



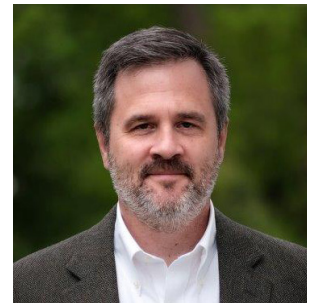
From the Pastor's Study

The Advent season begins December 1. Advent derives from the Latin *Adventus*, which means “coming.” The season proclaims the coming of Christ – whose birth we prepare to celebrate once again. Although we prepare for Christmas by decorating, socializing, and worshipping, at its heart, Advent is about waiting.

In her book, *Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting*, Holly Whitcomb writes:

Waiting presents an enormous challenge. We are impatient, I-can-fix-it kinds of people, but not all situations can be fixed. We assume that everything in life can be made better by taking action, but sometimes it just isn't so. The Bible has many dramatic stories about waiting. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, waiting to get into the Promised Land. Jacob waited 14 years before winning the hand of Rachel, his beloved. The Apostle Paul waited over and over to be released from prison. Jesus waited 40 days in the desert, tempted by the devil. In her beloved hymn “Lead On, O Cloud of Yahweh,” hymn writer Ruth Duck affirms:

*We are not lost, though wandering
for by your light we come,
and we are still God's people.
The journey is our home.*



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.

Whitcomb claims there are spiritual gifts that come from the practice of waiting. They include things like learning, patience, compassion, gratitude, and trust in God. I'm making my goal for this season to be intentional about my waiting. How might I notice and cultivate the spiritual gifts of waiting in the weeks leading to Christmas?

One way I plan to achieve my goal is by attending the many Advent offerings here at the church. I will come to Sunday worship, participate in service opportunities, adult classes, Lessons and Carols, fellowship, Musical Moments, the deacon-led services, and of course, Christmas Eve on God's Acre. I hope you will take note of all these activities and more in the pages of this newsletter.

In life, I tend to find it difficult to wait. However, I often find that what I receive in the end makes the wait worthwhile. I look forward to joining voices with the gathered congregation to sing the words of the old hymn: Joy to the world! The savior reigns; let earth her songs employ; let fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy.

Merry Christmas,
Eric

Advent and Christmas on God's Acre

We invite you to join your church family to celebrate the season through prayer, worship, music, fellowship, and Scripture.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 15, 5:00pm in the Meeting House.

Advent Musical Moments

30-minute musical meditations featuring vocal, piano, and organ music.

- December 4, Antonio Abate
- December 11, Jenny D'Alba
- December 18, Anne Maguire

Wednesdays at 12:00pm in the Meeting House.

Advent Prayer Services

Deacon led daily services of prayer and reflection. Wednesdays at 8:30am in the Chapel. December 4, 11, 18

Advent Study

Explore the themes of Advent - Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Find them in the Bible and in our faith traditions. How can you manifest them in your own life this Christmas season?

Sundays at 9:00am in the Parlor. December 1, 8, 15, 22

MG Christmas Dinner (Men's Group)

The Roger Sherman Inn - All men of the church are invited! Monday, December 9, 6:00pm

The Chancel Choir and an Instrumental Ensemble present Vivaldi's *Gloria*

Sunday, December 8, prelude begins at 9:50am

Women's Fellowship Christmas Open House

Hosted by Eileen Thomas. All women of the church are welcome. Thursday, December 5, 11:30am

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

at Walter Stewart's Market - December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 & 21

Youth Christmas Worship

All youth of the church are invited to celebrate the season. Wednesday, December 18 - Dinner at 6:30pm in Smith Hall, Worship at 7:00pm in the Meeting House.

Christmas on God's Acre Tuesday, December 24

Family Service with Nativity Pageant - 4:00pm

Experience the joy of Christ's birth through a procession of light and pageant provided by our Children's Choirs in this service designed especially for families.

Worship Service - 6:00pm & 7:00pm

Celebrate Christ's birth at these 30-minute services featuring Christmas scripture and classic hymns.

Caroling on God's Acre - 6:30pm

Join your family, friends, and neighbors for caroling on God's Acre with the New Canaan Town Band.

Candlelight Service - 11:00pm

A contemplative, candlelight service with scripture, sermon, music, and a procession of light. Communion will be served.



Men's Fellowship (MG)

Calling All Men: Join us for the annual MG Christmas Dinner on Monday, December 9, 6:00pm Fellowship Hour, and 7:00pm Dinner. We will gather at the Roger Sherman Inn for an evening of festive fellowship, dinner, and carols! RSVP to Don Moyle at donmoyle@gmail.com or (917)817-4684.



Women's Fellowship



Enjoy fellowship, a fabulous lunch, and dessert on Thursday, December 5 from 11:30am-1:30pm, at the home of Eileen Thomas, 33 Woods End Road. Let us get into the Christmas spirit together! Rides are available. Contact Stephanie Radman, stephanieradman@aol.com or (203)952-4554 for more information.

Flower Ministry

Christmas Flowers

The joy of Christmas comes alive each year in the Meeting House with a beautiful floral display organized by the Flower Ministry.

The congregation is invited to make contributions to create a living tribute to our love of the season and our families and friends. Contributions



and bulletin listings should be sent to Marianne Perry, in the church office by end of day on Tuesday, December 10, or you can contribute using the link at godsacre.org/give. The flowers will be on display beginning the third Sunday of Advent, December 15.

For more information please contact Marianne Perry, mperry@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x822.

Save the Date for Fellowship Chili Paddle!



Turkey Day Success!

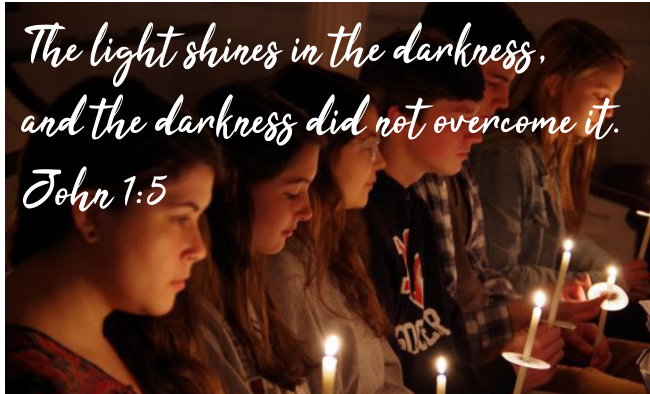
On Sunday, November 24 volunteers arrived eager and ready to serve for our annual Thanksgiving Service Project! Traveling throughout the church, families decorated donation boxes with creative drawings spreading holiday cheer, wrote thoughtful prayer cards, and completed their packages with the dressings for a full Thanksgiving dinner. After each box was prepared with mashed potatoes, green beans, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and gravy they were ready to be wrapped with a bow and paired with a delicious turkey to be delivered. The day was filled with positive energy, grateful hearts, and hard work, and was complete with fellowship time in Smith Hall enjoying apple cider and sweet treats! We are so thankful for all those that joined in our efforts to make Thanksgiving a special one for our neighbors in need!



Youth Ministry

Youth Christmas Worship

Come let your light shine this Advent season with youth group!



This year we are trying something new and instead of having individual Christmas Worship Services for each youth group we are going to make our December Youth Worship extra special! Join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ with contemporary Christian music provided by worship team and a spiritual activity. ALL youth grades 1st-12th are welcomed and encouraged to attend!

Wednesday, December 18th
Dinner - 6:30pm in Smith Hall
Worship - 7:00-8:00pm in the Meeting House

Visit our Children's Library!

Come one, come all to our new children's library located in Room 7! Equipped with faith-based books for all children, this new cozy spot is for all to enjoy! Check out our new God Is Love rug that was generously purchased by YGer Ashley Carbonier! Whether you need a place to spend time with your youngest during Guppies or waiting for Grace Notes to start visit us in Room 7 and get your reading on!



Get the Scoop on Christian Camp

Winter weather may be here but summer planning is right around the corner! Get a jump start on your summer camp sign ups and join us for an information session about a unique opportunity for your child to grow in their faith.



On Sunday, December 15 from 11:30am-12:30pm representatives from three Christian camps: Brookwoods, Deer Run, and Moose River Outpost will visit Smith Hall for an information session for both parents and children.



This experience offers your child the opportunity to break away from their routine, explore their faith, learn from mentors, and build friendships outside of their New Canaan community. Pizza and ice cream will be provided for this exciting new partnership! Visit the websites below for a sneak peek into our Scoop on Christian Camps.

Brookwoods: Summer Camp for Boys
<https://www.campbrookwoods.net/>

Deer Run: Summer Camp for Girls
<https://www.campdeerrun.net/>

Moose River Outpost: Summer Camp for Teens
<https://www.mooseriveroutpost.net/>

Faith & Finance

With the Holiday Season upon us, soon many of us will be inundated with the seasonal tasks of shopping, wrapping, and cooking, or simply enjoying all the wonderful, festive indulgences this time of year.

I think of the Christmas Season as filled with Joy. The author David Brooks writes: *“Joy is the present that life gives you as you give away your gifts”.*



This time of year in the Church we see ample opportunities to experience that Joy – helping others by taking an Angel from the Angel Tree, or volunteering to ring the bell at Walter Stewart’s.

But the Joy from giving away our gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasures, is of course, daily.

As a share of the overall annual Church spending, the largest proportion is invested in Serving Others, through either direct financial support of our Benevolences, events like our Youth and Adult mission trips, or Pastoral Care.

As a reminder, your 2020 Stewardship commitment supports not only the spiritual growth of our congregation and sustains the physical structure of the church itself, but also brings needed help and support, and hopefully Joy, beyond God’s Acre.

Stephanie Douglas-Parkin
Chair of Trustees

Missions and Outreach

Christmission

Families in need have hard choices at Christmas. Paying for food and winter utilities often leave no room in the budget for gifts. Working with local



partners, our three yearly Christmas projects target that issue. The Angel gifts we buy are for children in the homeless or working poor communities. The Dove Bags of groceries provide food for an entire day for a family or individual in need. The Salvation Army Bell Ringing funds raised provide help primarily with heat and electricity needs of local residents through our Health and Human Services Department. Please stop by the missions table in December to help or contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org, for more information.

- **December 8 Angel Gifts due in Smith Hall**
- **December 13 Dove Bags due in Smith Hall**
- **December 15 Dove Bag Delivery Drivers Needed 11:15am**

Pastoral Care

Need a Ride?

Did you know that the Transportation Ministry would love to help you get to church if you are unable to drive yourself? Please contact Marianne Perry at mperry@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x822, if you would like to arrange a ride to church.



Caught Doin’ Good

Whether she is delivering meals to our New Canaan neighbors, writing cards for the Card Ministry Team, or driving other church members to church, Janis Hennessy can often be found doin’ good! Thank you for all that you do, Janis!



Music Ministry

Advent Musical Moments

Wednesdays at noon for 30 minutes

Relax and enjoy the music of the season with Advent Musical Moments. Hear Chancel Choir members sing sacred pieces in scriptures and prayers by the Deacons. All are invited to bring a friend, too!



December 4
Antonio Abate,
tenor



December 11
Jenny D'Alba,
soprano



December 18
Anne Maguire,
mezzo-soprano

Joy Plaisted, Harpist

Sunday, December 22 - 10:00am service

To celebrate the fourth Sunday in Advent, hear Joy Plaisted, harpist, accompany the Chancel Choir. They will sing works by Jackson Berkey, composer for Mannheim Steamroller.

The prelude begins at 9:50am.



The Chancel Choir sings Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

Sunday, December 8

They will be accompanied by a string quintet, oboe, trumpet, and organ. Instrumentalists are provided through the generosity of the Mary Bradley Clarke Fund.

Prelude begins at 9:50am.



A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 15, 5:00pm

You are invited to *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* presented by the Chancel Choir and readers from the church. This candlelight service of scripture, carols, and anthems is a tradition in our church and around the world. The entire family will enjoy this Christmas service, which is open to all families. Childcare is provided. Contact Jody Blaine Davis, music@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651 x827 for more information.

Christmas Eve Music Tuesday, December 24

4:00pm

Family Worship Service
featuring the Annual
Nativity Pageant

Grace Notes, Cherubs, Spirit Singers, and Joyful Noise will sing and Bell Boys will ring at the Family Christmas Eve Service.

6:00 and 7:00pm

30-minute Christmas Worship Services

Hear section leaders Anne Maguire and Antonio Abate sing "O Holy Night" as they lead in Christmas carols.

11:00pm

Contemplative Candlelight Service with Communion
String Quartet prelude begins at 10:45pm.

Hear the string quartet, led by Mariusz Skula, play a contemplative prelude of Christmas carols before this candlelight service. Singing anthems of the season will be Anush Avetisyan, Anne Maguire, Antonio Abate, and Matthew Cossack.



All choirs resume in 2020.

Grace Notes

Monday, January 6 at 4:00pm

Spirit Singers

Wednesday, January 8 at 4:00pm

Joyful Noise

Wednesday, January 8 at 5:00pm

Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 9 at 7:30pm

Bell Boys

Sunday, January 12 at 11:15am

Children's Music Corner

Children's Music this December

Don't miss the beautiful voices of our children praise God this December!

You will be blessed with children's voices in December!



- Wednesday, December 11 – Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise sing at the New Canaan Inn.
- Sunday, December 15 in the 10:00am service, Spirit Singers and Joyful noise will sing “The Friendly Beasts” along with animal soloist! Don't miss hearing our wonderful children sing their hearts out!
- Monday, December 24 – Family Christmas Eve service at 4:00pm, beloved annual Nativity Pageant



Christmas Pageant News

- Sunday, Dec. 8 11:15am – 11:45am in the Meeting House, rehearse Scene 5.
- Sunday, Dec. 15 11:15am – 12:00pm in the Meeting House, rehearse **all scenes with no animals.**
- Saturday, Dec. 21 11:00am – 12:15pm in the Meeting House, rehearse **all scenes with animals. there will be no scripts and we will use microphones!**
- Sunday, Dec. 22 11:15am – 12:30pm in the Meeting House, we will have a **final dress rehearsal with everyone involved in the pageant. This is photo day!**
- Tuesday, Dec. 24 - 2:30pm meet in Room 7 to get ready for the 4:00pm Christmas Eve Service!

Adult Education

Advent Adult Education

Advent is an excellent time to jump into a Bible study! It's a short term commitment. Each class is always open to new members. Please contact Eric if you have questions regarding any of our adult education opportunities.



Sunday Advent Bible Study

9:00-9:50am in the Parlor led by Eric

Each Sunday in Advent, we light a candle on the Advent wreath during our worship services. In doing so, we recall one of four Advent themes each week: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. This Advent, we explore each of these themes.

- What is the connection of each to the birth of Jesus?
- What do the Old and New Testaments say about each of them?
- What might it look like to manifest these themes in our lives in the weeks leading to Christmas?

Week 1: Hope, Week 2: Peace, Week 3: Joy, Week 4: Love.

Monday Morning Bible Study

6:30-7:30am in the Library led by William Picard and Marianna Kilbride

- December 2: Hope and Peace
- December 9: Joy and Love

Tuesday Women's Bible Study

9:30-10:30am in the Parlor led by Marianna Kilbride

- December 3: Hope and Peace
- December 10: Joy and Love

Wednesday Jesus Top 40 Bible Study

9:30-11:00am in the Parlor led by Chapin

- December 4: Luke 1:46-55
- December 11: Matthew 1:18-25
- December 18: Matthew 2:13-23

Our Church Community

Ministers

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

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

Staff

Kelly Leather Antonson, x824
Senior Youth Director

Anush Avetisyan, x821
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Erik Burns, x834
Youth Director

Claire Carbonier, x839
Youth Program Coordinator

Laurel Carr, x833
Program Manager

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

Anthony Jones
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832
Director of Missions & Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835
Director of Children's Formation

Marie-Ange Masters, x823
Director of Accounting

Marianne Perry, x822
Pastoral Care Coordinator

Debbie Raymond, x826
Christian Formation Coordinator

Church Lay Leadership

Stephanie Douglas-Parkin
Chair, Board of Trustees

Jill Robey
Chair, Board of Deacons

Janis Hennessy
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Jeff Altman
Chair, Personnel



The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

23 Park Street
New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 966-2651
www.godsacre.org

We are a Stephen Minister Church

Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the January Newsletter, please submit by December 15th.

Email submissions to: laurel@godsacre.org.

myConnect 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
2. Go to 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