

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



December 1st, 2024

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

**"Faith is the foundation that makes all things possible,
but it is hope that keeps us moving forward.
With hope in your heart, nothing can stand in your way".
Author unknown.**

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

Lord Jesus Christ, My Light

J. S. Bach

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The days are surely coming, says our God, when Justice and righteousness will appear.

Many: God's promises will be made known to us, and we will declare God's goodness and salvation.

One: Lift up your souls and trust and praise; open your hearts and minds to God's teaching.

Many: God's ways will be demonstrated to us, and we will seek to walk in them all our days.

One: Render thanksgiving to God for all life's benefits. Watch and pray, in holiness and abiding faith.

Many: God's mercy and steadfast love will surround us, and we will abound in love for one another.

***HYMN**

We Hail You God's Anointed (NCH 104)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Speaker: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

All: Dear God, on this first Sunday in Advent, let this light shine brightly as the days grow shorter, so that we will be ready for your face to shine upon us at Christmas. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.

Advent Hymn Verse 1 Pilgrim 113

CALL TO CONFESSION

A new church year is dawning. An air of anticipation challenges us to fresh beginnings. Are we weighted down by the cares of life? Are we deceptive and untrustworthy? Do we project on others our own destructive habits? This is a time to rid ourselves of old ways and embrace the newness God offers.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of promises and possibilities, we admit that we color the world according to our own limited vision. We are often unjust in our judgments and faithless in our relationships. Help us to let go of our transgressions, to renew our covenant with you, and to live constructively with one another. In the spirit of Jesus Christ, whose coming among us we await with great expectation. Amen.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS

The mercy of God is new every day. We are free to accept the difference it can make in us. God's steadfast love is waiting to embrace us as whole people, to instruct us and to lead us in the paths of truth. Put your trust in God, for that is our hope.

ANTHEM

He Comes to Us as One Unknown

C. Parry arr. D. Busarow

*Dedicated to the glory of God by Craig & Sue Phyfe in memory of their fathers,
Churchill Phyfe and Leonard Sternberg*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

SERMON

Branching Out

Rev. Holly MillerShank

***HYMN**

In the Bleak Midwinter (Pilgrim 128)

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

God be with you.
Lift up your hearts.
Let us give thanks to God.

**And also with you.
We lift our hearts in prayer.
It is good to give God thanks and praise.**

Communion Prayer

Gracious God, Breath of peace, Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.
Make us, while many, one. Make us, though broken, whole. Make us, despite death, alive.

Sharing of the Sacred Meal: *At FCC we practice an open table, all who hunger for a closer relationship to Christ are welcome to partake in both the bread and the juice. Please take your elements and hold them until all are served so that we may feast in unity. Gluten free options are available.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, God, for breaking into our world and pouring into our lives and our experiences. We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. 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

As our love for one another increases and abounds so does our generosity- may give extravagantly!

OFFERTORY

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

E. Broughton

***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**

Thank you God, for this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. May our offering further ministry among us and beyond our walls. Amen.

***HYMN**

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (Pilgrim 107)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Hark, the Glad Sound!

E. Broughton

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 Sue Russell

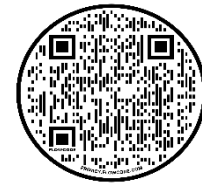
The Reader is Dennis Troy

Greeters are Kim and Jeff Goodwin and their children, Charlotte and Beckett

Altar Flowers are provided today by Karis and Kevin Ray in loving memory of Tomas Domanski and Mary Helen Ray.

Liturgy is adapted from Gathered by Love, Lavon Baylor, FaithForward.org, and Alydia Smith of AdventUnwrapped.ca

Today we celebrate the Ordination Anniversaries of Our FCC Clergy:



GIVE HERE:

- **Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplain** December 2nd 1984 – 40 years
- **Rev. Larry Ianetti:** January 5th, 1985 – 40 years
- **Rev. Cindy Maybeck:** November 12th, 1989 – 35 years
- **Rev. Holly MillerShank** December 11th 2005 – 19 years

PRAYER REQUESTS

Healing prayers for Michael Papagno and prayers for strength for his family; the families and friends of Paul German and Don Gray; Cathy; Erna's sister, Linda; Ben Hancox, son of Rena & Chuck Mayberry; Eileen F.; Thomas; Lt Ethan A. Connors & the DelDotto family; David, brother-in-law of Kathleen & Dave Rocheleau; Peter, friend of Pete & Marie Murphy; Joseph Evasius & the 181st Infantry Regiment; Phil; Marcia Smith; Natalie; Christina Hsu; Peyton; John Heald; Jean Folsom; Roberta Jelinch's sister, Sandi; Jan Smith; Anne Thompson; Brenda; Rebecca and Jennifer MacKenzie; Barbara Harlow; Wendy and Tom; 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.

-For those grieving or suffering due to the 14,634 gun violence deaths (not including suicides) ...since the start of 2024

- For those who have lost loved ones to suicide (if you or someone you know is considering harming themselves call 988 for help)

-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, 12/1:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

Monday, 12/2:

10:30am: Parkinsons Chorus

1:00-2:00pm: Advent Devotional, Chapel

7:00pm: YMC, Youth Room

Tuesday, 12/3:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Youth Room

7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Wednesday, 12/4:

12:00pm: Mustard Seed, Kitchen

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers

7:00pm: CLT, Adkins

Thursday, 12/5:

10:00am: SNEUCC, Adkins

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:00pm: CE Ministry, Youth Room

7:15pm: Senior Choir

Friday, 12/6:

4:15pm: Chimers

Saturday, 12/7:

3:30pm: "Portraits with Santa", Gifford

5:00pm: Lighting the Common, Common

7:00pm: New England Ringers, Sanctuary

Sunday, 12/8:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm