



The Epistle

June 2025

Dear Saints of God,

Pentecost is upon us. We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the institution of the Body of Christ, the Church here on Earth. For me, it begs the question: Where is the Holy Spirit moving us as a congregation?

Since my arrival, I have heard repeating motifs. “We need more members”, “We need more money”, “We need to attract younger people.” Each statement is spoken with deep conviction, an air of anxiety, and more than a hint of exhaustion. The underlying fear is that of survival. Will we survive as a congregation? I want to assure you: we are not alone in our fear. These motifs exist across the landscape of religious institutions in general. So how do we grow?

The current Pew Research [*Religious Landscape Study*](#) indicates that among Protestants, the groups that have seen an increase in membership include Nondenominational Protestant, Pentecostal, and Nonspecific Protestant. It leads to several questions:

- What is it that attracts people to these denominations?
- Where do we as a congregation intersect with the characteristics of these denominations?
- What gifts do we have and what do we offer that is unique that serves God’s mission?
- How do we organize and get re-energized?
- Where do we focus our energy?

I want to tackle the first question here; we will, as a congregation, address the remaining questions in workshops starting in the fall.

Consider the following: Nondenominational churches often attract people because they emphasize **personal faith** over institutional traditions. Here are some key characteristics that draw people in:

Biblical Focus – Many nondenominational churches prioritize the Bible as their sole authority, rather than adhering to denominational doctrines.

Flexibility in Worship – They often have **modern, informal** worship styles, making services feel more accessible and engaging.

Community-Oriented – Many focus on **tight-knit, welcoming communities**, making them appealing to those seeking a personal connection in their faith journey.

As a congregation, we can learn from these denominations while discovering our unique God-given gifts and purpose in the Body of Christ. But to do so takes time, prayer, collaboration, commitment, vulnerability, courage, and trust in God’s leading. All of this takes energy.

As we enter into the long days of summer, I encourage you to rest. Listen to the Holy Spirit and feel her movement in your life. Take time to pray, surround yourself in the glory of nature and the warmth of God’s love through creation itself, let the Holy Spirit carry you to new possibilities like a pleasant ocean wave. As you rest, become mindful of the tug of your heart. Pay attention to daydreams that leave you energized, curious, inspired. There you will find the Holy Spirit revealing to you the passions you can share to help grow God’s Church.

Come, Holy Spirit! Come!

Special Worship Services, Events & Holiday's in June



Pentecost, WEAR RED Children and Youth Sunday

Date: June 8

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.



After the **Ice Cream Social/Coffee Hour on Sunday, June 8, 2025**, come be part of a **joyful community event** at the **parsonage (20 Lovell Street, Westminster, MA)**!

Let's roll up our sleeves together and **bring new life to the gardens**, enjoy a **friendly tour of the parsonage**, and cap it all off with **delicious pizza and refreshing beverages**. No gardening experience needed—just a **heart for fellowship and a love for making things beautiful**! Whether you're young or young at heart, we'd love to have you join us.



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



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.
Kieman 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.
McGee Family	Debbie C.
	Tom M.

"Prayer List"

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

fccw.pastorruss@gmail.com



I was so pleased to see Bobby Hoyt walking up my driveway with a beautiful bright pink tulip plant for me. Thank you to the Deacons for their continuing kindness. I'm truly grateful.

Best wishes to my church friends,

Dawn Shaw

Thank you to the students of Cushing Academy for their hard work on cleaning up the grounds of the church. Your hard work and community spirit is appreciated.

Thank you for the beautiful celebration of my 10 year anniversary as church secretary. Your kind words, and joyful presence made my heart full. A special thank you to Kathy Miller for all the effort and care you put into making it such a meaningful celebration. I feel truly blessed to be a part of this church.

Lisa Roberts

Bible Study

Wednesdays at 11:00 AM

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

June 11

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalms 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

June 25

Isaiah 65:1-9

Psalms 22:19-28

Galatians 3:23-29

Luke 8:26-39

July 2

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-17

Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Luke 9:51-62

June 18

1 Kings 19:1-4 (5-7), 8-15a

Psalms 42 and 43

Galatians 3:23-29

Luke 8:26-39

To my FCCW family,

As I prepare for my last day as Church Secretary on June 2, 2025, my heart is full of gratitude. Serving in this role has truly been a blessing. I've cherished the moments when friends would stop by the office whether it be a quick hello, a word of encouragement, or a shared laugh. Your kindness and smiles have meant more to me than words can express.

This position wasn't just a job, it was my calling. I felt God's hand guiding me here, and now I feel Him gently leading me into my next chapter. Though I am stepping away from this role, I'm happy to share that I will remain an active member of our church.

Thank you for allowing me to serve alongside you. I will carry these memories in my heart always.

With love and gratitude,

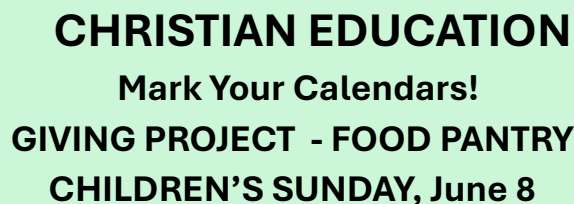
Lisa Roberts

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."

1 Corinthians 13:4



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30am Family Worship / Communion	2 8:00am Meditation (zoom)	3 8:00am Yoga (FH) 6:00pm Deacons (Parlor) 6:30-7:30pm Bear Den (FH & CH)	4 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours 6:00pm Troop 33 (CH)	5 3:00pm Trustees (FH) 6-8pm BSA Troop 33(CH) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	6	7
8 9:30am Children's Sunday Pentecost WEAR RED 10:45am Ice Cream Social (side lawn) Noon Beautifying the Parsonage	9 8:00am Meditation (zoom) 7-8:30 pm Super Users	10 8:00am Yoga (FH) 6:00pm WF Year End Dinner 7:00-8:30pm CE (Parlor)	11 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours 6:00pm Troop 33 (CH) 7:00pm PPRC	12 6-8pm BSA Troop 33(CH) 6:00pm Webelos (CH) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	13 Office closed	14 Yankee Stret Fair 8:30 am—3:30 pm
15 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Church School 10:45am Church Council Fathers Day	16 8:00am Meditation (zoom)	17 8:00am Yoga (FH) 6:00-8:00pm Scout Troop 33 (Ch)	18 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours	19 5:30pm Lion Den (CH) 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	20 Office closed	21
22 9:30am Worship Service/Baptism 9:30am Church School	23 8:00am Meditation (zoom) Epistle Due for July & August	24 8am Yoga (FH) 6:00pm Generous Giving (Parlor)	25 10:00am Staff 11:00am Bible Study 1-3pm Pastor Russ open hours	26 6:30-7:30pm Food Pantry (Side Entrance)	27 Office closed	28
29 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Church School	30 8:00am Meditation (zoom)					



The children will be bringing their donations into Church School and presenting their gift on Children's Sunday June 8th.

After the **Ice Cream Social/Coffee Hour on Sunday, June 8, 2025**, come be part of a **joyful community event** at the **parsonage (20 Lovell Street, Westminster, MA)**! Details on page 2.



Fiscal Update from the Trustees:

During the first several months of any church fiscal year our “pledges received” dollar amounts look as though we are financially very healthy. We are not, because the one-time annual pledges are received in January and February and make the income percentages appear more positive than they really are.

The trustee’s philosophy about any funding/expense request has been “can we put this expense off without hurting a particular church function?” If the answer is “yes”, we reluctantly turn down the request. Conversely, if the answer is “no”, we find a way to fund that request.

In the current fiscal year, the approved budget calls for using \$80,600 from the church’s endowment funds. Through May 16th the trustees with approval of the endowment committee have taken \$19,800 from the endowment funds to finance church activities. We fully expect to use all the \$80,600 by December 31st.

What the church really needs is for the budgeted pledges to be \$180,000, not the \$100,100 that was budgeted. The endowment funds will only last so long!

FROM THE HISTORY ROOM

This month’s discussion is on the various Parsonages of our church with an emphasis on the one located at 87 Main Street.

We are certain that the first three ministers, starting in 1742, built and maintained their own parsonages. There is documented evidence that our first minister, Elisha Marsh, was reimbursed by the Town for housing various guest ministers. (after he was dismissed from our church.)

There is evidence that Rev Asaph Rice and Rev Cyrus Mann frequently used their parsonages to hold church events. They both had fireplaces to heat their homes, whereas the meetinghouse did not.

Fast forward to the 1890’s where we see on maps that a Cong. Parsonage existed on Main Street. So began the hunt to trace the ownership of that building. Richard Miller and I have both tried doing a title search for the building and have been unsuccessful. Karen Reitter also learned that a gravestone was found on the property with the inscription, “John M. Whitney” who died in 1861. The 1850 and 1860 censuses do not indicate any real estate owned by Mr. Whitney. Our next step is to go to the Registry of Deeds in Fitchburg as I continue to build a genealogical profile of that Whitney line. If anyone has even a hint of knowledge about this building, feel free to pass it on to either myself or Richard.

About 1900 a new parsonage was built on Leominster Street and Rev. Lees was it’s first inhabitant. I believe Rev. Benbow lived in that parsonage while he was our Pastor in the early 1950s. We then purchased the Atkinson home which was located where our back parking lot is now (it is now located on Lovell Street.) Several Pastors occupied that building until our present parsonage was built in 1964, during Rev. Sanford Fasth’s tenure with us.

The mysteries of the past continue to challenge us, but it is rewarding when we have even a hint to help us find the answers. (And besides, it is a lot of fun.)

Deenie Burgess, Historian

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Summer is right around the corner. The price of groceries is still going up and kids will be out of school soon. As we are busy going on vacations and enjoying the warmer weather let's not forget those that count on our Westminster Food Pantry. There is a convenient box labeled for drop off at the side entrance or bring it to church on Sunday morning and leave it in the hall by the side door where there will be a labeled container.



"If every person offered just one act

Of kindness every day, we could change

the world." Let this be our goal.



Continued thanks & Blessings,

The Outreach Committee

Dear Saints of God,

It is with a mix of gratitude and heartfelt emotion that we announce Lisa Roberts' decision to step down from her role as the administrator of our church. For the past 10 years, Lisa has been a pillar of strength, dedication, and unwavering commitment to our community. Her tireless efforts and heartfelt devotion have touched the lives of many and have been instrumental in the nurturing of our church family.

While we will miss her leadership in this capacity, we are delighted to share that Lisa will remain an active member of our church. Her continued warm presence and involvement will undoubtedly continue to be a blessing to us all.

Please join us in expressing our deepest gratitude to Lisa for her incredible service and in wishing her all the best as she embarks on new ventures. We look forward to continuing this journey of faith together with her.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Pastor Russ

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.



Sunday, June 15

10:45 AM

Community Room



Available slots are open to host cookies and lemonade following worship this summer.

Sign up sheet is outside of the church office.



You fed me when I was hungry.... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

The Food Pantry is looking for someone to lead this critical service for the community. If interested, please call Dorcas Hurd at (978) 874-2350.

Yankee Street Fair Update

If any bakers are willing to make goodies for us to sell (with ingredients labeled on the items), we will have

Items for our Silent and Ticket Auctions are also being sought. If you know of a local business contact who

Finally, **if you and your friends have an hour or two available to help at the sales tables, we would be so**

Thank you for your support.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HEROES!

WESTMINSTER VFW POST 7389

**HELP CREATE A TOWN
PAVILION AT THE VFW!**

DONATE TODAY!

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO VFW
POST 7389 ATTN. PAVILION
EAGLE PROJECT**

**MAIL TO VFW POST 7389 PO BOX
388, WESTMINSTER MA 01473**

SHOW THE YOUTH THAT YOU CAN DREAM BIG!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL VFWPAVILIONEAGLE@GMAIL.COM

EAGLE SCOUTS

*Let us consider one another
in order to stir up love
and good works,
not forsaking the assembling
of ourselves together,
as is the manner of some,
but encouraging one another....*

Hebrews 10:24-25

10/24/20





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

Central MA Association, United Church of Christ, SNEUCC

Invites Central MA Member Churches to a WOO SOX Game

on SUNDAY July, 20th at 1:05 PM

at Polar Park in Worcester

The Assoc is underwriting tickets at the Woo Sox game against Scranton for an individual cost of only \$35 per ticket!!

We will have our own space on the Triple Decker Garden...which includes a 2 hour buffet and *ADDED* perks as described below....



- tickets to a private stanchioned section of the Hanover Deck
- 2-hour buffet of burgers, hot dogs, mac & cheese, potato salad, and other ballpark favorites
- Central MA Association, SNEUCC, featured on our right-center field videoboard during the game
- 5% Team Store discount coupon for each member of our group to use on merchandise

Additional pregame or in-game group experiences! (subject to availability)

Join us for a fun event and cheer with members of fellow churches beyond the boundaries of your local churches and experience a wider faith community!

Parking Details <https://www.milb.com/worcester/ballpark/parking>

To reserve tickets please email your request to treasurercentralmaassn@gmail.com Please include your name, contact information and number of tickets. You will receive a confirmation email with payment information. On the date of the game tickets will be held at Will Call in your name. If you have any questions, please reach out to Bob Kersting at the above email address or call him at 774-452-0137.

