

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sing With Us The Christmas Story



A Program for Voices Young and Older
With Narration from Scripture
Musical Arrangements by Teresa & Paul Jennings



December 14th, 2025

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"Christian joy is not the absence of suffering but the presence of God."

-Jürgen Moltmann

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.

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

PRELUDE

Silent Night

F. Gruber

Hannah Mandell, piano & Patrick Mandell, violin

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Rejoice with great joy and singing, for you shall see the glory of God.

Many: How shall we see this Promised One? Where is joy to be found?

One: God has promised to come to us, with saving grace to meet our needs.

Many: We are weighed down with limitations and oppressed by many fears.

One: God breaks into the desert of our despair with springs of water to quench our thirst.

Many: Open our eyes and unstop our ears, lest we miss the surprises of our God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION / ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: God calls us to examine ourselves, to pay attention to both the details and the big picture. How are you actively inviting God's presence in your life?

Many: We are so busy that we often miss the still silent voice of our Creator. We run by others, ignoring their pain, we block out the sights and sounds we do not wish to confront. Help us God to honor the gift of your son by honoring those who he came to save; the lost, lonely and marginalized. Save us from our own self-seeking ways.

One: God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ is given freely. Receive the Good News of Christ's coming and be transformed by this most generous gift. Amen

***HYMN**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Pilgrim 129)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pete, Marie & Sara Murphy

Voice 1: Jesus says that we may have sorrow now, but there will be a time when no one will take your JOY. In this season of Advent we await the birth of God's son, the JOY of the World!

Voice 2: In the long-days of winter, we catch glimpses of the Holy One. In the laughter of a child, in a warm embrace, in unexpected JOY.

Voice 1: God has taught us that there is as much JOY to be found in giving as in receiving.

Voice 2: As we light the candle of JOY, may it's light spread forth throughout the world as a promise that stands forth for all generations.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE SUNG

(NCH 87 V3)

O fashion us to do your will, our envious thought and actions still; In every challenge may we find the grace which guides both heart and mind.

FCC Kids Zone Christmas Pageant: Sing With Us the Christmas Story

Please remain seated during the songs

"The First Noel" (Maddie Kilgore, Flute)

"Angels We Have Heard on High" (Penelope Detrick and Charlotte Goodwin)

SPEAKER 1

SONG: "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" (Congregation and Kid's Zone)

Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

SPEAKER 2

SONG: “Away in a Manger” (Kid’s Zone ONLY)

SPEAKER 3 / ANGEL 1

SONG: “The First Noel” (Congregation and Kid’s Zone)

The first Noel the angels did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter’s night that was so deep. Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the East, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave a great light, and so it continued both day and night. Noel, Noel,...

ANGEL 2 / ANGEL 3 / SPEAKER 4 / SHEPHERD 1 / SPEAKER 4 / SPEAKER 5

SONG: “Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas Star” (Kid’s Zone ONLY)

WISEMAN 1

SONG: “Come and See the Newborn King” (Dylan DelDotto Bordage and Lincoln Detrick)

ANGEL 3

SONG: “Silent Night” (Kid’s Zone ONLY with Jammers)

SONG: “Joy to the World” (Congregation and Kid’s Zone)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas” (Chimers)

SPEAKER 6

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 *Please consider making a pledge for 2026 to support our ministry: www.fccsm.org*

God presents us with opportunities to do good. Let us not turn away from the chance we have to make a positive impact on the world. May our gifts and offering be transformed into acts of service and generosity.

OFFERTORY

Matthew’s Begats

A. Peterson

Rachel Smith, mezzo-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**

Holy One, we celebrate the gifts of this congregation. We ask that you bless our offerings so that these gifts become moments of joy for all the world to see.

