

FIRST  BAPTIST
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



The Message
January 2024

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
(The Rev. Catherine M. Miller)

Happy New Year First Baptist Church and Friends!

I'd like to invite you to join me this year in the *intentional practice of gratitude*.

It will bless us immensely to nurture the “good habit” of gratitude and will help us to **enjoy living by our faith** rather than feelings and emotions. Indeed, the Holy Bible; the Church's innumerable hymns and other worship songs call all people to maintain grateful hearts toward God! With a gratitude routine in place and the Holy Spirit's help in sticking to it, you'll notice a shift out from under the heaviness that comes to wear down many Christians.

You see, negativity despises gratitude. The two mindsets are totally incompatible. The two are enemies. **But since you have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16), you *can* choose to have gratitude characterize you!**

If we learned any lesson from God in 2023, let's apply it with a dose of gratitude and one day at a time with light hearts. God's Church is on a journey of spiritual growth. We must learn how to produce fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22) but honestly it costs some skin to live by the Spirit and not according to our flesh. Gratitude will catapult your growth tenderizing us to embrace and not ignore God's work of tenderizing and reshaping us primarily by His Word in the image of His Son.

Negativity is like a magnetic force with lots around to reinforce its power but a daily dose of gratitude will break its destructive hold!

Hey, at times I find myself saying: *“If it ain’t one thing, it’s another!”* But then I recall the simple hymn entitled, “Give Thanks” that goes:

*“Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ His Son. **And now** let the weak say “I am strong”, let the poor say “I am rich,” because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!”* ‘**And now**’ means stay grateful to God in spite of it all!

Try something different in 2024 and retrain your thinking to choose to expect the best not the worst. **You are cared for by God, not cursed by God!**

How appropriate this verse from the hymn entitled, “Give Thanks for Life”:

“Give thanks for life, the measure of our days, mortal, we pass through beauty that decays, yet sing to God our hope, our love, our praise: Alleluia! Alleluia!”

So how about setting aside a notepad, calendar, or use smartphone app to keep your gratitude list. Starting today and each day going forward take just a few minutes and write down one thing that you are grateful to God for.

And remember this on hard days when you want to give up on gratitude:

*“²⁸ **Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,...**”*

(Hebrews 12:28)

Peace to you!

Pastor Catherine



“Let’s Talk” group discussion and Holy Communion

Hello everyone! Pastor Catherine hosts the in-person and Zoom Bible discussion monthly on the third Thursday. For those attending in person, the group will meet in the Reception room. Pastor Catherine 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! **Hope you can join us!**

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

Topic: "Let's Talk" Bible discussion and Holy Communion facilitated by Pastor Catherine.

Time: Jan 18, 2024 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every month on the Third Thu, until Oct 17, 2024, 10 occurrence(s)

Jan 18, 2024 07:00 PM

June 20, 2024 07:00 PM

Feb 15, 2024 07:00 PM

July 18, 2024 07:00 PM

Mar 21, 2024 07:00 PM

Aug 15, 2024 07:00 PM

Apr 18, 2024 07:00 PM

Sept 19, 2024 07:00 PM

May 16, 2024 07:00 PM

Oct 17, 2024 07:00 PM

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

Monthly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZEpcu6ggj4rGNKQzhPzBjhjWM_euPcsFMH/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGtqj4tEtCQsRuBRpwMBo_4KPzwiCVcjY12rQXtMzpxaAv-PNVvDbdqINvD

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85457845126?pwd=bXhNVXNxK0tlbGo1T25MMkZiaDRxZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 5784 5126

Passcode: 655104

One tap mobile

+13092053325,,85457845126#,,,,*655104# US

+13126266799,,85457845126#,,,,*655104# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

• +1 309 205 3325 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

• +1 646 931 3860 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

• +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 507 473 4847 US

• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 253 205 0468 US

• +1 305 224 1968 US

Meeting ID: 854 5784 5126

• +1 564 217 2000 US

Passcode: 655104

• +1 669 444 9171 US

• +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

• +1 689 278 1000 US

• +1 719 359 4580 US



A special thank you to all who helped prepare our sanctuary and grounds for Christmas –

Carol Ahearn, Rick Alden, Jen Cromack, Bob Folsom, Brian Folsom, John Lewis, Bonnie MacDonald, Donna Metcalf, and Darren Valentine.





HOLLY FAIR Photos

SAT, DEC. 3rd

*I want to thank everyone for helping make the Holly Fair a great success.
No matter what your role was from donating, purchasing to the last
clean up and everything in between,
you all deserve a big round of applause.*

*With a grateful heart,
Vickie DeVoy*



Some of our faithful volunteers



**More Holly Fair photos*



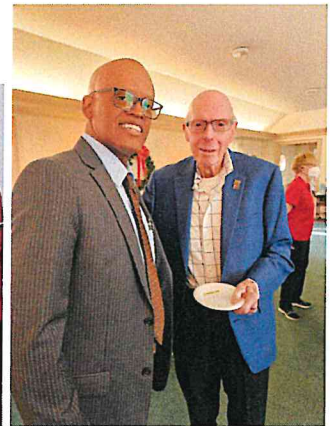
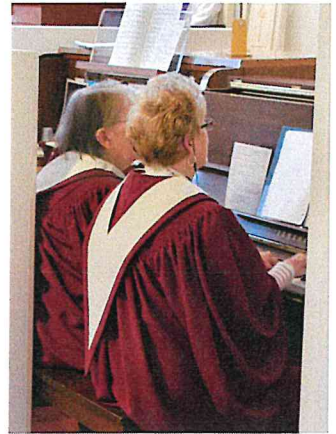
Westwood High School Alumni table



Acapela Group, Mass Appeal Boston



December worship services



Traditional service of

*Lessons
& Carols*

Sunday, December 17th



our Chancel Choir



***Westwood
Ringers***



**All participants
(readers, Chancel
Choir & Westwood
Ringers)**

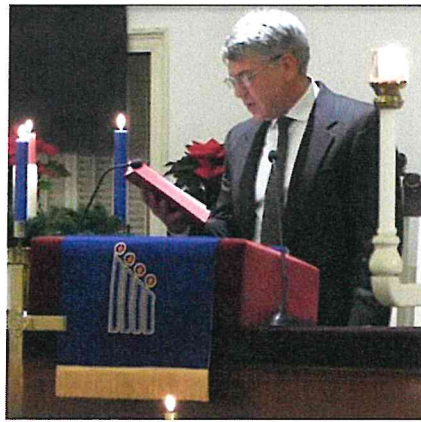
All attendees joined in congregational carol singing, and heard selected readings related to the Christmas story.



Christmas Sunday

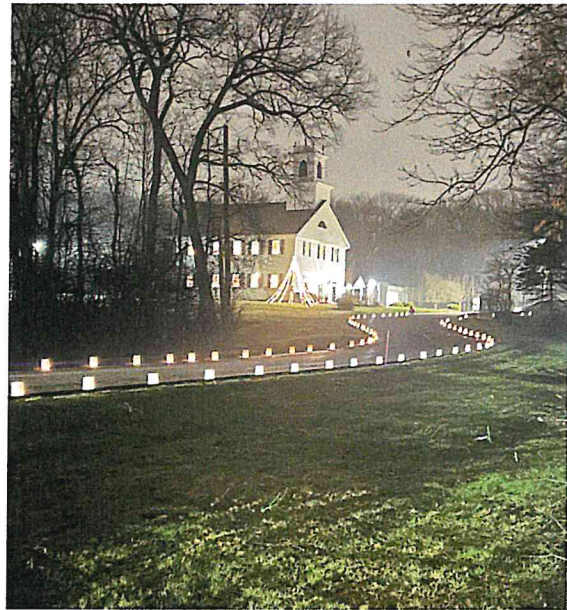
December 24th (10:00 a.m. service)







Thank you to Carol Ahearn for creating the FBC Westwood Christmas ornaments that were given out at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service this year. If you would like one and weren't able to attend the service, please email Donna at office@fbcwestwood.org.



Thank you to all our photographers for providing such great photos of our various services this season!





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.



Note from the Investment Committee

Donations

The committee would like to highlight two lesser-known donation options available to church members.

Donating appreciated securities, such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, that you have held for more than one year can provide a twofold tax benefit. First, you can deduct the total fair market value of the securities on your income taxes, up to 30% of your adjusted gross income. Second, you will not have to pay capital gains taxes on the appreciation of the securities. These tax benefits make the donation of securities a superior option to cash donations in most instances.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a charitable contribution made directly from your IRA. If you are 73 or older in 2024, you must take a certain amount of money out of your IRA each year, known as a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). With a QCD, you can have up to \$100,000 of your RMD sent directly to a qualified charity, and it will not be included in your taxable income. This can be a great way to reduce your taxes and make a charitable contribution at the same time.

Please consult your tax professional for more information on how these strategies may benefit you. Please let us know if you are interested in donating securities or making a QCD. We will be happy to provide you with the necessary instructions and paperwork.

We wish everyone a happy and productive 2024!

-Donna Folsom, Vickie DeVoy, Ken Shaw and A. Michael Poirier
FBC Investment Committee



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.



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.



Pastor Catherine's Office Hours

(for in-person, calls , or Zoom)

Tuesdays:

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Wednesdays & Thursdays:

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

For an appointment call:

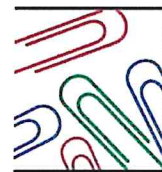
781-461-0297 or 781-461-1730

ext. 12

or email:

pastor@fbcwestwood.org.

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



CHURCH OFFICE

The church office is available:
Mon-Fri from 8:00 am- 1:30 pm

Donna can be reached by leaving a
voicemail message at

781-461-1730 or

by emailing

office@fbcwestwood.org

**Face masks are required in the
church office.**



The church office will be closed on
the following days as Donna is taking
vacation days:

*Tues Jan 2, Wed Jan 3 & Fri Jan 5



Reports Due Date

Church Council members and Committee Chairs' Annual Reports are due in the church office by Wednesday, **January 10, 2024**. If possible, please submit reports by email (as an attachment) to www.office@fbcwestwood.org. or on a flash drive to the office. Thank you.



Sign-up sheets for January and February are posted in the Reception Room for volunteer ushers and greeters. This is your opportunity to volunteer.



Do you have a favorite hymn or other musical selections you would like to have played during worship? Please speak to Jan Randlett and share your requests.



You are invited to join the Chancel Choir rehearsals on Monday nights. We meet in the Music Room, adjacent to Fellowship Hall, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.



Thank you to Carol Ahearn for the Christmas decorations on our sanctuary front doors.



Did you know?

On Communion Sunday (the first Sunday of every month), parishioners have the opportunity to help those in need by making a donation to the Fellowship Fund (Pastor's Discretionary Fund). Envelopes (labeled "Communion Fund") are in the pews on Communion Sundays. If you have any questions regarding this fund, please see Pastor Catherine.



Coffee Hour

What a great time to enjoy catching up with others and having some goodies, too.

We are looking for additional helpers to host a Sunday Coffee Hour. Wouldn't you like to host one? Sign-up sheets for January & February are posted in the Reception Room.

Have questions? Speak with one of the Church Council members, contact the Church office at office@fbcwestwood.org or call 781-461-1730 and leave a message.

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.



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.

Our newest donation method is through using Venmo. We introduced it at our Holly Fair with great success and received requests to provide this option for offerings and other donations. Here is our QR code that you can scan.



Tuesday, January 16th
7:00pm
Reception Room & on Zoom

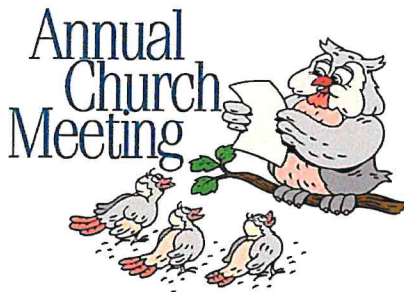


February "Message"
Material for next month's "Message" is due (to the church office) by
Wednesday, January 17th



OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes are available in the entryway for those who requested them. You will notice they are dated differently than in the past. Monthly envelopes just have the month on them, no year. Weekly envelopes indicated 1st Sunday, 2nd Sunday, etc. By not having them year specific, we can use unassigned envelopes in another year and not have to throw them away, thus saving the church some money.



Annual Church Meeting
Sunday, February 4, 2024
Watch for additional information in February's Message.



Tina Blood
93 Meetinghouse Road
Norfolk, MA 02056



To my Church family,
Your generous Christmas gift and words of appreciation meant so much. Thank you for your thoughtfulness. I am blessed to be a part of this thoughtful and loving church family. Thank you, again.

With appreciation,
Donna Metcalf



Thank you all for the Christmas gifts, I really appreciate it. I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday!

Joanne (Zessis)



Dear Friends,

It is with a grateful heart that I thank you all for your generous Christmas gift. I also want you to know how wonderfully blessed I feel with the continued support you offer to our music program.

As we move into yet another year together, may Peace and Love be with you all.

With much appreciation,
Jan Randlett