FINAL Count and Payment DUE July 3

HELP US RAISE \$\$ WITH OUR FUNDRIVE FUNDRAISER

ITEMS WE ACCEPT AND THE FUNDS WE CAN RAISE WITH THEM

CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSETS FOR WESTMINSTER SCOUT BSA TROOP 33

Help our Troop raise money to support our campouts and activities and get rid of your gently used books, clothing, shoes, accessories, and household textiles (towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, curtains, tablecloths), accessories, backpacks, bags, and stuffed animals.

Please text (603)718-0830 or email westminstermatroop33@gmail.com if you would like to drop-off donations prior to collection day.

Please bring donations in bags on

Saturday, June 7th,

8am—11:30am

Behind Westminster VFW

3 Eaton Street

Westminster, MA 01473

Westminster Scout BSA Troop 33 will receive cash from Savers for every pound donated. Please help support our scouts by donating!



What we accept

All items must be in good, clean, and sellable condition.



CLOTHING Men's, women's and children's



SHOES Men's, women's and children's



TEXTILES Towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, curtains, tablecloths



ACCESSORIES Hats, mittens, scarves, ties, socks, purses, wallets, backpacks, bags

We cannot accept:

Mattresses, baby gear, appliances, large furniture, auto parts, building materials, cleaning products, tires, flammable materials

First Congregational Church of Westminister, MA
Statement of General Fund Activities vs. Budget
January through May 2025

06/03/25

Accrual Basis

	Jan - May 25	Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
CarryOver to/from previous year	29,846.00	24,000.00	124.4%
502 - Interest from Checking Account	5.42		
601 - General Checking Account Income			
601.1 - Pledges & Offerings			
601.1.1 - Pledged	40,357.00	100,100.00	40.3%
601.1.2 - Unpledged	8,401.00	10,000.00	84.0%
601.1.3 - Loose	612.00	2,400.00	25.5%
601.1.4 - Initial	5.00		
Total 601.1 - Pledges & Offerings	49,375.00	112,500.00	43.9%
601.2 - Other Income			
601.2.1 - Parsonage Rental	9,365.00	14,700.00	63.7%
601.2.2 - Rental	800.00	1,200.00	66.7%
601.2.3 - Lease	3,800.00	11,700.00	32.5%
601.2.4 - Endowment Withdrawal	19,800.00	80,628.00	24.6%
601.5.1 - Proportional Giving	1,601.00	5,000.00	32.0%
601.2.8 - Other Contributions	1,110.00	4,000.00	27.8%
601.4.9 - Parsonage Fuel from Tenant	1,634.11	2,000.00	81.7%
601.4.8 - Parsonage Electric from Tenant	708.21	840.00	84.3%
601.2.9 - Matching Funds	3,800.00	3,800.00	100.0%
601.3.3 - Women's Fellowship	750.00	750.00	100.0%
601.3.6 - Anonymous Contribution	6,750.00	6,750.00	100.0%
Total 601.2 - Other Income	50,118.32	131,388.00	38.2%
Total 601 - General Checking Account Income	99,493.32	243,888.00	40.8%
Total Income	129,344.74	267,888.00	48.3%
Expense			
800 - Christian Education Expense			
801 - Curriculum		300.00	
802 - Materials & Supplies	10.01	250.00	4.0%
803 - Coordinator Salary		11,600.00	
804 - Teacher Recognition		100.00	
806 - Adult Education		200.00	
808 - Third Grade Bibles		50.00	
811 - Church - Special Events		250.00	
813 - Confirmation Materials		100.00	
Total 800 - Christian Education Expense	10.01	12,850.00	0.1%
829 - Diaconate			
831 - Candles	81.44	130.00	62.6%
832 - Wine & Juice		60.00	
836 - Other	55.23	255.00	21.7%
Total 829 - Diaconate	136.67	445.00	30.7%
845 - Miscellaneous			
857 - Bank Fees	5.59		
849 - Christian Outreach		50.00	
850.1 - Safe Church Committee		150.00	
852 - Historian		150.00	
855 - Welcoming		200.00	
860 - Generous Giving Ministry		250.00	
865 - Proportional Giving	5,922.00	11,844.00	50.0%
867 - Central MA Association		400.00	
870 - Conference Delegates		300.00	
871 - Upper Room	116.10		
Total 845 - Miscellaneous	6,043.69	13,344.00	45.3%
910 - Ministry of Music			
915 - Organist/ Dir. Salary	5,749.99	20,000.00	28.7%
916.1 - CCLI License		300.00	
917 - Sanctuary Choir (Sheet Music)	187.28		
919 - Substitute Organist/Soloist	500.00		
921 - Supplies	7.43	100.00	7.4%
Total 910 - Ministry of Music	6,424.70	20,400.00	31.5%
924 - Pastoral Ministry Expense			
925 - Annuity	1,600.00	4,800.00	33.3%
926 - Continuing Education		500.00	
927 - Family Protection Insurance	527.68	1,711.00	30.8%
929 - Pastoral Supplies	59.59	75.00	79.5%

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First Congregational Church of Westminster, MA Statement of General Fund Activities vs. Budget January through May 2025

06/03/25

Accrual Basis

	Jan - May 25	Budget	% of Budget
930 - Pastor Other		240.00	
931 - Professional Expense	240.00	500.00	48.0%
932 - Vision Allowance	110.00	110.00	100.0%
933 - Guest Preachers	350.00	1,500.00	23.3%
934 - Renter's Insurance		200.00	
935 - Salary (Pastor)	35,597.50	84,654.00	42.1%
936 - SECA Supplement	3,363.90	8,725.00	38.6%
937 - Auto Allowance		1,000.00	
938 - Housing Allowance	8,375.00		
938.1 - Pastor Moving Expense		3,900.00	
938.2 - Pastor Rental Housing Expenses		10,050.00	
Total 924 - Pastoral Ministry Expense	50,223.67	117,965.00	42.6%
939 - Administration Expense			
940.1 - CFLLC Assistance		150.00	
940.2 - Payroll Tax Services (CFLLC)	550.00	1,320.00	41.7%
940.3 - Direct Deposit Payroll Expense	8.20	50.00	16.4%
941 - Church Sec. Compensation	4,916.70	11,800.00	41.7%
942 - Custodian Compensation	5,018.70	11,800.00	42.5%
943 - Employer FICA	951.16	3,610.00	26.3%
944 - Bulletins	288.62	100.00	288.6%
945 - Zoom Account		160.00	
946 - Office Supplies	790.52	1,000.00	79.1%
947 - Copier Rental	1,094.19	3,000.00	36.5%
948 - Postage	73.00	600.00	12.2%
950 - Telephone/Internet Church	1,187.69	2,000.00	59.4%
951 - Internet Technology			
951.0 - Other Information Technology		1,670.00	
951.0.1 - Realm ACS Tech	898.53		
951.7 - ChurchArt	129.80		
951.9 - Alternate Solutions	50.00		
Total 951 - Internet Technology	1,078.33	1,670.00	64.6%
952 - Other Information Technology	42.00		
952.1 - Technical Consultant Services		2,000.00	
955 - Advertising (Newspaper Ads)	102.62		
957 - Workman's Comp Insurance	426.00	1,200.00	35.5%
Total 939 - Administration Expense	16,535.73	40,460.00	40.9%
959 - Church Property expense			
960 - Electricity Church	1,761.71	4,400.00	40.0%
961 - Electricity Parsonage	687.16	1,100.00	62.5%
962 - Fuel Church & Parsonage	8,761.00	18,000.00	37.7%
965 - Insurance Church/Parsonage	7,049.36	11,424.00	61.7%
970 - Maintenance Church	2,250.28	4,000.00	56.3%
971 - Maintenance Parsonage	787.48	4,000.00	19.7%
973 - Services - Plowing/Sanding	4,050.00	5,000.00	81.0%
975 - Sewerage/Water Church	1,120.23	1,365.00	82.1%
976 - Sewer/Water Parsonage	669.23	1,715.00	39.0%
977 - Elevator Maintenance		2,100.00	
978 - Elevator Pre-Inspection		1,100.00	
979 - Fire/Burglar Alarms	770.00	1,200.00	64.2%
980 - Supplies	531.99	1,000.00	53.2%
981 - Maintenance Reserve		5,000.00	
982 - Fire Extinguisher Maint	386.50	350.00	110.4%
983 - AED - Maintenance	690.00	650.00	90.8%
Total 959 - Church Property expense	27,434.93	62,404.00	44.0%
Total Expense	108,809.40	267,868.00	39.9%
Net Ordinary Income	22,635.34		100.0%
Net Income	22,635.34		100.0%

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

The Epistle
June 2025

Phone: 978-874-5790

Church office Email:

fccw.westminster@gmail.com

Visit our Website: www.westcong.org

Don't Miss the
DEADLINE!

June 23, 2025

**For July & August
Submissions**

Please email your articles to
admin@westcong.org



Always
give
yourselves
fully to
the work
of the
Lord ...

1 Corinthians 15:58