

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



January 4th, 2026

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

Saint Augustine of Hippo

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury (FCCS) is a vibrant, inclusive and compassionate community of worship and mission.

We want our faith to transcend the things that separate us, to be tangible to endure tests of life and time and to be environmentally responsible, protecting God's creation. Led by the Holy Spirit, we look to Jesus Christ to guide us toward companionship, justice, and the inspiration to serve God and our community.

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WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Have you seen the star? Have you heard the good news? God, who created all things, has come to earth.

Many: We have heard of a baby born in Bethlehem. We have seen evidence that God is with us.

One: Have you allowed God to reign in your life? Have you laid your gifts before the Holy Child?

Many: We have noticed the generous travelers from the east. They inspire in us a willingness to share.

One: God's call to us is for justice, beyond generosity. Are you ready for God's eternal purpose in Christ?

Many: We have been afraid to trust God completely. Yet we want to respond to God's dreams for us.

***HYMN**

We Three Kings (Pilgrim 143, verses 1,3,5)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Amid the oppression and violence all too evident in the world around us, we are called to rid ourselves of resentment and hatred and misuse of power. Aware of vast inequalities of opportunity and resources, we are summoned to examine our roles in creating or eliminating injustice. Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Just and righteous God, we tremble before your all-knowing awareness of us. You have blessed us with abundance we have not counted and riches we have not fully appreciated. Our gratitude is found wanting before your judgement. Our attention to the needs of the poor and oppressed is less than you desire. Forgive us, God, for misplaced anger and callous disregard of ways we trample others. We seek redemption from oppression and violence to embrace new life in Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God in Christ delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. God forgives us when we are truly penitent and know we have nowhere to turn but to the grace that Love provides. We are the church to which God entrusts a rich variety of wisdom. Let us together accept the gifts of God and make them known.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-12

SERMON

Breaking Through

***HYMN**

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light (NCH 140, verses 1 & 3)

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Prayer for the Meal

As we who are many are gathered like grain into one body, may your Spirit knit us together.

As we bring the gifts we have to offer—though they are not gifts fit for a king— may our hearts be open to receive your gift once again this day, and may your church be strengthened to be a gift to your world.

As we share the same meal you, Lord, have shared with disciples, with enemies, with the church through the ages, **may our eyes be opened and may we recognize you.**

Blessing of the Elements

Sharing in the Eucharist *At FCC we practice an open table, all who hunger for a closer relationship with Jesus, all those who thirst for justice and righteousness are invited to share in the bread and juice. Gluten Free wafers are available in the single serve cups.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, O Lord, for once again you have filled us with good things— not just bread and wine, but your very self. Now may this glimpse of your kingdom sustain us, and give us eyes to see you at work in every place, and strength to be your body in the world. As you have blessed the bread and broken it, you have blessed us and let light shine through the cracks. Make us your people, again and again, light for the world. In Jesus name. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING *Please consider making a pledge for 2026 to support our ministry: www.fccsm.org*

The riches of our land far surpass the resources of the visitors from the east who came to worship the infant Jesus. As they opened their treasure chest, may we open our wallets and our lives in expressions of thanksgiving and commitment. This offering is an expression of our priorities.

OFFERTORY

The Work of Christmas

D. Forrest

Deb Wallace, soloist

***DOXOLOGY**

Tune: Old 100th

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore: One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

We bring all that we have to praise you, God. Above all, we are thankful for your revelation in Jesus Christ that gives us good news to share. May this offering accomplish among us, and far beyond us, the mission you have to each one of your people. Amen.

***HYMN**

This Little Light (NCH 524)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Angels We Have Heard on High

D. Bish

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank

The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

The Musician today is Dr. Robert Eaton

The Deacon is Dave Snook

The Reader is Sue Phyfe

Greeters are Jean Feldkamp and Elaine Shaw

Altar flowers are provided by the DelDotto family in loving memory of Joseph Lychak, father of Deborah, father-in-law of Dave, grandfather of Dana, Darren and Darcy, and great grandfather of Drea, Devin and Dylan.

Liturgy is adapted from Rev. Teri Peterson, the Presbyterian Church of Palatine, IL and from Lavon Bayler Taught by Love

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

-Prayers for the Smith family on the passing of Diane's mother, Anne Thompson; the family of Timothy Pedjoe; Tom Stone; the family of Jeff Lawrence; Catherine Slein, Kevin Gabbett's mother; Andrea Pereira's father and their family; Stan Holden; Mei Hsu; Sue Russell's brother, Ronnie and his wife, Kathy; Timmy; Brian Scott; Jay Scott; James Kelly; Bernice Forrister; Kevin; Ronniy Reis; a friend undergoing brain cancer treatment; Kathy; Bob; Debra Wallace; Anne & Jonathan Phyfe; Jeanine's brother, Douglas Szlompek; Diane Smith's mother, Anne Thompson; Stanley; Sharon; Leon Bowman; David, brother-in-law of Kathleen & Dave Rocheleau; Roberta Jelinch's sister, Sandi.

-For those within our church family and all faith communities who are dealing with illness, caregiving, grief, mental health crisis, unemployment, hunger, and homelessness in their daily lives.

-Prayers for all those dealing with violence & loss and those recovering from natural disasters throughout our country and the world.

-For the people of Ukraine, Haiti and the Middle East whose lives continue to be shattered by war, as well as the many landscapes that are currently embroiled in conflicts.

-The mission & works of the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury.

-Blessings to government officials, first responders, health care workers, military personnel, and all who protect and care for us.

THIS WEEK AT FCC

Every day, 7am: AA, Cushing Hall

Every Wednesday, 5:30pm: ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics), Chapel

Every Sunday, 7pm: AA, Adkins Room

Every Thursday, 7PM OA (Overeaters Anonymous), Rm 214

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, 1/4:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

Tuesday, 1/6:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

Wednesday, 1/7:

1200pm: Mustard Seed, Kitchen

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

7:00pm: CLT, Adkins

Thursday, 1/8:

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 1/9:

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Sunday, 1/11:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

11:00am: Social Circle "Another 15 Minutes of Fun", Gifford

11:00am: Creation Justice Info Session, Adkins

7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

