

FIRST  BAPTIST
CHURCH OF WESTWOOD

808 HIGH STREET · WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02090



The Message
January 2025

REV. CATHERINE M. MILLER, PASTOR

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From The
Pastor's Desk

January 2025



Happy New Year!
First Baptist Church Westwood
& Friends

God's goodness and mercy has granted us to see this *New Year, 2025*.

I am grateful for all who worship God here & support First Baptist Church!

With the words of the Apostle Paul, I bless you:

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity... for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs... but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.”

II Corinthians 9:10-12

Praise God, at the time of this writing, our 2025 pledge tally is as follows: *Local: \$58,150 and Missions: \$9,972*. We bless God for strengthening our faith even in the hard trials faced and that have carried over from 2024.

But Christ is indeed attentive to us! We are one vineyard among many of His beloved. He has not ceased to ‘make us lie down in green pastures

and restore our souls' at every turn. Healing and deliverance is available to all who allow the working of God's love to cover the multitude of sin. As we begin this year humble before Christ, remember the message of joy from Third Advent Sunday: ***The Holy One is in our midst and we have the right to draw from the wells of salvation with joy!*** (Isaiah 12) The Holy Spirit will continue to comfort us in our weaknesses and fears and fill up anything lacking in the work of the ministry. God sent the Holy Spirit to help us navigate this way of faith in the Messiah, the Sent One – Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to keep joyful in faith rather than live in fear of bad news! ***Surely*** as we continue to read and look to His Word for hope and direction, we will give God our hearts' best. As 'one people in Christ' we can nurture the **joy of God** as we share in the work of the ministry and bless those who need both practical and spiritual relief. Amazing mission work is ahead!

Again, I thank God for your sharing of yourselves this past year in so many ways and sacrificially in the giving of your time, physical energy, authentic smiles and kindness and hugs; in resources and finances and talents and skills; in encouragement and much, much prayer!

May God be glorified through us even more in this year ahead!

Look to new mercies and rich blessing in Christ in 2025!

Pastor Catherine



*If you must look back, do so forgivingly.
If you will look forward, do so prayerfully.
But, the wisest course would be to be present in the present...gratefully.*

**Maya
Angelou**



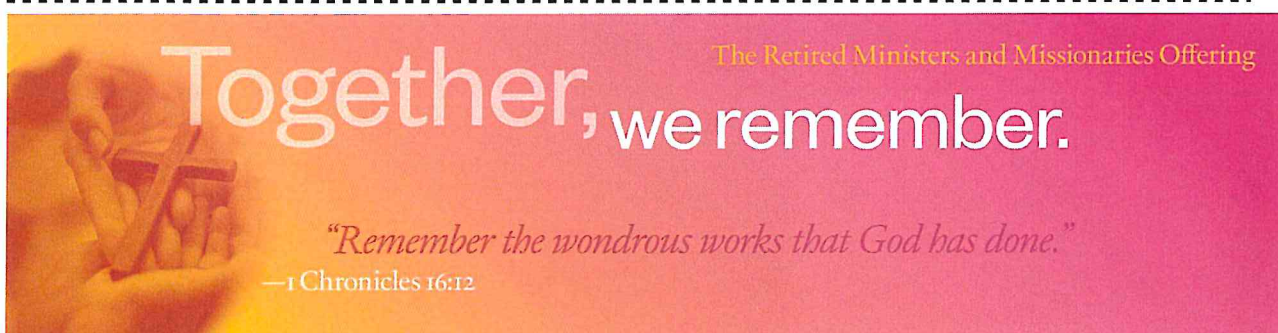
Collecting White Socks for the Homeless and Veterans

In December and continuing through January, our outreach project is collecting new white crew socks for the homeless and veterans. You may drop your socks donations in the collection bins located in both the narthex and the reception room.

In February, half of the socks will be donated to the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program which provides services to the homeless in hospitals, shelters, and on the streets throughout the city. The homeless are always in need of new socks - for warmth, for comfort, and for good health. One of the reasons that white socks are requested is that they are more likely than darker colored socks to indicate when someone is having foot problems and infections that need to be treated.

The other half of the socks collected will again be donated to the West Roxbury VA Hospital for our veterans who are hospitalized or in outpatient treatment.

Please spread the word and help us make things a bit better for some who are less fortunate than we are.



During the month of January, we will be collecting The Retired Ministers and Missionaries (RMMO) offering.

Your gift to RMMO goes toward the thank you checks and direct emergency assistance to ABCUSA clergy and missionaries who have served. Give generously for those who celebrate the wondrous works of Christ (1 Chronicles 16:12).

The pastors, missionaries and leaders who have served ABCUSA churches and ministries have bestowed on us numerous blessings through their service. Through RMMO, together, we remember each of them in the form of a thank you check and/or direct emergency assistance. RMMO: Together, we remember.

Your gift can be made by check or online:

By Check: please make your check payable to FBC Westwood and reference “RMMO” in the memo section. Your gift can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office at 808 High St, Westwood, MA 02090.

Online: 1) Go to abc-usa.org and click on the “GIVE ONLINE” button at the top right.

2) For “Fund”, select, “Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering”

3) provide your church name in the “Comment” box.



A special thank you to all who helped prepare our sanctuary and grounds for Christmas –
Carol Ahearn, Rick Alden, Bob Folsom,
Brian Folsom, John Lewis, Donna Metcalf, and Darren Valentine.





HOLLY FAIR Photos

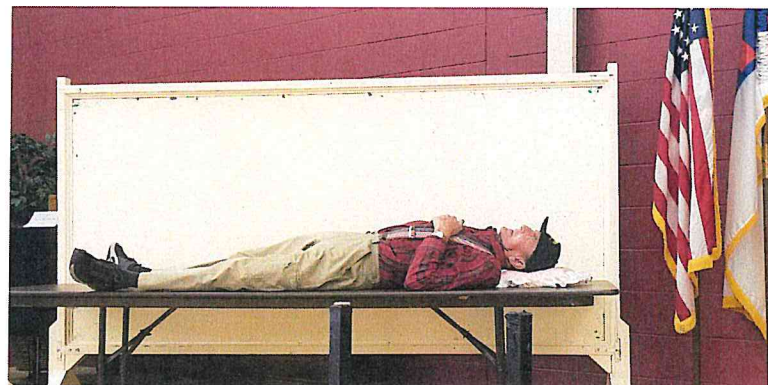
SAT, DEC. 7th

*I want to thank everyone for helping with the fair this year.
No matter what your part was, behind the scenes, up front, baking, donations
and purchases alike!*

Vickie DeVoy, Holly Fair Chair



**More Holly Fair photos*



Traditional service of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 15th

Our dear Chancel Choir sang lovely choral arrangements, led by Jan Randlett. The Westwood Ringers led by Dan Moore, rang out beautiful melodies accompanied by amazing guest flutist, "Cat" Craven. And how nice to have Jeanette Paul (daughter of Nellie Crosby) as one of the evening's narrators with Pastor Catherine. The Lessons & Carols Christmas presentation and carol singing charged the atmosphere with Christmas joy!



Westwood Ringers & "Cat" Craven on flute



"Cat" Craven, flutist



Pastor Catherine & Jeanette



Chancel Choir

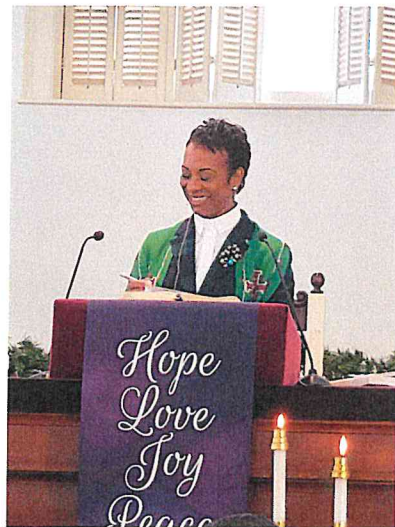
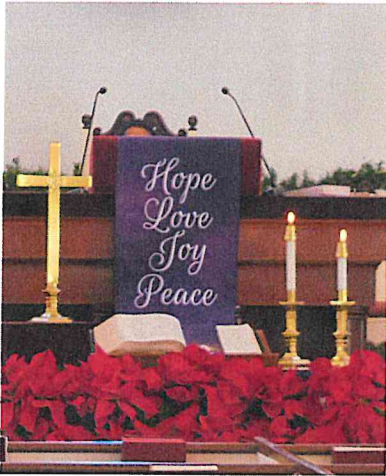


Chancel Choir & the congregation



Christmas Sunday

December 22nd



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA



December 3, 2024

First Baptist Church
808 High Street
Westwood MA 02090

Dear Pastor and 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 #85 in United Mission giving throughout in the entire denomination of approximately 4,700 churches for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023! Congratulations and thank you for your generous support of \$12,000 in 2023!

