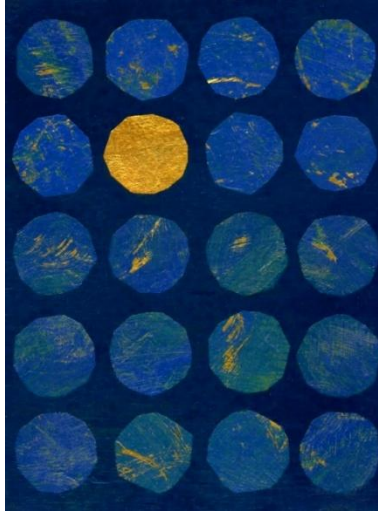


First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



"Where Advent Begins" by Jan Richardson

November 30th, 2025

Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

Acting Associate Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"Thanksgiving is a spiritual exercise, necessary to the building of a healthy soul. It takes us out of the stuffiness of ourselves into the fresh breeze and sunlight of the will of God."

~Elisabeth Elliot

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Our Mission:

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.

PRELUDE

Go Tell It on the Mountain

arr. M. Mier

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Like a table laid out for beloved guests

Many: Like a garden lying fallow

One: Like a nest safeguarding young life

Many: Like a star hovering over the horizon

One: We search hopefully for signs of Christ's coming

Many: The kingdom of God is drawing near!

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Voice 1: Today we start the journey of a new church year. With great anticipation we approach the season of Advent, holding in our hearts **HOPE** for what is about to unfold.

Voice 2: At the dawn of creation God spoke into the darkness calling forth love and light. Shadows continue to swirl around us, but we have not lost **HOPE**.

Voice 1: Be on the lookout, something more is about to break forth, a light which can never be extinguished, a light for all of Creation.

Voice 2: We light the candle of **HOPE** that will see us through even the stormiest seasons, a light not just for us but for the entire world.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE SUNG O Splendor of God's Glory Bright (NCH 87 vs. 1)
O splendor of God's glory bright, from light eternal bringing light; O light of light, light's living
spring, O day of days, illumining.

***HYMN**

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night (Pilgrim 109)

CALL TO CONFESSION

In this season of Advent, prophets of old call us to confess of our sin that separates us from God, one another, ourselves, and the creation. In doing so, we create space for reconciliation, renewal, and restoration of hope.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we confess that we are sometimes tempted to give up on your promise of a world marked by justice, peace, and love, and to settle for what seems expedient, easy, or inevitable. Teach us again to invest ourselves in the hard work of hoping, and once you have filled our hearts with hope, work within us to make your vision and hopes come true. In the saving name of Christ, we pray...

(silence is held for reflection)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Beloved, rest in the reassurance of God's grace and abundant love that offers us a fresh beginning in the dawning of this new day.

ANTHEM

Mid-winter

C. Rossetti & B. Chilcott

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 2:1-5 and Romans 13:11-12

MESSAGE

Advent Begins with Hope for a Weary World

Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

***HYMN**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Pilgrim 103)

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

Come with gratitude and joy to the table of the Lord. Bring the works of your hands and the gifts of your lives as an offering of praise.

OFFERTORY

What Child Is This?
Chuck Mayberry, baritone

W. Dix arr. L. Larson

*DOXOLOGY

Tune: Veni Emmanuel

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison)

We give you thanks and praise, O God, that you have built us up in faith and bound us together in love. By your grace, may these gifts and our lives be dedicated to serving the lonely, forsaken, the hungry, and those without shelter as we await the flourishing of all creation and people. Amen.

*HYMN

God, We Thank You for Our People (NCH 376)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Sing We Now of Christmas

arr. M. Mier

ABOUT THE BANNERS

Blue banners are being hung this Advent to symbolize the hope of the season. As our Church connects with the greater mission of caring for God's Creation, we wanted to incorporate the symbols of hope with the blues of water and sky.

Blue tulle was chosen for its light drapability and represents the ebb and flow of rivers and oceans.

Blue felt shaped into leafy plants ground the ends.

White tissue origami doves, 3-D rainbows and sparkling infinity loops are the symbols of hope filling the sky, while wispy fish swim among them.

As we await the coming of Jesus, let's remember OUR place within the GLORY of CREATION with awe and wonder.

Ann Cairns

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 Ziesemann

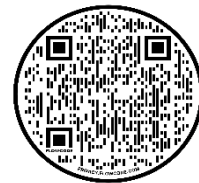
The Reader is Amanda Durkin

Greeters are Sue and Dave Russell

Altar flowers are provided by Diane and Dave Smith in honor of their wedding anniversary.

Parts of today's liturgy are adapted from prayers by the Rev. Carol Holbrook Prickett, Deep Well Worship.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

-Prayers for the friends and family of Sandra Hallock; the family and friends of Christina Hsu; Sue Russell's brother, Ronnie and his wife, Kathy; Timmy; Brian Scott; Jay Scott; James Kelly; the Canzano family; 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, 11/30:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

Tuesday, 12/2:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Wednesday, 12/3:

12:00pm: Mustard Seed, Kitchen

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers/Parish Pealers, Sanctuary

7:00pm: CLT, Adkins

Thursday, 12/4:

10:00am: SNEUCC Monthly, Adkins

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:00pm: CE Ministry, Youth Room

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 12/5:

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Saturday, 12/6:

3:00-7:00pm: Yuletide Market, Chiampa parking lot

Sunday, 12/7:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm