



A monthly newsletter from First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

An Open and Affirming Congregation

OCTOBER 2022



"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."

*L. M. Montgomery
Anne of Green Gables*

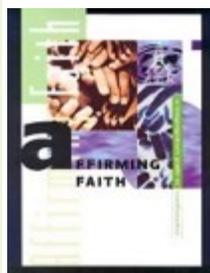


ty to incorporate the Youth Mission Trip into the confirmation experience and flows wonderfully with the liturgical calendar as confirmands will join the church just before Advent, the beginning of the new church year. (Don't fret students or parents/grandparents we'll have a flexible schedule over the summer).

Peace and Greetings in Christ's Name,

Allow me again to express my gratitude to the members and friends of First Congregational Church for your hospitality, grace and dedication. It is a joy and an honor to be serving Christ with you in this time and in this place.

I'd like to use this October Newsletter to introduce a few offerings for the fall:

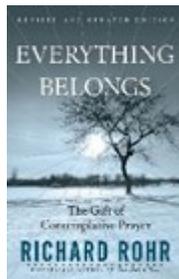


CONFIRMATION

Interim Christian Education Director April Mullins and I are working collaboratively on a Confirmation Class for this year. We'll begin in

Mid-November with a small retreat and meet approximately twice a month on Sundays from 6-7pm just before youth group. Confirmation is open to any youth in or around 8th or 9th grade. If you or a family member is interested in participating please reach out either to myself (pastor@fccsm.org) or April (cedirector@fccsm.org).

The confirmation class will be using the Affirming Faith curriculum, and will be a full year in duration, which means the participants will be confirmed in November 2023. I realize that this is a little different timing than the past. This allows for greater opportuni-



BIBLE STUDY

There are innumerable options for us to grow deeper in our faith and understanding of God. Throughout the coming year I want to find a wide variety of topics, times and formats for

people to engage in conversation on our Christian Faith. To begin, I'll be offering a six-week study using the book *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* by Richard Rohr. We will meet in the church parlor on Thursdays from 10am-11am starting October 13th through November 17th.

If that's not a good time for you to meet in person you can still participate through an email thread. I'll set up a group email for everyone that is interested in the discussion and we'll respond weekly to two questions:

- 1) What is resonating with you in the text this week?
- 2) Where are you finding resistance in the text this week?

The book can be purchased new or used from anyplace you like to get your books (thrift stores, online, the library etc).

Please email me at pastor@fccsm.org if you are planning on participating either in person or through email.

(continued on page 2)



La Romana, Dominican Republic Mission Trip

Dates:
Friday, Feb 24 to Sunday, March 5th, 2023

www.CentralMALaRomana.org
(Schedule of events and important dates can be found on this website on the *EVENTS* page. Applications and Orientation Guide can be found on the *JOIN* page. Supplies List and Donation Letter can be found on *SUPPORT* page)

The Goals 2023 - Medical Clinics with pharmacy, eyeglasses, food & Clothing distribution

The cost of the trip is \$1600 per participant. In addition, the team or individuals must fundraise another \$1,000 per person. The initial deposit is recorded as being due by this meeting. We need the first deposit of \$800 and most of the paperwork by early November in order to reserve flights.

Pastor's Corner (Conclusion)

During Advent we will use the UCC's Advent Devotional "What's Left of the Night?" Copies will be available at the church for personal use, \$5 free will donation.

In the New Year I hope to offer a six-week evening zoom Bible Study for school/college age parents.



MICAH PROJECT

The prophet Micah asks what is required of us; the respond in chapter 6 verse 8 is to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Named the "Micah Project" I'd like to begin offering monthly opportunities to study and reflect on areas of social / societal injustice and how our faith speaks to these contemporary issues. These conversation will be free and open to members of FCC and to the wider community. Ideally, each month, we would either host a conversation or participate together in a denominational or community sponsored event.

Our first gathering will be On October 30th at 6pm in the chapel. We'll show the documentary The Color of Care, which offers an in-depth look at the racial inequalities in the U.S. Healthcare System. You can watch the documentary online for free in advance or join us at 6pm to watch together. If it's easier to watch on your own and just come for the discussion please join us around 7:30pm.

I'd be thrilled to find someone to serve as a co-coordinator / facilitator of the Micah Project, if that's of interest to you please let me know.

May we continue to grow in faith and service, following Jesus's call to love one another,

Pastor Holly



The High School Youth Group will be having their 1st mission trip fundraiser at the church fair on Saturday, Nov. 5. Delicious apple baked goods and decorate your own caramel apple slices will be available for purchase...please stop by our table!

Thank you for your support.

October Calendar:

- Oct 9 – No YG meeting, Columbus Day Weekend
- Oct 16 – Apple Picking (MS/HS), meet at church @ 2:00pm (Stowe Farm Orchard, Millbury)
- Oct 22 (Sat) – Youth Group Meeting at 3:00pm, Pumpkin Carving, Pizza, & Spooktacular (6PM)
- Oct 23 – No YG due to Saturday activity
- Oct 30 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm, Haunted Hay Ride (time may change...stay tuned)



HOW CAN I SERVE THE CHURCH?

We are beginning a new church year with a new pastor. There will be many new ideas and opportunities for us as members of the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury. It's a great time to be part of the future. Have you ever considered being a member of the Deacons? Would you like to know more about the Deacons' role in the church? You have seen the work of Deacons in worship, but there are several other ways that we serve the members of the congregation.

Every year at the Annual Meeting in January we elect new Deacons, and we look forward to welcoming both those who may be Deacons for the first time or those who have previously served. It will be our 300th Anniversary, a time to reflect on our past but also to plan for the future that we envision with God's guidance.



Join us on
Saturday, October 22, 2022
from 1pm to 3pm

For a
Surviving an Incident of Violence
Parish Training

intruder" workshop. Training will include actual cases where congregations confronted armed intruders and bought precious time until police arrived. How to recognize individuals intent on violence and how to safely preserve calm until police arrive. Blue U was recommended by our insurance company and the Massachusetts Conference.

Blue-U Training Consultants will be returning after their September 2000 course (attended by 80 local community church members) for an updated "armed



Talita Binder loves the Sunday School backpack tags!!



A Message from the Director of Music

It's exciting to see events happen once again. A big thank you to Sabina, Kathi and Sue Phyfe for making my 43 year old sailboat look amazing for the Spirit of Shrewsbury parade. We won second place overall in the float competition!

On Sunday, September 18, the choir made their season debut with Morning Has Broken. It's a tune that gives thanks for each day and was a glorious start to the 2022-23 season. We are always looking for more singers to join us. Please contact me at musicdirector@fccsm.org for more details. The Training Choir has begun rehearsing for the season with Jennifer Shaw directing and Isabelle Zhao accompanying on Sunday mornings at 11. They will make their debut for the season on October 16. Please contact Jennifer Shaw at jiffer2@townisp.com for more details. Our two handbell groups, the Parish Pealers and Shrewsbury Ringers have begun rehearsing and will make their debut on Sunday October 9 and October 16 respectively. If you would like to learn more about ringing handbells, please contact me at the email above.

October 22 at 6pm will be our 5th annual Spooktacular. Isabelle Zhao and I will be performing on the Casavant organ, the harpsichord and the piano. Jennifer Shaw will be joining us for a Halloween story. It will be a fun filled evening for all ages.



Leah circle will meet on Monday, October 17th at 7:00 pm in the Youth Room. We will be celebrating

“Blanche’s Birthday” so be sure to bring your age in coins to add to our penny bowl. This collection helps support our many outreach projects.

We will also be collecting “Birthday Bags” to go to St. Anne’s food bank for the children. Bags should include a cake mix, frosting, candles, and a small gift (the Dollar Store has lots of great choices).

Come and join us for delicious treats and good conversation, and if you can’t be there consider dropping off a Birthday Bag and coins when you are in church on Sunday, the 16th.

For more information, contact Elaine Shaw 508-842-4401 eshaw@townisp.com



MEDICATION TAKE BACK

Saturday, October 29, 2022

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Bring in expired or unused medications for safe and proper disposal at the following location:

Shrewsbury Senior Center
98 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, MA 01545



Sponsored by the City of Worcester Division of Public Health, lead agency of the Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance



“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”

2 John 1:6



Marketeers Moment

During the month of September we organized a few marketing adventures in collaboration with the Hands For Hope Ministry. On Saturday, September 17th we hosted an expo tent at Northborough's Applefest. A week later we hosted an expo tent at the Spirit of Shrewsbury. Pictures were posted on our Facebook page during each event to share our excitement! We rejoiced in reconnecting with church members we haven't seen in years, and chatted with people of all ages and walks of life while we handed out 300th celebration pamphlets, Spooktacular flyers, church fair flyers and youth group flyers. We also displayed our large 300th celebration vertical banner for the very first time! People were excited to meet us as we personally



invited everyone to participate in our church's upcoming activities. Our hope for the future is that every member of our congregation will share warm and welcoming love through friendly conversation with strangers (people you don't know yet) when they enter our building.



October Observances (Shared by the SNEUCC)

- National Domestic Awareness Month
- National Hispanic American Heritage Month continues through Oct. 15
- LGBT History Month
- October 10 - World Mental Health Awareness Day
- October 11 - Indigenous People's Day
- October 11 - National Coming Out Day

Here are some other October observances. This list is not comprehensive.



MISSION & OUTREACH MINISTRY

A Moment of Thanks

On Sunday October 23, the Mission and Outreach Ministry will be offering cake during coffee hour as a small token of appreciation for the continued generosity of this congregation toward the church's mission & outreach work, both financially and through your volunteer time.

As you reflect on the approaching 300th anniversary of our church and consider your pledge for the 2023 fiscal year, Mission and Outreach would like to remind you of the many worthy organizations your donation of time and treasure helps to support.

Budgeted funds:

In addition to quarterly payments made to our UCC conference and Central MA association, the following organizations also receive quarterly payments from the Mission & Outreach budget-Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, St. Anne's Human Services, St. Anne's Free Medical Clinic, The Barton

Center, Andover Newton Theological School, Community Harvest Project, IHN (In the Hour of Need Family Shelter), Worcester Area Mission Society, Heifer Project International, and the La Romana Ministry.

Mission & Outreach also has budgeted funds available for our Food Mission work-Mustard Seed dinners, Worcester Fellowship meals and food cards for IHN host weeks, as well as funds to purchase birthday related items for the residents at Sage Place. We also have an outreach discretionary fund and special projects fund to address one-time requests for financial assistance from charities/organizations which come in during the year.

Special Collections/Donations:

Your generosity extends beyond your yearly pledge with your financial support of the annual UCC special collections-Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing & the Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross as well as the special collections Mission & Outreach holds throughout the year for St. Anne's at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas time. We also held special collections this year to support the people of Ukraine.

Your purchases at our yearly SERRV sale in November & December support artisans throughout the world who depend on this fair-trade organization to help sustain their families and communities.

It is obvious to the members of the Mission & Outreach Ministry that the First Congregational Church has a caring and compassionate congregation who



Calling all Ushers & Counters

Prior to March of 2020, First Congregational Church had a roster of people who served on a monthly basis as ushers and counters. There have been many changes since that time but as FCC returns to some of its previous practices, we are looking to reinstitute a schedule for ushers and counters.

USHERS (one Sunday per month)-you would serve as one of four people responsible for preparing the sanctuary for Sunday worship, assisting the greeters in handing out bulletins, being available during the service to assist attendees as needed, counting those in attendance, taking the offering collection, cleaning up and closing the sanctuary post worship.

COUNTERS (one Sunday per month)-this job has been streamlined from previous practice and now just requires two people to count the Sunday offering, put that offering in a designated envelope and place it in the wall safe by the stage in Gifford Hall.

No previous experience is needed for either of these positions and assistance will be provided.

If you are interested or would like to learn more, please contact Kathi Buzzell at (774) 258-1178.

300
years



300TH ANNIVERSARY UPDATE

Did you know that in 2002, the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury received the Harry S. Cutting Jr. award? This award is presented yearly by the Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services to honor one of the agency's founders and noted

Shrewsbury philanthropist Harry S. Cutting Jr. "It is given to recognize members of the community who, through their outstanding commitment and contributions, embody the spirit of giving, community service and support for the Shrewsbury community." This award was given to the Church in recognition of years of outstanding support from the congregation.

In honor of the past 300 years of giving and in faithful assurance that the Church will continue to support

that spirit as we step into the future, during our 300th anniversary we will be highlighting a local organization each month and requesting very affordable donations to support that organization. The organizations that have been suggested and the most needed items are: the Youth Group's January trip to City Reach (men's and women's underwear), Mustard Seed (jars of peanut butter), St. Annes (condiments for the food pantry), Sue Moore's mission trip to LaRomana (monetary donations), Worcester Animal Rescue League (cans of cat and dog food), Community Harvest (bars of Irish Spring soap which is used as a deer repellent for their gardens), Friendly House in Worcester (boxes of cereal), IHN (paper towels and toilet paper), Veteran's Inc. in Worcester (cans of fruit), Worcester Fellowship (toiletries), Worcester County Food Bank (cans of soup). The 12th agency TBD.

Watch for more information as we get closer to the beginning of our anniversary year. This is one more way we can all join together in continuing the tradition of sharing God's love.



We're a Level Three Green Congregation!

Jesus told this parable, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. Through the smallest of all seeds, it grows into a tree so that birds perch in its branches." ~ Matthew 13:31-32

The Earth Stewardship Ministry is proud to announce that FCC has been recognized by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) as a Level Three Green Congregation!

The Green Congregation Challenge is a step-by-step approach that helps churches take small, but consequential, steps towards protecting God's Creation. The Challenge has four levels of recognition. Each level has five categories: Educate; Organize; Reduce, Reuse, Rethink; Connect; and Advocate.

Over the last decade-plus, ESM has used this program to help the church green up and spread awareness to the Congregation of environmental issues as well as simple actions to take at home. Achieving the necessary Level 3 Green Congregation steps would not have been possible without the involvement of other church committees and individuals. These steps included, the creation of a divestment plan to eliminate fossil fuels from the church's investments, which led to the Budget and Finance Committee divesting a substantial portion of the church's investments in collaboration with their Financial Advisor, tree planting events in partnership with local groups and agencies, including five beautiful trees on the Town Common, insulation of the Sanctuary and other areas of the church during the church residing, and advocating against SELCO's participation in the construction of the fossil-fuel fired Peabody Peaker Plant.

We hope that you have been inspired to take action to green up your own living spaces. Like mustard seeds, every step taken moves all of us toward a healthier and more sustainable future for us and all the world's children. Stay tuned for a celebration including a formal recognition from SNEUCC of this momentous achievement!



Spooktacular Concert Returns Indoors!

The First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury's 2022 Arts on the Green series is excited to announce the return to indoors of its fifth annual Spooktacular! It will be held on Saturday, October 22 at 6pm in the Church Sanctuary.

The Spooktacular is a concert of some of the spookiest music composed for the pipe organ. Concert-goers will hear contemporary pieces as well as old favorites and selections composed by Bach, Fauré and Chopin performed by Curtis Smith, Music Director, and Isabelle Zhao on the Church's vintage 1958 Cassavant Opus 2446 pipe organ. All ages will enjoy this event and everyone is encouraged to come in costume and bring a friend!

The concert is free and open to the public, with the opportunity to make a goodwill offering. All proceeds will be donated to the church's Organ Fund.



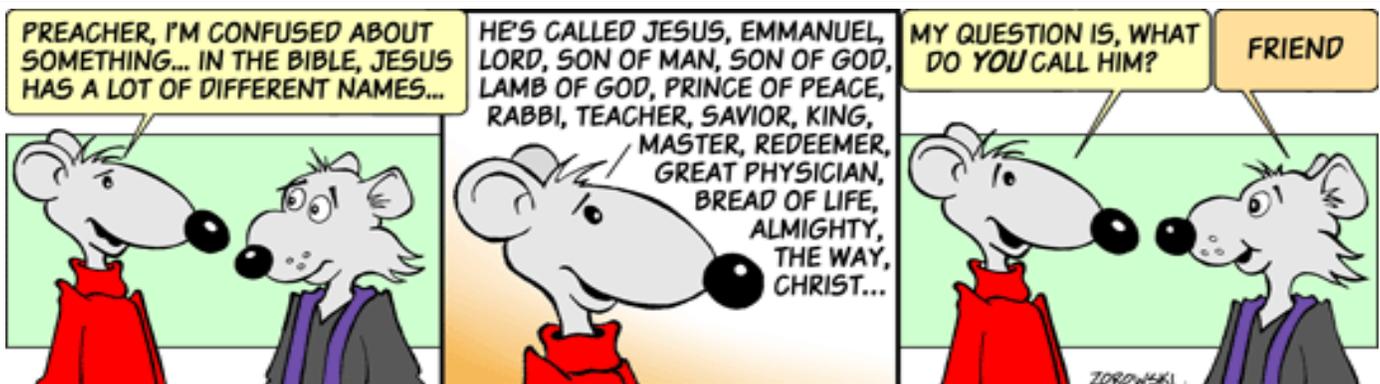
Our Story Ministry

Your church Historian's have been busy, busy this summer! Soon, all of the labels will be mounted in the History Staircase, which is on the north side lead-

ing up to the Adkins Room. You will be able to see drawings of our old Meetinghouse, and stories behind our 1766 panels. The beautiful antique oak table from the old pastor's office sits proudly at the top landing in the staircase. Keep your eye on that space!

Symonds Hall will soon be featuring a new display honoring the tireless lady for whom the hall is dedicated, who worked so hard educating so many children for decades. You will see her picture, her story and the names of the countless people who honored her services to our church.

We have been creating digital copies of our church history, which will soon be available on our church computer. From there, some of it will be available through our website. So many good things coming!



CHURCH FAIR



Mark Your Calendar! Our Church Fair is back and will be held Saturday, November 5th from 9AM - 2PM. Martha's Circle will have their famous Cookie Walk, Avis Kemp Scholarship Fund will have a Silent Auction, the Youth Group will offer coffee and goodies, and the Hands for Hope group has been working hard on hand-crafted items. Also at the fair will be our Jam & Jelly table, Christmas table, Jewellery table, Bake table and more. The Flea Market has been revamped, contact Sue Russell (508-753-1660) or Kathi Buzzell (774-258-1178) on how to reserve a table at the Flea Market.

We are all looking forward to having our long-standing beloved fair back. Can you help? Volunteers are still needed to man some of the tables, please contact Sandi Regnier (508-842-4141) or Linda Russell (Lindaruss25@gmail.com) for how you can help or how to donate items. We look forward to seeing everyone!

Hands For Hope



Our hands have been very busy throughout the summer! In September, we will be pricing our handmade items for the upcoming fair. A Macrame

101 class will also be held during September, on the 4th Monday of the month, from 10 a.m. until 11:30, (or whenever we decide to leave). Please come join us and create a plant hanger for yourself or for the fair.

In October, we will be holding a Christmas Bow making class, where we will create bows to attach to

all of the wreaths that decorate your doors at home. You can also look forward to obtaining our delicious "chocolate bark," which will be available at our church fair. We will be making that during October, and if you'd like to join us to learn how its done, please let one of us know.

Our support for Kagera, Tanzania seems to be winding down. The Tumaini Fund is now requesting paper, books, and school supplies. These items are expensive to ship and are not the focus of our group. We are shifting to creating items for Haiti and Sue Moore's important mission work in the Dominican Republic. Of course, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota is on our list also. A HUGE thank you to all who work from home and send items to us! We hope you can come to our meetings, as there is always lots of great conversations and fun!

FLEA MARKET UPDATE

As in years past, the flea market will take place in Cushing Hall & the adjoining Sumner Room and the proceeds will benefit the Music Ministry. That, however, is where the similarities end. The "new look" flea market will now involve purchasing a space to sell your own flea market items.

There are 23 total spaces available on a first come, first served basis. Signing up for a space is done through the Sign-Up Genius included in this announcement. The deadline to sign up for a space is October 22 (or sooner if spaces sell out). Each space is 8 feet x 7 feet and includes a 6 foot table and 2 chairs (if needed).

The cost of a space is \$25.00 and is due by October 22. You can mail a check to the church office with "Flea Market" in the memo section or pay online through the church's Give button on the website, using the "other" box and indicating "flea market."

If you purchase a space, you will be responsible for:

- Setting up your space (set up times to be determined)
- Making sure your items fit in your designated space

- Collecting and securing the money for all items you sell. Any money you make on the sale of your items is yours to keep (unless you would like to donate those proceeds to the Music Ministry)

REMOVING ALL UNSOLD ITEMS FROM THE CHURCH AT THE END OF THE DAY AND MAKING SURE YOUR SPACE IS CLEAN

Please keep in mind that this is a flea market and not a craft fair. We do not want to compete with the crafts, etc. being sold during the fair in Gifford Hall so please bring only "flea market items" to sell.

Thank you in advance for supporting this new flea market model. We realize this is very different from our previous events but we hope people will embrace the change and enjoy the day!

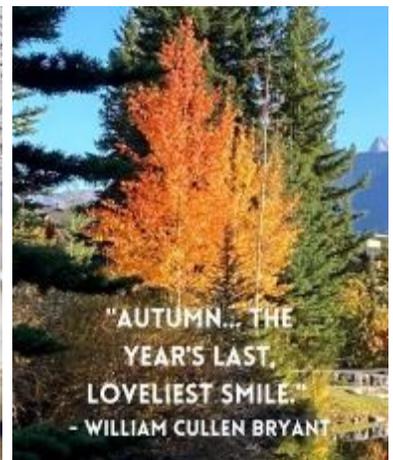
Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Kathi Buzzell (774) 258-1178

Sue Russell (508) 753-1660



Parade!



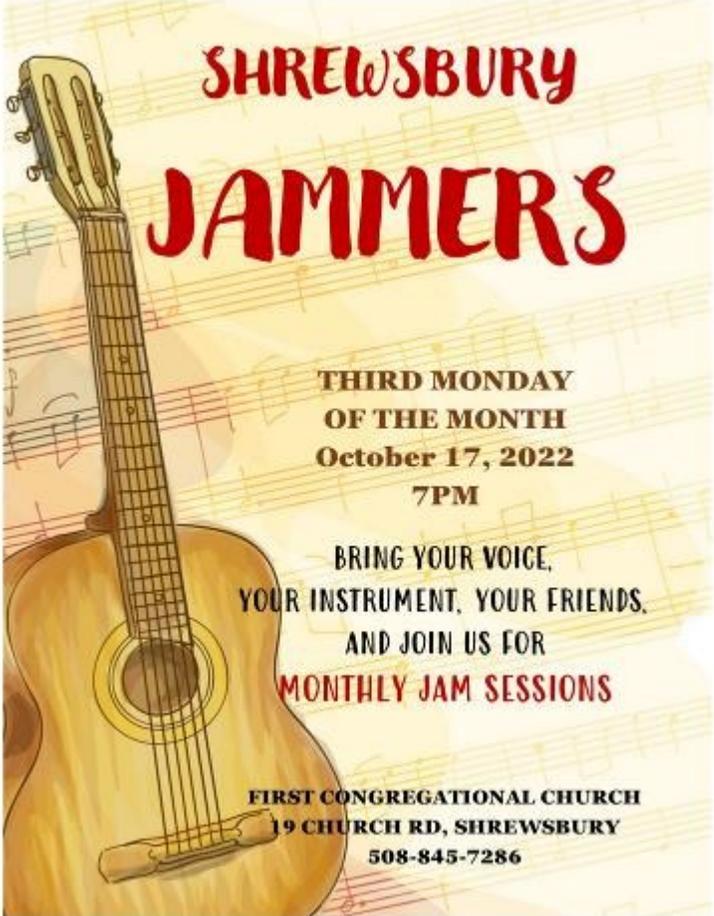
OLD-FASHIONED CHURCH FAIR

First Congregational Church
19 Church Road (On the Common)

Saturday, November 5th
9am to 2pm

**Flea Market
Silent Auction
Craft Tables
Cookie Walk
Jewelry Table
Jams & Jellies, Baked Goods
Holiday Table & more**

For more information you can reach us at
508-845-7286 or fccsm.org
First Congregational Church
9:30am Sunday Worship and Kid Zone



SHREWSBURY JAMMERS

THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
October 17, 2022
7PM

**BRING YOUR VOICE,
YOUR INSTRUMENT, YOUR FRIENDS,
AND JOIN US FOR
MONTHLY JAM SESSIONS**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
19 CHURCH RD, SHREWSBURY
508-845-7286

An Evening with Diana Butler Bass

discover the new and unfolding biblical scholarship about *Mary Magdalene*

12 OCTOBER 2022
8:00-8:45pm
followed by 30 min. Q&A

On Zoom
Register at
<https://bit.ly/3SgdDda>

Co-sponsored by
Barnstable, Old Colony, Pilgrim & Rhode Island Assoc.



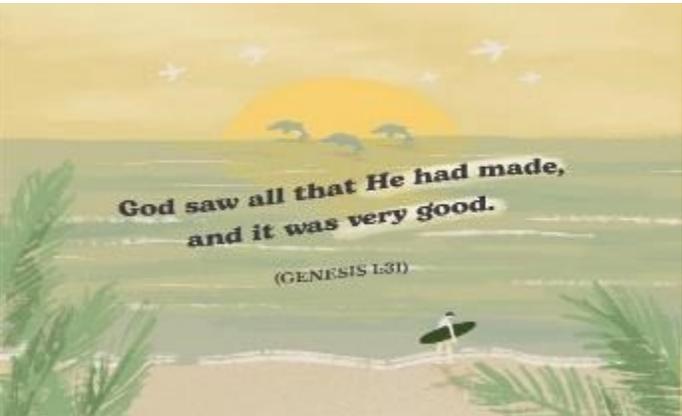
Diana will unpack texts that are familiar to all of us and open the door to interpretations and scholarship that have just recently been discovered.



FUN ACTIVITIES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

October 22, 3:00 – 4:30 pm: Pumpkin carving. Bring your own pumpkin(s) to carve and display at the Spooktacular event that night.

November 5, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm: Give some of your time to participating in a food fundraiser for the youth groups at the Church Fair.



**God saw all that He had made,
and it was very good.**
(GENESIS 1:31)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

19 Church Road
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
508-845-7286
www.fccsm.org



FCCShrewsbury



Church on The Green Newsletter
October 2022 Issue



Our mission:

The purpose of this Church is to come together as Christians to serve God by studying and listening to the Word, and living by Christ's teachings. We are committed to reaching our through prayers, caring, sharing, serving and fellowship.

Senior Minister: Rev. Holly MillerShank
pastor@fccsm.org

Director of Music: Curtis Smith
musicdirector@fccsm.org

Financial Administrator: Lauren Morse
finance@fccsm.org

Interim Christian Education Director: April Mullins
cedirector@fccsm.org

Church Administrator and Property Manager: Sabina Terrades
office@fccsm.org

Sexton: Benjamin Weiss
ben@fccsm.org

Please join us on Sunday
mornings at
9:30am

