

then...

...and now

Faith of our fathers... In the Beginning

In the 1600s in the New World, Anglican churches were established by the "Crown" and funded with taxes. Clergy were paid in tobacco.

Drawn to the peace and beauty of the Chesapeake, settlers made a church home among the verdant fields of Kent County.

Oysters were so plentiful they showed in piles above the waterline along the shore and fertile fields yielded abundance.

At Shrewsbury, they praised God for new life and the bounty of the land. The church was a place of worship, but in the early years, marriages, baptisms and funerals usually took place in private homes.

Enslaved people also attended Shrewsbury Parish Church.

Shrewsbury witnessed the birth of the Republic and all that followed.

General John Cadwalader's map detailing British positions was vital to the American victory at the battle of Princeton, prompting Washington to call the Shrewsbury parishioner a "military genius". He rests in our cemetery with veterans from every conflict before and after the Revolution. Their descendants have welcomed newcomers for over three hundred years.

Three buildings have served the worshipers at Shrewsbury. The first church, finished by 1692, lasted less than forty years.

Completed in 1729, our second church held over 700 people. But by 1834, the bishop described the decaying structure as a "...habitation for birds."

Our current church was consecrated in 1838, with improvements and small additions completed over the next 180 years.

Shrewsbury suffered periods of decline, even closing for brief periods, but God had plans for His people here. We've weathered every storm with Christ as our anchor.

Sustained by an abiding faith, rooted in Christ and carried forward by those faithful to His Gospel, we did what we could with what we had, keeping our traditions going even when our numbers dwindled to less than twenty people!

The first female on the vestry was Margaret Temple in 1979.

Reaching out to our migrant neighbors, we established regular Spanish services in the 1990s.

Through war, depression, social upheaval, changing attitudes, fractious times and societal flux, God's grace has been the lifeblood of Shrewsbury Parish Church.



Keeping the Faith... Shrewsbury Today

The Shrewsbury family is welcoming. All are invited to the Lord's Table.

We are attentive to one another and accepting of people no matter how different they are from "us". We embrace anyone beloved of God, and that is everyone.

Jesus loves the little children, and so do we. Our young ones are a sacred trust and we cherish them, protect them and guide them, with Jesus as our example. Whoever welcomes a little child in Christ's name, welcomes Jesus.

We love, because God loves us. We share, because Jesus gave all for us. We worship, because the joy is too great to keep to ourselves.

At first light on Easter morning we celebrate the Resurrection in our outdoor chapel, which is elevated and overlooks our cemetery. Its foundation houses a columbarium, where the faithful "await His coming in glory."

Our parish hall is where we gather for fellowship, meals and meetings. Sunday school rooms and church administration offices are located here as well. Kids enjoy expending excess energy at a well-equipped playground built by volunteers.

The bucolic meditation garden, nestled near the woods, provides a serene place for quiet reflection and prayer.

Faith in the Future... The Next Three Centuries

The first congregants at Shrewsbury were British subjects. Now we reflect the American landscape and are praising God for our Hispanic mission and the creation of their new congregation, Sagrada Familia de Jesus, Sacred Family.

Going forward, our prayer is that Shrewsbury will be known as a place of loving acceptance – a sacred place for members of fellowship.

We will continue our ministries to parishioners: lively worship, bible studies, Christian education, youth engagement, and outreach to those in need.

And answering God's call to share His love and grace with the greater community to share the Good News.

Only the Lord knows what will happen at Shrewsbury in the next 326 years. But we do know we will be faithful to carry on what was started all those years ago in the name of Jesus.

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." – Philippians 1:6