins.



“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 **Thursdays, September 3 and 17.**

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: September 3, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

September 17, 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-7ztmZbgqdcn0zMDRNNRzLJE_hLZ5BtGODT

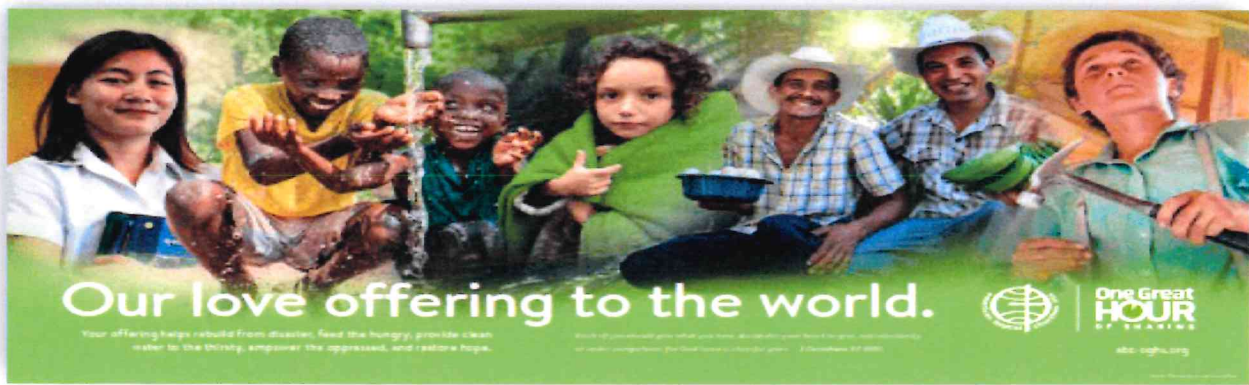
Join Zoom Meeting

<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>



Did You Know?

Photo: Public Domain, trumanlibrary.gov
Harry S. Truman, 33rd U.S. President



The One Great Hour of Sharing offering began seventy-seven years ago in response to the devastation of World War II. On Saturday evening, March 26, 1949, a national broadcast titled "One Great Hour" featured a remarkable assembly of national leaders and celebrities. The 33rd U.S. President, Harry S. Truman's, radio address during the broadcast included the following:

"There are thousands of children in foreign lands today who have no memory of their parents, no knowledge of the meaning of the words "home" and "family," and who have forgotten what it feels like to have enough to eat. There are hopeless thousands who wander among the shattered towns seeking a place to rest, seeking security and a chance to begin their lives anew. There are many who pray to God only in secret, fearing persecution if they profess their beliefs openly. It is hard for us to comprehend grief and distress such as this because we in America are so much more fortunate. Our country has been blessed with material riches. Our homes are secure. We can go to our churches and worship God as we desire. We know that we enjoy these great blessings not because of any special merit on our part, but because of the bounty of God. It is to His Providence that we owe the richness of our country and our heritage of freedom. Since these good things come to us from Him, we know that we must use them for the good of others in accordance with His will."

The broadcast concluded by asking Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches. More than 75,000 churches responded.

Today, One Great Hour of Sharing serves people in over 80 countries around the world. Sponsored by five Christian U.S. denominations and Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing makes sure that we can respond to needs as soon as they happen and that tens of thousands of people receive support for ongoing relief, rehabilitation, and development. The World Relief Committee of the American Baptist Board of General Ministries reviews each development project request funded by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering received from American Baptists. Gifts reach the ministries and people in need through a network of regional and international partnerships with the following: American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries) American Baptist Home Mission Societies Baptist World Aid – the compassionate arm of the Baptist World Alliance, supporting three areas of ministry: relief, development, and support of national partners. Church World Service – Founded in 1946, Church World Service is a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry. Church World Service transforms communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

**FBC Westwood will be receiving donations for OGHS through the end of September.
Our goal is \$500.00.**

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.



(C.Y.C.) –
Oceanwood, Ocean Park ME
July 26 – August 8, 2026



SUMMER MINISTRY WAS THRIVING AT OCEANWOOD CAMPS & CONFERENCE CENTER

The campus was buzzing with activity as guests from across the region and the country gather for worship, fellowship, recreation, and renewal.



One exciting addition this season was the installation of new basketball hoops, including one dedicated in memory of Scott Wanamaker, the beloved nephew of Bonnie and Joe Sestito. The dedication serves as a meaningful tribute while providing campers and retreat guests with an enhanced recreational experience.

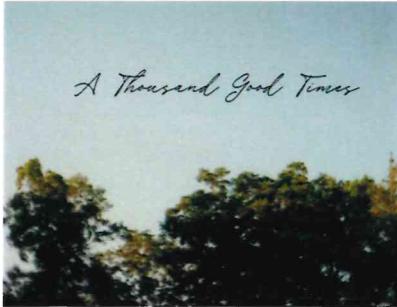
Oceanwood welcomed 10 groups representing a wide variety of backgrounds, churches, and age groups. From large Christian youth retreats from Boston to smaller family reunion-style gatherings from across the country, the camp was a place where people were building relationships, growing in faith, and creating lasting memories. The season was one of joyful ministry and hospitality.

Oceanwood has also launched a new website! Visitors are invited to explore the refreshed site at Oceanwood.org, where they can enjoy updated photos, stunning aerial footage of the campus, and learn more about the camp's ministry, programs, and facilities.

We give thanks for this special place where lives are renewed, faith is strengthened, and Christian community flourishes.

Article from the August 2026 issue of TABCOM Notes

GROTONWOOD - A THOUSAND GOOD TIMES



Grotonwood's ministry with adults with disabilities is thriving thanks to a called and gifted staff, years of generosity to support it, and churches and leaders who value the faith stories and friendships of adults with disabilities.

A recent video created by Naveen Kingsly (Grotonwood media team '26) takes us into one camper's experience. Somehow, in under three minutes, Naveen captures the whole of this special place and ministry. Grab a tissue and prepare for praise--this is a powerful testimony.

[Watch video](#)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1127mfPyVIlmNE2hd4BdcGMsZ3gPJnS8_/view

This is your offerings at work...the values of our history alive in us today! [Give today](#) and ensure a thousand good times for everyone who wants to experience the belonging of chapel and the joy of the water.



THE WORLD OF THE ARCHIVES

We have been working diligently this summer in the archives. Our focus has been our library. We didn't start out to have a library, it just came to be out of a collection of books, which keeps growing each week. We have a collection of Baptist Polity and History; Baptist church histories, books by TABCOM authors, biographies of Baptist pastors and leaders in Massachusetts. Books on missions, and Baptist theology. This is a go to place if you need to learn more about our polity and history, about your own church's history and want to read about those Baptist pioneers who began our denomination in this state. We have over 600 books catalogued and many more books to process.

We were blessed with Rick and Esther Irish, who spent a lot of their summer vacation helping catalogue and organize our library. Esther is a retired Baptist minister, and she and her husband Rick come back to Massachusetts each summer to visit family and luckily spend time with us. This summer Rick and Esther have put in well over 100 hours of their vacation helping in the Baptist library. We emphatically thank them for their help.



This summer has also seen the beginning of our online presence. We now have an archives page on the TABCOM website and an online presence through our person hub. We have compiled a collection of postcards of Baptist Churches in Massachusetts.

That collection stands at about 1,000 postcards. These have all been catalogued, inventoried, placed in acid free protectors and binders and now available for viewing online!

You can see them by going to <https://hub.catalogit.app/tabcom.org>

Our next step is to catalogue camp photos and have some of them available online also. We are preparing an exhibit of TABCOM's Camp History to display during October when the Pavillion at Grotonwood is dedicated. I hope you will stop by. We have a lot of fascinating history we would love to share with you.

All this work requires volunteers and money. Archival supplies are pricey. If you are interested in helping-out, please contact us at badger@tabcom.org. We also are available to give talks on preserving your church records and about our Baptist history.

Bring a group to our office and we can give you a task to help-out, or give a talk on aspects of our history. We would love to have you visit.



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/>



Pastoral Care

Tuesdays & Wednesdays

Stop by the Pastor's office on
Tuesdays between 1:30 - 4:00 pm

Scheduled time is on Wednesdays
between 1:00 - 3:00 pm

(Schedule with Pastor Catherine
after service; call 781 461-0297;
or email pastor@fbcwestwood.org).



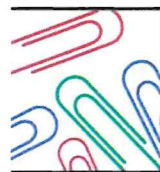
**Pastor Catherine will be taking
time off:**

**Tues., Aug. 25th - Thurs., Aug. 27th
and**

Tues., Sept. 8th - Thurs., Sept. 10th

*If you are in need of pastoral care
during her first week off, please
contact the church office and
someone will get back to you.*

*During Pastor Catherine's Sept. time
off, Rev. Shelton will be available for
pastoral care.*



CHURCH OFFICE

End of summer hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays

8:00 am - 2:00 pm

(until September 4th)

Beginning September 8th:

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 1:30 pm

Donna can be reached

by calling

781-461-1730

or emailing

office@fbcwestwood.org

Prayer & Friendship meeting

Wednesdays, Sept. 2, 23 & 30

(will not meet Sept. 9 & 16)

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

All are welcome!

Come to the sanctuary.



Crafters' Group

The next meeting will be
on Wednesday, September 9th.
They meet in room 7 from 10:00 a.m.
to 12 noon.

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

Foundations Bible Study

Weekly on Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.

A small group focus on core principles of our Christian faith, work through common questions, and to discuss life applications.

The Bible Study has taken a few weeks off in August but will resume in September. Meetings are held in room 14 (1730 room) and on Zoom. For the Zoom link, speak with Rev. Shelton Miller following Sunday morning worship or contact the church office.



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.



Join us on
September 13th
at 10:00 a.m.

Our Chancel Choir will be performing and there will be an Extended Coffee Hour with sandwiches following worship.

We trust you had a good Summer break and look forward to everyone worshipping together again this Fall!



Reception Room

September 15th
7:00pm

News Letter DEADLINE

Material for October's "Message" is due to the church office by:

Wednesday, September 16th

Information can be emailed to:
office@fbcwestwood.org



Saturday, September 19th

Additional volunteers are needed to help staff our booth.

***Come join the fun,
and help spread the word
about FBC!***

Contact the church office (office@fbcwestwood.org) if you are interested in volunteering (can be for an hour or more) at the booth.

A CORI form must be completed by all volunteers by Sept. 7th and will be available in the church office and the bulletin board in the Reception room.

Westwood Day is held at Westwood High School's parking lot on Nahatan Street from 10am- 3pm, rain or shine.



***Joyful Song &
Prayer at
The Ellis Senior
Residence***

Sunday, September 20th

*Come join us one Sunday a month
for **Joyful Song & Prayer** at The
Ellis Senior Residence, Norwood.*

*Join Pastor Catherine, Jan
(pianist), & FBC team for a time
of uplifting fellowship and
laughter with residents,
their families, and staff...You
won't be disappointed!*



**Coffee
Hour**

Coffee Hour is a
great time to enjoy catching up with
others and having some goodies, too,
following morning worship.

Join us in September as we will be
back to holding Coffee Hour each
Sunday following worship in the
Reception Room.

We are looking for additional helpers
to host a Sunday. Wouldn't you like to
host one? Sign-up sheets for
September, and October will be
posted on the bulletin board in the
Reception room.

If you have any questions, please
contact the Church office at
office@fbcwestwood.org or call
781-461-1730.

Missionworks

October 3, 2026

Theme -

Rooted in Christ: Rising in Hope

On Saturday, October 3rd, our
church will be hosting TABCOM's
annual event.

We will be providing a.m.
refreshments and sandwich
lunches. All items will be ordered.
The event will run from 8 am to 3
pm. We are looking for additional
volunteers willing to help with
set-up, replenishing items, or
clean-up?

Please contact Donna in the
church office (781-461-1730 or
email her at

office@fbcwestwood.org).

Thank you!



This is the final call

We are still looking for a Holly
Fair chairperson or co-chairs.
We are hoping to avoid
canceling the fair this year.

There is help available but
need the go-to-person, you
will not be alone. The
crafter's have been working
hard on their items to sell and
many people have been
planning their tables. Please
contact Vickie DeVoy 781-690-
3755.



**Jazz Fundraiser Concert
FBC Westwood
Sat., Oct. 24th**

The Christian Youth Conference (CYC) Board (the High School Summer camp at Oceanwood) will be offering a Jazz Concert at FBC Westwood. The Rev. Geoffrey Hicks will be performing.

Watch for additional informaton in September & October bulletins and October's Message.

Also, see Jen Cromack for more information.



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 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.



Dear Church Family,
Thank you all for your care and concern upon John's passing. The cards, prayers, texts, calls, flowers, hugs, and memorials were such a comfort at this difficult time.

Wendy Lewis

Thank you, Rick!



Thank you to Rick Alden, our Church Sexton, for creating a new sign for our Fellowship Hall piano.



We were sad to share last month that John Lewis passed away on July 27th.

John was a long-time active member of FBC Westwood. He served on the Board of Trustees for many years. John lent his skills to installing air conditioning in the sanctuary and the Reception Room; installing a kitchenette in the "Link" and building changing rooms in the church basement for baptismal candidates. For over 30 years, John cooked our annual Easter Breakfast following Easter Sunrise services and quietly expressed his generosity by cooking dinners for shut-ins and his friends. He had the gift of freely giving of himself and lending a helping hand wherever he saw a need.

John's Service of Remembrance was held on Saturday, August 8th here at FBC Westwood. John will be laid to rest with military honors on Friday, September 11th at Knollwood Memorial Park in Canton, MA.



9/2	Mark Randlett
9/6	S. Gail Weatherhead
9/11	Steven Barner
9/17	Mikayla Metcalf and Yves Urio
9/19	Vickie DeVoy
9/24	Evan Folsom
9/26	Darren Valentine
9/30	Jean (Mellen) Sinko



9/1	Austin (Bill) & Kim Poirier
9/12	Brad & Jan Randlett
9/21	Phil & Jan Shepperson