ABCUSA values the faithful generosity of First Baptist Church in Westwood, MA. The past few years have not always been easy and we know there are many details that require your attention and resources. 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.

The 2025 Biennial Mission Summit will be held at the CHI Health Center Convention Center in Omaha, Nebraska, July 3-6, 2025. 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.

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

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain
General Secretary

Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops
Mission Resource Coordinator

*A letter with your Church's Delegate allotment was sent on November 4, 2024. If you have not received this information, you can reach out to your region office. For more information and to register for the Biennial Mission Summit, please visit www.americanbaptists2025.com.



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.





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.



(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)



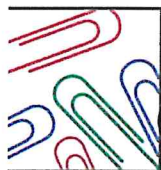
Let's Talk Bible Discussion & Communion - January

We will **not** be meeting in January.
The next meeting will be on
Thursday, February 6th.



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.



CHURCH OFFICE

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 1:30 pm

Besides visiting Donna in the
church office, she can be reached
by phone at 781-461-1730 or by
emailing her at

office@fbcwestwood.org

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



ANNUAL MEETING

Reports Due Date

Church Council members
and Committee Chairs' Annual Reports
are due in the church office by
Wednesday, **January 8, 2025.**

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.



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.

Joyful Song & Prayer at The Ellis Senior Residence - monthly

Pastor Catherine and Jan are hosting services and times of musical fun for residents at The Ellis, every 2nd Sunday.

Residents and staff join in singing hymns, Oldies but Goodies, & participated in prayer. The Ellis community is happy about this new monthly gathering.



You are invited to join the Chancel Choir rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 9:20 a.m.

A special thank you to "Mimi" Earley for donating our new Christmas tree for the Reception room.



Salem Radio Boston



Christian Radio Station

Tune in to AM 590 WEZE - "The Word" channel on Saturdays @ 5:15pm and enjoy our Pastor's prayer/inspiration program, **Be Still**, a family-oriented radio outreach sponsored by FBC Westwood! Livestream & podcasts at <http://wezeradio.com/radioshow/be-still>.

News letter **DEADLINE**

Material for February's "Message" is due to the church office by:
Wednesday, January 15th

Information can be emailed to:
office@fbcwestwood.org



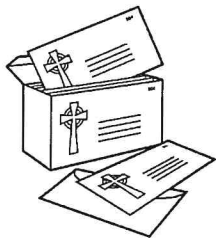
Coffee Hour

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

Join us for 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 January and February are posted on the bulletin board in the Reception room.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Thompson at kleethompson65@gmail.com or the Church office at office@fbcwestwood.org or call 781-461-1730.



If you would like 2025 offering envelopes and haven't already requested them, please either contact Wendy Lewis, the Financial Secretary, or the church office at 781-461-1730.



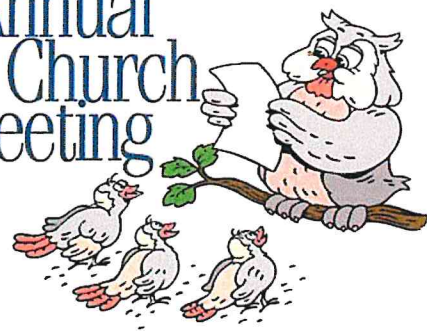
You are invited to join our Prayer Chain. This is a small group of FBC folk who email one another with prayer concerns of the larger church community and then include those concerns in their prayers. This is beyond the all-church prayers shared by the Pastor. If you would like to join The Prayer Chain,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



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

January 21st
7:00pm

Annual Church Meeting



Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025
meeting following worship



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.



To my Church family and TABCOM leadership,

Thank you for all of the prayers, cards, phone calls, and flowers during my ongoing recovery from my October accident. Words can not express my appreciation for our loving church and our extended TABCOM family.

Love,
Jen Cromack