***HYMN**

Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good (NCH 138)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Sing With Us the Christmas Story Cast

(not in order of appearance)

Mary.....	Sophie Kilgore
Joseph.....	JJ Shepherd
Wiseman 1.....	Lincoln Detrick
Wiseman 2.....	Cayden Peck
Shepherd 1.....	James Kenney
Angel 1.....	Corrina MillerShank
Angel 2.....	Charlotte Goodwin
Angel 3.....	Charlotte Mason
Star	Beckett Goodwin
Angels.....	Josephine Cressman, Maya Graham, Annie Kenney
Sheep.....	Sylvie Summers, Colton Peck, Elliot Smith, Will Mandell, Jack
Speaker 1.....	Penelope Detrick
Speaker 2.....	Maddie Lallier
Speaker 3.....	Cam Peck
Speaker 4.....	Zelda Hudock
Speaker 5.....	Dylan DelDotto Bordage
Speaker 6.....	Emma Lallier

Instrumentalists:

Flute.....	Maddie Kilgore
Violin.....	Patrick Mandell
Piano.....	Hannah Mandell
Drum.....	Lizzie Lallier
Xylophone.....	Dylan DelDotto Bordage
Chimes.....	Elaine Shaw, Director
Jammers.....	Paul Dobner, Dave Rocheleau, Carol Baker, Susan Moore, Marty Tentor, Dennis Pike
Piano.....	Curtis Smith, Music Director

CHRISTMAS HIDDEN OBJECT

Find the pictures and color them in. Check off each pictures as you find it!





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.

Working Toward Fossil Fuel Divestment

Written by Paul Dobner

Several years ago, our congregation took on an intentional effort to divest much of its endowment from fossil fuels. The real impetus behind this came from our work involving the UCC Green Congregations program and from the leadership of the UCC General Synod where a resolution endorsing both divestment from fossil fuel companies and other strategies such as shareholder activism was adopted. The Earth Stewardship Ministry (ESM) was instrumental in promoting divestment of our church's investments in fossil fuels which ranged from ETFs holding fossil fuel company stocks to direct investments in fossil fuel company bonds. ESM became interested in divestment as part of the UCC Green Congregations Program and were further inspired by Rev. Jim Antal's book *Climate Church, Climate World, How People of Faith Must Work for Change*. An important step for Green Congregation recognition involved reviewing church investments and divesting from fossil fuel companies.

ESM worked throughout the latter half of 2018 on researching the divestment idea and whether it might be feasible for our church. This work included reviewing the church's investments (endowment and stabilization funds), determining what investments the church held in fossil fuels, exploring alternatives, and asking other UCC churches that had divested how they went about it. After gathering this information, ESM drafted a divestment proposal and presented it to both the Budget and Finance Committee and Church Council. The proposal was accepted and subsequently announced to the congregation in Looking Ahead in March or early April of 2019. Budget and Finance in consultation with the church's financial advisor decided that we would retain the full range of asset classes in place and divest as many as possible to fossil fuel reserve free funds (FFRFs). In the most recent quarterly report, close to 52% of the church's investments are in FFRF funds or other similar investments (e.g. Treasury Bill and Gold Share ETFs). There is an ongoing effort to identify FFRF funds in other asset categories.

You can learn more about FCC's work on Creation Justice at information sessions after church on December 14th or January 11th.

Publication Date:
December 2025

FCC's MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

In NOVEMBER we had REVENUE of \$59,316.98 and EXPENSES of \$ 63,826.68* giving us a monthly net income (NEGATIVE) of \$4,509.70

Year-to-date (January 1st thru November 30th 2025) we have REVENUE of \$635,404.41 and EXPENSES of \$600,865.52 which gives us a YTD net income (positive) of \$34,538.89

**November expenses included annual boiler inspection, mission & outreach distributions, and increased end of year ministry costs.*

Give at
www.fccsm.org

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



2025 Poinsettia Donations

Donated by

Ann Adams
Debbie and Don Alger
John, Stephanie, Andrew, and Mia Ambra
Mia and Andrew Ambra
Carol & Tami Baker, Carrie Bowler & Family
Peter, Carrie, JP, Cat, & Brian Bowler, Carol Baker
Kathi and Norman Buzzell
Kathi Buzzell and Carol Correia
The Buzzell Family

Erin Canzano

The DelDotto Family

Steve and Robin Donigian
Christine, Joseph, Jared & Kat Evasius
Bill and Norma Garcia
Tonya Hautala and Family
Karin Hemmerdinger

The Kane Family

The Kilgor Family

Leah Circle
Deborah Lebeaux

Sandi and Marty Leroux
Jennifer MacKenzie and Rebecca MacKenzie

Sally, Jesse, & Lisa Martin
Elizabeth and David McRae

Pete and Marie Murphy

Karis and Kevin Ray

In Honor/Memory of

Hugh Adams
our parents, family, and friends
our loved ones
Nana, Anne Hanieski
Tom Baker
John Bowler
our grandson, Beckham Robert Buzzell
our parents, Al and Jean Haynes
Edwin Correia
Don Buzzell
Barbara Hughes
Lori Delmore
Joseph DelDotto, son, brother, & uncle
Florence Stowe
our parents
Christopher Evasius, husband & father
Joanne Turgeon
Roy J. Urban and Richard Hautala
Gary Hemmerdinger
Mr. and Mrs. Alton Goranson
Caroline Libby Kane
Francis James Kane
Maureen Muntz
Rohan Kripashankar
members, past and present
Ralph and Dorothy Perkins
Mildred and Trusten Russell
peace everywhere, for everyone, always
our mother, Nancy B. MacKenzie
our father, Malcom D. MacKenzie
our son and brother, David
our little grandchildren:
Mia, Luana, David, Joseph, and Sedona
Brenda Cofske
our parents, Mel & Judy Murphy and Charles &
Barbara Gunderson
Tomas Domanski and Mary Helen Ray



2025 Poinsettia Donations

David and Kathleen Rocheleau
Linda Rudman
Sue and Dave Russell
Paul and Diane Sainsbury
The Scott Family

Dave and Diane Smith

Marcia Smith and family
Colleen and Dean Tipple

Anne and J. Oscar Rocheleau
David Rudman
our parent's and Sue's brother
passed loved ones
our parents
our brothers and sister
Virginia S. Bigelow
Robert M. Smith
James Smith
Gilbert and Gloria Kelly
Jack and Carol Tipple

2025 Christmas Memorial Donations

Donated by

The Colby Family

The Hautala Family
Karin Hemmerdinger
Mary Innis
Erna Lallier

Jennifer MacKenzie and Rebecca MacKenzie
Mary Maloney
Heather and Charlotte Mason
Dennis and Janet Pike
Kathleen and David Rocheleau
The Salsgiver Family
The Shaw and Cullen Family
Dave and Diane Smith

Colleen Tipple

In Memory/Honor of

Harold and Ruth Colby
Chester and Ruth Jakubiak
Mary Kelleher
Gary Hemmerdinger and Mr. & Mrs. Alton Goranson
my parents, Robert and Winnifred Innis
the Lallier and Tentor families
my sister, Linda Rosendahl
our parents, Nancy and Malcom MacKenzie
Marjorie Maloney
Rev. Kenneth Joines
family and friends forever cherished in our hearts
in gratitude for our many blessings
our family and friends near and far
our loved ones
Earle H. Smith
Stephen Thompson Smith
Carol A. Smith
Primrose M. Smith
Raymond W. Thompson
Samara Rae Smith
Mary Ann Dumont

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank

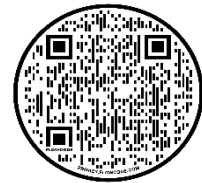
The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin

The Director of Music is Curtis Smith

The Deacon is Mary Ellen Lane

Greeters are Neary and Aaron Detrick

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

--Prayers for Stan Holden; Mei 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, 12/14:

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

Monday, 12/15:

7:00pm: Leah Circle, Youth Room

7:00pm: Jammers, Chapel

Tuesday, 12/16:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

9:30am: Grief Group, Chapel

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Council, Adkins

Wednesday, 12/17:

11:30am: Martha Circle, Adkins

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

Thursday, 12/18:

9:30am: CoAM, Adkins

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 12/19:

NO Chimers

Sunday, 12/21:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

1:00pm: Blue Christmas Service, Gifford Hall

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing Hall

7:00pm: HS Youth Group, Youth Room

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm