

# First Congregational Church

*Gathered in 1723*

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Painting by Kenna Elizabeth Art

**April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**Easter Sunday**

9am & 11am

**Rev. Holly MillerShank**

**Senior Minister**

*Deacon's Quote of the Day*

*“He is alive — and the stone is rolled away! The lion roars,  
death couldn't hold the one who saves.”*

*~DeDee Gaskin*

## PRELUDE

Worcester Brass Consort

*Taryn Hariston & Ralph Metcalfe, trumpets    Avril Whye & Leslie Havens, trombones*

## WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

## PASTORAL GREETING

One: Alleluia! Christ is Risen!                      **Many: Alleluia! Christ is Risen Indeed!**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

One: What are we to make of this day? When graves are opened... When the dead awaken... When life refuses to be contained...

**Many: Then nothing is impossible! Hope is never extinguished and love is never conquered.**

One: We celebrate You today, Jesus, because You have made it clear that death does not have the last word; because You have filled us again with hope and faith; because You have given us a vision of new possibilities, new realities, and new ways of being.

**Many: Open our minds to believe what we cannot explain; Open our hearts to hope for what we cannot see; Open our lives to live and to love in the midst of death and despair; Let resurrection happen again in us today. Amen.**

### \*HYMN

**Christ the Lord Is Risen Today (NCH 233)**

## TIME OF CONFESSION

One: God, resurrection is not what we expect in our world. On the face of things, life seems to be under threat... our earth is grieving, our families are fracturing, our nations are at war, and the light of our hope is growing dim. **Many: We need the stone to be rolled away again.**

One: Forgive us and all who have failed to honor and preserve life in all its diversity and glory. Forgive us and all who have allowed relationships to become less important than riches or recognition. Forgive us and all who continue to exalt our needs and desires over those of others, and who are prepared to kill to prove it. Forgive us and all who have grown blind to all the signs of resurrection that beckon us still.

**Many: We need the stone to be rolled away again. We need life to break out within us again. We need love to consume us again. Resurrect us today, O Lord, and make us agents of Your life wherever dying and grief hold sway. For Jesus' sake. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God's Amazing Grace flows with abundance. Not even the tomb could contain such extravagant love. Christ died so that we might live- for this we sing our praise

**SUNG RESPONSE-** Amazing Grace verse 7

**When we've been there ten thousand years, bring shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise then when we'd first begun.**

## ANTHEM

**Around the World the Shout Resounds**

J. Vадja & C. Schalk

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

## SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 28:1-10

## MESSAGE

Sending Forth

Rev. Holly MillerShank

## \*HYMN

**Now the Green Blade Rises** (NCH 238)

## SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

### Invitation to the Table

One: On this day, we celebrate the risen Christ **Many: On this day, we celebrate resurrection in our lives.**

One: On this day, we embrace the grace which reaches from the tomb.

**Many: On this day, we embrace faith by committing to love in action.**

One: On this day, we rejoice for love's victory! **Many: On this day we shout, Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

## SUNG RESPONSE- Halleluja (NCH 236)

### Blessing of the Meal

**Sharing of the Meal** *At FCC we practice an open table, all who hunger for a closer relationship with Christ, all who thirst for the promise of hope are welcome to participate. Please take the bread/juice as they are passed and hold the elements so that we may eat together. Single serve gluten free options are available.*

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Through this space and time together today, we celebrate the covenant that ties us with God, Jesus the Christ, our neighbors and creation. Thank you, Divine Crafter of the Table, for fashioning us a holy meal unites us with the Body of Christ. Send us into the world resurrected, refreshed and ready to share Christ's unconditional love. 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

In this economic climate, fear is the greatest obstacle to generosity: fear that there isn't enough to go around; that if we give away what we have, we won't be able to take care of our own needs. Fear is like a big stone standing between us and the experience of the resurrection miracle. So "who will roll away the stone?" We will, through the gifts we now give.

## OFFERTORY

Worcester Brass Consort

## CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

### *Ecological Resurrection*

Every ecological success is a resurrection story! Find out which animals, plants, or ecosystems have been revived after environmental degradation. For example, the Monterey Bay in California has a wonderful "resurrection" story!

**\*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**

Dear God, we are thankful to have witnessed again the resurrection of your son, to have him with us every day, and to be able to share our gifts in Christ's name. We wish to live out your vision for our lives. Please accept our gifts for the ministries of this church and those beyond our walls. Amen.

**\*HYMN**

He Lives (see insert)

**BENEDICTION**


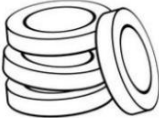

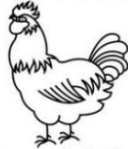

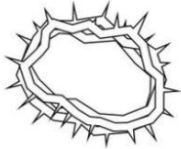




**\*POSTLUDE**

Hallelujah Chorus from The Messiah

G. F. Handel

(anyone who wishes to join in the chorus is invited to come forward, music will be provided)

# The Easter Story

 <p>Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Matthew 21:8</p>	 <p>Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. Matthew 26:14-15</p>	 <p>And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. Matthew 26:26</p>	 <p>"Peter answered and said to Him, Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble. Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Matthew 26:33-34</p>
 <p>And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Matthew 26:39</p>	 <p>And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. John 19:2</p>	 <p>Then soldiers nailed him to the cross. Mark 15:24a</p>	 <p>They gambled for his clothes, throwing dice to decide who would get them. Mark 15:24b</p>
 <p>Then Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a new linen cloth. He put Jesus' body in a new tomb that he had dug in a wall of rock. Then he closed the tomb by rolling a very large stone to cover the entrance. After he did this, he went away. Matthew 27:59-60</p>		 <p>He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Matthew 28:6</p>	



# He Lives

Words and Music by  
Alfred Henry Ackley

## VERSE

$\text{♩} = 66$   
A $\flat$

1. I serve a ris - en Sav - ior, He's in the world to - day; I  
2. In all the world a - round me I see His lov - ing care; And  
3. Re - joice, re - joice, O Chris - tian, lift up your voice and sing E -

5 C/G Fm A $\flat$ /C B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$

know that He is liv - ing, what - ev - er men may say. I see His hand of  
though my heart grows wea - ry, I nev - er will de - spair. I know that He is  
- ter - nal hal - le - lu - jahs to Je - sus Christ, the King! The Hope of all who

10 B $\flat$ 7

mer - cy, I hear His voice of cheer, and just the time I need Him, He's al - ways  
lead - ing through all the storm - y blast; The day of His ap - pear - ing will come at  
seek Him, the Help of all who find, none oth - er is so lov - ing, so good and

## CHORUS

16 E $\flat$  A $\flat$  A $\flat$ 7 D $\flat$  A $\flat$  Cm/E $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7

near. He lives, He lives! Christ Je - sus lives to - day! He walks with me and  
last.  
kind.

22 D $\flat$ /A $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$  A $\flat$ 7 D $\flat$  C

talks with me a - long life's nar - row way. He lives, He lives, sal - va - tion to im - part! You

29 F7 B $\flat$ 7 Ddim7 A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$

ask me how I know He lives? He lives with - in my heart!



