

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming & Creation Justice Church of the United Church of Christ



April 26th, 2026

**Rev. Holly MillerShank
Senior Minister**

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable."

- Mary Oliver

PRELUDE

Lead Me, Lord

S. Wesley arr. R. Thygerson

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The Good Shepherd invites us to green pastures. We are refreshed beside still waters.

Many: We have been given everything we have. God offers us everything we need.

One: When we walk through shadowed valleys, God is with us. We are comforted and reassured.

Many: God leads us in the right paths. Our cups are filled to overflowing.

One: God welcomes us to the table where love is expressed. We are invited to partake of the truth God offers us.

Many: We have received plenty that we might share. We are called to be God's helpers.

***HYMN**

In the Midst of New Dimensions (NCH 391 vs. 1, 3 & 5)

CALL TO CONFESSION

All of us have taken vows as followers of Jesus and have broken them. Our God calls us to confess of our sin – of the obstacles that prevent us from following in the footsteps of Jesus. Let us return to the one who is our Origin to reattune and reorient ourselves to God's intent for us to live abundant lives.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Good Shepherd, we have wandered down the strange pathways of our world. We have ventured into dead-end streets that looked more inviting than the narrow ways marked by the signposts of your love. We have failed to use our overflowing cups to fill the cups of siblings who need what we have to offer. Forgive us, we pray, and restore us to your fold. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear the good news: In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, and we are restored to wholeness. God's love will abide with us, as long as we share it with others.

ANTHEM

Thou Art Worthy

P. Mills arr. J. Schrader

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 10:1-10

MESSAGE

The Gatekeeper

Rev. Holly MillerShank

***HYMN**

Where Charity and Love Prevail (NCH 396)

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

Bring your good deeds as an offering to God. Present to the Good Shepherd your firm commitment to care for others in the spirit of Christ. As followers of Jesus we are called to give leadership and comfort.

OFFERTORY

Deep River

S. Scott

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Earth Day Reflection

This earth day, take a moment to reflect on this proverb: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we have borrowed it from our children."

*DOXOLOGY

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

How can we express our thanks O God, for the one who has laid down life itself in witness to your love for all people? Use what we offer to you to bring healing and peace to all yearning for wholeness.

Amen

*HYMN

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love (see insert)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Joy Eternal

G. Parker

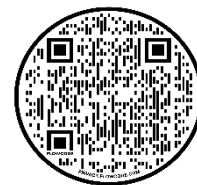
First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury (FCCS) is a vibrant, inclusive and
compassionate community of worship and mission.

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.

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 Wendy Zeisemann
The Reader is Linda Wagner
Greeters are Cara Molyneaux and Nancy Colby
Altar flowers are provided by Lisa and Stephen Wark in loving memory of their mothers.

Liturgy adapted from Led By Love, Lavon Bayler.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Prayers for Jim; Norma & Bill Garcia; the Binder on their upcoming move; Mary; Sherry & Scotty Robertson; Carole Fontaine; Susie and Brian Amos; Ruthie, sister-in-law of Dave & Sue; Aaron; Lt Ethan Connors, deployed in the Middle East; Joshua S.; Bob Podolski; Stan Holden; Timmy; Jay Scott; James Kelly; Bernice Forrister; Ronniy Reis; 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), Youth Room & 214

Every Sunday, 7pm: AA, Adkins Room

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

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, 4/26:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

2:00pm: Rail Trail walk, Mass. Central Rail Trail parking lot

2:00pm: Kids Zentangle, Adkins

Monday, 4/27:

10:00am: Hands for Hope, Parlor

1:30pm: 4th Monday Memory Café, Chapel

7:00pm: Men's Ministry, Adkins

Tuesday, 4/28:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Youth Room

12:00pm Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Wednesday, 4/29:

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

Thursday, 4/30:

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 5/1:

10:30am: Marjorie Freker Funeral, Sanctuary

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Sunday, 5/3:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

11:00am: Newcomer Brunch, Chapel

11:00am: Breakfast Bag Prep, Cushing Hall

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Words and Music by
Peter Scholtes

VERSE

$\text{♩} = 56$ Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F Fm

1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord; We are
2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand; We will
3. We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side; We will
4. All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come; And all

5 Bbm Eb7/Bb Fm Eb/F Fm Bbm

one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord. And we pray that all
walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand. And to - geth - er we'll
work with each oth - er, we will work side by side. And we'll guard each man's
praise to Christ Je - sus, His on - ly Son. And all praise to the

CHORUS

10 Eb7/Bb Fm Eb/F Fm Db

u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored. And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our
spread the news that God is in our land.
dig - ni - ty and save each man's pride.
Spir - it, who makes us one.

15 Fm Bbm Fm Bbm Eb7/Bb Fm

love, by our love, yes they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love. _____

CCLI Song # 26997



Dollars & Sense is a monthly feature, generally the 3rd week of the month, where we share information about different aspects of our financial health as a congregation.

FCC Special Funds

Last month we explored scholarships available to individuals through First Congregational Church. There are also several special funds set up to support individuals, families or projects (both within the church and the wider community) at FCC.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund- This fund allows for the Senior Minister of the church to help cover emergency needs of church or community members such as food, medicine, utilities etc. This fund is extremely flexible as it allows resources to be utilized when there is a financial need and no other source of funding fits the exact parameters of the need.

Memorial Fund- The Memorial Fund is supported through gifts when a loved one or member of the church passes away and contributions are made in their memory. These funds can be utilized to support activities of the church that fall outside of the normal operating budget.

Remembrance Fund- The Remembrance Fund is generally fed through gifts members leave the church in their wills or estates. These monies are approved for specific projects at the request of the minister to the Budget and Finance Committee.

King's Daughter's Fund- These gifts are specifically reserved for flowers, resources help with purchasing lilies, poinsettias or altar flowers as needed.

FCC Foundation- Established from a generous gift of a church member these funds can support groups or individuals working on specific projects. A request comes in through church council and is acted upon. This fund has supported youth mission trips, adult mission trips to La Romana and special request such as a recent presentation for an Eagle Scout Project to repair the gazebo on the common.

YES Fund- Y.our E.vanglism S.avings, is our newest fund, created through a donor gift and the mission funds from the 2022 capital campaign. These funds, requested through Mission and Outreach, approved by Church Leadership Team, can invigorate new missions and ministries.

First Steps Fund- These resources support new projects or ministries.

Publication Date: April 2026

FCC's MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

In MARCH we had REVENUE of \$49,809.70 and EXPENSES of \$74,474.96* giving us a monthly net loss (negative) of \$24,665.26

Year-to-date (January 1st thru March 31st 2026) we had REVENUE of \$214,779.02** and EXPENSES of \$199,436.81 which gives us a YTD net income (positive) of \$15,342.21

** Expenses included significant snow removal costs, three payroll runs in the month and insurance payment.*

*** YTD revenue includes 11 members who paid their annual pledge in full.*

Give at

www.fccsm.org

To contribute to our request support from one of FCC's special funds contact Lauren Morse our Financial Administrator (finance@fccsm.org)