First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

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



November 22nd, 2026

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

~Pope Benedict XVI

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PRELUDE **Lead On, O King Eternal** H. Smart arr. R. Thygerson

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, God is seeking to gather us together. Like a shepherd searching for lost sheep, God calls us.

Many: We are drawn into this place, our souls long for meaning and purpose.
We seek to follow our savior's voice.

One: God reached out to rescue all who have strayed. Scattered, weak and injured ones are called to God, the powerful are made humble, all come to gather in Christ's presence.

Many: We come, in need of healing and of honest rebuke, our faith draws us here,
in spite of our doubts.

One: Come, above all else, to worship and give thanks.

Many: God's steadfast love becomes real to us here.
We are reminded of God's immeasurable goodness.

CHIMERS **Kum Bah Yah** trad. arr. E. Shaw

***HYMN** **We Plow the Fields and Scatter** (Pilgrim 460)

CALL TO CONFESSION

God both loves and judges us. High standards are held before us, and God expects much of us. God calls us to live in response to Holy Love, this requires of us a more disciplined life. God asks us to change, let us heed God's call.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All-knowing God, you are aware of our comfort-seeking weakness. We ignore strangers in need as if they were no concern of ours. We resist programs that might threaten our privileges. We do only enough good to keep from feeling guilty. O God, we pray that we have not wandered beyond your reach.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God will come to judge people and nations- not for unchecked power, but for the ways in which they have used their strength to serve others. God's love is one of humility and grace, accessed not through force but given freely in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

ANTHEM **Come, Ye Thankful People, Come** G. Elvey & L. Bourgeois arr. M. Hayes

Anthem dedicated by Dini & Bill Whitehead, in loving memory of Bill's paternal grandparents, Martha and Walter Whitehead.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING **Ephesians 1:15-23**

MESSAGE Glory & Power Rev. Holly MillerShank

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

All: **We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

Bell Side: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

Piano Side: In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself. You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

All: **You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

You promise to all who trust you, forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

***HYMN** **We Gather Together** (Pilgrim 21)

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
Through our offerings, we seek to share the good news, to bind up the injured, strengthen the weak, secure justice for the oppressed, and bring back those who have strayed. We are all invited to participate in this mission through our tithes and offerings.

OFFERTORY **I Want Jesus to Walk with Me** H. Helvey

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT *Thanksgiving*
This thanksgiving, spend time learning about the indigenous history and the traditional ecological knowledge where you live. The Nipmuk Tribe were the original inhabitants of what we now call Shrewsbury.

***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**
God of steadfast love, receive these expressions of our thanks for the bounty of your love. Use us and our resources to further your will in all the world. May we be thankful servants of your boundless grace. Amen

***HYMN** **For the Fruit of All Creation** (NCH 425)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE **Triumph and Thanksgiving** F. Ritter

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.

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 Dennis Pike
The Reader is Bill Whitehead
Greeters are Laura, James and Annie Kenney
Altar flowers are provided by Andrea Pereira and Paul Dobner in loving memory of their parents.
Liturgy adapted from Lavon Baylor, Led by Love.

GIVE HERE:

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Prayers for Larry Iannetti; Benjamin Tipple; Sarah and her mother, Cindy; Randy; Pastor Karen's brother, Ken; Henry; Ralph; Sean Allen; Joanne Warmen; Martha Sederquest; Bretton; Dan; Bob Podolski; Jim; Mary; Sherry & Scotty Robertson; Ruthie, sister-in-law of Dave & Sue; James Kelly; Deb Wallace; Anne & Jonathan Phyfe; 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, all military serving in the Middle East and around the world, and all who protect and care for us.



THIS WEEK AT FCC
Every day, 7am: AA, Cushing Hall
Every Sunday, 7pm: AA, Adkins Room
Every Monday, 7pm: AA,
Rm 213 (week 3) & Youth Room (weeks 1, 2, 4)
Every Wednesday, 5:30pm: ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics), Youth Room & Rm 214
Every Thursday, 7PM OA (Overeaters Anonymous), Rm 214

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, 11/22:
9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary
11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

Monday, 11/23:
10:00am: Hands for Hope, Parlor
1:30pm: Memory Café, Chapel
7:00pm: Men's Ministry, Adkins

Tuesday, 11/24:
NO Guided Meditation
12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins
7:00pm: Deacons, Adkins

Wednesday, 11/25:
NO Shrewsbury Ringers

Thursday, 11/26:
OFFICE CLOSED: *Happy Thanksgiving*

Friday, 11/27:
NO Chimers

Sunday, 11/29:
9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary
11:00am: Training Choir/Youth Singers, Choir Room

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm



Generous Hearts- an Interview with Craig and Sue Phyfe

A few months ago Craig and Sue Phyfe came to the church to talk, they wanted to make a gift. To the delight and deep appreciation of First Congregational Church the Phyfe's gave a $20k gift to be used in two distinct ways. Below is an interview of the generous couple by Pastor Holly.

Pastor Holly: Why was this the time for you to give to FCC?
Sue: We talked to our financial planner and to our two adult children and realized that it was possible to make a significant gift at this point in our lives and be able to see and experience its impact.
Craig: This year is also a very special year for us personally as we celebrated significant birthdays and our 50th wedding anniversary. We wanted to give back because of our sense of gratitude. We also dedicated a choir anthem in celebration of our golden anniversary.

Pastor Holly: What areas of ministry will you be helping with your gift?
Craig: Music has been a central part of our lives, we sing with the Worcester Choir and play bells here at FCCSM. Part of our gift will go to completely refurbish the entire set of handbells used by FCCSM's bell choir. Now we'll have both a refurbished Cassavant Organ and completely repaired and restored handbells. (Note: the handbells will be shipped to the restoration facility in the summer of 2027, thanks to the Phyfe's funding).
Sue: We also know that this congregation shows up when there is a need. We wanted the other portion of our gift, $10k, to go to long-term ministry support so we have given it to the FCC Foundation. (The FCC Foundation is a restricted fund whose proceeds can be voted by the church council to support community needs and outreach ministries).

Thank you to Craig & Sue Phyfe for their gift to FCCSM

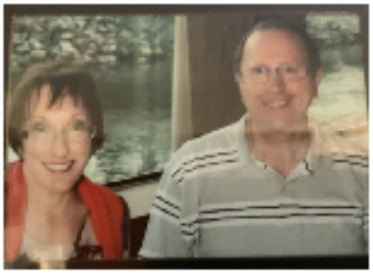


Photo: The Phyfe's on their first Rhine River Cruise. Did you know that both Sue and Craig sang in the FCCSM choir for over 30 years? They started in the choir when the 1st came to FCC in 1977.

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.

Publication Date: October 2026

FCC's MONTHY SNAPSHOT
In OCTOBER we had REVENUE of $70,818.34** and EXPENSES of $53,176.99 giving us a monthly net income (gain) of $17,641.35

Year-to-date (January 1st thru October 31st 2026) we had REVENUE of $625,428.84 and EXPENSES of $578,381.79 which gives us a YTD net income (positive) of $47,047.05

Our 2027 Stewardship Goal is $390,000. As of November 19th 2026 we have received $370,293.00.

in pledges from 98 giving units.

We are in our Fall Stewardship Season. To find out more or to make a pledge please visit www.fccsm.org and click on the Give button / 2027 Stewardship

Give at
www.fccsm.org