



Church on the Green

A monthly newsletter from First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury

An Open and Affirming Congregation

DECEMBER 2022

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ⇒ Events.....2
- ⇒ Music Ministry.....6
- ⇒ Christian Ed.....7
- ⇒ Ministries.....8
- ⇒ Community Events.....9
- ⇒ Past Event Pictures.....10



The Pastor's Corner

We have just begun our Advent season, five weeks of preparation as we anticipate the birth of the Christ-child. This year our Advent Season will have a consistent theme that you will hopefully notice in ways both big and small. Our theme will be "Night Visions".

weekly we'll sing hymns that connect to this larger arc such as Watchman Tell Me of the Night.

We will also be offering a daily Advent Devotional available for any member of the church to pick up for your own personal reflections. It is from the United Church of Christ Still Speaking Writing Group entitled "What's Left of the Night?" Copies will be available on the tables in the back of the sanctuary.



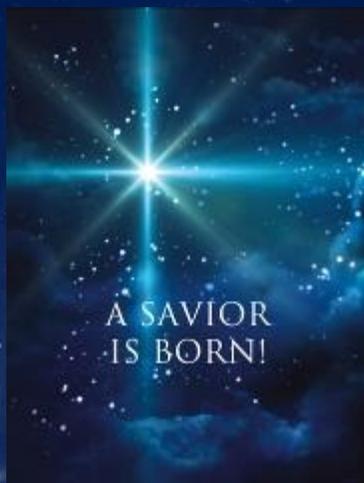
Night Visions by Jan Richardson

This year we will again come together for three Christmas Eve services (5pm outside, family-oriented, 7pm inside, lessons and carols, 10pm inside candles and bells). Christmas itself falls on a Sunday this year. We'll gather for worship informally in the chapel for a service with cookie, coffee and carols. January 1st will also be a Sunday, the deacons have agreed to coordinate this New Years' service.

We'll hear scripture lessons focusing on the dreams of our fore-bearers, we will have two beautiful banners in the sanctuary with deep blue tones and sparkling stars. We'll see images of "night visions" in our bulletins and in the weekly Looking Ahead. Our youth will perform a Christmas skit on the Dec 18th related to our Advent theme and

My prayer for us as a church is that we'll together feel and experience the power of God at work in the world as we long for the sun's light to break forth over the horizon and give color and richness and meaning to the visions of the night.

Pastor Holly



*"Some Christmas tree ornaments do a lot more than glitter and glow, they represent a gift of love given a long time ago."
Tom Baker*

EVENTS



Attention Children ages 3-7!

Join us for some.....

Yuletide Music Magic!

When: December 10

Time: 11a.m.-Noon

Where: Gifford Hall

Come and enjoy music with rhythm instruments, singing, parachute and pom pom dancing, and a Pinata!

Space is limited.

*Reserve your spot by email by December 8
kdholton51@gmail.com*



**Family Advent Workshop for
all families of all ages**

December 4th after the service

Make a simple and beautiful Advent Wreath for the season. All Materials supplied. Please sign up here so we can prepare our supplies:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F054AABA72EAAFE3-family6>

Children's Christmas Tableau

A retelling of the Christmas Story during the church service

December 18, during the worship service

All children are invited to participate. Costumes are provided, we are looking for Shepherds, Animals, Wisemen and Angels. There are some speaking parts and some silent parts!



EVENTS

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury
presents

*Reflections
On Our Past*

**Wednesday, December 14
7 pm in the Sanctuary**

Presented by
Bill Whitehead
and a colorful cast of characters!

In conjunction with
**THE SHREWSBURY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury
19 Church Road, Shrewsbury, MA 01545
www.fccsm.org 508-845-7286
Sharing God's Love for 300 Years!

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury's 300th Anniversary Celebration Begins!

All are invited to join us for our
300th Anniversary kickoff event!

Reflections On Our Past,
presented by Bill Whitehead and
a colorful cast of characters, will be held on
Wednesday, December 14th at 7pm.
Greeters, hosts and hostesses in beautiful
period attire will welcome you to this
extraordinary evening of history and
community. The event will feature
storytelling and music in our beautiful
Sanctuary which will be decorated for the
holidays with candles, wreaths, and
poinsettias. Following the program, historical
items will be on display in Gifford Hall
and refreshments, including Shrewsbury
Cakes, will be available at a Silver Tea. Bring
your family and friends to this special
evening honoring FCC's 300 years of
sharing God's love! The event is
free and open to the public.
For more information, please contact
the Church Office at 508-845-7286.



Christmas Eve Services

5pm: Outdoor Family-Oriented Service

7pm: Indoor service featuring lessons and carols

10pm: Indoor service with candlelight and bells

Christmas Service, 9:30am:

Informal worship in the Chapel

EVENTS

The Social Circle Committee is hosting a night of fun at

The Southwick Zoo

Saturday, Dec. 17 @ 6:30pm



PLUS...

WINTERWONDERLAND AND A VISIT FROM SANTA!!

This season, Winter Wonderland and the Festival of Illumination come together to create one unforgettable family experience! The zoo's holiday tradition now includes a visit with Santa Claus, a ride on Santa's Train, live entertainment, yummy holiday favorites and so much more. This WALKTHROUGH event brings the wonder of the lanterns and the magic of the holidays together!

*Special group rate is \$20 pp (Ages 3 years+)
(This is a savings of \$7-\$12 pp)*

The zoo is in Mendon, a 35 minute drive south from the church. Everyone will meet at the zoo and enter at the same time slot of 6:30 pm. Food will be available for purchase. Expect to spend one to one and a half hours to enjoy it all.

Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/2k6h7yyr>

**FOR UNTO US A
CHILD IS BORN.**

ISAIAH 9:6



**Be a part of Church Street
Coffeeshouse in 2023!**

Our last Coffeeshouse was in February 2020 and you know what happened next...

The Coffeeshouse is coming back in 2023, on February 11!

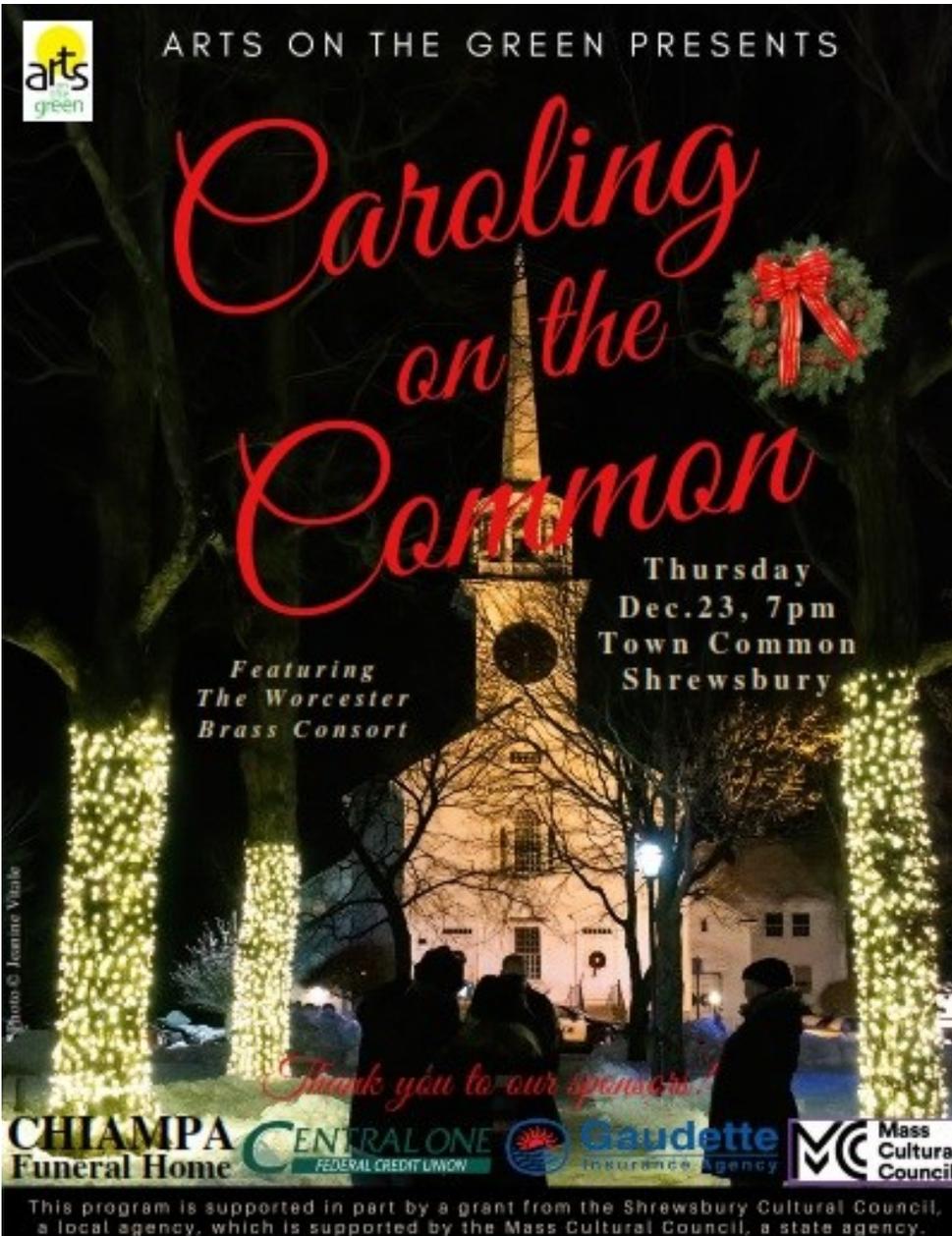
I am looking for talent to perform. It would be great to have acts from a wide range of church members and friends in our community. You could sing a song, perform a skit, read poetry or tell a short story.

If you are willing to lend your talents, please email me, Tom Porter at tlporter@townisp.com.

Let's put on a Coffeeshouse to remember!



EVENTS



arts on the green

ARTS ON THE GREEN PRESENTS

Caroling on the Common

Thursday Dec. 23, 7pm
Town Common
Shrewsbury

Featuring
The Worcester
Brass Consort

Photo © Jeanne Vitale

Thank you to our sponsors!

CHIAMPA Funeral Home | CENTRAL ONE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION | Gaudette Insurance Agency | Mass Cultural Council

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Shrewsbury Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



Attention shoppers !

The Mission and Outreach Ministry will be holding it's annual SERRV sale this year **through Sunday December 18** after the worship service in Gifford Hall.

Shopping at the SERRV sale is a win-win situation. You are making someone happy by giving a special gift and at the same time helping to alleviate poverty in 25 countries worldwide by supporting artisans, their families, and communities through fair and ethical trade. Additional proceeds from this sale also benefit other programs determined by the Mission and Outreach Ministry.

Come join us at the SERRV table in Gifford Hall and make the world a better place.



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

As a part of our Advent Season, which is themed "Night Visions" we'll be offering an advent devotional entitled 'What's Left of the Night?' It is written by the UCC's Still Speaking writers group. Copies will be available at the back of the sanctuary for your personal use.

While the world jumps quickly from the gratitude of Thanksgiving into the rush of the Christmas season, may we remember that Advent is a time of anticipation, of deep longing not for things but for the Holy One to break-in and make all things new.

MUSIC MINISTRY

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

We've just celebrated Thanksgiving and I have so much for which I am thankful. One new person for whom I am thankful is asleep in my left arm as I type one-handed with my right. Another new person for whom I am thankful is Andrew Lefferts. Andrew will be subbing for me beginning in January as I take the 12 weeks of paid family leave offered through the new program in Massachusetts – another thing for which I am thankful.



Andrew Lefferts began playing piano at the age of five. During his childhood, he studied at Pakachog Music School of Greater Worcester, sang in the Worcester Children's Chorus, played as a rehearsal pianist for Greater Worcester Opera, performed as a soloist with the Worcester Youth Orchestra, and spent summers at

the Lyra Music Festival and Workshop in Northampton. He earned his undergraduate degree in Piano Performance studying at Ithaca College, during which he collaborated with vocalists, taught piano, played with chamber and symphony ensembles, and briefly studied harpsichord and organ. He has experience playing for worship services at local churches in Worcester County and in his free time, he likes coding, composing, and cooking.

Andrew has already begun singing in the choir as part of FCC's new Musicians in Residence program. You may have also seen him ringing handbells with the Shrewsbury Ringers and Parish Pealers. This is Andrew's gap year. He will be auditioning at graduate schools in the spring. I will truly enjoy the leave with my son because I know that the music at church is in very capable hands.

Sincerely,
Curtis

Christmas is a season of celebrating traditions and...



...looking toward the future with hope.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"*

Luke 2:8-14

CHRISTIAN ED



The Youth Group is collecting men's cold weather clothing for CityReach. Larger sizes are in highest demand as well as men and women's winter footwear, hats, & mittens/gloves. Please put donations in collection box located in Gifford Hall by Sunday, January 8, 2023. Thank you.

December Calendar:

- Dec 4 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm, Decorate Youth Room Christmas Tree
- Dec 11 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm, game night and/or Christmas movie
- Dec 18 – Youth Group Meeting at 7:00pm (if participating in the Yankee Swap bring a wrapped \$10 gift)
- Dec 25 – No Youth Group, Merry Christmas!!!
- Dec 26 – Alumni/Youth Group Bowling Night...meet at Bowlero, Shrewsbury @ 8PM cost \$10



Kid's Zone Schedule

- 11/27 First Advent Sunday, Group Activity:
A Christmas Movie and Popcorn, Come in Your Pajamas!
- 12/4: Christmas Tableau Rehearsal, Christmas Cookies
- 12/11: Christmas Tableau Rehearsal, Christmas Cookies
- 12/18: Children's Christmas Tableau during the Church Service
- 12/25: Christmas Day, No Kid Zone

MINISTRIES



At Mustard Seed evening meals are served on weekdays to anyone in a need of a meal. Our congregation provides evening meals to Mustard Seed on the first Wednesday of the following months: January, March, April, May, September, November, and December.

Through volunteering a few hours of your time you can help to feed nourishing food to the hungry. Volunteer Openings: January 4, 2023 (5) Cooks, (3) Bakers, (2) Driver

To volunteer sign-up online at <https://signupgenius.com/go/60b0b4fafaf2c7-mustard1> or you can contact Janet Pike at 774 -243-4395, mrsbear8@msn.com.

MINISTRIES



NEW GIVE A RIDE MINISTRY

As seasons change, some people feel less comfortable driving at night, or driving at all for that matter. We at FCC want to ensure that everyone who wants to participate in-person at church events can do so. We have had several specific requests for rides for the Dec 14th Historical Presentation to kick off our 300th anniversary. If you are able to **offer** a ride for that evening let Pastor Holly know (pastor@fccsm.org), If you **need** a ride for the Dec 14th event please contact Sue Russell (davrusl@aol.com) (505-753-1660) or a member of the care team.

We're hoping to develop a Give-a-Ride ministry where we have a list of potential people who would be willing to pick up members of the church, on occasion, for worship services or special events. Please indicate to Pastor Holly if you are willing to have your name on a volunteer list for drivers in the future. **We'd love to find someone to coordinate this ministry of the church.** If you think that you might be interested, please let Pastor Holly know.

SHREWSBURY JAMMERS

THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
December 19, 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



In the Hour of Need Family Shelter

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - UPCOMING TRAINING SESSION OFFERED

As you may know, our congregation provides volunteer opportunities to serve as Evening and Overnight Hosts for In the Hour of Need Family Shelter (IHN). It has become increasingly difficult recently

to fill volunteer shifts for our host weeks. Our congregation's next host week is January 1-7, 2023. We are in need of volunteers to serve as Evening and Overnight Hosts during that week, as well as our host weeks in June and September.

In an effort to recruit new volunteers and invite former volunteers to return to serving, we have scheduled two training sessions in the coming weeks. The training sessions will be led by IHN Program Director, Sheri Linn and held at the IHN house located at 91 June Street, Worcester on Thursday, December 8th @ 6:30 pm

Kindly contact Lyn Tozeski at ltozeski@gmail.com if you would like to attend one of these training sessions or for more information about becoming or returning to serve as an Evening or Overnight Host.

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING INVOLVED - THANK YOU!

COMMUNITY NEWS



The Shrewsbury Town Center Association announces the 2022 Yuletide Market and Light the Common, Saturday, December 3 from 4 to 8 p.m. on the Town Common and Chiampa Funeral Home on Church Road. There will be shopping, music and entertainment.

The Market will open at 4 p.m. and the Light the Common will dazzle at 4:45 p.m. Food, beverages and festive treats will be sold including the Shrewsbury Fire Department's delicious "Fire House Chili" and a variety of other food trucks.



U.S. Marine Corps **Toys for Tots** Program - The Chiampa Funeral Home is a designated drop off location for the Worcester County Toys for Tots.

Please drop off new and unwrapped toys at the funeral home located at 5 Church Road in Shrewsbury any day between the hours of 9:00am and 6:00pm. The deadline this year is December 9. Help bring joy to a child's life this Christmas and bring a toy!



Chiampa Funeral Home Letters to Santa - Children can drop off their Letters to Santa in the red mailbox located in front of the funeral home at 5 Church Road. The letters will be sent to the North Pole. Please remember to include a return address so Santa's elves can respond. Letters also can be printed from our website at chiampafuneralhome.com. Also, an email can be sent instead of a letter using Santa's new email address at santa@chiampafuneralhome.com.



The library is doing a strategic plan for FY'25-FY'30 and we would love to get feedback from the community. Here is the link: <https://surveymonkey.com/r/SPLSurvey2022>. You can also find a pdf of the survey on the homepage of the library website. Hard copies of the survey in English, Spanish and Chinese are available at the library. The deadline to respond to the survey is December 20th.



The SuperAgers Family Study aims to collect data from a large group of individuals who have lived to age 95 or more. The goal is to understand and uncover the biological factors contributing healthy aging and exceptional longevity shared among the SuperAgers and their families.

The SuperAgers Family Study will compare traits in SuperAgers and their children to traits in older adults whose parents were not SuperAgers. The research aims to identify inherited and natural factors that protect against human aging and related diseases. The data from this study will be used to create a biorepository database for future research related to healthy aging. The multi-year SuperAgers Initiative is an ambitious effort led by the American Federation for Aging Research and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in collaboration with Boston University School of Medicine. More information and sign-up at www.superagersstudy.org.

PAST EVENTS



Care Packages Assembly Line



Apple Pie Baking Extravaganza!!



*Thank you to Social Circle for organizing
a trip to Providence to see
"Les Miserables".
Yes, we did "hear the people sing"!*

PAST EVENTS

2022 Church Fair!!



Silent Auction



Christmas Table



Pastor Holly and State Representative Hannah Elizabeth Kane



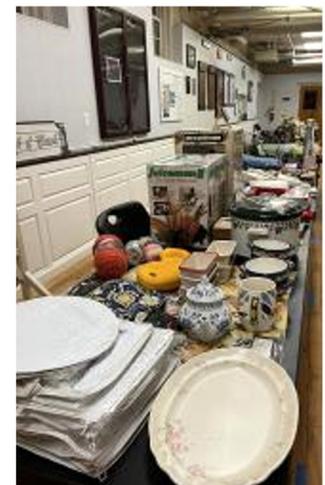
Hands for Hope



Chocolate Yumminess



Jams, Jellies, Jewelry!



Flea Market

Well Done!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

19 Church Road
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
508-845-7286
www.fccsm.org



FCCShrewsbury



Church on The Green Newsletter
December 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 Minister: Rev. Holly MillerShank
pastor@fccsm.org

Director of Music: Curtis Smith
musicdirector@fccsm.org

Financial Administrator: Lauren Morse
finance@fccsm.org

Interim Christian Education Director: April Mullins
cedirector@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

