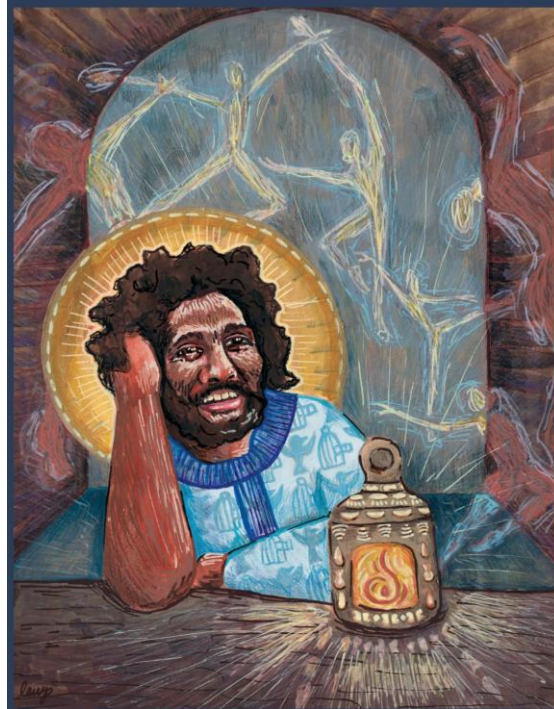


First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Hope Like A Dancer- Sanctified Art

December 7th, 2025

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

*"Hope is like the sun. If you only believe in it when you can see it,
you'll never make it through the night"*

~Star Wars

19 Church Road, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 - 508-845-7286 - fccsm.org - office@fccsm.org
www.facebook.com/FCCShrewsbury

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

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

J. Dykes arr. L. Smith

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

ANTHEM

Somewhere in My Memory

L. Bricusse & J. Williams arr. A. Snyder

FCC Choir & Youth Singers

Anthem dedicated to Emma Whitehead with love. Grandpa, Bill Whitehead.

TRAINING CHOIR/YOUTH SINGERS

Nova, Nova

M. Bedford

Jennifer Shaw, director

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Cressman Family

Voice 1: We continue our Advent journey. Remembering that when God created the heavens and the earth, he called it Good.

Voice 2: God called for the protection of the sea and sky and land. God proclaimed that all of creation would live in harmony.

Voice 1: We long for the lion to lie down with the lamb and for swords to be beaten into plowshares. We seek God's light of PEACE amid much violence and destruction.

Voice 2: We light the candle of PEACE, knowing that another world is indeed possible, one in which all of God's beloved may flourish.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE SUNG

(NCH 87 V2)

O true Sun, fiery star, let fall perpetual brilliance on us all; The Holy Spirit's radiant beam upon our earthly senses stream.

CALL TO WORSHIP & CONFESSION OF SIN

One: We are not worthy.

Many: And yet we are invited to the table.

One: We arrive hungry and unsure.

Many: We are greeted with warmth and given seats of honor.

One: We can never repay God's generosity. **Many: All God asks of us is to bear fruits worthy of repentance.**

One: As we are welcomed by God, let us welcome others; strangers, friends and foe, sharing together, in the abundance of God's grace.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 3:1-12

MESSAGE

God's Vision

Rev. Holly MillerShank

***HYMN**

I Come with Joy (NCH 349, vs. 1 & 3)

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

SETTING THE TABLE....

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight, that valley's peace be lifted up and mountain's might brought low so that all God's people might rejoice together, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

BLESSING THE MEAL...

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all. With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

Bless us, O God, and these your gifts. Encourage us to share your life and love, which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.

God made known in Jesus Christ, **hear our prayer.**

We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

SHARING OF THE MEAL... *At First Congregational Church we practice an open table, where all who are seeking a closer relationship with Christ are invited to share in the bread and the cup. Please take a piece of bread/cup of juice and hold it until all are served. Gluten free options are available.*

SHARING OUR THANKS...

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger.

At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always, that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives, and become hosts to God's presence and people.

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world, where the lonely and longing gather.

Lead us to the mangers of our time, where hope and renewal are born again.

Make us heralds of your love and joy. 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.

MISSION MOMENT: Assabet Valley Master Singers

Dr. Robert Eaton, Artistic Director

CALL TO OFFERING

God has drawn for us a vision of peace, an image so captivating that we cannot turn away. May we give so that the life-giving promises of God can be fulfilled.

OFFERTORY

Christmas Lullaby

J. Brown

Jennifer Shaw, soprano

***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 thanks to you, God of all creation. Bless these offerings that they might further your work throughout the world, so that one day we may see and experience your promise of peace. Amen.

***HYMN**

O for a World (NCH 575, vs. 1 & 5)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Rondeau from "Abdelazer Suite"

H. Purcell

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank

The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

The Director of Music is Curtis Smith

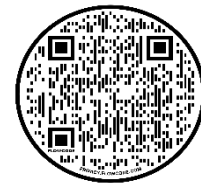
The Deacon is Matt Lallier

The Reader is Donna Kafel

Greeters are Delayna and Chris Griffith

Altar flowers are provided in loving memory of Dorothy and Lawrence Wagner.

GIVE HERE:



Communion liturgy © 2018 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca>.

PRAYER REQUESTS

—Prayers for Stan Holden; the family and friends of Christina Hsu; Sue Russell's brother, Ronnie and his wife, Kathy; Timmy; Brian Scott; Jay Scott; James Kelly; 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, 12/7:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

Monday, 12/8:

7:00pm: Music Committee, Adkins

Tuesday, 12/9:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Budget & Finance, Adkins

Wednesday, 12/10:

11:30am: Can We Talk?, Adkins

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

Thursday, 12/11:

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 12/12:

4:00pm: Chimers, Chapel

Sunday, 12/14:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

11:00am: Social Circle "Cookies for a Cause"

11:00am: Creation Justice Info Session, Adkins

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm