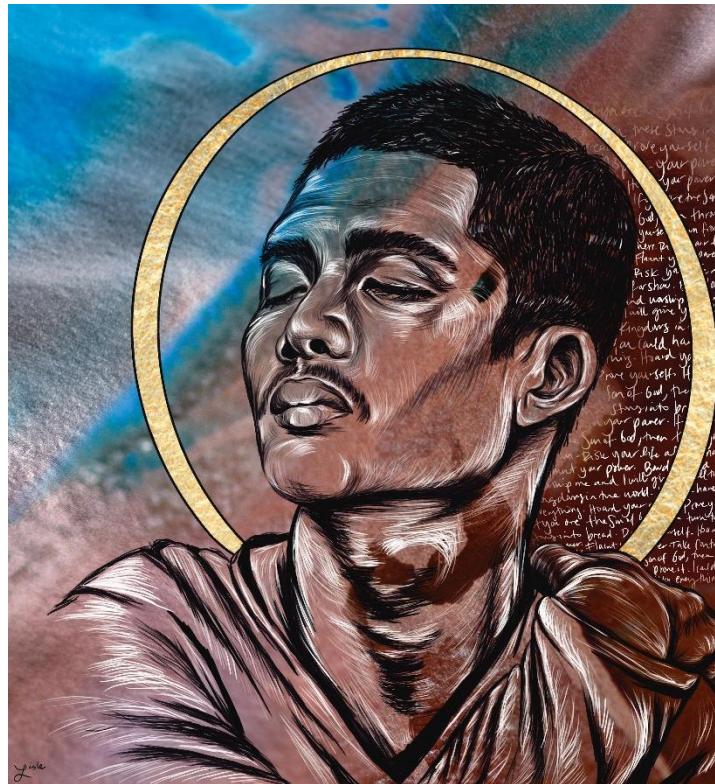




FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
spiritual discovery • inclusive community • compassionate service

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Tune In, Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, Sanctified Art

February 22nd, 2026

Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin
Acting Associate Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

“Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility”
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PRELUDE**Higher Ground**

C. Gabriel arr. J. Scriveyner

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING***PASSING OF THE PEACE****PASTORAL GREETING****CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: On this first Sunday in Lent, we journey again toward the cross.

Many: We feel the weight of all that lies ahead.

One: O God, we come here braced for the hazards of the journey that brings us into the wilderness.

Many: Even in the wilderness we will find beauty in dry places, abundance in want, flowing waters, and unexpected grace.

HYMN*Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days (NCH 211)****CALL TO CONFESION**

In this Lenten season, we are called to examine our own hearts, to name the broken places in us, and release all of this to God's forgiving heart and mercy.

PRAYER OF CONFESION

Merciful God, you know all about our troubles. Your Son was tested in the wilderness, tempted by the powers and principalities of the age. We confess how often and easily we give in to them. Yet, you continue to forgive us, reminding us that there is nothing we can do to lose your love. Holy God, turn us from the evil powers in high places, that we may return to you and to the path to which you have called us. Forgive our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved we are forgiven – receive now the abundant grace that opens our souls to love. May we rejoice in this gift of God's amazing grace and sing to God's glory.

SUNG RESPONSE Amazing Grace, Verse 1

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.

ANTHEM**Is There Room for a Sinner?**

P. Choplin

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**ORDINATION OF DEACONS**

Presentation of New Deacons: Kevin Gabbett & Erin Canzano

Covenant with all Deacons: Erik French (Head Deacon), Beth Hansen, Deb DelDotto, Dennis Pike, Dave Russell, Sue Russell, Mary Innis, James Garvin, Matt Lalier, Wendy Ziesemann

Prayer of Commissioning (in unison)

Almighty God, who out of your great love gathered one church by the power of the Holy Spirit to be the light of the world, we thank you for those in all ages who have given their lives to tend it, to care for it, to lead it, and to serve in every way to forward its ministry. Now we thank you especially for Kevin and Erin, whom we ordain in your name to the ministry of the diaconate at First Congregational Church.

Guide, inspire, empower all of the deacons of this church and keep *them* faithful to your call so that, your church may continue to be blessed and its mission brought closer to the fulfillment you intend; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 4:1-11

SERMON

A Landscape of Grace

Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

***HYMN**

O Loving Founder of the Stars (NCH 111)

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

God is generous and calls us to give with generosity our time, talents, and resources. Love and gratitude lead us to give abundantly.

OFFERTORY

Pastorale on Sicilian Mariners

H. Kihlken

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Lenten Resource:

As we enter the season of Lent, how can your Lenten practices honor creation? You could challenge yourself to give up single-use plastics. You could aim to eat less meat, drive less, or find ways to waste less water.

***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**

Holy One, bless these gifts to be used for the care of your creation, feeding the hungry, speaking out against injustice and hate, seeking reconciliation between all people. As Christ's body, use us too, in service of repairing the breached and broken places in the world. Amen.

***HYMN**

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing (NCH 77)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

All Things Bright and Beautiful

J. Mansfield

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 Miller Shank
The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin
The Director of Music is Curtis Smith
The Deacon is Kevin Gabbett
The Reader is Dave Russell*

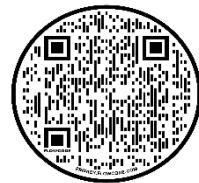
Greeters are Ann Adams and Nancy Colby

Altar flowers are provided by Paul and Diane Sainsbury in loving memory of departed members of the Gallece and Sainsbury families.

Liturgy adapted from Presbyterian Outlook, Rev. Shea Watts, used by permission.

Call to Worship, Pouring Out Grace, copyright 2025, Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission. Adapted by Pastor Karen.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

-- Prayers for 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; Carol Baker; 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 Szlompekk; 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, 2/22:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

Monday, 2/23:

10:00am: Hands for Hope, Parlor

1:00pm: Memory Café, Gifford Hall

7:00pm: Men's Ministry, MS Lounge

Tuesday, 2/24:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Wednesday, 2/25:

6:00pm: Lenten Series, Chapel

7:00pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

Thursday, 2/26:

11:00am: Ministry Team Meeting, CE Library

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 2/27:

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Sunday, 3/1:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

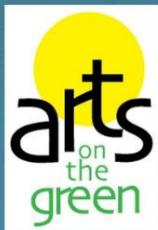
11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

11:00am: Breakfast Bag Prep, Chapel

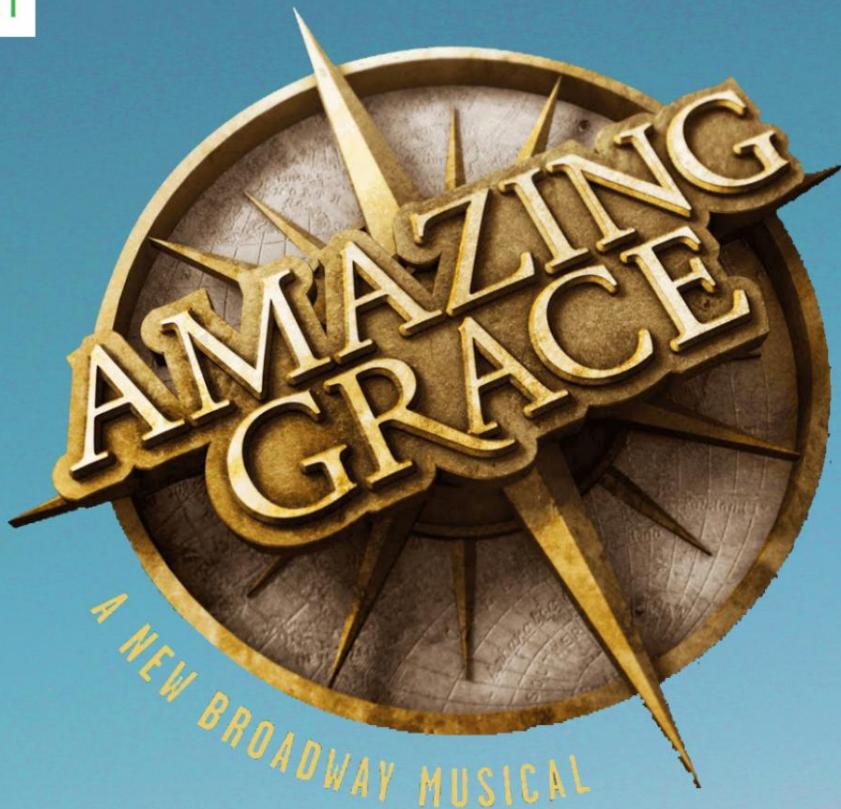
5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm



ARTS ON THE GREEN PRESENTS



SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

7:00PM GIFFORD HALL

SNOW DATE: MARCH 21

This concert version of the musical includes 11 vocal selections from the show interspersed with narration to help tell the story.
We hope to see you there!

This is a free concert. Donations graciously accepted.
For more information, please contact
Curtis Smith, Music Director.



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



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.

**Publication Date: February
2026**

Cell Tower Income

First Congregational Church first explored the possibility of using our steeple as a cell phone tower in the late 1990's. Initially contracts were developed with the four major cell phone providers at that time: AT&T (1999), Verizon (2001), Sprint (2002) and T-Mobile (2005). In 2020 T-Mobile and Sprint merged. The original AT&T contract was monetized with a 20-year contract in 2004. At the conclusion of that contract in 2024, that revenue stream reverted to direct payments to the Church.

The initial investment in the cell phone contracts allowed FCC to set up what was then known as the "Antenna Fund" which was used to close any significant deficits from our annual operating budget. In 2024 the name of that fund was changed to "The Stabilization Fund" to better describe its function. In our 2026 budget we estimate a \$39,600 transfer from The Stabilization Fund to help cover the cost of our operating budget.

Over the years the monthly income from the cell phone companies have helped the church to pay for significant expenses, including using those funds to pay off the mortgage on the new parsonage. Additionally, income from the cell tower rentals have contributed to the growth of our endowment.

In 2025 the church leadership embarked on a significant project to monetize one of our three remaining cell tower contracts. Working with a 3rd party vendor we again negotiated a one-time lump sum payment in lieu of 50 years of monthly rental on our AT&T lease. Doing so diversifies our cell tower income portfolio and ensures that FCC has the resources on hand to invest through our endowment to undergird the long-term sustainability of the church.

With the endowment receiving a significant increase from the monetization of the AT&T lease, the two remaining monthly cell tower leases, T-mobile and Verizon, will now be distributed to The Stabilization Fund and to a restricted Capital Fund. The Capital Fund is designed to accumulate money for us to address building related projects that are outside of the scope of our normal annual budget.

FCC's MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

In JANUARY we had REVENUE of \$59,316.98* and EXPENSES of \$56,332.86** giving us a monthly net income (positive) of \$46,826.04

Year-to-date (January 1st thru January 31th 2026) we had REVENUE of \$59,316.98 and EXPENSES of \$56,332.86 which gives us a YTD net income (positive) of \$46,826.04

**January revenue includes 10 members who paid their 2026 stewardship pledge in full.*

***January expenses included significant snow removal costs.*

Give at

www.fccsm.org

Questions about our investments? Speak to any member of the Budget and Finance Committee.