## 2026 Easter Lilies Donations

### Donated by

Debbie & Don Alger  
Stephanie, John, Mia, & Andrew Ambra  
The Ambra Family

Kathi Buzzell & Carol Correia

Kathi Buzzell & Carol Correia

Erin Canzano

Erin Canzano

The DelDottos (*Deb, David, Dana, Darren, Darcy, Drea, Dylan, & Devin*)

Christine, Jared, Joseph & Kat Evasius

Karen Freker & Wendy Ziesemann

Erik & Alexandra French

Bill & Norma Garcia

Bill & Norma Garcia

Wolf & Joy Goethert

Mrs. Gary Hemmerdinger

Mrs. Gary Hemmerdinger

Kathy, Trey & Kacie Holton

Mary Innis

The Kafel Family

The Kenney Family

Paul & April Mullins

Sue & Dave Russell

Sue & Dave Russell

The Scott Family

Dave & Diane Smith

Dave & Diane Smith

Marcia Smith & her family

Deb Wallace & Bob Eaton

### In honor/memory of

Dear family and friends we miss

Mia's Nana, Anne Hanieski

Our parents & loved ones, Virginia & Richard Skillin and Pauline & Florian Ambra

Our parents, Jean and Al Haynes

Our cousin, Doug Skinner

Barbara Hughes

Lori Delmore

Gram Ruth Boutwell DelDotto, our mother, grandmother, great-grandmother

Christopher Evasius, husband & father

Our parents: Raymond, Glen, Jack, Marjorie

David G. French

Bill's aunt, Judy Garcia

Bill's sister, JoAnne Turgeon

Our parents

Mr. Gary Hemmerdinger

Mr. & Mrs. Alton Goranson

Dile Holton

My parents, Winifred and Robert Innis

Our loved ones who are no longer with us

Betsy Shufelt

Paul Sr., Rita, MaryEllen, and Lois

Our parents and Sue's brother

Our beloved Cathy

Our parents, Thomas and Barbara Scott

Virginia S. Bigelow

Robert M. Smith

James Smith

Our loving family





## *2026 Easter Memorial Donations*

### **Donated by**

Skip & Nancy Colby  
Skip & Nancy Colby  
Erik & Alexandra French  
Mary Innis  
  
The Kafel Family  
Paul & April Mullins  
Jay Salsgiver  
Kathleen & David Rocheleau  
  
The Shaw & Cullen Families  
Dave & Diane Smith  
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Dave & Diane Smith  
Deb Wallace & Bob Eaton

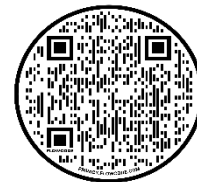
### **In honor/memory of**

Ruth and Harold Colby Sr.  
Ruth and Chester Jakubiak Sr.  
David G. French  
My grandparents, Catherine and Frederick Innis,  
Mary and Sarkis Papoojian  
Our loved ones who are no longer with us  
Paul Sr., Rita, MaryEllen, and Lois  
Neil  
Our parents, who taught us the importance of  
sharing our gifts  
Our loved ones  
Primrose M. Smith  
Earle H. Smith  
Stephen Thompson Smith  
Carol A. Smith  
Raymond W. Thompson  
Samara Rae Smith  
Our parents



*The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank*  
*The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin*  
*The Director of Music is Curtis Smith*  
*The Deacons are Sue Russell 9am, Dennis Pike 11am*  
*The Readers are Chelsea Cressman 9am, Bill Garcia 11am*  
*Greeters are Jean Feldkamp and Dave Russell 9am, Norma and Bill Garcia and Sue Russell 11am*  
*Please see the insert for the lily contributions for this Easter Service.*

**GIVE HERE:**



*Liturgy adapted from John van de Laar, Sacredise and Michelle L Torigian*

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- Prayers for Michael, Raquel, Talita and Mateo Binder; 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, 4/5:**

6:00am: Easter Sunrise Service  
 9:00am: Easter Service  
 11:00am: Easter Service

**Tuesday, 4/7:**

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Youth Room  
 9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel  
 11:00am: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

**Wednesday, 4/8:**

11:30pm: Can We Talk?, Adkins  
 6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

**Thursday, 4/9:**

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

**Friday, 4/10:**

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

**Sunday, 4/12:**

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary  
 11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room  
 11:00am: Breakfast Bag Prep, Chapel  
 1:00pm: CPR Training, Adkins  
 7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

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.