

FIRST  BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



*The Message*  
*March 2026*

REV. CATHERINE M. MILLER, PASTOR

CHURCH OFFICE: 781-461-1730

EMAIL: [OFFICE@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG)

PASTOR'S STUDY: 781-461-0297

EMAIL: [PASTOR@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG](mailto:PASTOR@FBCWESTWOOD.ORG)

WEBSITE: [WWW.FBCWESTWOOD.ORG](http://WWW.FBCWESTWOOD.ORG)



# From the Pastor's Desk

March 2026



## Grace and Peace!

*“So, since we’re out from under the old tyranny, does that mean we can live any old way we want? Since we’re free in the freedom of God, can we do anything that comes to mind? Hardly. You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it’s your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you’ve let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you’ve started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom! I’m using this freedom language because it’s easy to picture. You can readily recall, can’t you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing—not caring about others, not caring about God—the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God’s freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness? **Romans 6:15-19 (The Message)**”*

Dear Friends of God,

Lenten season this year is February 18<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Observing Lent through various spiritual disciplines of self-reflection; fasting; etc. is not supposed to be depressing but strengthening. When Christians intentionally and prayerfully examine ourselves our spiritual condition we are blessed overall! For how else will we grow closer and closer to the Lord and each other? We should not be fearful of drawing close to God. This is not to produce self-condemnation or self-loathing. That is not of God. But we find relief and a lighter heart is the result when we need to come to God in repentance because confession is where we find forgiveness and peace. Taking honest stock of our faith life and practice (not only at Lent) is crucial since so much can pull us away from sticking close to Jesus. You honor God when you care enough to reflect upon your commitment to and obedience to Him. During Lent people also *fast* in various ways to help unclutter their mind and prepare to seek God in a deeper way. Fasting can help build spiritual strength over natural cravings/habit. It can help us to bow our *self-will* to *God’s will* in our lives. Christian fasting is not a matter of giving up something to check the box: “*I fasted on this day or gave up\_*”. We fast to experience supernatural power of spiritual nourishment found in God’s presence and from every word that proceeds from God’s mouth. (**Matthew 4:4**)

For a prayer guide during Lent consider using a daily devotional and/or reading Jesus’ words to you in the Bible and enjoy this special season with the Lord. He will meet you there...

\* \* \*

Let’s now focus to the ‘big picture’ Body of Christ in the world. Christ’s Kingdom on earth is represented through a vast array of organizations and industries (tiny and enormous) serving God and the world, following distinct Biblical ethics. These include households, schools, parachurch organizations, local churches and other socially-oriented groups. Also represented across a spectrum of

non-profit **and** for-profit industries: education, healthcare, environmental, advocacy, etc. comprised of ordinary, diverse committed to their God-given mission in the world.

While we do this work of spreading Gospel hope and practical relief in the world, every entity must also pay careful attention to the *spiritual heart* of the organization. This monitoring of the *spiritual heart* of the organization is a group task not just for a few. Everyone is tasked with helping *God's* truth is being followed and flowing free to support the health and harmony of the whole.

No Christian group or business can do this without the Holy Spirit's help. Believers learn unity by following the *Holy Spirit*. This is a gift each one has from God to help sense and ward off danger and toxicity to the Beloved community. But spiritual perception is learned from becoming familiar with God's Spirit's and His voice in prayer. Much is taught about the Holy Spirit in the Bible! He's our Divine Watch Care Provider! He makes Himself know and speaks. He lives with us in community!

**Hear Jesus make this point to His first disciples:**

**<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you** and will be in you.” John 14:15-17**

Imagine how the early Church overflowed with gratitude when the Holy Spirit was sent to them on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 1**) They recalled Jesus' words above when he passed His baton to them and ascended. God never expected the Church to figure out Christian love and life in community all on our own. The Church would have failed since we are incapable of this due to our humanness! We have Divine loving, parental guidance. Just as it comes to us individually, deep conviction helps keep organizations unified and pleasing to the Father. This is a sign of the Holy Spirit living among Christian community and lovingly counseling us. Count it a blessing those rare times of conviction of sin being felt by all in Christian fellowship. This means we hear God! Remember Jesus' warning that those without the Holy Spirit are incapable of this godly sorrow/conviction. **“The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” (John 14:17)** The ability to *hear and obey* the Spirit's voice and be led back to the Light is a gift of salvation!

I'll share an example from the New Testament. We find a very unfavorable incident recorded about Peter who was influenced into the sin of hypocrisy, offending a community of Gentile believers. We see in this Biblical record how easy sin's poison infiltrates through leaders. Peter then lured Barnabas into this sinful attitude and behavior. And they were blatant about it too! (But imagine if they had masked their hypocrisy? I shudder to think what a great loss to the Church if Peter had been hardened in his sin.) Thank the Lord, Peter, was convicted by the Holy Spirit through Paul's holding him accountable. Paul wrote the Galatians that he “confronted Peter in front of them all...” **Galatians 2:11-14.**

During Lent pray for Christian entities all over the world to remain to discern the Holy Spirit in their midst so we all remain obedient and pleasing the Father. Our bases of operation are sacred gatherings for worship, serving God and the world. The Holy Spirit's presence blesses us with true friendship and joyful unity found when we are centered in the Lord's will. We have come into Christ's Light. May it be plain for all to see that our works have been done in the sight of God. (**See John 3:19-21**)

*Stay encouraged!*  
*Pastor Catherine*



## “Let’s Talk” group discussion and Holy Communion (change in weeks)

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, March 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Hope you can join us!**

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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: March 12, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

March 19, 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-7ztmZbqqdcn0zMDRNNrZLJE\\_hLZ5BtGODT](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZcodu-urTwuHdac3InSTEQ_Ezi5BrhXckDa/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGrqzosHNeStB6FRpwqGYj4M-7ztmZbqqdcn0zMDRNNrZLJE_hLZ5BtGODT)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83516637472?pwd=EvL6pkHvrpu0fst9Pyl3PKEydXFVak.1>

Meeting ID: 835 1663 7472

Passcode: 618284

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



## Easter Lilies and Tulips

Anyone wishing to donate one or more lilies or tulips to decorate our sanctuary on Easter Sunday – please fill out the form below.

**The cost this year for lilies is \$9.00 per plant and \$7.00 for potted tulips.**

Please be specific as to how you would like the wording to appear in the Easter Sunday Bulletin.

The **deadline** for ordering is **Wednesday morning, March 18<sup>th</sup>.**

Lilies or tulips may be given .... (please print)

**IN MEMORY OF /HONOR OF /THANKS FOR** (circle one):

GIVEN BY:

**IN MEMORY OF /HONOR OF /THANKS FOR** (circle one):

GIVEN BY:

**IN MEMORY OF /HONOR OF /THANKS FOR** (circle one):

GIVEN BY:

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of lilies @ \$9.00 per plant

\_\_\_\_\_ # of lilies I would like to donate for a shut-in

\_\_\_\_\_ # of lilies I will take home with me

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of tulips @ \$7.00 per plant

\_\_\_\_\_ # of potted tulips I would like to donate for a shut-in

\_\_\_\_\_ # of potted tulips I will take home with me

Please have your request in the church office by **Wednesday morning, March 18, 2026.**



Non-perishable items

**Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**

**1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**First Baptist Church of Westwood**

**808 High Street, Westwood  
Fellowship Hall**

**\$10 Dunkin' gift certificate to the first 20 donators.**

**The most requested items:**

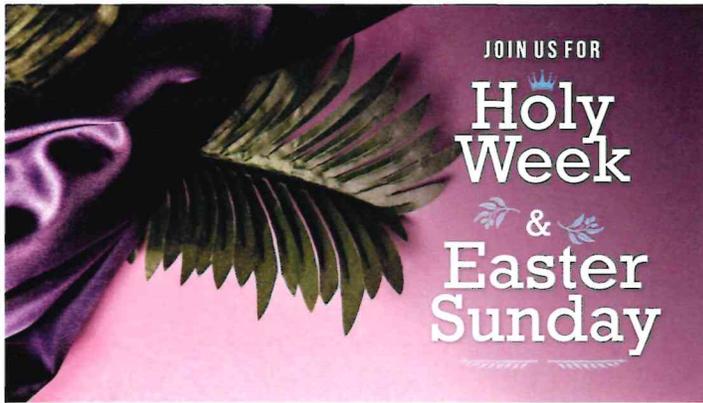
- \* Condensed Milk    \* Canned Salmon    \* Sardines    \* Salsa
- \* Canned Fruit    \* Canned Baked Beans    \* Shelf Stable Milk
- \* Canned Soups (Clam Chowder, Vegetable types)    \* Canned Tomatoes
- \* Canned Oysters    \* Canned Beef Stew, Hash, Chili with Meat
- \* Cookies    \* Chef Boyardee    \* Diapers    \* L Or XL Depends
- \* Cleaning Products (Dish and Laundry Detergent)
- \* Health & Beauty Aids (Shampoo, Deodorant , Toothpaste, etc)



**All donated items will go to the Westwood Food Pantry**

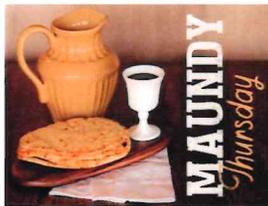
If you have any questions, contact:

Donna M @ 781-461-1730 or [office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org)



all services will be  
Livestreamed –  
go to our website,  
[fbcwestwood.org](http://fbcwestwood.org), and  
click on “worship  
services” for the links

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



**Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday:**  
Solemn Assembly @ 6:30 pm in the sanctuary  
(Prayer, Hymns, and Sharing The Lord's Table)

**Friday, April 3 – Good Friday:**  
The sanctuary will be open for prayer from  
12:00 noon – 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](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org) by Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**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!





## White Socks Outreach Project Update

We're pleased to announce that we collected 286 pairs of new socks for our "White Socks" outreach program during the months of December and January!

We will be donating over 140 pairs to the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program which has numerous clinic sites to help provide for those experiencing homelessness. They are always in need of new socks - for warmth, for comfort, and for good health. And we are also donating over 140 pairs to the veterans who are hospitalized or in outpatient treatment at the West Roxbury VA Hospital.

Thank you to everyone who participated in making this project a success again this year!



CIRCLE OF HOPE

January 22, 2026

First Baptist Church of Westwood  
c/o Friends  
808 High Street  
Westwood, MA 02090

Dear First Baptist Church of Westwood,

Thank you! On behalf of Circle of Hope, thank you for your generous gift during our end of year campaign. We received \$600.00 on 1/12/2026. Your thoughtful donation makes it possible for Circle of Hope to serve the increasing number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts. With your help we will be able to add new partners and continue responding to urgent requests.

Your gift will not only help fill basic needs, but also give those living in crisis comfort and hope knowing that they are connected to others in the community. Individuals and families have access to the basic essentials they need for health and opportunity because of donors like you. Thank you.

Your generosity makes it possible for Circle of Hope to continue our mission. We are grateful for you!

Sincerely,

Ari Barbanell  
Executive Director  
Circle of Hope, Inc.  
ari@circleofhopeonline.org

Thank you for this gift!  
Caitlin Sawicki

*Pursuant to IRS requirements, Circle of Hope does not provide any goods or services in exchange for the above-mentioned contribution. Donations to Circle of Hope are deductible as charitable contributions in accordance with Federal tax law. Please keep this receipt for your records. Circle of Hope's tax ID number is 26-3478964*

**CLOTHING & ESSENTIALS FOR HEALTH & OPPORTUNITY**

# Recent Conference Pastor Catherine attended

## Missional Entrepreneurship Immersion Gathering (February 3-5, 2026)

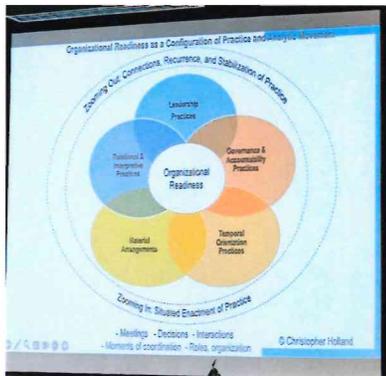


### **Missional Incubator National Capital Presbytery**

**Missional:** Loving people. Engaging community on their terms and their turf.

**Incubator:** Space to dream. Growing dreams into reality.

*Believing: "Unless it is the LORD who builds the house, the builders' work is pointless."*



Fresh Express, a coffee shop open to the public at Ridgetop Presbyterian Church

Conference was hosted by Ridgetop Presbyterian Church



## 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 and virtual meetings by appointment):

For meetings with the Pastor  
please

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

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

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



Thank you to Donna Folsom for her  
33 years of devoted service as  
FBC Westwood's Treasurer.  
The cake was presented at our  
February Annual Meeting.



## CHURCH OFFICE

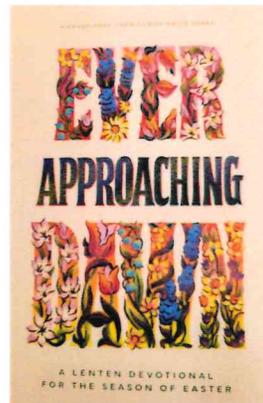
Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

Donna can be reached  
by calling

781-461-1730 or

by emailing

[office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org)



## Lenten Daily Devotional

Copies are available now in the  
Narthex and Reception room.

Or, you may contact the church  
office at  
[office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org) (or call  
781-461-1730) and leave a  
message.



Donna will be out of  
the office on:

Mon., March 2<sup>nd</sup> &  
Wed., March 25<sup>th</sup>



## Choir Rehearsal

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



Be sure to change clocks (one hour ahead) before going to bed on Sat., March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sun, March 8<sup>th</sup>.



Sign-up sheets for March and April are posted on the Reception room bulletin board.

This is your opportunity to volunteer.



### Sunday Worship Services

Please check out our website, [www.fbcwestwood.org](http://www.fbcwestwood.org). We post Livestream links and videos of our worship services there, plus other news and devotional materials.



### Crafters' Group

The March meeting will be on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office at [office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org).

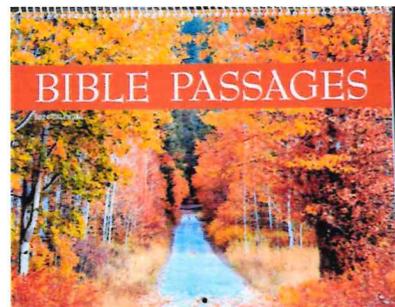


### Joyful Song & Prayer at The Ellis Senior Residence

*Pastor Catherine and Jan Randlett host service and times of musical fun for residents at The Ellis Rehab & Nursing Center, every 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, March 8<sup>th</sup>.*



### 2026 Wall Calendars

Bob & Brian Folsom have provided 2026 wall calendars for our church family. They are available in the Narthex. Please take one.

Thank you, Bob & Brian!



**Church Council  
and Staff meeting**  
Reception Room

March 17<sup>th</sup>  
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 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](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org).

News  letter  
**DEADLINE**

Material for April's "Message" is due to the church office by:  
**\*Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>\***

Information can be emailed to:  
[office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto: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](http://www.fbcwestwood.org).

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



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.



## Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is a great time to enjoy catching up with others and having some goodies, too, following morning 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 March and April are posted on the bulletin board in the Reception room.

If you have any questions, please contact the Church office at [office@fbcwestwood.org](mailto:office@fbcwestwood.org) or call 781-461-1730.



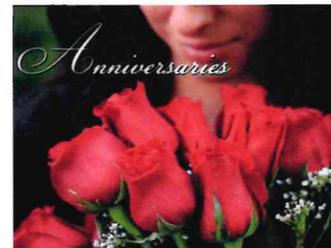
It is with sadness we share that **Linnette (Linn) Whitlock**, wife of our former pastor, Rev. Dr. Larry Whitlock III, passed away on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Linn was our Sunday School Superintendant, a member of the Chancel Choir, a Mission Advocate for our Board of Missions & Social Concerns, and one of our Delegates to T.A.B.C.O.M. (The American Baptist Churches of MA).

Please keep Pastor Larry, their two children (Karen and Fred) and their families in your prayers.



- 3/3 Andy Bolton
- 3/9 Yong Sun Salvi
- 3/11 Dick Brasie
- 3/21 Trevor Cromack
- 3/22 Linda Pelrine
- 3/23 Wayne Smith
- 3/26 Donna Mulhane
- 3/29 Katy Murray, Donna Folsom



- 3/30 Ned & Stephanie Salinas

