



The Epistle

May 2025

We are an “Easter People!”

Being an "Easter People" means that we emphasize the transformative power of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It means living with hope, joy, and a sense of mission inspired by the resurrection. As St. Augustine famously said, "We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song," highlighting the call to live in the light of Christ's victory over death.

To be an “Easter people” is to embody the values of faith, hope, and love in daily life. It means imitating Jesus in actions, thoughts, and words, and embracing the mission to bring healing, justice, and compassion to the world. The resurrection is not just a promise of life after death but a call to live fully and abundantly in communion with God, our neighbors, our enemies, and God’s creation here and now.

But what does living as an Easter People mean in our daily lives? The Belhar Confession is a Christian statement of faith that originated in South Africa during the struggle against apartheid. It was adopted by the Dutch Reform Church and served as the religious foundation to resist the perpetrators of oppression and violence. It asserts that we are unified under Christ and “that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways:”

in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another’s burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity (Phil. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; John 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-6; Eph. 3:14-20; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 1:3-4)

As we continue our journey together, may we live as Easter People, united and freed by Christ’s resurrection promise. May we find ways to imitate Christ, offering healing, love and compassion to the world and resisting evil in all its manifestations, all for the glory of God.

Pastor Russ

Special Worship Services, Events & Holiday's in May and June

Mother's Day - May 11



Spring Organ Recital - Sunday, May 18

Featuring: Kristjon Imperio, Principal Organist and Director of Worship and Development at Village Church Inn at Wellesley and Weston

Time: 4:00 pm

Where: First Congregational Church of Westminster



Epistle Due - May 18

Memorial Day - May 26th



Pentecost, Children and Youth Sunday - June 8

CHURCH SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY GIVING PROJECT

Time: 9:30 am

Where: Sanctuary

As part of this year's Church School theme "God is all around us" the children of the Church School are collecting monetary donations for the Westminster Food Pantry. The children will be bringing their donations into Church School and presenting their gift on Children's Sunday June 8th. The Congregation is invited to attend the ice cream social after church on the lawn.



Yankee Street Fair - Saturday, June 14

Time: 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

Where: First Congregational Church of Westminster, 138 Main Street

Our Fair has joined with the Westminster Historical Society's Town-Wide Yard Sale to increase awareness and foot traffic. **If any bakers are willing to make goodies for us to sell (with ingredients labeled on the items), we will have a signup sheet posted in Fellowship Hall for you to let us know.** See page 8 for more information.



Father's Day - June 15



Office Summer Hours beginning Monday, June 16

Tuesday—Thursday

Time: 9 am—noon



Page 3 The Epistle

The mystery surrounding the Church Bell

Several months ago, our church bell became inoperable and needed hands-on intervention. Matt McGee's two sons, John and Thomas, climbed up to the belfry to fix the problem. What they found surprised us as we believed that the bell in the third church had been destroyed by the fire of 1940.

They found a bronze Henry N. Hooper & Co. bell (circa 1833-1868), photos were taken and the mystery deepened. Where did it come from? Did the original bell from the third church get restored?

Were we given a bell from another church or did we purchase a used one?

All kinds of questions but few answers!

What we know so far is that it is clearly marked as a Hooper bell. Henry Hooper had originally been apprenticed to Paul Revere before starting his own business in 1833. We know that \$40.00 was appropriated by the building committee to install a bell in 1941-1942 (wonder what the cost would be today?) There is no mention of buying a bell, only installing it. We know that furnishings such as the pews were gotten from other churches (Salem and Plymouth are two mentioned) We know from a transcript of an interview done in the late 1980s that three local men "hid" the bell from the third church for a year. Did they have it rehabilitated or was it beyond repair? We know that at the 1942 dedication of our existing church there was no bell, yet.

If anyone has any insight into our mystery bell or if family stories of the incident still exist, we ask that you share what you think or know with either Matt or myself.

Deenie Burgess, Historian

Next month we will share the mystery of the Parsonage on Main Street in the late 1800s.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Mark Your Calendars!

GIVING PROJECT - FOOD PANTRY

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY, June 8



As part of this year's Church School theme "God is all around us" the children of the Church School are collecting monetary donations for the Westminster Food Pantry.

The children will be bringing their donations into Church School and presenting their gift on Children's Sunday June 8th. The Congregation is invited to attend the ice cream social after church on the lawn.

Prayer List

For our members, family and friends hospitalized, ill and in need of prayers, may God bless and watch over you:

Amelia L & her family	Bob A.
Kiernan W.	Lorna D.
Ellie G.	Steve C.
Amanda A. & her family	Bryan C.
Sally C.	Marcia M.
Eddie H.	Bobbie D.
June & Brian C.	The Walker family
Peter R.	Pam L.
Bobbie D.	Ted G's brother
Paul (Denise's brother)	Gloria H.
The McGee Family	Debbie Callahan

"Prayer List"

If you added somebody to the prayer list, please email Pastor Russ:

fccw.pastorruss@gmail.com



Thank you to the students of Cushing Academy for your hard work on cleaning up the church grounds. It looks beautiful.

Thank you, Reverend Cindy Maybeck, for your ministry here on Sunday, April 27. We enjoyed your message and hope to see you again in the future. Blessings!

A sincere thank you to Gregory Smith for his generous donation of the cases of Poland Spring bottled waters.

Thank you to all that have volunteered to help assist in in the church office. Whether it be folding bulletins, inserts, filing, proofing bulletins, the epistle, and your patience and kindness.

Bible Study

Wednesdays at 11:00 AM

Let's get together to study the readings for the upcoming week.

May 7

Acts 9:36-43
Revelations 7:9 -17
John 10:22-30

May 21

Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 148
John 13:31-35

May 14

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 1:4-819:28-40
Revelations 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

June 4

Acts 16:16-34
Psalm 97
Revelations 22:12-14
John 17:20-26

May 21

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 148
John 13:31-35

June 11

Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104::24-34, 35b
Romans 8:14-17
John 14:8-17, 25-27




CONDOLONCESS

Our sincere condolences go to the family of William Callahan who passed on April 23, 2025.

Our deepest condolences go to the family of Marcia McGee who passed on April 28, 2025.



2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6-7pm Webelo's Den Meeting (CH) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance) <i>Office closed</i>	2 <i>Office closed</i>	3
4 9:30am Family Worship / Communion	5 7-8:30 pm Super Users	6 6:00pm Deacons (Parlor) 6:30-7:30pm Bear Den (FH & CH)	7 8:00am Meditation Zoom 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours 6:30pm Troop 33 (CH)	8 8:00am Yoga (FH) 3:00pm Trustees (FH) 6-8pm BSA Troop 33(CH) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	9 <i>Office closed</i>	10
11 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Church School 10:45am Church Council	12 8:00am Meditation (zoom)	13 8:00am Yoga (FH) 7:00pm CE (Parlor)	14 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours 6:00pm Scout Troop 33 7-8:30pm PPRC	15 11:00 am WF Lunch & Walk (Doyl Field) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance) 5:30pm Bear Den (Community Room) 6:00pm Webelos (CH)	16 7:30am-3:30pm WES Colonial Days CH & FH <i>Office closed</i>	17
18 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Church School 4:00pm Organ Recital EPISTLE DUE	19 8:00am Meditation (zoom)	20 8am Yoga (FH) 6:00pm Generous Giving (Parlor)	21 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours 6:00pm Scout Troop 33	22 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	23 <i>Office closed</i>	24
25 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Church School	26 8:00am Meditation (zoom) 	27 8:00am Yoga (FH) 6:30pm Bear Den (FH & CH)	28 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours	29 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	30 <i>Office closed</i>	31



Pastor Russ's office hours:

Wednesdays 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

After hour meetings may be arranged upon request. For Pastoral Care Emergencies, please contact Pastor Russ directly at 774-764-1025.



Monday, May 26th

First Congregational Church – Westminster
Spring Organ Recital



Featuring

Kristjon Imperio

Principal Organist

Director of Worship & Development at Village Church in |
Wellesley and Weston

Sunday, May 18 at 4:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church

**138 E Main Street
Westminster, MA**

Women's Fellowship



This class may have taken place on April Fools Day but it was no joke! Participants unleashed talent that they may not have been aware that they had and created beautiful paintings. Thank you to Bob Ruberti for his inspiring instruction and to all who joined with the Women's Fellowship for this great activity! The morning was truly filled with "Fun, Fellowship, and Art"!



Who would like to be the next head of the Food Pantry?
The job takes only one hour a week! Haha! The job takes more than that.

If you are interested, please call Dorcas Hurd at
(978) 874-2350.



Sunday, May 11

10:45 AM

Community Room

Yankee Street Fair Update

Our Yankee Street Fair will take place on **Saturday, June 14th. (8:30 am – 3 pm)**. Our Fair has joined with the Westminster Historical Society's Town-Wide Yard Sale to increase awareness and foot traffic.

If any bakers are willing to make goodies for us to sell (with ingredients labeled on the items), we will have a signup sheet posted in Fellowship Hall for you to let us know. Also planned will be cut flower bunches and vegetables for sale. We'd love to hear from you if you can **donate items from your garden** as well. **Donations of cans of soda and water** as well as **a variety of snack-size chip packs** will be gratefully received.

Items for our Silent and Ticket Auctions are also being sought. If you know of a local business contact who may be interested in donating items, please let us know at ysf.fccw@gmail.com.

Our goal is to support our many local businesses through the Fair.

Finally, **if you and your friends have an hour or two available to help at the sales tables, we would be so appreciative.** We are working together with the Welcoming Committee to run the Yard Sale component of the Fair and will post via Mailchimp drop-off nights in June. Again, we will have a signup sheet in Fellowship Hall or just send an email (ysf.fccw@gmail.com) of when you might be available.

Thank you for your support.

Jeff Hoyt
YSF Chair



Below are the available slots to sign-up if you wish to host coffee hour in Fellowship Hall or lemonade and cookies outside of the church following worship service.

The clipboard for sign up is on the bulletin board outside of the church office.

June 1	July 27
June 15	August 3
June 29	August 10
July 6	August 17
July 13	August 24
July 20	August 31



The Women's Fellowship is inviting you to an opportunity for lunch, fellowship and a bit of exercise. We are grateful to Sammi Dawley for organizing this year's Walk and Lunch on Thursday, May 15th.

All will meet at the church at 10:00 AM and carpool to the Doyle Community Park and Center. If you choose to arrive on your own, drive Route 2 East to the Abbott Ave exit (the exit right after Merriam Ave). The Park and Center will be on the right just a short distance down the road.

Not knowing the walking abilities of participants, I would suggest a trail that begins right across the street (Abbott Ave) from the Community Building. It is accessed by following a gravel path in front of the building and then crossing the street. Shortly you will come upon a lovely pond and sitting area, which those who may not want to walk far can enjoy. It is only 1000 steps from the parking lot. Others can continue on as far as they wish, then turn around, and "pick up" those who have been enjoying the pond. This, of course, is just a suggestion. There are lots of options to enjoy on this 150+ acre park!

After a walk, we will gather for lunch at the Main Street Gift and Cafe located at 40 Main Street in Leominster. If street parking is difficult, there is a parking lot behind the cafe.

Please let Sammi (scdawley@yahoo.com) know by Sunday, May 11th, if you will join us so we can provide a count to the restaurant.

Thank you to Sammi for all the planning, Mary Waight



Yankee Street Fair

Saturday, June 14th, 2025

830 am – 3pm

First Congregational Church of Westminster

138 Main Street, Westminster, MA

Strawberry Shortcakes

Yard Sale, Silent and Ticket Auctions, Plants and Fruit & Vegetables

Baked Goods, Coffee, Water & Soft Drinks

Hamburgers & Hot Dogs

The First Congregational Church
of Westminster
United Church of Christ
138 Main Street • PO Box 477
Westminster, MA 01473

The Epistle

May 2025

Phone: 978-874-5790

Church office Email:

fccw.westminster@gmail.com

Visit our Website: www.westcong.org

Don't Miss the

DEADLINE!

**Sunday
May 18, 2025**

Please email your articles to
fccw.westminster@gmail.com

