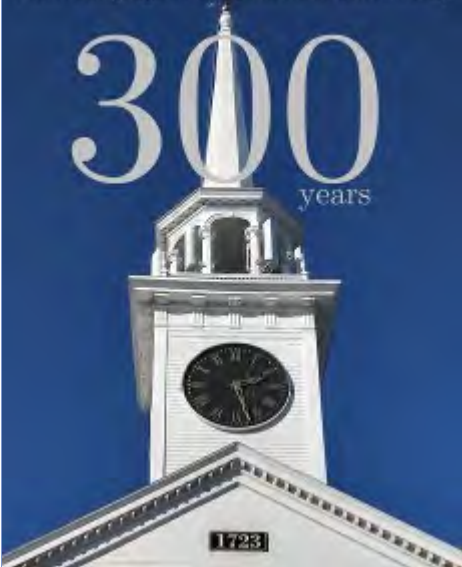


300 years



Church on the Green

A monthly newsletter from

The First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

An Open and Affirming Congregation

MEETING HOUSE — 1766
View from the South

MEETING HOUSE AT SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
AS BUILT IN 1744

MAY 2023

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*“Bethlehem was God with us,
Calvary was God for us, and
Pentecost is God in us.”*

Robert Baer

The Pastor’s Corner

A Culture of Discipleship

On Pentecost we will be welcoming new members into the faith and family of First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury. You are invited to wear red for the celebration on May 28th; come not just as observers but as full participants in the work of the Holy Spirit.

The concept of church membership has changed significantly over time. Pentecost is known as the birth of the church, when people first began to preach publicly about the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and to invite others to join them in the worship of God and the proclamation of the gospel.

When people come alongside an active community of faith and seek to join its membership, it’s not like joining a gym. When you join a gym you’re making a financial transaction to use the facilities, coming and going pretty much as you please, interacting with others as much or as little as you would like. There’s no accountability (unless you’re paying a personal trainer extra for that) and there’s no obligation to actually show up or participate in the decision making of the organization. This type of membership is consumer

driven, based on the desire of the individual. Church membership is different.

Church membership builds within in a culture of discipleship. It’s never just one person joining a church, instead it’s the whole church recommitting to God and to each other, we call this Covenant.

“A covenant is an exchange of holy promises. In making a covenant we promise to serve God together. So it’s not just new members who join the church. Rather, everyone- new members and existing members- joins one another. As we make our promises to one another we remember God’s promises to us and promise to serve God as best we are able. In the Bible God makes covenants with people all the time. Since we believe that God is still speaking, we still believe that the holy promises we make to each other matter.” – United Church of Christ New Member Brochure

In the United Church of Christ the local church is the center of our worshiping life, it is the place where we make our promises and live out our daily commitments to Christ. When someone joins a local congregation of the United Church of Christ, one is not only joining that singular local church but also joining into the denomination and membership in the Church Universal.

(conclusion on page 2)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Roberta Jelinch's sister, Sandi, Jan Smith, Linda and Tony Phillips, Ed and Betsy Giles, , Donald Gray, Wendy Ziesemann's sister, Tamara, Rebecca and Jennifer MacKenzie, Barbara Harlow, Bonnie Gibbs, Wendy and Tom, Lisa DiPilato, Florence Stowe.

The people of Ukraine and other countries in our world dealing with war & unrest.

The people of Turkey and Syria.

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

Those within our church family and all faith communities and beyond, who are dealing with illness, care-giving, grief, mental health, unemployment, hunger, and homelessness in their daily lives.

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

The Pastor's Corner (conclusion)

Membership brings with it not only the ability to take part in the decision making of the community (voting on church actions, holding leadership roles) it also brings with it the joy and knowledge of being part of something larger- an entire congregation of people encouraging and supporting one another through the highs and lows of life, a place to grow in knowledge of the scriptures, to serve Christ through acts of mercy and justice, to discover more than ever thought possible about God's hope for the world. Church is a place to know and be known, it is a place where you belong.

Pastor Holly

**Strengthen
the Church**
Living the love and justice of Jesus!

A special offering on Pentecost Sunday
to support these Discipleship Ministries
of the Southern New England Conference
of the United Church of Christ
Outdoor Ministries
Faith Formation Ministries
Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Bring new life as agents of change!
Your gifts support these transformational ministries!

The Center for Transformational Leadership

Innovative Tools for Transformative Work

Your gifts equip our clergy, lay leaders, and congregations with the resources, tools, guidance, services, and support required for the innovative and transformative work of the church.

Programs include:

- Church Vitality Assessment
 - ADAPT- Discerning Our Church's Future
 - Conflict Transformation
 - Clergy Communities of Practice
 - Leadership Academy
 - Training for Association Leaders
- For more information about CTL programs and resources, please contact Transform@sneucc.org

Outdoor Ministries

Nurturing disciples at Silver Lake, Irons Homestead, and Edwards House Retreat Center
Your support nurtures disciples of all ages through SNE Outdoor Ministries. Lives are changed and faith is deepened through programs, camps, and retreats.

- Welcoming all God's children to deepen faith, do justice in the world, and to encounter God's love in creation at Silver Lake
- Building relationships through new collaborative opportunities for mission groups onsite at Irons Homestead
- Engaging with our UCC and the broader community to expand and deepen our connections at Edwards House

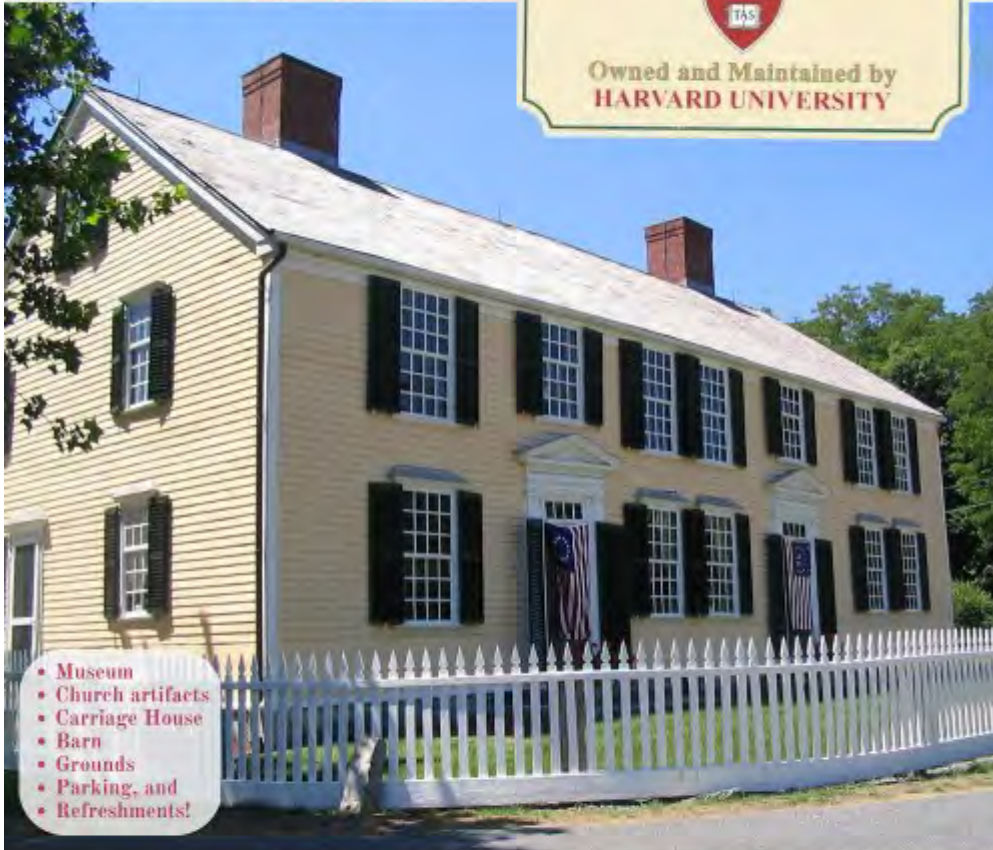
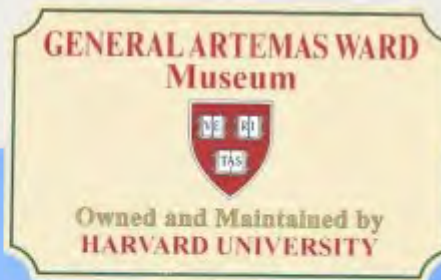
Faith Formation Ministries

Equipping Leaders and Congregations for Ministry in a New Day

- Your contributions deepen discipleship initiatives for local church practitioners and laity.
- Expanding resources for worship and intergenerational ministry
- Nurturing faith in the home and community
- Helping youth grow in faith and explore vocation

300TH ANNIVERSARY

Join us for
an Open House
and Tour of...



- Museum
- Church artifacts
- Carriage House
- Barn
- Grounds
- Parking, and
- Refreshments!

Sunday, May 21, 1- 3:00 pm
786 Main St., Shrewsbury



First Congregational Church
19 Church Road
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
www.fccsm.org 508-845-7286
Sharing God's Love for 300 Years!

This free event is for members and
friends of FCC. Registration is required.
Please sign up at
<https://tinyurl.com/54am4twa>
use the QR code, or call the church office.

As part of our 300th anniversary celebrations, you are cordially invited to attend an open house and tours of the General Artemas Ward Museum on Sunday, May 21st between 1-3 pm. All members and friends of First Congregational Church are invited. The museum is located at 786 Main Street in Shrewsbury, MA. It was first built c. 1717 by Nahum Ward, a Shrewsbury Town Founder and original First Congregational Church organizer.

As part of your visit, you will be introduced to the Ward family who were Church members for generations, and you will tour the museum.

Early Church artifacts will be on display, the Carriage Shed will be open and light refreshments will be served in the barn, courtesy of the Artemas Ward Museum. You may also walk around the beautiful grounds at your leisure.

This event is free.

To plan for staffing and refreshments, registration is required by using the sign up genius below.

<https://tinyurl.com/54am4twa>

You may come at any time between 1 and 3 to begin your tour. Parking is available on the grounds.

If you would like to attend but need a ride, please contact Sue and Dave Russell at 508-753-1660 or email us at dasrusl@charter.net and arrangements will be made to pick you up.

Please plan to attend this wonderful event which has been so graciously planned and organized by the Artemas Ward Museum to help our Church celebrate its 300 years of sharing God's love. Thank you.

300TH ANNIVERSARY



Save the Date!

*Our 300th Anniversary
Gathering & Celebration*

Saturday,

November 4, 2023

5:30 - 8:30 pm

Sharing God's Love for 300 Years!

Photo by Jerry Collapso

Come to a presentation and chat with...

General Artemas & Sarah Ward in 18th Century Shrewsbury



Sunday, May 7, 11:00 am
Presented by Jim and Marcia Smith



First Congregational Church
19 Church Road
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
www.fcsm.org 508-845-7286
Sharing God's Love for 300 Years!

Refreshments will be served.
This event is free and open to the
public. All are welcome!
We are an Open and Affirming
Congregation.

“Local historian presents case for Shrewsbury as an Underground Railroad stop”

Check this April 5, 2023 article from the Community Advocate at <https://www.communityadvocate.com/2023/04/05/local-historian-presents-case-for-shrewsbury-as-an-underground-railroad-stop/>



Big thanks to all who participated in our 300th April Giving Opportunity benefitting the children of La Romana! We collected:

12 bottles of children's vitamins
156 pair of children's underwear
67 tubes of toothpaste
91 toothbrushes
3 containers of dental floss

God is good!!

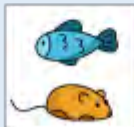
300TH ANNIVERSARY

OUR CONTINUED SHARING, 1723 - 2023

MAY 2023

During the month of May, we are collecting cat and dog food for the **WORCESTER ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE**. (Wet or dry food, Purina brand) (NO grain-free). WARL protects, cares, and loves our cats and dogs throughout Central Massachusetts. Their staff and volunteers are dedicated champions to this cause and act as caretakers for the animals and educators to their human counterparts.

Also needed: Kong rubber toys, cat toys and catnip, dog treats such as Pup-Peroni or Milkbones, and non-clumping kitty litter.



**"Give, and it will be given to you."
Luke 6:38**

***Due to record-keeping and storage issues,
please donate allotted items only in assigned month.*



WORCESTER ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE

Did you know that the Worcester Animal Rescue League was founded back in 1912 by a group of women who were determined to save overworked and abused farm horses as well as stray cats and dogs? They were dedicated women who stayed with the WARL for the remainder of their lives.

The services have expanded greatly over the years and have changed to protect, care for and love cats, dogs and other animals that no longer have a home or have been abandoned or found as strays.

The Worcester Animal Rescue League is a non-profit organization that depends entirely on donations of money, time, supplies, homes

and love for the purpose of caring for the animals that end up in their care.

Please donate if you can to the May Giving Opportunity in support of the Worcester Animal Rescue League.

Thank you.

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:21

EVENTS

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury
presents

Blessing of the Animals



Saturday
June 3, 2023
12:00 - 3:00 pm

Town Common
Rt. 140 & Main St.
Shrewsbury

Rain date June 17, 2023, 10:00 am - Blessing only

All well-behaved pets are invited to come at 12:00 pm
to participate in the blessing ceremony.
Photo and stuffed animal pet representations are welcome!

Also featuring:

Worcester Animal Rescue League

Uhlman's Ice Cream

Ridge Valley Stables Pony Rides 12:30 - 2:30

Chiampa Funeral Home Pet Cremation Information

Kaya's D.O.G. Bites

FCC Youth Group Pet Photo Booth

Golden Louie Pet Accessories

Shrewsbury Animal Control



First Congregational Church
19 Church Road
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
www.fccsm.org 508-845-7286
Sharing God's Love for 300 Years!

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Open and
Affirming
Congregation



CHRISTIAN ED

Her children arise up, and call her blessed.

Proverbs 31:28

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



May Schedule

May 7th Anger is a BIG emotion and it can be scary.

In Kids' Zone, the children will learn "What Jesus taught us about Anger" and "How to Love our Enemies" from the Sermon on the Mount.

There will be science lessons, puzzles and games and videos and we explore how anger effects us and how much better it is to forgive than to get revenge.

May 14th and May 21st: In celebration of Mother's Day, Kids' Zone will be learning about Rahab and Ruth.

May 28th: Group Activity for Ages 3 through grade 6



Mother's Day Cake Pop Bouquet Fundraiser for Youth Group Mission Trip!



One great way of letting your mom know how much you appreciate her is by giving her a beautiful bouquet. For Mother's Day on May 14, our high school youth group will be offering the congregation a chance to purchase a Mother's Day Cake Pop Bouquet after worship. All proceeds go directly toward the high school youth group's mission trip this June in New Rochelle, NY. Thank you for your support!

May Schedule

May 7 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm

May 14 – Mother's Day Fundraiser, no evening meeting

May 21 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm, final Mission Trip payment due

May 28 - No meeting, Memorial Day weekend

MUSIC MINISTRY

Firstly, a big thank you to Andrew Lefferts for serving as my sub during my parental leave. Andrew started singing with the Senior Choir and playing with the handbell groups three months before he officially took the reigns as substitute. This gave him a chance to meet everyone and made for a smooth transition. While serving as my sub, he was also auditioning for graduate schools. He has decided to attend Boston Conservatory in the fall. You may see Andrew around the church in the coming months. He is continuing to direct the Parkinson's Choir and is playing handbells with the Parish Pealers in May. We wish Andrew all the best in his future endeavors!

