

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



January 12th, 2025

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil,
but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
If it is possible, so far as it depends on you,
live peaceably with all.
~Romans 12: 17-18*

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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

Prelude in C major BWV 846

J.S. BACH

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Gather from East and West, from North and South. God is calling us; listen, for God is naming you.

Many: The voice of God thunders through our midst. The voice of God is powerful and full of majesty.

One: Bow in awe before the one who created you. God knows you completely, yet accepts you.

Many: The voice of God commands our attention. The voice of God is like fire and tornado.

One: God reaches out to strengthen, not condemn us. God brings us through terror to a place of peace.

Many: Ascribe to God glory and strength. Worship God in awe, wonder and joy!

***HYMN**

Take Me to the Water (NCH 322)

CALL TO CONFESSION

We are baptized, set apart to be a ministering people, called to be agents of change, created to give glory to God in word and deed. The Holy Spirit has claimed us to be praying, caring, giving disciples of Jesus Christ. In this time of confession, we acknowledge how far we are from what we were created to be.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, the waters of faithfulness run deep, and we have been afraid they will overwhelm us. The fires of your Spirit burn brightly, and we fear we may be consumed if we display too much enthusiasm. We retreat to safe places where we hope to avoid challenges, conflicts and uncertainty. When we shrink from risks, we miss much that enriches life. We fail to notice your amazing activity among those who respond to your leading. Free us, we pray, for daring service. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

God has redeemed us, claimed us, and called us by name. We are precious in God's sight. Surely our God will strengthen us to face times of difficulty. Our God forgives and empowers, God blesses us with a peace that is more powerful than any outward circumstance. The assurances of God are eternal.

CHOIR ANTHEM

Lift Every Voice and Sing

J. Rosamond Johnson (arr. Rollo Dilworth)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 43:1-7

MESSAGE

Building Our Capacity: City Reach Mission / Congregational Mission

***HYMN**

When Peace, Like a River (It Is Well with My Soul) (NCH 438)

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 has gathered us from East and West, from North and South, to offer our best in worship and praise. Now we bring the fruits of our labor as an offering of thanks. We invest in people and programs, near and far, to benefit God's scattered children who have missed the majesty. Let our generosity aspire to match the lavish gifts of God.

OFFERTORY

Excerpts from Piano Sonata in A D. 784

Franz Schubert

***DOXOLOGY**

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.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

For bringing us safely to this hour, we give you thanks, O God. May our offerings honor you. May our lives reflect your mercy. May our hands bestow on others the blessings we have received. May our prayers unite us with one another and with Christ, in whose name we celebrate the privilege of giving. Amen.

***HYMN**

Wonders of Wonders, Here Revealed (NCH 328)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Les Baricades Mysterieuses

François Couperin



About CityReach:

CityReach is an overnight urban outreach program in downtown Boston, begun in March 1996 for youth (with accompanying adults), young adults, and college students from churches of any denomination. The program gives these young people the opportunity to learn first-hand about homelessness from people who have experienced it. During the 20 hour session, participants join CityReach staff in street ministry and offer hospitality, food and clothing. This is followed by times of sharing and reflection.

This year's CityReach participants from FCC are:

Youth Group Members: Felix Gregroy, Claire Troy, Chayce Couture, & Allison Esposito

Adult Leadership: Kris Couture, April Mullins & Paul Mullins

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank

The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

The Visiting Director of Music is Andrew Lefferts

The Deacon is MaryEllen Lane

The Reader is Jennifer Shaw

Greeters are Corrina MillerShank and JJ Shepard

Liturgy is adapted from Gathered by Love, Lavon Bayler

Altar flowers are provided by Kathi Buzzell in loving memory of Al and Jean Haynes from their daughters Kathi Buzzell and Carol Correia.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

For Frank Trippi; Patrick Sullivan and family; for the victims and those hospitalized & affected by the recent tragedy in New Orleans; Jean Stuart; Sherri Robertson; family & friends of Linda Rosendahl, Erna Lallier's sister; family & friends of Tom Driscoll, Wendy's husband; family & friends of Nancy MacKenzie; Joann Armstrong; healing prayers for Michael Papagno and prayers for strength for his family; Cathy; Ben Hancox, son of Rena & Chuck Mayberry; Eileen F.; David, brother-in-law of Kathleen & Dave Rocheleau; Peter, friend of Pete & Marie Murphy; Phil; Marcia Smith; Natalie; Christina Hsu; Peyton; John Heald; Jean Folsom; Roberta Jelinch's sister, Sandi; Jan Smith; Anne Thompson; Brenda; Barbara Harlow; Wendy; Lisa DiPilato; and Florence Stowe.

-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 recovering from natural disasters happening throughout our 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

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, 1/12:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

10:45 Q&A opportunities: CityReach Gifford, Church Finances Chapel

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

Monday, 1/13:

7:00pm: Music Committee, Adkins

Tuesday, 1/14:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Youth Room

7:00pm: Budget & Finance, Adkins

Wednesday, 1/15:

11:00am: Martha Circle Adkins

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers

Thursday, 1/16:

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:15pm: Senior Choir

Friday, 1/17:

4:15pm: Chimers

Sunday, 1/19:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm