

# news @ GOD'S ACRE

Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year! Our family is so grateful to God for the opportunity to serve with you in ministry. We love our life on God's Acre, and feel blessed to be part of such a dynamic and loving community of faith.

Personally, I am also so very grateful to be able to work with such a faithful and caring staff. Our team members love our church and offer the best of themselves and their efforts as they strive to build up our community every day. And of course, I am eternally grateful for our lay leaders and all of those who volunteer of their time and talents for our church.

We have had a remarkable fall season on God's Acre. There have been a number of new programs and events that have been particularly spirited and engaging. Our men's and women's small groups have provided deep connections among our members and friends, as we share our lives and our stories with one another. The Wednesday Musical Moments during Advent were a wonderful and welcomed reprieve for the busyness and bustle of the holiday season. And testimonies and pictures from the Sabbath Family Dinners on Sunday evenings have been truly heartwarming.

From the  
Pastor's  
Study



I hope you have been able to enjoy some of the warm fellowship within our church community this holiday season. It is truly a gift that we get to share in this remarkable life together. The coming year will bring both blessings and challenges for our community, but we know that God will be with us each step of the way. I look forward to another wonderful year together in 2019!

Yours in Christ,  
Chapin

For over 280 years, we have gathered as a family of God's children in order to experience His presence, learn Christ's ways, and serve our neighbors – all to make faith a way of life.

Resolve to connect @GOD'S ACRE in 2019!

Sign in to myConnect today!  
[www.godsacre.org/myConnect](http://www.godsacre.org/myConnect)



**connect**  
*with each other*



**grow**  
*in your faith*



**serve**  
*your neighbor*

# Faith and Finance

## First Fruits 2019 Stewardship Campaign

“Being involved in the Church brings a peace and calm to our busy lives.”

“Through some very difficult times, and joyous ones, what this church has taught me is that I was never alone, and as long as I choose to be part of something bigger than myself, I never will be.”

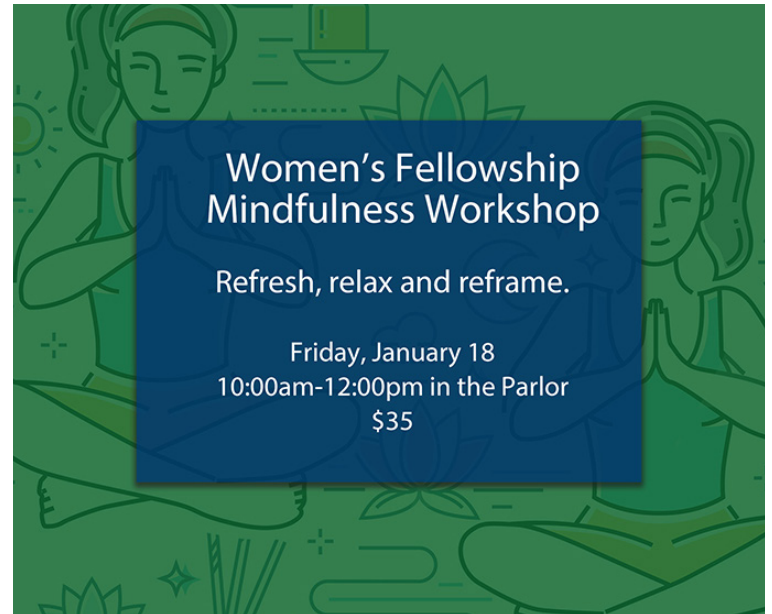
“I want to share God’s generosity with others through my pledge to the Church and also through involvement in programs.”

We encourage all in our family of faith to embrace a spirit of gratitude for our blessings by joining us for worship, participating in programs, pastoral care and missions and outreach of the church, and to give of your First Fruits by submitting a pledge for our 2019 Annual Stewardship Campaign. If you have made a 2019 pledge – THANK YOU! If you still need to submit your pledge you can do so with a pledge card via mail or pledge and/or pay online by going to [www.godsacre.org/pledge](http://www.godsacre.org/pledge).

If you have questions or would like to speak with someone in more detail about this year’s campaign, please don’t hesitate to contact stewardship co-chairs, Peg Davidson at [peghome@optonline.net](mailto:peghome@optonline.net) or (203) 249-1070, or Laura Doscher at [lauradepersis@gmail.com](mailto:lauradepersis@gmail.com) or (203) 273-3465.



# Women’s Fellowship Events



Refresh your intentions, relax, and reframe. Join Mindfulness Educator Christine Dufour for a workshop for the New Year. January 18th, 10:00am-12:00pm in the Parlor. To learn more about Christine, please visit her site at [www.carnelianconnection.com](http://www.carnelianconnection.com). Contact Stephanie Radman, [stephanieradman@aol.com](mailto:stephanieradman@aol.com) or (203) 952-4554 to sign up or for more information.

## Women’s Fellowship is looking for hosts for a new series:

### CAKE & COFFEE

We are looking for one or two hosts to open up their homes to the ladies of the church. You pick the day and time, we will bring the coffee and the desserts. We are thinking to simply meet to enjoy fellowship in the comforts of someone’s home. Please contact Stephanie Radman if you might consider hosting or with any questions.

Stephanie Radman (203) 952-4554 or [stephanieradman@aol.com](mailto:stephanieradman@aol.com)



# Bible Study

## Paul and John in Dialogue: A Bible study with William Picard & Diana Beecher

The Book of John was the focus for the Monday Morning Bible Study and Tuesday Women's Bible Study this past fall. During that study, there were interesting connections made to Paul's New Testament letters. Therefore, starting January 14th and 15th, our Monday and Tuesday classes will explore three major themes important for both Paul and John: Dark and Light, The Holy Spirit, and the meaning of the Cross.

Paul's writings were the earliest New Testament writings. John's Gospel was the last of the four gospels to be developed. Was John influenced by Paul? How are their ideas similar and how do they differ? What does it all mean for us? The New Year is a good time to join one of these studies. You be able to engage in fabulous, thoughtful conversation and you will also be engaging in a wonderful fellowship opportunity with your church peers.

Materials are available on our website at [www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org) (click on "Learn and Grow" then scroll down to Yale Bible Study). Group discussion opportunities are offered weekly: Mondays at 6:30am in the Library and Tuesday at 9:30am (Women's Group) in the Parlor. New members and all knowledge levels are always welcome! Contact Laurel Carr at [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org) or (203)966-2651 x833 to sign up or for more information.



## Sunday Morning: *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know* with Eric Dupee and BJ Flagg

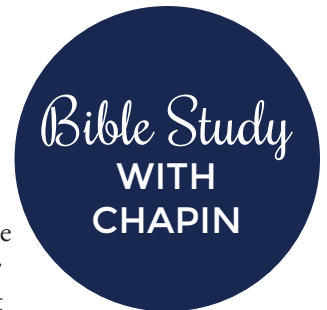
Now that Advent is behind us, we will return to Beginner Bible study. Make Bible study a New Year's resolution! Since the beginning of the church year in September we've been inviting all church members to use the *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know* booklet, to have family discussion or personal reflection on 40 of the most important Bible stories. If you need background on the story, insight into its meaning or thoughts on how it might apply to our lives today, this study is for you! Come to the Parlor for 9:00 – 9:45am each Sunday starting **January 13th** and be ready for conversation. Contact Eric for more information and to sign up at [eric@godsacre.org](http://eric@godsacre.org).

## Wednesday Morning Bible Study with Chapin Beginning 1/16/19

This Bible Study is an exploration of the scriptures that Chapin and Eric will be preaching on Sundays in the coming weeks. This year, it will include the *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know*. This is not a lecture, but a conversation that helps our preachers form the themes and directions of their sermons. Sessions begin in the Parlor at 9:30am and end promptly at 11:00am each Wednesday. If you are interested in or have a passion for the Bible, and if you are willing to be honest with your thoughts and opinions – this study may be for you! Please contact Chapin directly for more information and to sign up at [chapin@godsacre.org](mailto:chapin@godsacre.org).



We are a warm and welcoming family of faith, bound together in compassion and love.



# Music News

## Thank You

The Advent and Christmas seasons were especially beautiful because of the music. Thank you to all the singers who worked many hours to present lovely music for our services during the Advent and Christmas seasons. A special thank you goes to the pianists who provided music for the Advent Meditation services. Your talents, time, and devotion to the church are so admired and we are grateful. You inspire us when you lead in worship. Thank you for your gift of sacred music.



## The Children's Music Corner



Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all the children who participated in the choirs and the Nativity Pageant in 2018. Also, thank you to all the adults who helped make it happen!

The musical will be revealed on Wednesday, January 16th! Please consider joining a choir

or the Musical in 2019. The children's musical will be Sunday, May 19 in the 10:00am service.

Happy New Year to The Congregational Church of New Canaan!

God's Blessings!  
-Mrs. Mya

## New Year's Resolution! Sing In A Choir In 2019 Choirs Resume



Start the New Year by singing in a Church Choir.  
There's a choir family for YOU.

**Cherubs** (ages 4 - K)

resume Monday, January 7: 4:00 – 4:30pm

**Grace Notes** (ages 2 & 3)

resume Monday, January 7: 4:30 – 5:00pm

**Spirit Singers** (grades 1-4)

resume Wednesday, January 9: 4:00 – 5:00pm

**Joyful Noise** (GIRLS grades 5-8)

resumes Wednesday, January 9: 5:00 – 6:00pm

**Chancel Choir** (high school through adults)

resumes Thursday, January 10: 7:30 – 9:00pm

**Sonshine Singers** (BOYS grades 1-8)

resume Sunday, January 13: 11:15 – 11:45am

For more information, please contact Jody Blaine Davis at (203) 966-2651 x827 or [music@godsacre.org](mailto:music@godsacre.org) or Mya Gill at (203) 966-2651 x821 or [mya@godsacre.org](mailto:mya@godsacre.org)

# Pastoral Care & Mission

## Director of Pastoral Care

Avril Sweeny has joined our staff as Director of Pastoral Care. Avril has been a member of our church for over 15 years and in that time has always been involved in Pastoral Care as a lay person. Avril has volunteered in many ministries within the church including Fellowship and Pastoral Ministry. She has been a member of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team and Stephen Ministry since 2003. She is a trained Stephen Minister and Stephen Leader. Avril is also trained as an Emergency Chaplain, Hospice Visitor, and Small Groups Facilitator.

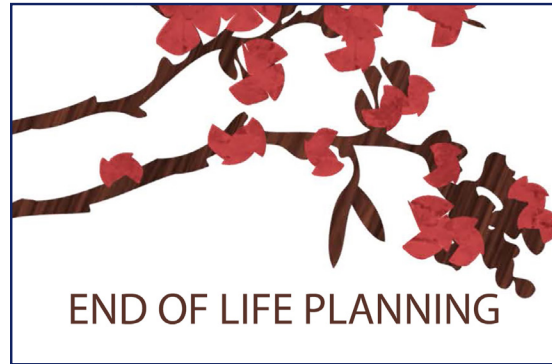


Avril, born and educated in England, has lived and traveled all over the world in the ensuing years. This led to an interest in World Religions that has continued to this day. She hopes to continue her education and development in ministry in the coming years.

Avril has lived in New Canaan for 25 years. Her grown son and daughter were educated in the town schools, and while raising her family, Avril volunteered in many of the town's charities and organizations, including Red Cross and CERT.

In her busy, work life Avril has been organizing professionally for many years. She enjoys cooking, hiking, reading, creating art, and getting together with friends and family.

## End Of Life Planning: Part II



It's a new year and you may be one of those making resolutions to... stop procrastinating and get your affairs in order!

To help you out, we invite you to:

### Planning for Procrastinators

**Sunday, January 27, 11:30am in the Chapel**

The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team will host this planning session. Chapin will speak in the Chapel about planning Memorial Services, as well as speaking about scriptures and prayers that can be used.

Jody Davis will offer music and hymn suggestions.

Immediately following, our trained Stephen Ministers (the church's lay ministers) will be available in the Parlor to answer any questions about completing the paperwork "Arrangements at the Time of Death". A link to this form is available at <https://godsacre.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/15/responses/new>.

### Questions:

Debbie Chapman, Pastoral Care Coordinator,  
(203) 966-2651 x831, [debbie@godsacre.org](mailto:debbie@godsacre.org)

Avril Sweeny, Director of Pastoral Care Ministries,  
(203) 966-2651 x836, [avril@godsacre.org](mailto:avril@godsacre.org)

**Mission To Mobile**  
**Sign Up Now**  
**OG Mission Trip**  
**March 17-23, 2019**

No experience necessary. For more information or to sign up contact Marianna Kilbride at [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org).

1/17/19 Pacific House, 4:30pm  
1/22/19 Open Door Lunch Service,  
11:15am

Contact Marianna Kilbride at  
[marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org)



# Starting the Conversation: Youth Mental Health – What Every Parent Should Know

January 22, 2019

7:30pm in the Meeting House



Randi Silverman, screenwriter of the award-winning film, *NO LETTING GO*, and Founder of The Youth Mental Health Project, will be joining us on January 22nd to share her story and engage in an open dialogue about the importance of understanding and caring for youth mental health.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our community to open our hearts and minds about an important conversation that is too often silenced.

*NO LETTING GO* is free to watch on Amazon Prime (“Snow” date: January 24 at 7:30pm)



# Children & Youth Ministries

## Become A Mission Sponsor This Year! WE NEED YOU!

We are sending 80 mission fish to Mobile, Alabama this February to work with our partners at Raise the Roof Project. Alabama is the sixth poorest state in the U.S. and over 800,000 people live

below the federal poverty line. Raise the Roof is committed to helping those in need in the South Broad Street community in Mobile to insure that their homes are warm, safe, and dry.

Join us on Sunday, January 13 as we commission our YG Fish for their mission work!



Our trips would not be possible without the support of our Mission Sponsors. When you donate at any level and become a Mission Sponsor, you will receive two letters from our YG Fish while on their trip, and will be thanked and lifted up at our Mission Sponsor Brunch on Sunday, March 10.

You can give now at:  
[godsacre.org/give](https://godsacre.org/give).

## Youth Ministries Serving Our Neighbors

In December, YG had the opportunity to partner with Staying Put, an organization in New Canaan that seeks to help aging members of our community stay in their homes. Staying put offers opportunities for participants to socialize by organizing community events as well as mobility services. YG worked with Staying Put to provide home cooked meals for 16 Staying Put individuals and were even able to drive to drop them off. YGers relish the opportunity to be servants to people in their own town!



This coming January, JYG will be shipping off for their annual Overnight Mission Trip to Pivot Ministries in Bridgeport, CT. This will be their first introduction to life on a mission trip; experiences that they will continue to have through Middle School and High School. While at Pivot, JYGers will be blessed with the time to hear the stories of the men and their journey in healing through the Bible-centered programs of Pivot Ministries. In the past JYGers have helped out in the Pivot greenhouse, so they're looking forward to seeing how they can help this January!

## All Church Bingo Night!

Join us on Friday, February 1 from 6:00-7:30pm in Smith Hall for an exciting evening of Bingo! Prizes will be awarded, food will be provided, and fun will be had by all! Please contact Caroline Leather at [church-school@godsacre.org](mailto:church-school@godsacre.org) for information.



**FRESH CONDENSED CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP**

# SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Our big brothers and sisters will be crashing Church School Chapel on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> for a special Bible Bowl service! Please bring a can or two of soup to contribute to our SOUPER collection for New Canaan Food Pantry!

Let the fields and all that is in them be full of joy  
Psalm 96:12

# Our Church Community

## Ministers

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin Garner, x1  
Senior Minister

The Rev. Eric M. Dupee, x2  
Minister of Christian Formation

## Staff

Laurel Carr, x833  
Program Manager

Debbie Chapman, x831  
Pastoral Care Coordinator

Dr. Jo Deen Blaine Davis, x827  
Director of Music Ministries

Morgan Flagg, x834  
Youth Director

Mya Gill, x821  
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Anthony Jones  
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832  
Director of Missions & Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835  
Director of Children's Formation

Kelly Leather, x824  
Senior Youth Director

Marie-Ange Masters, x823  
Director of Accounting

Kelly Morrissey, x822  
Chief Administrative Officer

Beth Picard, x839  
Administrative Assistant

Debbie Raymond, x837  
Christian Formation Coordinator

Avril Sweeny, x836  
Director of Pastoral Care Ministries

## Church Lay Leadership

Stephanie Douglas-Parkin  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Mark Tedford  
Chair, Board of Deacons

Doug Raymond  
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Kathie Dinnie  
Chair, Personnel

## Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the February Newsletter, please submit by January 19th.

Email submissions to:  
Laurel Carr  
[laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org).

## my connect corner

Become part of myConnect, our online church community!

Within myConnect you can:

- view an online directory
- interact with groups
- set up and manage your online giving
- view giving statements
- register for events
- find ways to volunteer

Two ways to login:

1. Visit [www.godsacre.org/myconnect](http://www.godsacre.org/myconnect)
2. Go to [www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org) and click "myConnect@God's Acre" in the upper left corner.

Need an Account?

Click "Sign Up Here" on the login page, enter your info, and look for our email to get started.

Questions? Contact [marie-ange@godsacre.org](mailto:marie-ange@godsacre.org)



The Congregational Church  
*of New Canaan*

23 Park Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
(203)966-2651  
[www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org)

*We are a Stephen Minister Church*