In April, I took a second trip to Northampton to check on the progress of the organ refurbishment. I was once again astonished at the level of craftsmanship and attention to detail provided by Czelusniak et Dugal. They are taking extra steps to move several of the pipes to a more accessible location for tuning. It is reassuring to know that the instrument is in such capable hands. The video footage from the visit will be available soon. If you haven't yet seen the video from my visit in February, it is available here:



Jon Van Houten fabricating a new rack board for the Casavant organ at the workshop of Czelusniak et Dugal in Northampton.



From left to right: Dana Humphreys (guest ringer from Maine), Jeanine Vitale, Karen Daukas, Greg Urban (guest ringer from Boston), Curtis Smith, Kathi Buzzell, David Rocheleau and Andrew Lefferts at the 35th annual Massachusetts Spring Ring in Tewksbury.

<https://youtu.be/91aZHNhkr28>.

It is magical to see these master craftspeople and artisans in action.

Several of our handbell ringers traveled to Tewksbury on April 22nd for the 35th annual Massachusetts Spring Ring. We had a great time ringing there with 14 other handbell groups from Massachusetts and were joined by guest ringers from all over New England. Some of the repertoire that we played will also be featured at the Festival Conference in Worcester this summer. I especially enjoyed the chance to play with the group. Usually, I am busy conducting instead.

Sincerely,

Curtis Smith

MUSIC SUNDAY

Join us on **May 21st** as we celebrate Music Sunday during morning worship. We'll feature the many musicians and artists at FCC: Chimers, Youth Singers, Training Choir, Senior Choir, Shrewsbury Ringers.

Are you interested in joining a music group? Email Director of Music Curtis Smith at musicdirector@fccsm.org

MINISTRIES

Thank you! - Thank you! - Thank you! - Thank you!

The 2023 Medical Mission to La Romana team wants to thank ALL of our supporters for making this mission such an amazing success.

Thank you for supporting our team and our mission by purchasing sponsorships and providing donations of money, silent auction items, medicines, hygiene products, clothing, glasses and medical supplies. We were able to bring **3000 pounds** of supplies to the region, and we couldn't have done it without you!



Our Batey Bible School cared for hundreds of children –playing games, making crafts, administering dewormer medicines and **giving them hope** that the world sees them and that they are worthy.

Our Medical Clinics treated over 600 patients in five days. Serious cases were identified and sent to the Hospital for life-saving measures. Our team assembled a wheelchair for an elderly man that had been years without mobility. A woman that had a bubus-infected thyroid was rushed to the hospital for immediate care. The food and clothing distributions were tremendously needed. Eye care and glasses distribution and dental care were provided and very much needed.



The Construction team went out into the Bateyes (sugarcane villages) to replace roofs and paint homes that had been ravaged by the Hurricane in Sept 2022. Multi-generational families were living in these houses without roofs for more than 5 months. Our team also spent 3 days refinishing hospital rooms affected by the hurricane by fixing electrical, painting and patching walls and cleaning the ceilings. Rooms were restored to functional and sanitary hospital rooms.



Days for Girls We purchased and distributed 200 reusable, sustainable feminine hygiene kits that were created on the island by local women. Not only did we educate the young women of the bateyes about feminine hygiene, reproduction and safe sexual practices, but local women can now make a living by creating and assembling the kits that we purchased and distributed. A truly sustainable effort!

Our hardworking team of 31 people included members from First Church in Sterling, First Congregational Church in West Boylston, and First Church in Nashua as well as returning team members from all over Central MA as well as NC and VA!

YOUR amazing support helped make all of this possible – thank you!

Like us on Facebook - "La Romana Mission Team"



and look for details on our upcoming 2024 Medical Mission at

LaRomana.fcsterling.org



Jess and I would like to thank all of those who attended our Presentation on our Medical and Construction Mission Trips to La Romana and for the very thoughtful questions. We shall keep the Congregation apprised of future mission trips to La Romana in the Dominican Republic. They always leave the last Friday night in Feb and stay in the DR for the first week in March. We would also like to thank Sue and Dave Russell and the 300th Anniversary Team for inviting us to

share our stories of our mission trips. Thank you to Curtis for his technical assistance as well as for leading our choir with a beautiful Spanish hymn!

Sue Moore and Jessica Moore Degliaberti



MINISTRIES

Mustard Seed Ministry

Volunteers needed for our March 1st Mustard Seed evening meal which provides a nourishing food to approximately 125 individuals of all ages in need of a meal.

Volunteer Openings:

May 3, 2023 (3) Cooks, (1) Baker

* Be part of a team of Cooks who work in our church's kitchen from 1:15 pm to 3:45pm preparing the Meat Loaf ~ Mashed Potatoes ~ Green Beans Casserole ~ dinner. Have fun preparing this meal with others.

* Be one of the Bakers who make or buy 36 cookies and bring them to the church's kitchen by 3:15pm on

the day of the scheduled meal. You can also bring your cookies the night before from 7:00pm – 8:00pm. Please label your cookies "For Mustard Seed".

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped to make the April 5th Mustard Seed dinner a wonderful success: Susanna Meyer, Sue Russell, Donna Kafel, Kathi Buzzell, Deb DelDotto, Jean Feldkamp, Joy Goethert, Jamie Sampsonis, Kathleen Rocheleau, Jane Lapointe, Stephanie & John Ambra and Paul Mullins. Please know how very much the people at Mustard Seed appreciate your acts of kindness!

To volunteer sign-up online by clicking this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0b4fafaf2c7-mustard1#/> or you can contact Janet Pike at 774 -243-4395 or mrsbear8@msn.com. Thank you!



SAVE THE DATE
38TH ANNUAL
WALK FOR THE HOMELESS
SUNDAY, MAY 21 2023

The 38th annual Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance Walk for the Homeless will take place on Sunday May 21 at 2 pm at Elm Park in Worcester. This important fundraising event supports a variety of programs aimed at fostering long-term housing stability through prevention, shelter & safety net, moving be-

yond homelessness, and public education & advocacy.

Several members of the congregation will be representing the church at the walk this year. We welcome anyone who would like to join us for the walk or who would like to donate to the walk through the online team that has been created for First Congregational Church.

To donate, go to www.classy.org/give/447846 and click on the DONATE NOW button.

When you reach the box that states "Would you like to credit this donation to a specific fundraiser or team?", type in **First Congregational Church Shrewsbury**, click on the box & complete the rest of the donation information. Your donation will be credited to our church team.

If you would like to walk on May 21, please see Kathi Buzzell (kabuzzell11@gmail.com) or Jean Feldkamp (jeanfeldkamp@hotmail.com) for details.

**Thank you for helping to prevent homelessness,
one step at a time.**

MINISTRIES



How to divest

When discussing climate change, people often ask, what can I do? They may agree that wrecking the climate is dangerous and wrong, but feel powerless in trying to turn things around. But, that's not true and an increasing number of

people have followed the lead of some well know colleges, universities, cities and towns, and many faith communities, including our own, in divesting from fossil fuel companies. So, if you have investments, there is something you can do that directly addresses the source of the climate problem, divest.

There are several ways of doing this ranging from excluding companies that own fossil fuel reserves (coal, oil, and gas), to targeting a larger set of companies that in addition provide the infrastructure for fossil fuel extraction and transport or that burn large amounts of fossil fuels, namely utilities. These two categories are typically referred to as fossil fuel reserves free (FFRF) and fossil fuel free (FFF) investing. There is a third category that excludes companies based on energy, social, and governance criteria (ESG) that will discussed in a future article.

Perhaps the easiest way to divest from fossil fuels is to select mutual or exchange traded funds that have been tailored to exclude fossil fuel companies. This is the approach

that has been taken by our church and many other individual investors. If your investments are managed by an investment firm, you'll have to speak with your financial advisor about how to shift your investments away from fossil fuels. There are several important considerations in making the choices, including management fees, capitalization (how much total money is invested in the fund), and investment strategy (conservative/aggressive) of the fund are.

The State Street Global Advisors SPDR S&P 500 Fossil Fuel Reserves Free ETF provides a good example for divestment. The fund was one of the first established to meet the growing demand for fossil fuel free funds, has a low expense, and is well capitalized (over \$1.3 billion). The fund invests in companies that are in the S&P 500, excluding 17 companies that own fossil fuel reserves (ExxonMobil, Chevron, etc). There are also funds that meet the somewhat broader Fossil Fuel Free criteria, how the criteria the funds use are not uniform. There are a large number of these types of funds and the best approach is to do some research and pick those that best suit your individual needs, or consult with your financial advisor. For 401 (k) and 403(b) investments, the choices will be more limited and depend on what your employer offers.

You may well ask, how will this affect performance, and the answer to that is, it depends. The S&P 500 Fossil Fuel Reserves Free ETF was outperforming the S&P 500 for a number of years, but in the past year or so that has flipped. But, in the longer term as renewable energy and electric vehicles become more predominant, energy stocks are not expected to perform well. In the words of climate activist Bill McKibben, "if it's wrong to wreck the climate, it's wrong to profit from that wreckage."



Thank you to all the wonderful ladies of Martha Circle for the wonderful staff appreciation luncheon. Delicious food and great fellowship!!

TID BITS



An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation

(508) 796-1971

Email: housing@fscm.org

www.sevenhills.org/programs/mediation

HOUSING MEDIATION,
THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO
LITIGATION

Are you facing a Landlord-Tenant crisis? Do you want to avoid one?

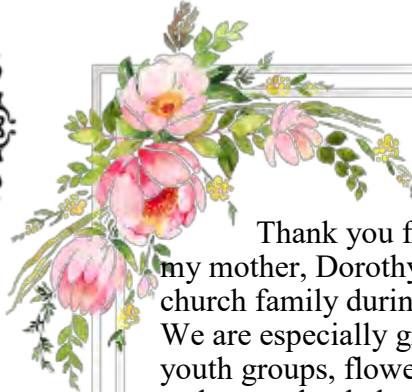
- ✓ Now is the best time to choose housing mediation because government programs are available for help in Covid-19 related housing problems.
- ✓ DHCD provides translator accessibility if needed.

Housing Mediation Benefits

- ✓ **For tenants:** can help work out if and how arrears can be paid off. Can avoid the risk of having their credit records negatively affected.
- ✓ **For Landlords:** can more quickly resolve an issue of arrears and avoid eviction costs.
- ✓ **For Landlords and Tenants:**
 - Can help to stabilize tenancy or can help to find a way to leave a property that works for both parties.
 - No public record involved.
 - Gives the parties control over the outcome of their dispute
 - Collaborative outcomes are more lasting and more respected.
 - Gives parties a chance to speak and hear one another.
 - Creative, flexible outcomes.

When to mediate?

- Before any court eviction proceeding,
- After an eviction case has been filed in court BUT before any hearing date,
- Based on court referral.



Thank you for all the care and attention my mother, Dorothy Perkins, received from our church family during the past couple of years. We are especially grateful for the cards from youth groups, flowers from the congregation, and notes that helped her know that she was in people's thoughts and prayers. We have scheduled a graveside memorial service (weather permitting-it will be in the church if it is a stormy day) for her on Saturday, May 20th at 1 PM. Please come if you would like to join us, and if you are planning to come please email me at deborahlebeaux@gmail.com so we can plan ahead.

Debbie Lebeaux and Family



A special thank you from St Anne's Human Services

"A very special thank you for the \$700 in contributions from First Congregational Church to our annual Easter Collection you held on Sunday, March 26th.

Your heartfelt donations, along with those from St. Mary's, Trinity Episcopal, and St. Anne's congregations were exchanged for local grocery store gift cards from either Stop & Shop, Price Chopper, or Market Basket and distributed to local Shrewsbury families so that they were able to share an Easter dinner together.

Happy Easter."

PAST EVENTS

Game Night!!



PAST EVENTS

Easter!!



PAST EVENTS

Earth Stewardship Sunday



Rev. Dr. Jessi- ca



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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



FCCShrewsbury



Church on The Green Newsletter
May 2023 Issue



Please join us on Sunday
mornings at
9:30am



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