

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

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



May 3rd, 2026

Rev. Karyl Leslie

Guest Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me”

Revelation 3:20

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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www.facebook.com/FCCShrewsbury

PRELUDE

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

A. Peace arr. H. Whitford

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP *written by Rev. Amy Petré Hill*

One: We gather in the presence of the One who abandons no one.

Many: Come Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.

One: All are welcome in this sacred place, made holy through your presence with us.

Many: Open our hearts and minds this day, guide us into a loving relationship with all your children.

One: We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

Many: Spark us with a word of life and radical belonging— a message that we share with others as we seek to live out Christ's love.

One: We call on the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us. Amen.

***HYMN**

Be Still My Soul (Pilgrim 77)

TRAINING CHOIR/YOUTH SINGERS

Tree Song

K. Medema arr. R. Sterling

CALL TO CONFESSION *written by Rev. Shernell J. Edney Stilley*

Creator God, you are full of grace and justice. You are Holy and Wholly present with us every moment of our lives. In our rush to compartmentalize and create control in our lives, we have sometimes ironically allowed seeds of chaos to be planted in our relationships with others. We have sought to put people and their illnesses, struggles, and complexities at bay while we justify ourselves as "normal" or "quirky". Yet in your Righteousness, Lord, You have seen fit to be steadfastly patient and divinely compassionate with all of your Creation— including us.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess both our subconscious and willful othering that provides us false protection from our own inner battles. You said that if we confess, you will draw us close and wrap us in your forgiveness that provides both truth and love. We come before you with humble hearts and contrite spirits asking for your pardon. Continue to grant us the invaluable gift of the ability to know one another and walk together in an intimacy that only you can manifest. Into Your care, we commit our collective weakness, assured by Your omniscient strength and love. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE *written by Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe*

Hear the Good News: No valley is too despairing, broken, or dusty for God to enter in. No fear, no chaos, no hopelessness is beyond the reach of the One whose breath gives us life. Through Christ, God sees only our wholeness. Through Christ, forgiveness, love, and new life are always possible.

ANTHEM

The Welcome Table
Chelsea Cressman, violin

J. Raney

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 14:1-14

MESSAGE

Always Present

Rev. Karyl Leslie

***HYMN**

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go (NCH 485)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE MEAL *At FCC we practice an open table, all who hunger for a closer relationship with God, all who thirst for a better world are invited to share. Please take your bread when it is passed and hold it until we can eat together as a sign of our mutuality. Likewise, hold the cup to share together in the promise of God's healing and hope. Gluten free options are available in single serve containers.*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of love, we celebrate that today You are still speaking a word of acceptance, wholeness, and inclusion of all Your differently-abled people. We give thanks for this church and the ways we seek to live out Jesus' commandment to love You, and to love our neighbors and ourselves. 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 written by Rev. Dr. Alydia Smith

In our offering we share not only measurable treasures of time, talents and resources, we also commit to sharing immeasurable gifts of forgiveness, grace, compassion, acceptance and loving concern with each other and with ourselves.

OFFERTORY

Andante Religioso

F. Mendelssohn

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Church of the Wild Service

Host/join a "Church of the Wild" Service at a nearby park, beach, or garden. Read Victoria Looz's book, "Church of the Wild" to learn about this time of gathering, wondering, and admiring God's creation.

***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**

In all that we do, all that we say, and all that we give, may we create spaces of belonging for all. Amen

***HYMN**

When Peace, Like a River (NCH 438)

BENEDICTION

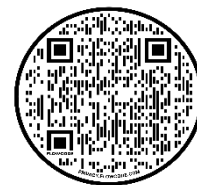
POSTLUDE

To God Be the Glory

W. Doane arr. T. Birchwood

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 Dave Russell
The Reader is Erik French
Greeters are Elaine Shaw and Nancy Colby
Altar flowers are provided by Bill and Dini Whitehead in loving memory of Dini's parents Jack and Dolores Lilly.

GIVE HERE:



Liturgy adapted from Radical Belonging: A Mental Health Sunday Resource for All by the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Prayers for Chris Besaw on the passing of her sister Deb, Jim; Norma & Bill Garcia; the Binder Family 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, 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
7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

Tuesday, 5/5:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Youth Room
9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel
12:00pm Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

Wednesday, 5/6:

12:00pm: Mustard Seed, Kitchen
6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary
7:00pm: CLT, Adkins

Thursday, 5/7:

10:00am: SNEUCC, Adkins
10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library
7:00pm: CE Meeting, Youth Room
7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 5/8:

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Sunday, 5/10:

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm