

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Image: Church Picnic by Helen LaFrance

September 7th, 2025

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

*"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do everything for the glory of God."*

Corinthians 10:31

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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.

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE-** Today, please take a moment to go around your table and introduce yourself to one another as our passing of the peace.

PASTORAL GREETING**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: We gather together in the splendor of God's creation.

Many: **We celebrate the gifts of the season and the abundance of God's love.**

One: We come to worship, to receive the blessings of communion and of fellowship.

Many: **We are prepared to be changed in this encounter, to grow from this experience.**

***HYMN**

As We Gather at Your Table (see insert)

CALL TO CONFESSION

God calls us into unity, and yet we often try to sit on the sidelines, keeping our distance from those we do not know. We fail to widen the circle, to draw in those most often excluded. Even Jesus, in his final hours, welcomed Judas to share in the Last Supper. Together may we share our confession:

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy One, it is uncomfortable to enter into new relationships, with other people, and yes, even with you. Help us to draw closer to one another and to your Son. Forgive us for narrow thinking and exclusive practices. Help us to live generously.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

As Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes, a multitude was fed in body and Spirit; the blessing of a meal and the community of faith. We too are freely given the bread of life and the cup of promise, to renew our weary spirits and to revive our commitments to the Gospel. Together we are fed and freed for service.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**SHARED REFLECTION**

Luke 19:1-7 Jesus invites himself to the home of Zacchaeus

Mark 6:30-44 Two fish and five loaves feed over five thousand

John 21:1-13 In their sorrow, the Risen Christ feeds the disciples

Table Talk: Which of these three lessons of meals in the Bible resonates the most for you? Why?

***HYMN**

Where Charity and Love Prevail (see insert)

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Remembering our Past: Retelling the ancient story

Celebrating our Present: Sharing of the Meal

During today's communion service we will share the gifts of bread and juice around our tables. One person starts with the loaf of bread and offers it to the next person, saying "The body of Christ". Tear off a piece of bread and hold it for a moment while the cup of juice is offered saying "The cup of hope". Dip the bread in the juice and eat. Then take the bread and cup and offer it to the next person at the table. There are single serve gluten free options available. If you use the gluten free option or choose not to partake, simply offer the bread and cup to the next person so the elements continue to move around the table.

Extending the Promise: A Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)

Jesus we thank you for the gift of this meal; simple elements, transformed by your Spirit. You offer your grace to us without question, help us to extend the same abundant love to others. Give us the confidence to speak openly of our faith and encourage others in their journey. Let the feast continue, far and wide, so that all may be fed. 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

We are fed through the extravagant blessings of Jesus Christ. We are asked to bring forth what we have to offer for the greater good of the community. May our joy overshadow our hesitation as we give our offerings today.

OFFERTORY

Simple Gifts
Jeanine Vitale, soprano

A. Copland

*DOXOLOGY

Tune: Old 100th

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore: One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison)

Gracious God we ask that our offerings be blessed as we have been blessed by this community of faith. Transform our gifts into life-giving opportunities for true relationship with you and with others. Amen.

*HYMN

Over My Head (see insert)

BENEDICTION / BLESSING OF THE PICNIC

POSTLUDE

Trinitarian Blessings
Jeanine Vitale, soprano

B. Wren arr. K. Scott

MINGLE BINGO

FIND SOMEONE WHO...

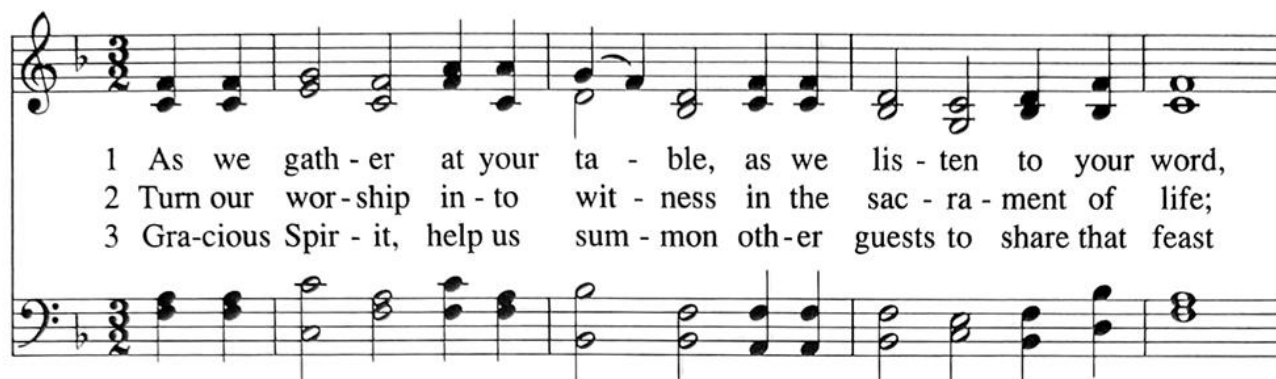
Two ways to play! First person to fill five squares in a row, or first person to fill their entire card WINS! *(Have people sign your sheet as you go, one square per person).* Choose your playing style, get started and have fun!

FIND SOMEONE WHO...

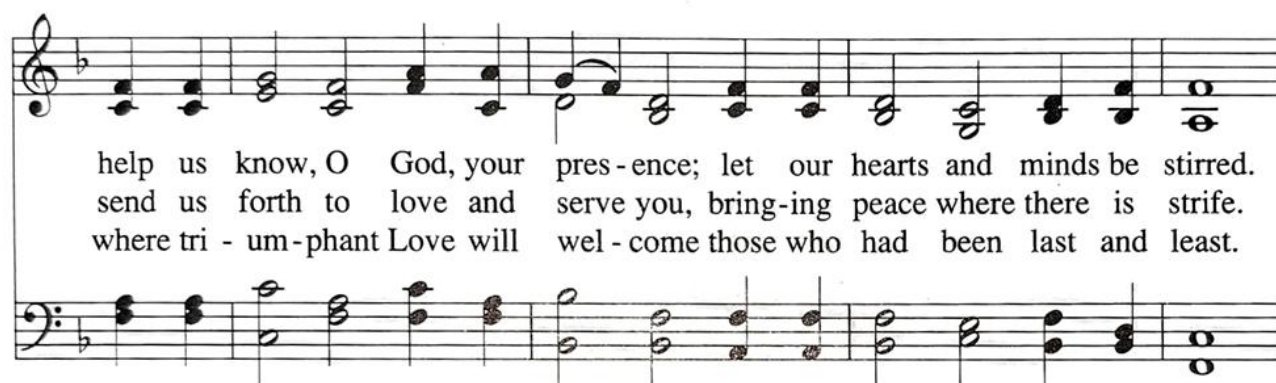
| | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ...is left handed | ...plays guitar | ...has two dogs | ...has been to South America | ...was born the same month as you |
| ...is wearing something orange | ...has a birthday this month | ...has the letter "T" in their name | ...has flown on a plane in the past month | ...is bilingual |
| ...has a garden | ...has worked at a fast food restaurant | FREE SPACE | ...doesn't have Facebook | ...has gone camping |
| ...has eaten french fries in the last 24 hours | ...has the same hobby as you | ... is wearing jewelry | ...has a collection of something | ... has broken a bone |
| ... is a middle child | ... wears the same shoe size as you | ... has gone bowling in the past year | ... has run a 5k | ... is wearing a hat |

Matt. 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24

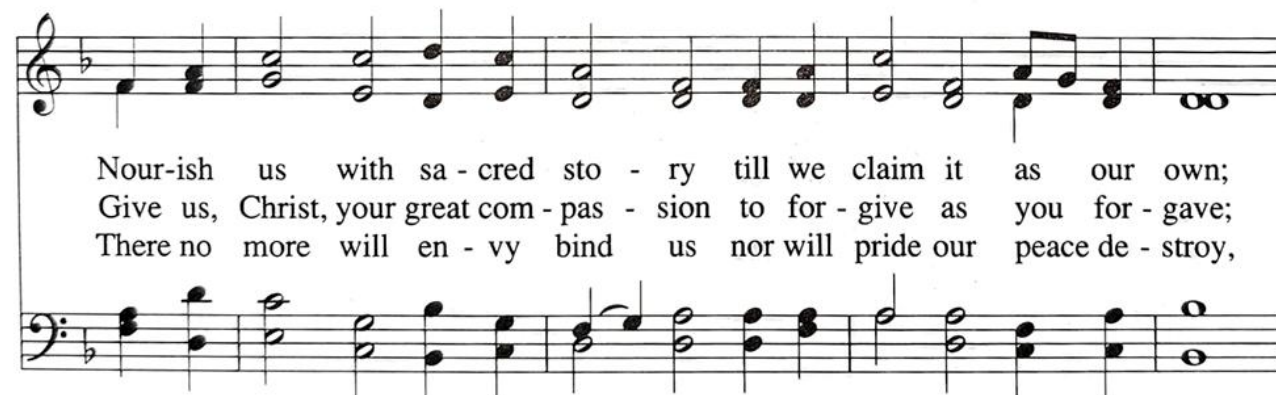
Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1989



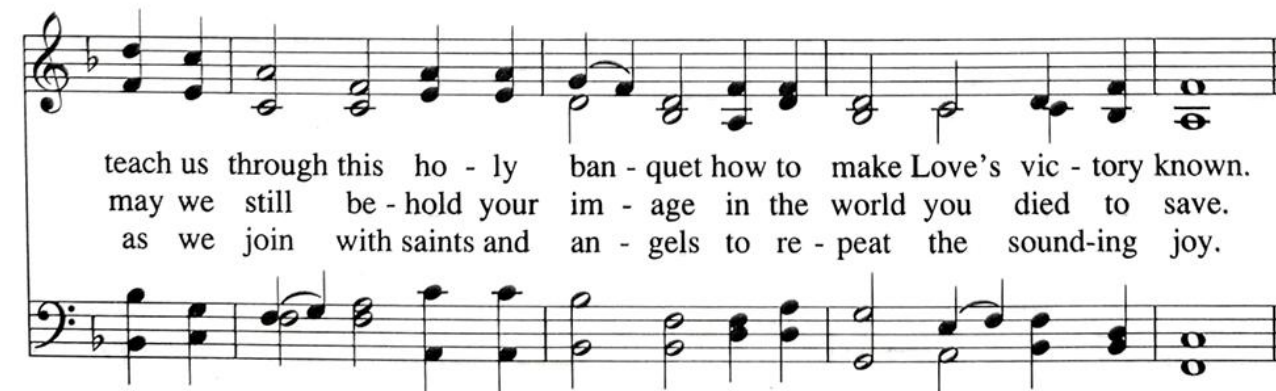
1 As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
 2 Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
 3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 send us forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife.
 where tri - um - phant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least.



Nour - ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
 Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;
 There no more will en - vy bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,



teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - tory known.
 may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
 as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

Where Charity and Love Prevail

396

Latin hymn, "Ubi caritas et amor," 9th century
Paraphr. by Omer Westendorf, 1961; alt.

John 13:34-35; 15:9-12; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; 1 John 4:7-21

With freedom

1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found; Brought
2 With grate-ful joy and ho - ly fear true char - i - ty we learn; Let
3 For - give we now each oth - er's faults as we our faults con - fess; And
4 Let strife a - mong us be un-known, let all con - ten - tion cease; Be

here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.
us with heart and mind and strength now love Christ in re - turn.
let us love each oth - er well in Chris-tian ho - li - ness.
Christ the glo - ry that we seek, be ours Christ's ho - ly peace.

Over My Head

514

African-American traditional



1 O-ver my head I hear mu-sic in the air.
 2 O-ver my head I hear sing-ing in the air.
 3 O-ver my head I see trou-ble in the air.
 4 O-ver my head I see Je-sus in the air.



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there must be a God some - where.

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 James Garvin

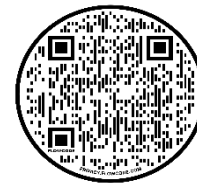
The Reader is Luke Cressman

Greeters are Kevin Gabbett and Nancy Colby

Altar flowers are provided by Holly and Jonathan Millershank in celebration of their 20th Wedding Anniversary.

Liturgy written by Pastor Holly.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for the family & friends of Kevin Doherty after last Friday's heartbreaking shooting incident in Shrewsbury; Bernice Forrister; Erik French, on the passing of his father; the Trippi & LeRoux families, on the passing of Janet & Tony's daughter, Liz; Sue Bourget's brother-in-law, Walt; Barbara Harlow; Kevin; Donna, Kathy Holton's sister; Ronniy Reis; a friend undergoing brain cancer treatment; James; Duncan Scott; Kathy; Bob; Debra Wallace; Anne & Jonathan Phyfe; Mary; Susan, Beth Cullen's sister; Jeanine's brother, Douglas Szlompek; Christina Hsu and her family; Diane Smith's mother, Anne Thompson; Stanley; Sharon; Leon Bowman; Kathy Wentzell; David, brother-in-law of Kathleen & Dave Rocheleau; Roberta Jelinch's sister, Sandi; Brenda.

- For the families in Minneapolis impacted by recent act of violence at Annunciation Catholic School & Church.

-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.

-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.

Blessings & thanks to the Shrewsbury Police Dept, State Police, and Shrewsbury School Supt. & Staff for their phenomenal response to last Friday's incident & their continued support in the days ahead.

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, 9/7:

9:15am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

10:00am: Outdoor Worship on the Common

11:00am: Church picnic, on the Common (Cushing Hall, weather back-up)

Monday, 9/8:

7:00pm: Music Committee, Adkins

Tuesday, 9/9:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

7:00pm: Budget & Finance, Adkins

Wednesday, 9/10:

11:00am: Can We Talk?, Adkins

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

Thursday, 9/11:

8:30am: M&O Thursday Café, Kitchen

10:30am: Staff Meeting, CE Library

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Sunday, 9/14:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm