

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

An Open and Affirming & Creation Justice Church of the United Church of Christ



August 23rd, 2026

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

***“For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.”***

Psalms 139:13-14

PRELUDE

Here I Am, Lord
Chris Williams, tenor

D. Schutte arr. L. Larson

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In times of celebration, and in times of sorrow, our strength comes from God.
Come to worship the one whose care is knit into the very fabric of our being.

Many: Each of us arrive in this the place with unique cares and perspectives.

And yet God asks us to focus not on ourselves but on the gift of Divine Love.

One: God has gifted each one of us with distinct abilities and callings.
In our variety, we complement one another.

Many: We rejoice in God's love and faithfulness.

We celebrate the gift of God's blessing and long to experience the harmony God intends.

One: In thankfulness, we bring ourselves into this moment of worship.
Filled with the Spirit, we leave as better versions of ourselves.

Many: We are here, seeking the gifts of God's grace. Holy One, open us to your transforming Spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Holy One, week to week, day to day, moment to moment, we distract ourselves with self-serving ways. Our own thoughts dominate our minds; our individual wants often supersede the needs of those most vulnerable. Help us to see and experience a greater vision in which each of your children have a part to play.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, beyond our knowing, yet always available to us, your love never fails. Forgive us when we do not turn to you in times of trouble. Remind us that we are shaped in your image when we celebrate good news without giving thanks. Help us to open the pathways of our hearts to recognize the many ways in which you are present in the world. Use our unique gifts to build the complex, yet beautiful, tapestry of your kingdom where justice and peace prevail.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God gives us grace that is without cost. God's love flows lavishly upon our faces. We are forgiven, empowered, and called. We each have a part to play in the redemption of this world. Come, there is much for us to do.

*HYMN

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise (see insert)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Alora Susie Boucher, Child of Taylor and Angela Boucher, Godparents: Jennifer Greenwich and Daniel Butler

Cora Jean Fitzgerald, Child of Colleen Fitzgerald, Granddaughter of Henry and Jean Fitzgerald
Godparents: Amanda Morgado and Tom Fitzgerald

Mila Grace Palermo-Dugan, Child of Samantha Palermo and Christopher Dugan, Sister to Giuliana
Godparents: Katie Weeks and Eric Weeks

Invitation

Pastor: Members and friends in Christ, we gather to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.

People: There is one body and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.

Pastor: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of us all.

Questions of the Parents

Question of the Congregation

Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support and care to the ones about to be baptized, as they live and grow in Christ?

People: We promise our love, support and care.

Prayer of Baptism

Act of Baptism

Act of Praise

Tune: BUNESSEN (*"Morning Has Broken"*)

Alora, Cora, Mila,

We greet you on this glad morning,

Your day of life we now recognize.

Here is the water, we are God's people.

Sing we our praises to Christ the Lord.

Alora, Cora, Mila,

We name you with thanksgiving,

Offer our prayers and sing you this song.

We are the church, your spiritual family.

Sing we our praises to Christ the Lord.

Gifts of Baptism & Celebration of God's Grace

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12:1-8

MESSAGE

One Body

Rev. Holly MillerShank

*HYMN

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation (see insert)

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 *during outdoor services offering can be placed in the boxes located on the welcome table*

We are invited to give with the same generosity that God offers to us. As the waters of baptism flow freely, may our hearts be open to the transformative work of God's call upon our lives.

OFFERTORY

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

S. Temple arr. L. Larson

Chris Williams, tenor

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Rest and Reflect

Leah Thomas writes, "we can't save the planet without uplifting the voices of its people, especially those most often unheard." What does this look like in your community? How can you help?

*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

Receive our offering, gracious God, as an expression of our thankfulness. In your church, we are privileged to cultivate the dimension of our lives that give meaning and purpose to all we do. Here we become aware that the greatest gifts we receive are not material, and we learn how best to use the particular gifts you give us. May many be blessed through our sharing of these offerings and our sharing of ourselves. Amen.

*HYMN

Blest Be the Tie That Binds (see insert)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

How Great Thou Art

S. Hine arr. L. Larson

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.

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

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Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

1 Child of bless-ing, child of prom-ise, bap - tized with the Spir-it's sign;
 2 Child of love, our love's ex-pres-sion, love's cre - a - tion, loved in-deed!
 3 Child of joy, our dear-est trea-sure, God's you are, from God you came.
 4 Child of God your lov - ing Par - ent, learn to know whose child you are.

With this wa - ter God has sealed you un - to love and grace di - vine.
 Fresh from God, re - fresh our spir - its, in - to joy and laugh - ter lead.
 Back to God we hum-bly give you; live as one who bears Christ's name.
 Grow to laugh and sing and wor - ship, trust and love God more than all.

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

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John Fawcett, 1782; alt.

Gal. 3:28; 6:2; Col. 3:13-15

1 Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
 2 Be - fore our God we come and pour our ar - dent prayers;
 3 We share each oth - er's woes, each oth - er's bur - dens bear,
 4 When we are called to part it gives us in - ward pain,

The shar - ing of a com-mon life is like to that a - bove.
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com-forts and our cares.
 And of - ten for each oth - er flows a sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
 But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.

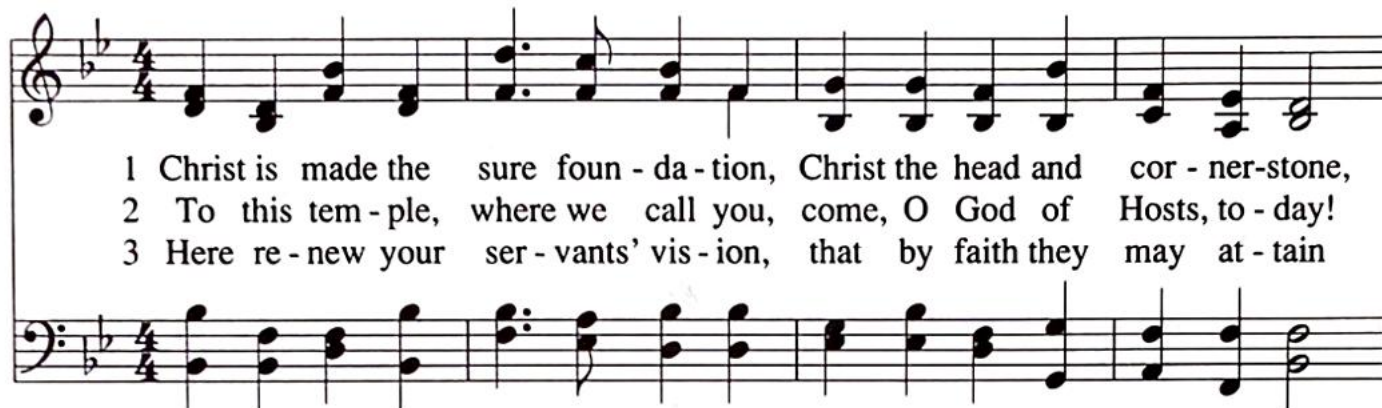
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-7

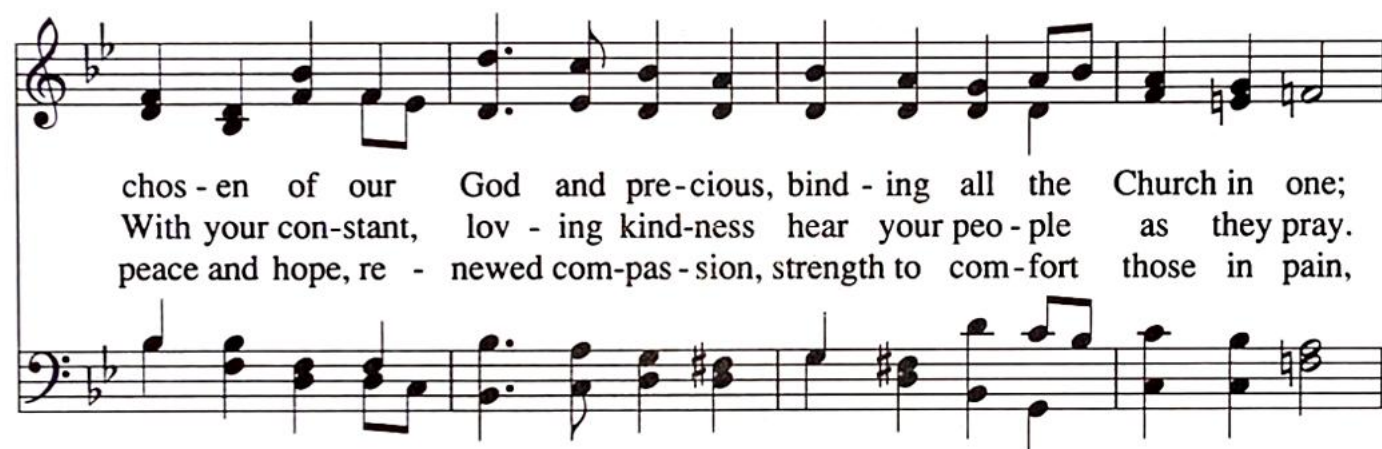
Latin, 6th-8th century

Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851; alt.

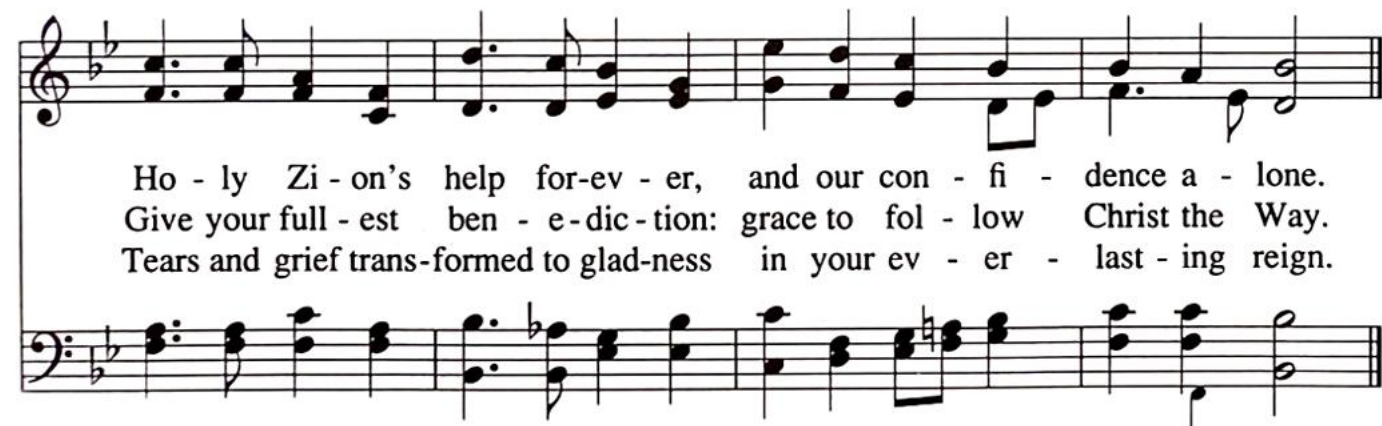
St. 3 adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1992



1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ the head and cor - ner-stone,
2 To this tem - ple, where we call you, come, O God of Hosts, to - day!
3 Here re - new your ser - vants' vis - ion, that by faith they may at - tain



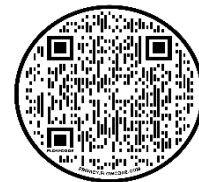
chos - en of our God and pre - cious, bind - ing all the Church in one;
With your con - stant, lov - ing kind - ness hear your peo - ple as they pray.
peace and hope, re - newed com - pas - sion, strength to com - fort those in pain,



Ho - ly Zi - on's help for - ev - er, and our con - fi - dence a - lone.
Give your full - est ben - e - dic - tion: grace to fol - low Christ the Way.
Tears and grief trans - formed to glad - ness in your ev - er - last - ing reign.

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank
The Acting Associate Minister is Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin
The Director of Music is Curtis Smith
The Deacons are Sue Russell and Erik French
The Reader is Dave Russell
Greeters are Bernie Trafford and Elaine Shaw
Altar flowers are provided by Jon Scott in loving memory of his parents Thomas and Barbara Scott.
Liturgy is adapted from the UCC Book of Worship and Lavon Bayler Taught by Love.

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Prayers for the family & friends of Alexander Macdonald; family and friends of Bernice Forrister; Linda Russell, the Red Cross, first responders, and all communities impacted by the wildfires; the family & friends of Wendy Driscoll; Joanne Warmen; Martha Sederquest; Bretton; Dan; Cindy and Sarah; Michael; Bob Podolski; Jim; Mary; Sherry & Scotty Robertson; Susie and Brian Amos; Ruthie, sister-in-law of Dave & Sue; Lt Ethan Connors and all military personnel deployed in the Middle East; Jimmy; Jay Scott; James Kelly; Deb Wallace; Anne & Jonathan Phye; Stanley; Sharon; Tracey Carner, 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 as well as 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), Youth Room & 214
 Every Sunday, 7pm: AA, Adkins Room
 Every Thursday, 7PM OA (Overeaters Anonymous), Rm 214

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, 8/23:

9:30am: Outdoor Worship on the Common

Monday, 8/24:

10:00am: Hands for Hope, Parlor
 1:30pm: Memory Cafe, Chapel
 7:15pm: Stewardship Committee, 214

Tuesday, 8/25:

NO Guided Meditation
 10:00am: Personnel Meeting, 214
 6:30pm: Climate Hope, Chapel
 7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Thursday, 8/27:

3-6pm: CSA Pick-up, FCC parking lot

Saturday, 8/29:

2:00pm: Wendy Z. & Karen F. Wedding, Sanctuary

Sunday, 8/30:

9:30am: Outdoor Worship on the Common
 5:00pm: JMS School Music Recital, Sanctuary & Gifford Hall

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 13th, 10:30AM:

Last “Worship on the Common” of the season, followed by the church picnic

Sunday, September 20th, 9:30AM:

Blessing of the Backpacks/Re-covenanting Sunday

Saturday, September 26th, 10:00AM-3PM:

Spirit of Shrewsbury, 45 Oak Street

Parade: **Sunday, September 27th @ 1PM**

Saturday, October 3rd, 12PM:

“Blessing of the Animals” on the Common (raindate 10/10)

Saturday, October 17th, 6PM:

“Spooktacular: Red, White & Boo” in the Sanctuary

Saturday, November 7th, 10AM:

Church Fair & Flea Market

Saturday, November 21st, 6:30PM:

Arts on the Green “Coffeehouse” in Gifford Hall

Wednesday, December 23rd, 7:00PM:

“Caroling on the Common”