



Church on the Green

A monthly newsletter from First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

An Open and Affirming Congregation

**SUMMER
2022**



**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**



FAREWELL, GOOD PEOPLE!

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.
-Philippians 1:3-5

As I write this message, I will be traveling to Seattle and then to Yakima and

finally to Toppenish, Washington on my second and last mission trip with the high school youth group. By the time Tom and I leave Shrewsbury, Massachusetts for Chicago's North Shore in late August, it will have been over three years since my arrival among you as your interim minister. It has been an incredible journey to be among you – and as I quoted from Paul's letter to the Philippians, "I will thank my God every time I remember you."

When I started in this place, I had been in the States only 10 months after almost 12 years of living in the UK. I began with a dual mandate as sabbatical pastor and intentional interim, conducting intensive listening sessions, and simply learning about the people and place that make up First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury. Seven months later, the world was plunged into a global pandemic that has changed life as we know it. Rev. Lynne Dolan and I had to figure out how to do "pandemic church" with no manual or guidance. Yet, this church opted to stay open in any way we could when many kept their doors shut. We were worshipping on the Common by June 2020 and a small crew braved indoor worship (which we recorded for online worshippers) starting in July 2020. You allowed our youth group to meet throughout the summer and kept our

doors open to 12-step groups. At an outdoor meeting on September 27, 2020, you became an Open and Affirming Church ("ONA") in the United Church of Christ – a process that first began in 2005.

We gained members throughout the pandemic. We said farewell to the Rev. Lynne Dolan after more than seven years of ministry and I became your Interim Senior Minister. The administrative capacity of the church office has been strengthened and streamlined. We have revised the bylaws and agreed on a capital campaign for the celebration of the church's tricentennial in 2023. The Cassavant organ will be restored by Fall 2023. The person you choose to be your next settled Senior Pastor will come into a healthy church that is financially sound and filled with possibilities. On a more personal note, it was while I was among you that I met my husband, Tom. We were married in September 2021 – one year after our church became ONA.

You will hear more from me in the coming weeks. My final worship service with you will be on Sunday, July 24. After a twice-delayed honeymoon in Brazil, Tom and I will move west at the end of August. Assuming an affirmative vote by the congregation, I will be the next settled Senior Pastor of Glenview Community Church, UCC, in Glenview, Illinois. Tom and I will live in the neighboring village of Wilmette.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you as your Interim Senior Minister. Without you, this church, and the experience and learnings it provided me, I doubt I would be headed to what some call a "big steeple" church for my next assignment. I will take with me all the happy memories and lovingkindness shown to me by all of you. First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury and its people will be forever in my heart.

I pray that God will continue to bless you as you begin a new chapter. May "mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance." (Jude 1:2).

With thanks, true affection, and every blessing,

Jim

Rev. Dr. James M. Matarazzo, Jr.



First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

Gathered in 1723

Preview of Coming Attractions

The 300th Yearbook

When the “Our Story Ministry” was formed in 2017, the group had one goal in mind. We all wanted to dig into the archives and discover the hidden stories that existed therein. That, we have done! In anticipation of our 300th Anniversary of the founding of our great church, we are in the process of compiling a fabulous book of history for all to enjoy.

Where to start was the question. Much of our history was already prepared for us and was sitting right there on the shelf. “The Historical Sketch” was released by Reverend Thayer during 1927. It was heavy in history and precise in detail. Then in 1963, Reverend Bartlett, along with our historian at the time, Hiram Harlow, released “The Road We Have Traveled.” This book recapped some of the old history, but included lots of information and pictures about the town. Since then, our church has released two additional booklets, on the occasion of the 250th and 275th anniversaries. We were thrilled that that part of our history was complete!

We are presently still digging for the rest of the story! A rough draft has been started and is presently being polished. Several members of the congregation have contributed stories that are near and dear to their hearts. We are still seeking articles and are reviewing to determine any topics that are yet untold. If you have an idea and you’d like to contribute, please let one of the historians know. We’ll see that you get “published!”

Presently, our plan is to offer the book to all, in whatever form they choose. We hope to offer “advanced sales” for any who would like a hard copy. We also plan to make the book available on our website for all who would like to obtain an electronic copy. Also, any visitors to our website will be able to learn about our church.

We are excited to share this with each one of you, and we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed putting it together! Stay tuned!

The Our Story Ministry

Nancy Burnett, Elaine Shaw, Sherry Robertson, Linda Russell, Jenn Shaw, Susannah Baker, Carol Baker, Kathleen Rocheleau, Sue Phyfe and Linda Ryan

300TH ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 2022, 7PM--Candlelight celebration of the sanctuary of Shrewsbury’s Historic Congregational Church in preparation of our 300th anniversary. This will be sponsored by the Shrewsbury Historical Society and presented by members of our Church. The sanctuary will be completely decorated for Christmas

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH, 2023- An Old Fashioned Hymn Sing is planned where you will be able to sing your favorite hymns. Following worship, the time capsule from the 275th anniversary will be opened while you enjoy Soup Sunday sponsored by Social Circles.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH - Social Circles will be presenting a Coffee House in the evening. This event is spearheaded by Tom Porter and will be an evening of entertainment and great fun.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH FOLLOWING WORSHIP—Celebration and presentation by the Boy Scouts in recognition of their 100 years associated with the Church and their contributions that have gone along with this partnership. The Girl Scouts will also be invited to participate. Reception to follow.

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

Gathered in 1723



SUNDAY, MARCH 19TH, FOLLOWING WORSHIP-Presentation by Carol Baker on the Underground Railroad and its connection to Shrewsbury. A handmade quilt that Carol has made will be on display, incorporating all of the symbols of the underground railroad that enabled the slaves to find their way to freedom. A brunch will accompany this. This presentation will be repeated once again in the fall.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH 4PM-Arts on the Green will be hosting a concert by a group named Ensemble Aubade. Curtis is planning a program of baroque style music to fit into the theme of our anniversary celebration. Reception to follow.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, FOLLOWING WORSHIP-Presentation by Sue Moore and her daughter, Jessica Degliaberti, on their mission work in La Romana, in celebration of adult ministry. Reception to follow.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23RD, FOLLOWING WORSHIP-Presentation by Earth Stewardship on their contributions in the Church's role to preserve our sacred trust for the environment. They will present the many contributions that they have made not only for the Church but for the wider community. Reception will follow.

MONTH OF MAY-Plans are underway for a possible tour of the Shrewsbury Historical Society, the Sumner House and the Artemis Ward Museum.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD (EVENING)- Cemetery tour in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Historical Society. Most of the speakers will be members of our own Church. Rain date—Saturday, October 14th.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH -7PM-Presentation by John Campbell on the history of Churches in Shrewsbury. This will be presented at our Church in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Historical Society. Reception to follow.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH-TENTATIVE DATE- Church banquet, followed by an organ, piano, and harpsicord concert in the sanctuary in celebration of Music.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD Our historical service, complete with costumes, incorporating as many of the historical practices and themes as possible, from over the last 300 years. Rev. Dr. Paul Adkins has very graciously agreed to preach the sermon on that Sunday. Following the service there will be a video presentation of the interviews of many of our older members of the Church, sharing their very best memories of what it meant for them to dedicate their lives to our Church. A brunch will follow. Snow date will be Sunday Dec. 10th.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH-Blessing of the new time capsule for the 325th anniversary of the Church. We are also planning a "300 item a month" appeal to keep in tune with the spirit of giving that our Church is known for. Monthly organizations that we are considering are City Reach, LaRomana, St. Annes, Worcester Animal Rescue League, Veteran's Inc., Mustard Seed, etc. More details will be coming. Other planned activities are Historic tours of our Church, a presentation by Sarah and Artemus Ward, with several other activities still being worked on.

We are still looking for suggestions that you, the members of the Church, would like to see. We want to involve as many people as possible. Please email Sue/Dave Russell at dasrusl@charter.net with any suggestions or questions. Thank you.



A Message from the Director of Music

I've been reflecting on my life's journey with pipe organs. The Catholic church that my family attended when I was growing up had an electronic instrument. I was taking piano lessons at the time but I wasn't really interested in the organ. It wasn't until I arrived at college and heard how an actual pipe organ sounded that I was hooked. It had depth and character; it wasn't a tone produced by a computer. It's the difference between hearing someone perform live and hearing them on your car stereo.

Then I started taking organ lessons and that changed my life's trajectory. An authentic pipe organ can do that. Learning to play the organ wasn't easy. Most worthwhile endeavors are not easy. It would have been easier to stick to playing the piano. I was making a career out of teaching piano and accompanying other instrumentalists and choirs on the piano.

Someone once asked me why fewer people were learning to play the organ these days and I replied, the organ is the most difficult instrument to learn. His response, "Well yes, but it's not like it has gotten more difficult to play over the years. Plenty of people used to learn to play the organ."

That is true; but modern life keeps getting easier. New inventions make it easier to connect with each other and manage data in ways that make our lives easier. So, relatively speaking, you could say that playing the organ has gotten more difficult. Over the past 299 years, this church has had its share of difficult tasks. Moving the church building 50 feet up the hill and turning it 90 degrees strikes me as difficult even with modern machinery. That project was completed in 1834.

The capital campaign to restore the Casavant organ is another difficult task. The restoration project will ensure that the Casavant at FCC will last for several more generations. It is now 64 years old. It has accompanied so many hymns and brought people together to sing in a way that only a pipe organ can. Imagine the future lives it will touch and the music students it will inspire. We are at the right place at the right time. This will be our legacy. 50 years from now, at the 350th anniversary of the church they will look back at what we did for the 300th anniversary. And they'll see that we weren't afraid to take on the difficult task of rebuilding the pipe organ for future generations. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported this project.

Curtis

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FIRST OUTDOOR SERVICE OF
THE SEASON

OUR YOUNG GENTLEMAN
JJ
WELCOMER
EXTRAORDINAIRE!



The 2022 Recipients of the Cwis Kemp / Olson Scholarship



Matthew Clark



Jupiter Montalvo



Meredith Sainsbury



Phase II

NEW CHURCH SIGN

Honan Signs Co. (Winthrop, Mass.) installed the first two phases of three of the new church sign on Route 140. The wooden posts are temporary until Swenson Granite Works (Shrewsbury, Mass.) cuts the new granite posts.

The sign will be installed in three phases:

Phase I: June 3 (complete): the main sign and cross bar with ONA diversity bar was installed. It has the words "Gathered in 1723" which highlights our upcoming tricentennial.

Phase II (complete): the sign's "hat" or triangular top with the United Church of Christ orb and cross logo will be installed. The tops of the temporary wooden posts have been cut and the "hat" overhangs the sign.

Phase III: Sometime before or after July 4, the granite posts from Swenson will replace the temporary wooden posts and the sign will be complete.



Ellen Jones, our former church administrator, is seeking a new apartment for September 1st. If you are aware of any affordable in-law, studio or one-bedroom apartments in the greater Shrewsbury area that allow a cat, please contact her at althea7160@yahoo.com.

Thank You Note

To my church family -

Words cannot express how much your support has meant to me and my family during the months since Bill's first diagnosis through these particularly difficult last weeks. Your prayers, your cards, and your loving notes have given us so much comfort.

Many, many thanks

Jean Stuart

Summertime. It was a song. It was a season. I wondered if that season would ever live inside me.

Benjamin Aire Sáenz



Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Registration Now Open for 2022 SNEUCC Justice Summit!

Saturday, September 24, 9 AM - 4:30 PM
First Church of Christ, Congregational
in Glastonbury, CT

Join other SNEUCC members, authorized ministers, and partners at the 2022 Justice Summit, a one-day in-person gathering focused on devising strategies to confront racial inequity in local congregations and communities.

The Justice Summit will include worship components, workshops, and a lunch-time plenary discussion between 2022 SNEUCC Theologians in Virtual Residence Rev. Dr. Diane Schmitz and Bishop Yvette Flunder. Morning workshops will center on current and emerging issues of racial justice identified as priorities by SNEUCC members and congregations. Attendees will bring together their knowledge and experience to work on a plan for addressing each specific issue. Please note that the Conference will not host a Super Saturday this fall. If you normally attend that gathering, you might consider registering for the Justice Summit. Registration is limited, so reserve your space today!

Register at <https://sneucc-reg.brtapp.com/wwwsneuccorgjusticesummit>



Capital Campaign Update

We did it! Our pledges totaling \$473,151 have allowed the contracts for the organ restoration to be signed. At Tuesday night's Church Council meeting Jean Feldkamp, Moderator, Jay Salsgiver, Vice-Moderator, and Curtis Smith, Music Director, signed the contracts. The signed contracts assure our place in line to have the work done. The plan is to disassemble the organ in January and have the restoration completed in September, 2023.

The cost of the organ restoration is \$430,000 leaving \$43,151 to be split between the Building Fund and the Outreach Fund. If you have not yet made a pledge toward the capital campaign, you still can. Any new pledges will go toward the Building Fund and the Outreach Fund.



SHREWSBURY
JAMMERS

THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
July 18, 2022
7PM

**BRING YOUR VOICE, YOUR INSTRUMENT, YOUR FRIENDS,
AND JOIN US FOR MONTHLY JAM SESSIONS**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
19 CHURCH RD, SHREWSBURY
508-845-7286



Meetinghouse Minute

No. 14

If you had visited Shrewsbury’s new meetinghouse after 1796, you might have seen a pair of elegant silver communion goblets presented to the church by its most famous member, General Artemas Ward (1727-1800). The cups were made by Paul Revere and entered in his wastebok (record book) on October 10, 1796 with the note that each was a “Church Cup” made for Ward.

Revere engraved the cups with the following:

The Gift of the Honble Artemas Ward, Esq,
to the Church of Christ in Shrewsbury, 1796

The gifts, but not the silver-smith, are mentioned in church records. In December 1796, the “brethren” were asked to stay after the service, and Pastor Joseph Sumner presented the two cups as gifts from General Ward. The church voted to accept the cups and present thanks to Ward via a committee composed of Dr. Sumner and Deacon John Bragg.



The communion cups are on long-term loan at the Worcester Art Museum, which has the second largest collection of Revere silver in the country.

Church Fair

One annual Fair is back! It will be hosted on Saturday, November 5. We are looking for ideas and volunteers! Many ministries will participate and will be looking for help. Please see below for an example. Stay tuned for more opportunities to help!! Contact Sandi Regnier at 508-842-4141

The Scholarship Committee will once again have a Silent Auction table at the church fair. We like a variety of items (maybe some hiding in your attic?) and this year we would like to add some “theme baskets” to our table. For more information, contact Elaine Shaw at 508-842-4401 or eshaw@townisp.com and join the fun!!



We Are Pulling Out All The Stops!

Recognizing the importance of music in our lives and how a well played organ soothes and uplifts the body, mind, and spirit during both simple and difficult times, the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury is pulling out all the stops to restore the 65 year old church organ to excellent condition. Thanks to the faith, love, and charity of the members of the congregation, we exceeded the pledge goal of \$430,000 to fully restore the organ in the year 2023. On Tuesday, June

21, 2022 during the Church Council meeting, a motion was made and unanimously accepted to move forward with the organ restoration. Pictured above are Jean Feldkamp, Moderator, Jay Salsgiver, Vice Moderator and Curtis Smith, Music Director signing the contract with Casavant in collaboration with Czelusniak et Dugal.

Where words fail, music speaks.

Hans Christian Andersen

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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www.fccsm.org



FCCShrewsbury



Church on The Green Newsletter
Summer 2022 Issue



Our mission:

The purpose of this Church is to come together as Christians to serve God by studying and listening to the Word, and living by Christ's teachings. We are committed to reaching our through prayers, caring, sharing, serving and fellowship.

Senior Interim Minister: Rev. Dr. Jim Matarazzo
jim@fccsm.org

Director of Music: Curtis Smith
musicdirector@fccsm.org

Financial Administrator: Lauren Morse
finance@fccsm.org

Interim Sunday School Director: Deb DelDotto
sundayschool@fccsm.org

Church Administrator and Property Manager: Sabina Terrades
office@fccsm.org

Sexton: Benjamin Weiss
ben@fccsm.org

Please join us on Sunday
mornings at
9:30am

