

First Congregational Church

Gathered in 1723

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



October 4th, 2026

Rev. Holly MillerShank

Senior Minister

Deacon's Quote of the Day

"Our animal friends' non-reactive and forgiving natures can teach us positive spiritual lessons on a daily basis."

~ Eckhart Tolle

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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.

PRELUDE **Prelude on 'Regent Square'**

H. Smart arr. R. Thygerson

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON'S GREETING

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Pete & Marie Murphy

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, all who carry the weight of fear and uncertainty.

Many: **For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.**

One: Come, you who have felt forgotten, rejected, or outside the fold,

Many: **For God's mercy is wide, welcoming and endlessly deep.**

One: Come, let us worship the God of all nations and tribes,

Many: **We worship God, whose persistent love will never let us go.**

One: May our hearts be opened to the mystery of God's grace,

Many: **And may our lives reflect the expansive mercy of our God.**

***HYMN** **Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation** (Pilgrim 263)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Lord, through the death of your Son Jesus Christ, you brought together peoples of many tongues and nations. In him, we who were once far off from you and from one another were brought together. He is our peace and who breaks down the dividing walls of hostility, and reconciles us through the cross.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We lament that what should not be separated has been divided. There is only one Christ, one Lord, and one body. There is only one Church and one baptism. And yet, by division after division, we have erected walls that make our unity invisible to the world and to ourselves. We do not see a way we can, in our own power, fix what has been broken.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

With God, all things are possible. Our hope is in Christ who can repair our divisions and bring the Church together in love. God enlists us as disciples, to work for a better world. The Spirit will use us, and our siblings across the globe, to accomplish much, together, may we be known by our love. Amen.

ANTHEM **Leaning on the Everlasting Arms** E. Hoffman & A. Showalter arr. S. Paul

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 21:33-46

MESSAGE One in the Spirit Rev. Holly MillerShank

***HYMN** **Somos pueblo que camina** (NCH 340, vs. 1-2 in English & vs. 1-2 in Spanish)

SHARING ACROSS THE GLOBE: WORLDWIDE COMMUNION

One: From every corner of the earth, Christ calls us to the table.

Many: **We come from many peoples, many places, many traditions.**

One: We come with the songs of our ancestors and the prayers of those who came before us.

Many: **We come carrying stories of faith, struggle, hope, and joy.**

One: From the villages of Africa and the islands of the Pacific, from the mountains of Asia and the cities of the Americas, from the churches of Europe and the Middle East—

Many: **We come as one people, gathered in Christ.**

One: Some come to this table with abundance. Some come longing for daily bread.



Many: Christ welcomes us all.

One: Some come singing. Some come grieving. Some come with questions. Some come with gratitude.

Many: Christ welcomes us all.

One: Today, the walls that divide us do not have the final word. Language does not divide us. Geography does not divide us. Culture does not divide us.

Many: At Christ's table, there is room for all.

One: Come, people of God. Come with open hands and open hearts.

Many: We come to receive. We come to remember. We come to share. We come to be made one.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Meal: *Today we share in this sacred meal with Christians around the globe. All are invited to take bread, hold it and eat together. All are then invited to take a cup, sharing in the hope of unity with all the faithful in every time and place. As part of our value of Inclusive Community, gluten-free bread is available, and grape juice is provided.*

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of every nation and generation, gather us into the great company of your people— those who have gone before us, those who worship beside us, and those we may never meet in this life. Until the day when every people and every nation are gathered into your eternal feast, keep us faithful to one another and to you. Send us from this table as people of Christ's peace: One body. One Spirit. One Lord. One faith. One hope. One table. 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

Praise be to God who calls us to imagine and believe that another world is possible. We are invited to give as we are able. Each of us has a role to play in the building up of the body of Christ.

OFFERTORY

Meditation on 'Toplady'

T. Hastings arr. H. Livingston

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH OFFERING THOUGHT

Coffee Hour

FCC has worked diligently to use recyclable or ceramic cups for coffee hour and coffee from sustainable fairly traded sources. How can you make your daily coffee more eco-friendly?

***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**

We praise the One who calls us into covenant with one another. Deliver these our gifts to the work of bringing hope and wholeness to all our neighbors. God of all times and all places, remind us of the world as You intend it: free from hunger, poverty, violence, and oppression. Embolden us to imagine and believe that another world is possible! Amen

***HYMN**

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me (NCH 596)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Postlude in E-flat

G. Blake

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 Linda Phillips

Greeters are Corinna MillerShank and JJ Shepard

Altar flowers are provided by Elaine Sharw with loving wishes for a "Happy Birthday" to Auntie Jen from Sylvie and Gavin

Liturgy is adapted from Global Ministries World Communion Sunday and The Pastor's Workshop

GIVE HERE:



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Prayers Steve, Josh, Ben and all who loved Cathy Phillips; for Sean Allen; Nancy Colby; Marion Marston; Joanne Warmen; Martha Sederquest; Bretton; Dan; Cindy and Sarah; 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; 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, military personnel, 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, 10/4:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

11:00am: Breakfast bag Prep, Chapel

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

12:00pm: SOS Parade Line-up, Wesleyan St. by the post office

5:30pm: MS Youth Group, Cushing

Tuesday, 10/6:

8:00am: Guided Meditation, Parlor

12:00pm: Lectionary @ Lunch, Adkins

Wednesday, 10/7:

6:30pm: Shrewsbury Ringers, Sanctuary

7:00pm: CLT, Adkins

Thursday, 10/8:

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

7:15pm: Senior Choir, Choir Room

Friday, 10/9:

NO Chimers

Sunday, 10/11:

9:30am: Worship & Sunday School, Sanctuary

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm