



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
spiritual discovery • inclusive community • compassionate service

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



March 8th, 2026

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"You Are Not Alone

***Dear God, When I feel lost and overwhelmed,
remind me of Your constant presence.***

Surround me with Your love and peace.

***Help me feel held, seen, and safe. I trust that
even in silence, You are with me. Amen."***

- unknown

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: This is a place of safety, this is a time of comfort. Here and now the God who made the universe waits to embrace us. Here and now we come to feel God's healing touch, and to be anointed by God's grace.

Many: With all that we are; parts that are whole, and parts that are broken; parts that are well, and parts that are sick, parts that are joyful and parts that are in pain; With all that we are, we come to worship you, O God. For you are gracious, merciful and kind and we long to find our rest in you.

*HYMN

Creator God, Creating Still (NCH 278)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us open our lives to God's searching gaze;

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Dear God of mercy and compassion, we acknowledge that we are not all that we would like to be; we carry wounds and regrets, some of which are of our own design, and some of which we have received from others. We acknowledge our failings, our bitterness and our hatreds, and ask you to heal us.

One: For all of our sin

Many: Forgive us, O God

One: In all our weakness

Many: Strengthen us, O God

One: From the brokenness of body and soul

Many: Heal us, O God.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON—Congregation reads **BOLD** portions

Alone we cannot find wholeness, it is only through community and our belief in God that restoration is possible. Let us share what we believe:

We believe in God –

The Creator of all that we see, and all that we do not see.

We believe in Jesus Christ-

**God become flesh; in death the forgiver of sinners,
in rising the healer of the broken.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit-

God within us; comforter, strengthener and friend.

SUNG RESPONSE **Amazing Grace, Verse 3**

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

Chimers

ANTHEM

When Grief Is Raw

B. Wren & D. Haas

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 5:1-11

SERMON

Healing Grace

Rev. Holly MillerShank

*HYMN

Amazing Grace (NCH 547)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

HEALING PRAYER

Come to us again, O God, fill our prayers with power and our hearts with faith.

We pray for all who suffer, for the victims of war and violence; of persecution and aggression, of disaster and accident; we pray for the homeless and the hungry, for refugees and asylum-seekers; for the destitute and the oppressed; for the lonely and unloved; and for those who mourn that they may find strength and hope.

In Your Mercy, Heal Us O God.

We pray for every scar of hatred, prejudice and injustice that mar the body of Christ. We pray for all who experience addiction, for all who seek to numb the pain of the world through excess, vice, and distraction. We lift to you relationships that are strained in our families, community, country and yes, even within the church. Bring to us a vision of unity that will overcome our differences.

In Your Mercy, Heal Us O God.

We pray for all who are sick, those in a hospital or at home, for those whose minds are beset with anxiety and fear; for those oppressed or broken in spirit; for all who long for something more. We lift to you the brokenness of creation, our plundering of the earth's resources, pollution and death of species. O Holy One, curb our coveting ways so that all of life may flourish.

In Your Mercy, Heal Us O God.

Let your healing flow among and within us-

ANNOINTING

At this time, those who wish are invited forward for anointing with oil. Please proceed down the center aisles and return via the side aisles. You may share with the pastor the prayer that is on your heart or simply remain silent.

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

While we are yet broken, it is Christ who offers wholeness. While the world is not yet as we would wish for it to be- we come to offer what we can for the sake of creation. May we give of our time, talent and resources in pursuit of God's gracious healing and mercy.

OFFERTORY

Meditation on "Showalter"

A. Showalter arr. B. Logan

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Women's History Month

Learn about women making environmental change! Some inspiring creation justice heroes include Dr. Vandana Shiva, Sister Dorothy Stang, and Dr. Wangari Muta Maathai.

***DOXOLOGY**

Tune: Old 100th

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ in whom God's grace we know.
Praise Spirit, with us evermore. One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

God we are grateful for your grace poured out. We have traveled through many toils and snares. Bless these our gifts so that they may bring grace and comfort to a hurting world. Amen.

***HYMN**

Out of the Depths, O God, We Call (NCH 554)

BENEDICTION

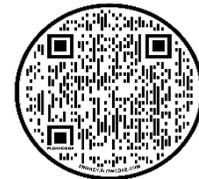
POSTLUDE

The Glory of the Spirit

L. Smith

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank
The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin
The Director of Music is Curtis Smith
The Deacon is Kevin Gabbett
The Reader is Elaine Shaw
Greeters are Elaine Shaw and Nancy Colby
Altar flowers are provided by Marty and Sandi Leroux in loving memory of Marty's parents, George and Yvonne Leroux.

GIVE HERE:



Liturgy adapted from John Van de Laar Communion Liturgy for a Healing Service and The Methodist Church of Ireland Order for Healing and Wholeness

PRAYER REQUESTS

-- Prayers for Christine Yablonski on the passing of her sister, Sally; Carole Fontaine; Susie and Brian Amos; Ruthie, sister-in-law of Dave & Sue; Steve Donigian; the Scott family on the passing of Brian Scott; Aaron; Lt Ethan Connors, deployed in the Middle East; Joshua S.; Bob Podolski; Stan Holden; Timmy; Jay Scott; James Kelly; Bernice Forrister; Kevin; Ronniy Reis; Bob; Deb Wallace; Anne & Jonathan Phyfe; Jeanine's brother, Douglas Szlompek; Stanley; Sharon; 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 in cities in the United States as well as 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, 3/8:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary
11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room
7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

Monday, 3/9:

7:00pm: Music Committee, Adkins

Tuesday, 3/10:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor
12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins
7:00pm: Budget & Finance, Adkins

Wednesday, 3/11:

11:30am: Can We Talk?, Adkins
6:00pm: Lenten Series, Chapel
7:00pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

Thursday, 3/12:

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 3/13:

NO Chimers

Saturday, 3/14:

5:00pm: Social Circles "Potluck of the Irish", Gifford Hall

Sunday, 3/15:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary
11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room
11:00am: Breakfast Bag Prep, Chapel
5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm