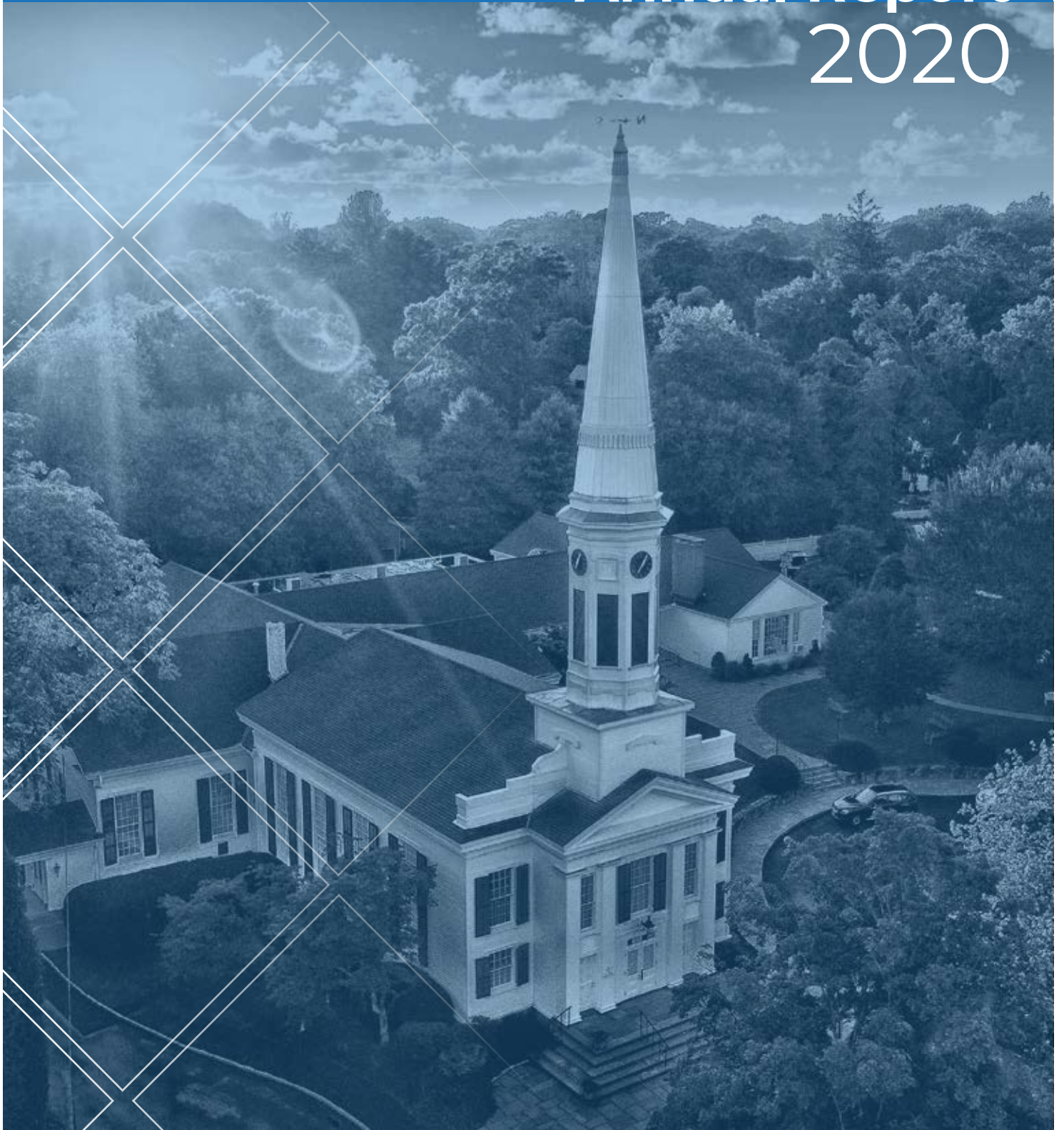


Annual Report 2020



The Congregational Church *of New Canaan*



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Church Family,

Years ago, I was told that the former Senior Minister of the church I was serving would read his Annual Report as his sermon on Annual Meeting Sunday. While I didn't have much interest in reading my Annual Report as if it was a sermon, I did think it might be a clever idea to write my Annual Report as a sermon. I could unabashedly biblically reflect on the past year and the year that is to come. I am resurrecting that practice this year, which allows me two opportunities to share my reporting and reflecting. So you either get it in my sermon, or you read it in this report!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin



288th Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of New Canaan

March 7, 2021

I. Introduction to Annual Meeting

This is our Church's 288th Annual Meeting Sunday. We gather to give thanks to God, to reflect on the year that has been, and to prepare for the year that is to come. So, on this Sunday, we focus on the life of Christ's Church, here on God's Acre, for nearly three centuries a community of faith that has been entrusted to us for a time, this time. Our time.

I want to briefly address three items in advance of our Congregational Meeting today. First, I want to speak of gratitude – thanksgiving, if you will. Second, I want to touch on a few of the accomplishments and learnings of this year. Third, and finally, I want to take a moment to reflect on our scripture this morning and the caution and focus Jesus offers to us through its message.

II. Giving Thanks

There is simply too much gratitude to express in any single message. First, so many people have given so much during this time, but our Deacons, Trustees, and our Leadership Team have been remarkable. Our church staff has been remarkably innovative, undaunted, engaged when many of their jobs entirely changed, and as many of us were forced to engage in work that did not match our gift sets particularly well. The resolve, the care, the diligence has been spectacular! And YOU! Let me say “Thank You” to our entire church family. We have gone an entire year without a single complaint of significance from anyone in our church family – that is amazing! Not only that, you have been so encouraging, supportive, and generous. It feels as if our offerings have

been so compromised, but you have stayed committed, and your commitment inspires those of us who work daily on your behalf.

And most importantly, *Thanks be to God!* Our first and last word should be a word of gratitude to our Lord. We have been carried through this time, not exclusively by our own best efforts but by the power, creativity, and encouragement of the Holy Spirit of God. In my personal prayers, I give thanks to God for our church family, for our church leaders, and for our church staff. We are blessed, even and perhaps especially, in challenging times!

“People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.”

—Mark 10:13-16

Message from the Senior Minister

III. Learnings and Accomplishments

So, what have we learned, and what has been accomplished? We have learned that we really are not in control. We need to be flexible and adaptive. We need to focus on what is most important in the life of our church; we need to get down to the business of our church without focusing on all the busyness we are too often consumed with. It is a gift to be forced to realize, from time to time, that this is Jesus' church. Therefore our plans, our agendas, and our creative ideas for our life together are not as important as what the Lord wants us to do. And being forced to cede control of this institution for a season helps regain the Pilgrim perspective that Jesus' church is at its best and most prophetic when He is in charge of His communities of faith. And for Jesus to be in charge, it helps to remind us that we are not. Now, as we have learned, not being in charge requires a lot of flexibility and adaptability. As scripture attests, *"The [Holy Spirit] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."* If we are going to be a church that follows our Lord's leading, flexibility and adaptability will be essential.

I also want to note that in 2020 I had a personal goal of developing a virtual campus for God's Acre so church family and friends could engage in our community wherever they were. Last year at this time, I had not made any headway toward that goal; a week later, as the country began to quarantine, I/we received full-time instruction on virtual church life. We still have much to learn, but we have expanded our reach and connection as a community, and we have been pushed in directions we should have gone years ago. It took a kick in the butt from a pandemic to get us going, but now God's Acre extends well beyond the .63 acres we actually inhabit.

IV. Word from Jesus about Organization and Mission

Now, I want to make a couple of observations about this story of Jesus Blessing the Little Children. At first glance, I didn't think this an ideal scripture for Annual Meeting Sunday, but the more I considered it, I realized this brief little story could be really instructive for our church.

If you follow the story, you will realize that the disciples, the ones who should have known best and understood most about Jesus' ministry, got this moment very wrong. Parents came to Jesus to have their children blessed by Jesus, and Jesus' students began turning them away, saying essentially, *"the teacher can't be bothered with the needs of kids and their parents."* You know how the story goes. Jesus said, *"let the children come to me, for blessing little ones is exactly what I came to do!"*

I think this story can be really instructive to our future. First, we often make the mistake; I often make the mistake, the disciples made in the life of our church. We allow the organization to cause us to overlook the mission. Because of the swelling crowds around Jesus, the disciples had become focused on matters of crowd control; they began focusing more on the logistics of Jesus' teaching events than the purpose of those remarkable gatherings. It is evident in a number of places in the gospels. The disciples started to focus on crowd size and crowd management. Where was everyone going to sit? Where was Jesus going to set up so everyone could see him and hear him? Where were they going to get food for all the people to eat?



I understand their concerns because we have them here too pre-pandemic and certainly during COVID. Event management and crowd control, which we do really well, can overtake the purpose of our gatherings. People of faith like us always need to be a bit cautious that we don't allow our organizational impulses to overcome the point and purpose of our ministry. This, of course, begs the question, "*what is the point and purpose of our ministry?*" to take care of the little ones, especially now, especially for us. Take care of the little ones, care for and advocate for, and ease the burdens of those who are not recognized as having much, if any, value. That is Jesus' ministry; it is our ministry too. Take care of the little ones. I know this. You know this. But as I thought more about this particular text and frankly looked at it a bit more literally, I realized that at this very moment, our church is having three very different and very important conversations about how to take care of children. I wonder if this scripture, and those efforts, are not the Holy Spirit calling to us to place even more focus and effort on taking care of, supporting, and empowering children. I want to very briefly highlight three efforts on the horizon that focus on the care of little children that might help define the course of our church in the coming years.

1. Child sponsorship. We are entering into a relationship with World Vision to offer our congregation an opportunity to sponsor children in need around the globe. Child sponsorship has proven to be incredibly helpful in lifting children and their families out of poverty. Studies have shown that it does really matter how a particular organization allocates resources to children in need; resourcing children has a huge benefit to the children sponsored, their families, and even the community at large. We are going to add the opportunity to sponsor children to our mission offerings at church because blessing little children has proven to be a highly effective way to benefit the entire world!

2. Mentoring. I am currently working with a church member who is feeling called to have his business start offering internships to young people who come from under-resourced communities and families. We are entering into conversation with the organization "Mentor" to help us envision how sharing our knowledge and our social capital with young folks who do not have the networks or the opportunities most of our own children have can

transform the lives of kids and their communities. I do not know what will come of this effort. Still, I wonder, what if all our church members who run their own organizations began offering internships and connections to young people from communities that do not have access to many of the opportunities we tend to take for granted? What a gift that could be not just to these kids but to our organizations and our communities?

3. New kids in New Canaan. Since January, nearly 400 new families have begun to move into our town. The folks moving here are almost exclusively from a very specific demographic: young couples from NYC who have one young child and planning for more, or couples who are moving here to begin a family. This is a community re-defining development. This could mean 800-1200 new kids are entering elementary school in the next few years. It means a lot of young couples with two jobs wondering how to care for their kids. It means new young people to town who don't know their way around town. For us, a church that historically focuses on ministry to children and youth, this is a HUGE opportunity. We are in the process of putting together a task force to approach these new folks to find out what their needs are and what our church can provide.

When I first read this scripture, I didn't know what it had to speak to us. I now wonder if it is speaking very directly to us, take care of these little children, at home, in our wider community, and abroad.

V. Blessed Opportunity

As we edge out of a trying and tiring pandemic, we have a real opportunity before us. Thanks be to God! We have an opportunity for an expanding mission to children and youth. We have the commitment of an amazing congregation to support those efforts. And we have learned a great deal and developed some new competencies through this pandemic that will serve us well in the future.

I am really excited about the year and years ahead for our community of faith. I continue to be thrilled with the opportunity to work together as Stewards of Christ's Church on God's Acre in this dynamic season. And, most importantly, I give thanks to God, as I know you do, for what has been, for what we are learning now, and for what will be in the future. AMEN.

Our Vision

As a community moved by God's gracious gift of flourishing life, we gather to share transforming spiritual, educational, and service experiences, and to love God and neighbor as servants of Christ. The church supports each member's journey of transformation by providing meaningful opportunities for enrichment through:

- **Spiritual Experience** in worship, music, prayer, meditation groups, retreats, and other means of grace;
- **Christian Formation** for all ages through Bible Study, Church School classes, and small groups;
- **Love of Neighbor** through caring ministries to fellow parishioners in need, as well as local service projects, mission trips, and provision for the needs of God's children around the world.

In this resolve, we join ages of Christians in all parts of the world, and we trust that God will bless our efforts as God has blessed theirs.



Spiritual Experience

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing."

—Psalm 100:1-2





“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

—Mark 12:31

Board of Deacons Report

Oh, what a year! Our charge of working with our Senior Minister to lead the spiritual life of our church changed dramatically with the start of a once-in-a-century pandemic that took hold just as our new year began. Then, racial and political unrest rose up across our country. What didn't change, though, was our faithful service. We simply served in new and different ways.

In March, we thanked Ann Clay, Ann Whittaker, Allison Boeckman, and Ralph Davies for their years of faithful service as Deacons; while we welcomed Hoyt Davidson, David Haddad, Martha Palmer, and Nancy Upton in ministry with us. In June, we said good-bye to our dear friend, Margery Gardner, as she and William prepared to move to Pennsylvania. We are grateful to Twee Haffner for agreeing to finish out Margery's term as a Deacon.

Additionally, we had a transition of Junior Deacons over the summer. Emma Dunlap, Henry Pohle, and Walker Swindell graduated from High School and left for college. Sydney Sheffield, a rising senior, continued with our new Junior Deacons: Daisy Crystal, Madeline Grenauer, and Reeve Boeckman. What an inspiring group of young Christians!

I'll recount the year's milestones in perhaps more detail than usual to preserve the events of this most unusual year for history.

As we began discussing the meaning of 'being-the-church' during a pandemic, we relied on scripture, Mark 12:31, ***‘love your neighbor as yourself’***, as our guiding principle to create a covenant for safe worship and church community activity. We knew that the church always provides comfort

and guidance during difficult times and that we need to love and support our neighbor as ourselves through a flourishing spiritual life on God's Acre. Determining how to do all this without spreading a deadly virus was challenging.

We met monthly via Zoom throughout the year, sometimes even bi-weekly, to plan how we could worship safely. By mid-March, we decided to close the Meeting House doors and started providing virtual worship services. We also helped to implement a phone tree to stay in touch with one another. Then in June, we decided to try 30-minute outdoor services on our front lawn. Chairs were purchased, lawn signs advocating social distancing and mask wearing were created, and Park Street was closed during services for safety. Our efforts were blessed with success, and the sun shone on us nearly every Sunday. In October, we decided to move back into the Meeting House by creating designated seating for up to 100 congregants and opening all the windows for ventilation. Attendees signed up for contact tracing purposes and wore their coats, hats, mittens, and, of course, their masks. We even added a Wednesday noon service with lots of music for those who wanted a smaller, intimate experience. The virtual services continued throughout the year, thanks to the creativity of Chapin and our staff, as an option for those who needed or wanted to worship safely at home.

To celebrate Christmas Eve on God's Acre, we decided to have a large tent erected on our front lawn and hold services outdoors. Caroling on God's Acre was cancelled, and we wanted to create a safe but memorable event. Under the night sky, and a seasonally decorated tent, we hosted over 450 people and heard a wonderful message, listened to organ music, a brass quartet, and professional singers from wide-open Meeting House and Chapel windows at 4:00, 6:00, and 7:00pm. Then, we moved the last service at 11:00pm inside due to a wind storm but were able to live-stream this most beautiful service to all.

While the deacons were unable to gather for occasional in-person fellowship events this past year as had been our practice, we worked together with our faithful ushers to set up chairs, clean chairs, and to put chairs away. We handed out

Spiritual Experience

masks, installed lawn signs, and provided the 'prayers- of-the congregation.' We even served communion with gloved hands dropping self-contained, pre-filled disposable communion cups in congregants' hands.

As we finish out this unusual year of communal spiritual life, we especially give thanks for the leadership of our ordained staff. After hosting an Ecclesiastical Council for Commissioned Ministry in the UCC in January 2020 for Rev. Eric Dupee, our Associate Pastor, we said good-bye to Eric, he answered a call to lead First Parish Congregational Church in York, Maine. His devotion to preaching, bible study, deep thought, and social justice was remarkable and inspiring. We also welcomed the Rev. Kibbie Laird, our new Acting Associate Minister for Children, Youth, and Families, from the First Presbyterian Church, New Canaan. She has a passion for working with children and youth and will guide our pastoral care ministries. And, lastly, our senior pastor, Rev. Chapin Garner, agreed to postpone his scheduled sabbatical. We are very grateful for his commitment to our church in a time of uncertainty and unrest. His creativity and leadership have been a beacon of hope.

Lastly, in this 287th year of our congregation, we are pleased to report that we confirmed 31 eighth graders and received 26 new adult members to our church. We are grateful to the Confirmation Leadership Team and the Welcoming Ministry Team for nurturing the spiritual transformation of our newest brothers and sisters in this time when drawing closer to the church was of importance to so many.

This has truly been a year of change which required so much flexibility and openness to the Spirit in new and different ways. We are both proud and grateful that we could provide a variety of meaningful worship services that fed our souls while keeping us all safe. Our faith remained strong, and our commitment to love and support our neighbors endured.

Jill Robey, Chair



Flower Ministry

The Flower Ministry is a fun and creative group that supports our church and each other creating floral arrangements to enhance the worship services. When COVID closed our flower market and our beloved flower room, our gardens and kitchens provided all the blooms we needed to continue to provide arrangements for services virtual and in-person alike. Recently, we have happily been able to return to both the flower market and our flower room. We love to design around the liturgical seasons and also for special requests from church members who financially donate a flower arrangement in celebration or memory of loved ones.



This year at Christmas, because we were unable to create our traditional Christmas display in the Meeting House, we helped adorn the virtual services with festive Poinsettia arrangements and decorated Christmas Trees in and around our outdoor worship tents.

We look forward to the soon approaching day when we will once again be able to partner with the Deacons in breaking down our Sunday worship service arrangements, which are delivered to those in our community who are celebrating, ill or grieving. We also hope to soon work again with the Pastoral Care team in creating our abundant traditional Easter flower and Christmas display of plants that go out to those who have lost a loved one or are homebound during the holidays.

While gathering is challenging during these days of quarantine, many members of the Flower Ministry recently zoom-gathered to celebrate our gratitude to our church, the fellowship we share and the beauty, and fun of arranging.

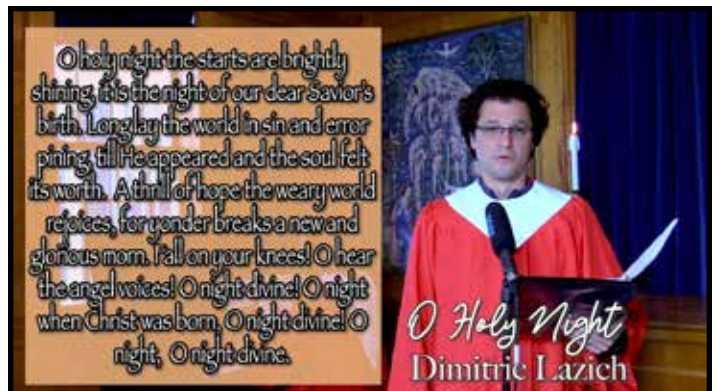
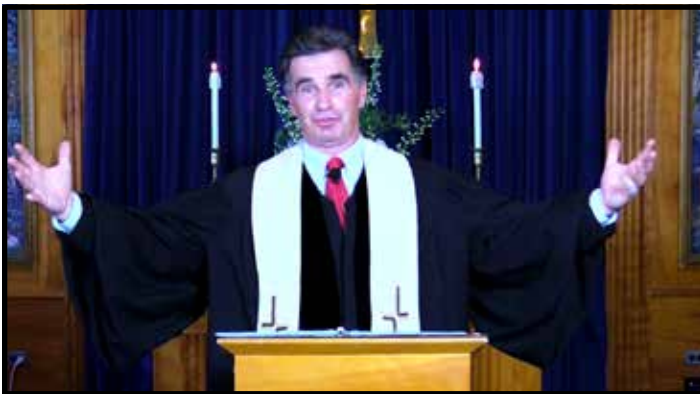
Virtual Worship

2020 required the addition of a whole new way of sharing our Worship Services. As soon as COVID kept us from worshipping in person, Rev. Chapin Garner, with the help of Erik Burns, videographer, Dutch Doscher, photographer, and Sloan Alexander, sound engineer, began producing Virtual Worship Services from the Chapel. These services included weekly announcements, a monthly communion, traditional hymns, anthems, sermons, and prayers and prayer shawl blessings. In June, a new videographer position was created and Anush Avetisyan, Director of Children's Music and Drama, was trained, and took over the production of Virtual Worship Services. With the instruction and supervision of Rev. Chapin Garner, Ms. Avetisyan included a creative element weekly to maintain the interest of congregants and

find ways of reaching beyond our community. Some examples included Kickoff Sunday, Celebration Sunday, Confirmation Sunday montages produced for Virtual Worship, and videos of Stewardship messages of hope, peace, and unity.

Special videos were created to promote the Stewardship campaign, and Co-Chair John Burges was featured sharing a message.

Since singing was strictly prohibited to our congregants Ms. Avetisyan recorded and produced a Christmas Medley Sing a-long, Virtual Nativity Pageant, and Christmas Eve Services including a different family lighting Advent candles each week.



Spiritual Experience

Music Ministry

The first 2.5 months of 2020 were going great - then COVID arrived, and all music programs went on an “immediate pause” beginning March 12. No in-person rehearsals, no singing, no choirs!

On March 25, Jody played a Wednesday Musical Moment organ recital, these continued for 24 weeks, ending September 30. <https://www.godsacre.org/sermon-worship-videos>

The summer services were outside while a singer sang inside the Meeting House to stay socially distanced from everyone. Jody remained at the organ.

Because singing is one of the most contagious ways to spread the COVID disease, a handbell choir began in September. Added to our four octaves of White Chapel bells, a fifth octave of Schulmerich bells was purchased.

In-person services resumed in the Meeting House in October, so a Chancel Choir section leader provided music from a plexiglass apparatus.

Christmas Eve services featured a brass quintet through the chapel windows with a vocal quartet singing from the Meeting House windows.



Children's Music Ministry Adversity Breeds Creativity

2020 Children's Choirs pre-COVID, prepared for the annual musical with the help of the amazing Music Ministry Team of parents, Dr. Jody Davis, and church family. Then COVID arrived, and we had to get creative with how we shared God's word through music since no in-person singing could happen. Creative Christian Summer Camp and Zoom Music Sessions began, and through Zoom, we built a closer connection to one another, sharing our talents weekly and continuing to learn sacred repertoire. Later, Ms. Avetisyan joined the Youth Team to bring music to a greater number of our children. Towards the end of the year, children participated in a hugely successful virtual Nativity Pageant with over six solos and full participation in roles.



We continued with virtual Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise choirs through June via Zoom. At the end of the year, Ms. Avetisyan threw a car parade to celebrate Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise and their participation as a group to praise God's name through music.

This summer, Ms. Avetisyan developed a Creative Christian Summer Camp that focused on building our kindness and faith muscles and complied with COVID protocols for social distancing, and mask requirements. Some water games were also involved!

This fall, Ms. Avetisyan joined the Youth Team to provide music in the newly pitched Youth Tents to an expanded age range of our congregation's children. Our MSYG group, the newest age group involving music, focused on team building exercises through music focusing on rhythm and drums and expression.

The Children's Nativity Pageant continued virtually for all to see on Christmas Eve. All children were recorded separately by Ms. Avetisyan and later put together. The pageant also included over six soloists sharing in God's word through music!



Christian Formation

Children and Families Ministry

The Children and Families Ministry focuses on bringing together members of all ages in our church community for worship, fellowship, and service.

The early months of 2020 were lively as Church School students filled the classrooms with enthusiasm and energy fresh off Christmas break. The fun continued from the classroom into the Chapel as Youth Group crashed Church School for our 4th Annual Souper Bowl Sunday Bible Bowl! Students collected canned goods to donate to the New Canaan Food Pantry before competing to be the Bible Bowl Champion! Excitement filled the Chapel as teams answered questions based on the lessons learned in Church School.

Little did we know just five weeks later, we would be filling our classrooms for the last time that year. When we physically could not welcome students into classrooms, the classrooms were brought to them! Not a Sunday was missed as resource bags were hand-delivered to the homes of over 100 families filled with crafts, worksheets, journals, activities, and the supplies to orchestrate a family Sabbath dinner! Our confirmands did not miss a beat as they moved to virtual classes meeting each week with leaders Chapin Garner, Doug Simpson, Twee Haffner, and Kim Hall. Zoom offered confirmands the ability to meet more frequently and continue with traditions such as 'Dinner with Deacons' and preparing their statements of faith.



After a hot and socially distanced summer apart, we returned on September 20 for Confirmation Sunday to celebrate the hard work of thirty-one confirmands. On a chilly September morning, the confirmands radiated God's light as they presented their statements of faith. They were true inspirations to us all, making the best of a challenging situation and coming out stronger as a class.

In October, hope and excitement for a new year of programming came in the shape of a large white tent on the front lawn! Over 238 students in grades K-12 signed up for a weekly offering that combined Church School, Music, and Youth Ministries into one. Under colorful face coverings were smiles all around as the youth were back on the Acre! Traditions from previous years were kept alive such as scavenger hunt for Baby Moses, Spark Bible storytime, and lighting our Advent wreath. And new traditions began as we welcomed families to join our Trunk-or-Treat event that allowed students of all ages to participate as our 9-12 graders decorated and presented treats to all the youth who arrived in costume!

On Sunday mornings, activity bags filled with stickers, coloring books, squishies, and fidget spinners greeted children as they entered the Meeting House. Children of all ages were welcome to enjoy them at home or in the pew to offer some playful fun to their worship experience! Back at home, before our smallest learners went to bed, families were encouraged to enjoy our virtual offering: Bedtime Bible Story from God's Acre presented by Chapin and Parry Grogan! Chapin as our very own Mr. Rodgers each week 'phoned in' Parry who brought to life the story using the beloved felt board from Parry's Church School visits!

While 2020 did not allow us to celebrate all of the traditional events of our ministry, we are grateful for the opportunity to share in the faith journey of our youth and the moments that have brought families closer to one another. As we recognize and celebrate our church's vital ministry to children and families over the past year, we look forward to more exciting, inspiring, and impactful events and activities in the year ahead!



Youth Ministries

2020 saw an interesting spring and fall for our Youth in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Despite challenges, our programs fulfilled the mission of fostering a community in which our youth may experience and share the love of God!

Just before the initial COVID outbreak, in February of 2020, we were fortunate to take 75 YG Mission Fish to partner with Sierra Service Project in Sacramento, California. YG fish shared Christ's love through repairing homes and building relationships with the people of Sacramento. The work that was accomplished was life-changing for the homeowners and our YG mission fish. Our fish returned home with a renewed sense of purpose and faith. We felt God alive in our hearts and spirits throughout the nine-day pilgrimage! Take a look at the awesome page from Sierra Service Project's Newsletter highlighting the work of our mission fish!

Sherri Kirk

Community liaison, North Sacramento, CA

I'm Sherri Kirk, a community leader through the Neighborhood Wellness Foundation of Del Paso Heights. As a leader in the Del Paso community, I never thought I would be the one to receive such LOVE! In February, I experienced an amazing gift — the real gift of love, from amazing youth from New Canaan, Connecticut. This group of young people came to assist me to repair my home. Not only did they rebuild my home inside and out, but they also rebuilt me.

Not only did they rebuild my home inside and out, but they also rebuilt me.

Words can't express how they made me feel — but I can say I feel good again. The world may be critical of young people, but these volunteers went above and beyond to assist me in painting, replacing my flooring, and building me a long-overdue backyard fence. This is Love! SSP is AWESOME, and I am so glad we are connected.

Learn more about this program: SierraServiceProject.org/Volunteer-Sacramento

Editor's Note: During the fall of 2019, we received funding from Wells Fargo Foundation's NeighborhoodLIFT program to create a home repair program in North Sacramento, where our HQ office is located. After four years of hosting volunteers in nearby Rancho Cordova, we were excited to double our local footprint. Sherri is an integral community liaison, helping SSP build trust and relationships in North Sacramento. In February, we hosted Congregational Church of New Canaan's Youth Group (100 people!) for an Alternative Break working in both communities in Sacramento. With the leadership of SSP's Program Managers and the contractors that came with the group, 18 impactful home repairs were completed in one week!

LEFT: Sherri (on right) at the community dinner at the end of the Alternative Break. **MIDDLE:** Volunteers from New Canaan celebrating the birthday of the homeowner they were working with, Michelle!

FAR RIGHT: 2019 Tribal Youth Kick Off with games and BBQ. Will (middle back, wearing blue) has been a community liaison with SSP for the past two summers.



Christian Formation

The mission trip and the fruitful program year we had before the pandemic launched us into a robust spring via Zoom with our MSYG, Quest, and YG programs! A highlight to our MSYG year was a virtual Mountainside session with s'more kits delivered to the homes of our 7th and 8th-grade students. Our fish signed on to hear a testimony from a young man in recovery from our partner Pivot Ministries and enjoyed their favorite campfire snack in the comfort of their own backyards. YG finished the year on a high note with the celebration of our YG Senior Leaders in the town senior parade, a virtual Beacon of Light slideshow, and a video that the seniors made to pass along Christian words of wisdom to our younger fish!

Weekly programming for Youth Ministries returned in a new way this fall, reminding us of our early Christian roots as we met under our "youth tent" each week with grades K-12! While we had to re-envision how to keep everyone safe, we had a remarkable time learning and growing in faith with our fish. Youth Ministries has continued to serve thy neighbor as best we were able as each youth group had a role in the church annual Thanksgiving Food Collection, Quest served at Filling in the Blanks, and YG/MSYG rang the bell at Christmas for The Salvation Army! Youth Ministries ended 2020 with gratitude for the resilience of our Youth and with hope for a bright 2021!



Adult Christian Formation

Yale Bible Studies began 2020 with the Gospel of Luke. As the pandemic set in, a fitting move to The Book for Acts and Zoom's platform found us studying the trials, and tribulations and joys of the early church.

The season of Lent saw us reading together the well-timed devotional Pauses by Trevor Hudson. And a later spring offering continued a conversation around race and injustice as we read and discussed Byran Stevenson's *Just Mercy*.

A new group was formed over the summer to read Thomas Merton's works and began with the extremely appropriate *Thoughts in Solitude*. In addition the summer saw a masked and distanced meditation group take advantage of the glories of the Memorial Garden.

With COVID lingering on into the fall, the Yale Bible Study groups fortified ourselves with two of Paul's letters from prison, Galatians and Philippians. For Christmas devotion we read Walter Brueggemann's *Celebrating Abundance*.



And through the entire year, Chapin's Bible Study informed the sermons they considered first the wisdom of the parables and stories and teachings of Jesus with our Jesus Top 40 and then began a yearlong look at our Pilgrim ancestors, who knew a few things about hardship, with *A Pilgrim Journey*. The Wednesday Night Bible Study reflected on the sermons the week after they were preached. Men's and Women's Small Groups also followed our booklets. All of this had much to say to inform our lives and light our paths in the most extraordinary year.

With great pleasure we introduce a new Adult Formation Ministry Team of Zak Carroll, BJ Flagg, Tammie Garner, Fatou Niang, and William Picard, whose time and research will inform and facilitate our offerings in the months to come and to whom we are very grateful.

Marianna Kilbride

*"If you abide in my word,
you are truly my disciples,
and you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free."*
—John 8:31-32

Fellowship

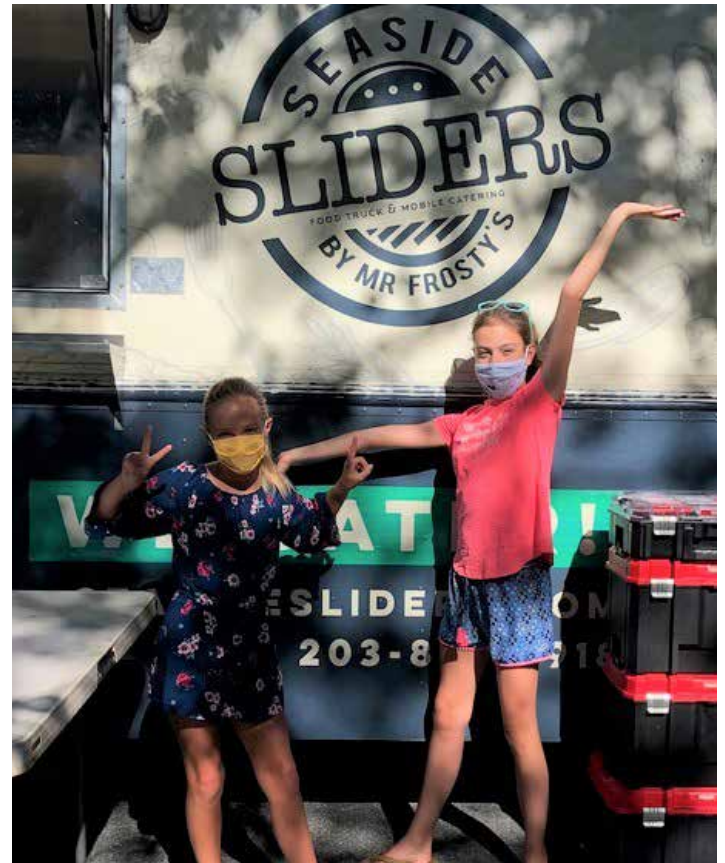
Our Fellowship Ministry Team typically organizes events throughout the calendar year and the weekly coffee hour each Sunday after the 10:00am service of worship. Annual events include picnics, dinner parties, summer concerts, and socials. With the arrival of COVID, coffee hour was postponed and other events planned throughout the year were socially-distanced.

We hosted the 9th Annual Chili Paddle Party in January 2020 with food, fellowship, and fitness! In early March, we were blessed to convene in 5 small groups for dinner parties and the chance to really get to know one another. We emerged from a spring and summer of lock-down with a socially distanced picnic in late August in our front churchyard. Thirtyeight families participated in a long-anticipated evening of fellowship, fun, yummy food trucks, and water balloons. This picnic was a terrific opportunity to meet and greet The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird and her family. Welcome, Kibbie!





The team had a great deal of fun decorating tents for Kickoff Sunday, and our youth really enjoyed the hay bale seating. We gathered again in December to decorate the tents for Christmas Eve with the help of many wonderful volunteers from Women's Fellowship and the Junior Deacons. Thank you, thank you to both groups. The tents looked great, and we all had a wonderful afternoon of fellowship. The Waffle Cabin supplied hot cider and waffles to warm frozen fingers and noses. Our team of 5 is looking forward to another great year in 2021 – hopefully with more opportunities to gather.



Christian Formation

*Be imitators of me,
as I am of Christ.*

—1 Corinthians 11:1



Men's Fellowship (MG)

On a cold Saturday morning on February 22, 2020, Men's Fellowship Group opened the doors to Smith Hall, where we welcomed over 30 men from Pivot Ministries to have a warm breakfast, share some stories and reflect on scripture and our experiences related to "Fatherhood". Within weeks, this definition of fellowship – gathering with friends and family – had certainly changed. While the spirit of "MG" was challenged, we remained steadfast and did what was needed to maintain a sense of connection with our church brothers. We were able to continue with our MG Small Groups, meeting virtually and sometimes in socially-distant, in-person outdoor settings. While we needed to postpone some of our favorite events, such as the Waveny Barbeque in June and the annual Christmas Dinner, we held our Annual MG Golf Outing in October. We had over 30 men – including six brothers from Pivot – play the front nine at Sterling Farms Golf Course.

Despite the challenges over the past year, MG's spirit remains strong, and we look forward to reconvening in the near future. Go MG!



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship had a quiet year with the pandemic but did have two noteworthy events. In March, 34 women gathered for the Cake and Coffee series. They enjoyed cake, coffee, and camaraderie at the beautiful home of church member Kristie Breed. Then in December, the Women's Fellowship group joined forces with the Fellowship Team to decorate the tents in preparation for Christmas Eve along with our Junior Deacons. We again thank Stephanie Radman for her continued support of this ministry as she gracefully transitions away from her longtime leadership role.



Welcoming Ministry

In fall 2020, despite the pandemic, the Welcoming Committee hosted a new member class in a safe and socially distanced environment. We are proud to report that on Sunday, November 8, we welcomed 14 new families into our church community. Each family is excited to be a part of the Church and looks forward to meeting other members through our Bible studies, youth groups, and fellowship offerings.



Love of Neighbor

“...(we) are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for (ourselves) the treasure of a good foundation, so that (we) may take hold of the life that really is life.”

—1 Timothy 6:18-19

Missions and Social Action (MSA) Committee

As the stewards of our congregation's financial commitment to mission, in 2020 MSA once again directed three pillars of support to our neighbors in need:

- Sponsoring direct service opportunities for our members and programs,
- Providing operating funds to our long-time partners, and
- Responding as we were able to unanticipated needs domestically and abroad.

In a normal year, MSA receives grant applications and presentations in the first quarter of the year. Then, once the congregation approves the annual budget, the committee deliberates on how to distribute grants, to best serve our neighbors at risk from homelessness, lack of opportunity, food insecurity, and addiction. By making that decision early, those funds can be disbursed to our partner agencies throughout the year as the congregation fulfills its pledges. Of course, this was not a normal year. This spring, MSA made several emergency grants to our local partners – Inspirica, Open Doors, Pacific House, Pivot Ministries, and ReEntry Ministry – and then returned to them a few months later to make the remainder of our annual commitment to support them in their work.

Similarly, in a normal year, approximately a third of the MSA budget goes directly to support service opportunities and mission travel by members of all ages, from the Thanksgiving

project to our OG trips. This year, much of that funding continued to go out to support our mission and service partners as always, but MSA also worked with those groups whose original plans were cancelled by the pandemic and identified mission and service partners to receive emergency grants; JustHope in Nicaragua, Filling in the Blanks, Fairfield County, and Delta Hands for Hope, Shaw, MS.

In addition to our traditional Easter and Christmas plate offering collections, this year, church leadership also invited everyone worshipping with us through the summer and fall to give directly to several organizations supporting our neighbors in need through this unprecedented challenge. The committee was pleased to contribute to these collections, and bring attention to these trusted partners by designating them as recipients.

Finally, MSA continued the congregation's long history with the Maasai through grants to the Simba Maasai Outreach Organization and tuition assistance for two Maasai students attending Daystar University. These two larger grants accompanied the many individual gifts from members who sponsor students and the annual campus improvement projects and relationships, which continue to be a blessing.

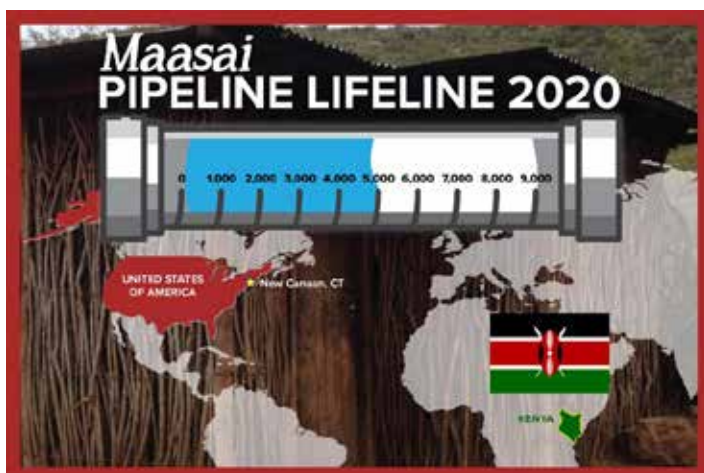


Love of Neighbor

Missions and Outreach

The highlight of our mission year is quite often our mission trip. With sadness and after much deliberation, we cancelled our trip to Puerto Rico due to COVID. The work we planned to do was able to be carried out by local volunteers. Such is the way of mission; one picks up where the other leaves off in a never-ending cycle of good.

Our yearly Maasai project is normally a festive few weeks in Smith Hall in May and June. We were concerned this year that we might not meet our goal with an online fundraiser. Thanks to the amazing graphics from BJ Flagg and team and a video from Kenya but mostly just your generous hearts, we exceeded our goal in two weeks. A new Maasai Pipeline was installed, and 200 villagers have water.



*And the king will answer them,
'Truly I tell you, just as you did
it to one of the least of these who
are members of my family, [a]
you did it to me.'*

—Matthew 25:40

As the pandemic continued, we looked for all the ways we could still be hands-on: we bagged lunches for Pacific House, delivered groceries for Person to Person and sorted their clothing collection, we collected backpacks for Filling in the Blanks and held a food drive for Inspirica. Our close-knit relationship with Pivot Ministries grew closer as we collected clothes for the men and made and delivered meals when they lost some major food donation sources. We moved the Noble House Sober Living Project a bit farther along with a warm early fall workday. Our Thanksgiving Project, perhaps the most beloved all-church event, while unable to be in person this year, surpassed all previous years in giving by far. Christmas giving was up as well in all projects, with Dove bags of food for those in need tripling a normal year and Salvation Army Bell Ringing, our one safe in person offering passing all normal records.

The need was so much greater in 2020, and you answered it with so much love. Our partners all have expressed much gratitude, and our familial bonds have grown.

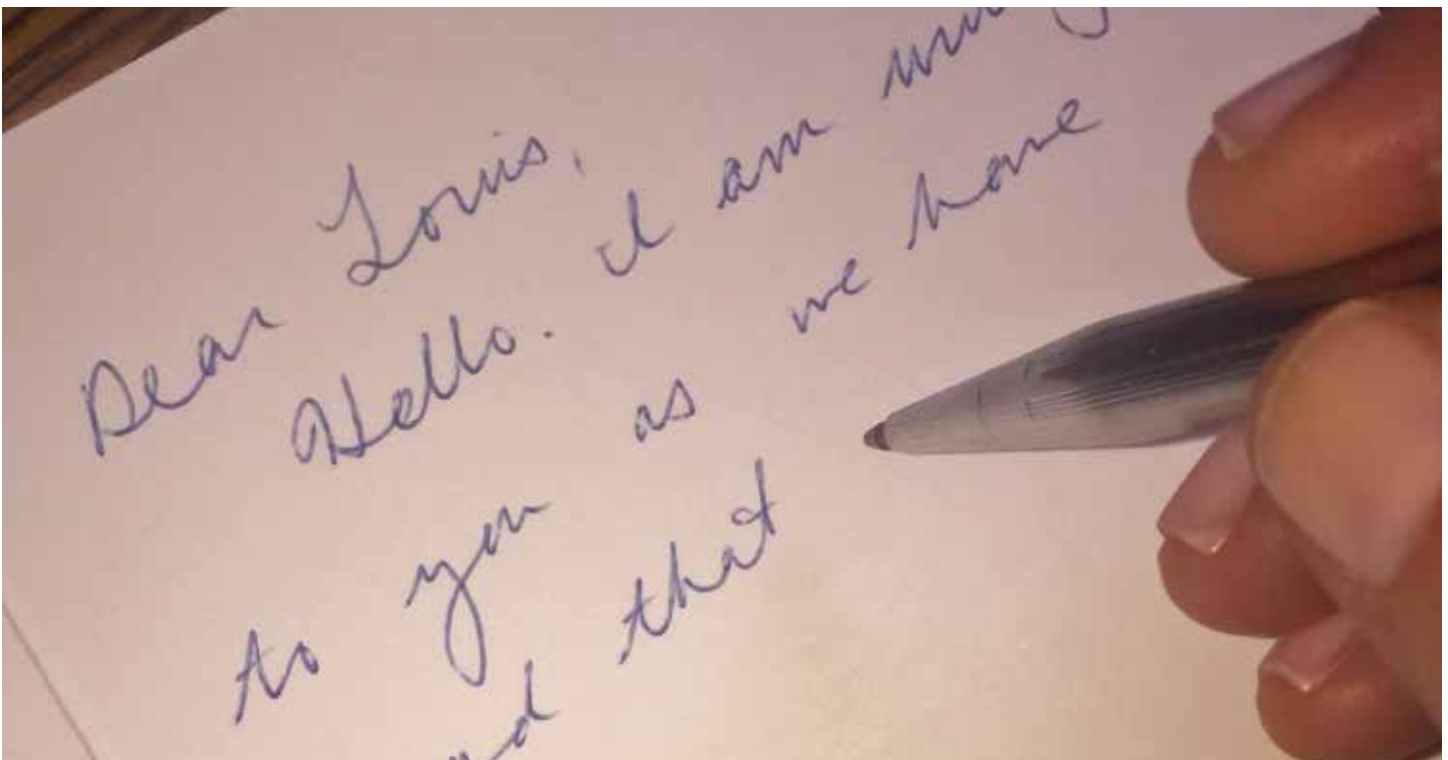
Marianna Kilbride



Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care for our church family takes on many different forms; however, all of them focus on channeling God's love to those experiencing difficult and challenging times of life. While everyone in the church is called to "love thy neighbor," we are blessed by a large number of people who have joined organized ministries within our church to use their gifts and talents to serve others. With our dear Eric Dupee's departure in September, our pastoral calls and visits are being done by Chapin Garner and Kibbie Laird and our ministry teams support these efforts by offering joy, support, prayer and fellowship.

During the COVID pandemic, Pastoral Care has been more important than ever. We believed it is critical to make sure our members feel connected to the church and are spiritually fed. In the early days of quarantine, our members were called by a pastoral care team member or staff member to make sure they were safe and well connected. Our pastoral care ministry pivoted with COVID in new ways, tried and experimented with reaching out through Zoom or delivering care packages to mailboxes instead of in-person, and helping provide grocery shopping to those who could not venture out safely. The lesson we learned was how important the church family is to each of us and how important it is that we all stay connected to each other and our mission to worship God and serve others.



Love of Neighbor

Our Visitation Team supports our ministers in providing care and support to members who need help on a temporary basis. There are eight members and two pastors who serve in this way, and many are trained Stephen Ministers. Whether it is help when someone returns from the hospital, calling to make sure a parishioner is doing alright after a transition in life, or just for a friendly conversation, our Visitation Team is available.

Our Stephen Ministry Team is comprised of twenty-six trained Stephen Ministers and two pastors who support our members during a difficult season of life. Stephen Ministry is a nationwide program that teaches lay members to provide one-to-one care for those experiencing various life challenges such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, depression, or loneliness. Stephen Ministry is completely confidential, and Stephen Ministers become skilled at walking beside another in crisis after receiving 50 hours of training. Our Stephen Ministers meet weekly with their care receivers and meet monthly for supervision and continuing education. The program began at our church in 2006, and we are pleased to announce that we will be training a new class of Stephen Ministers (our 6th) in 2021 using the Zoom platform.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry Team meets twice a month to knit prayer shawls for our members who need an extra measure of God's grace and care during a difficult time in life. The shawls prayed over as they are being knitted and blessed in worship and given with love through this amazing ministry.

Throughout the year, when meeting indoors seemed unsafe, knitters were found in a circle under the trees. As you can imagine, many prayer shawls were produced in 2020 by dedicated members.

We said goodbye to our long time ministry leader, Judy Hyde, who moved to Maine. Her leadership for over 15 years is remarkable, and her kind spirit and loving presence will be missed. Thank you, Judy! Twee Haffner and Troy Elliot have come forward to lead the group, and we thank them for stepping up to fill very big shoes.

The Prayer Chain operates under the faithful leadership of BJ Flagg. Those who need prayers or wish prayers for others contact our ministers or BJ directly, and the prayer concern is sent via email to our prayer chain. Members of the church and those outside of the church can ask for prayer in this way.

The Card Ministry, headed up by Stephanie Radman, sends cards to members of the congregation during times of illness, loss, or to celebrate life's blessings. The team, comprised of seventeen members, enjoys handwriting messages to brighten up another's day.

The Transportation Ministry team has provided rides to and from church and other church events since 2014. This important ministry helps those who cannot drive to church on their own.



The Raymond Fund is a Trust that was established under the Will of Deacon William E. Raymond in 1883 to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in Connecticut who otherwise would not have access to such worship. In generations past, the Trust employed eleven successive Raymond Minister who served nearly 100 churches in widely divergent situations. It became increasingly apparent that the Trustees needed to re-envision the Trust and grow its assets in recent years. In 2019, the Norwalk Probate Court approved the Trustee's petition to employ new approaches to fulfilling Deacon Raymond's



Deacon William E. Raymond

wishes and utilize modern methods of managing Trust assets to meet the church community's current needs in the 21st century while honoring Deacon Raymond's Will probated in the 19th century.

Final Thoughts

We could not end this report without thanking William D. Gardner for his thirteen years of outstanding service as a Trustee.

John T. Banigan, John Crum, and Gabriella Kiniry, Trustees

Raymond Preaching Fellows

With the requisite court approval and having grown sufficient assets to allow for future ministry, we are pleased to report that the Trust has agreed to fund the newly established Preaching Fellow Program, which will offer \$12,000 Raymond Fellowships to three Yale Divinity School students. Raymond Fellows commit to a more rigorous study of preaching as a pastoral discipline. They offer to preach at churches needing pulpit supply - free of charge - throughout the academic year. The first three Raymond Fellows are Natalie Owens-Pike, first year; Zak Carroll, second year; and JaQuan Beachem, third year. Senior Minister Chapin Garner will be working with these students to develop their homiletical skills and ability. While our Raymond Fellows will be preaching primarily at other churches in Connecticut, they are all scheduled to be at our church a couple of times during the year. We look forward to them being introduced and getting to know our church family.



Natalie Owens-Pike



Zak Carroll



JaQuan Beachem

Selected Financial Information

The following are Summary Statements of Activities for the five fiscal years ended June 30, 2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Interest and dividends	\$18,367	\$16,496	\$19,488	\$21,750	\$21,655
Realized gains and (losses)	0	(21,870)	0	11,436	11,856
Unrealized gains and (losses)	(35,804)	107,214	53,506	20,076	(1,527)
Total investment income	(17,437)	101,840	72,994	53,262	31,984
Expenses	1,814	2,044	2,662	1,800	2,128
Change in net assets	(19,251)	99,796	70,332	51,462	29,856
Net assets, start of year	751,511	732,260	832,056	902,388	953,850
Net assets, end of year	\$732,260	\$832,056	\$902,388	\$953,850	\$983,706

Board of Trustees

Overview

The twelve members of the Board of Trustees oversee the business affairs of the Church. They are responsible for raising money and dispersing funds for the Church and its programs, the acceptance and use of gifts and other bequests, personnel policies, ensuring appropriate record-keeping, and the provision of an independent audit each year.

At the Annual Meeting, the Trustees are tasked with submitting an accounting of Church income, expenses, and other relevant information for the prior year, and a budget for the current year. Consistent with these duties, the Trustees are pleased to submit this financial report.

Our 2020 Church Funding

To support the Church’s ministries and programs, we had sources of funding of \$2.9 million, up modestly from 2019’s \$2.7 million.

As in prior years, the majority of our funding, 76%, came from Pledges, Bequests, and Contributions (PBC), which totaled \$2.2 million. Within PBC, pledge receipts totaled \$1.8 million, slightly ahead of budget for the year.

Program Revenue, which is mostly fees paid in support of Mission and Christian Formation trips, was 5% of total income, down from 10% last year. The decline was due to the cancellation of mission trips due to the COVID pandemic. The smallest category at 2%, Use of Facility, is primarily rental income from the lease of Church property. We experienced a modest decline in this income source as ToddlerTime, a daycare and preschool provider, was closed last spring due to the pandemic and the Church provided rent relief to ToddlerTime as a result of the closure.

Our last category of income, Release of Restricted Funds, comes from the Church’s endowment and other specialized funds. This source of income was \$485 thousand and totaled

17% of income. In accordance with our policy detailed in the Investment section, we take a modest distribution from our endowment funds each year as a source of funds.

Our 2020 Expenses

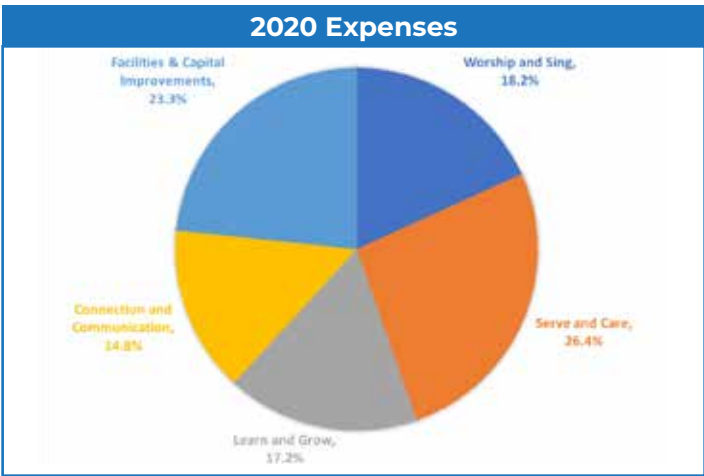
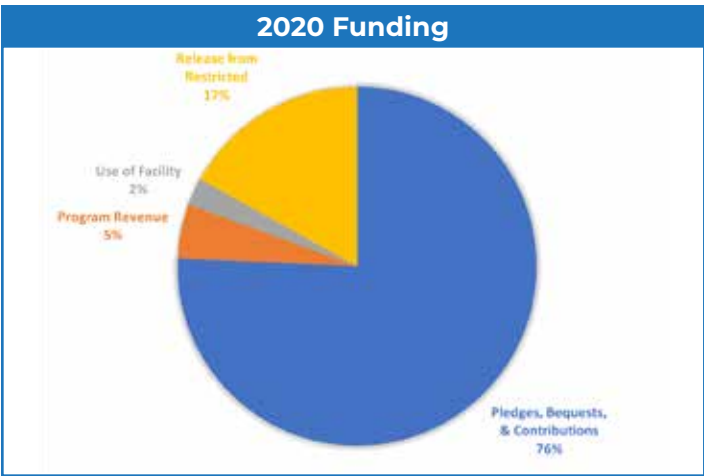
Last year, total expenses were \$2.7 million, up modestly from the prior year, but below our budgeted level for the year. Expenses came in below budget primarily due to a lower level of activity brought about by the pandemic, which resulted in the Church being temporarily closed during the year and the cancellation of activities and several mission trips.

Our largest category of spending was the Serve and Care category, which houses our Mission and Outreach spending. The Church donates to a long list of charitable organizations, locally and internationally. Despite the pandemic impact, our Mission and Social Action spending was modestly above budget for the year.

The second-largest expense category was Facilities and Capital Improvements. Normally, this is a smaller percentage of the total, but here again the pandemic impact was felt. COVID related spending to enable virtual services and outdoor services resulted in higher than expected facility costs. In addition, we had an expensive upgrade to a heating and cooling system in the church school wing of the building.

The third-largest expense category was Worship and Sing. This was a smaller percentage than normal due to the partial closure, shift to virtual services, and a lower level of music activity during the year.

Learn and Grow was our fourth-largest spending category. This category houses our Youth Group, Confirmation, and Church School spending. In addition, this category includes Adult Christian Formation, Bible Studies, and Men’s and Women’s Fellowship.



The final category is Connection and Communication. This category was higher than the prior year, again due to the COVID impact on the Church. We had incremental expenditures due to the virtual activity of the Church. Upgrades were needed in computer systems, audio/visual, Wi-Fi, Zoom, and other communication-related spending.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, overall spending came in below budget and Church operations ended the year with a surplus of \$200K. Exceeding financial goals in any year is commendable, still the Church's performance during last year's pandemic was truly extraordinary – a testament to the leadership of Reverend Garner and the entire church staff. They rose to the challenge and kept the Church vibrant, active, and functioning well.

In closing, I would like to thank the four Trustees who rotate off the board this year – Seth Alvord, Christy Bonner, Jim Clayton, and Jeff Johnson. Their expertise, advice, and counsel have been invaluable to the Board and Church.

Respectfully submitted,
David Carlson, Chair of Trustees

Our Assets

The Church is blessed with significant financial assets. Each year, we take a maximum of 4.5% of the average of the month-end balance for the rolling 36 months ended September of the prior year. The Church uses these funds to maintain its facilities and to assist with its programs and ministries. The maximum draw for 2021 will be \$386,138.

The Church's endowment is managed by the Investment Committee, a standing committee that reports to the Trustees. Committee members in 2020 were Chris Pohle (chair), John Sheffield, and Jeff Johnson.

The assets are held in a pooled investment account at Vanguard and are invested in a manner consistent with a balanced asset allocation strategy established by the Investment Committee. The Church also has funds in savings and checking accounts.

Fund Name	Market Value 12/31/19	Market Value 12/31/20
General Endowment	\$4,145,594	\$4,397,842
Charles A. Luckhurst, Jr. Memorial Fund	\$3,906,699	\$4,232,809
250th Fund	\$554,301	\$606,356
Catherine Bangham Fund	\$243,828	\$272,994
Emma C. & Henry V. Williams Fund	\$228,351	\$284,764
Memorial Garden Fund	\$98,314	\$123,986
Rosalie R. Hall Fund	\$21,191	\$23,123
Total	\$9,198,278	\$9,941,874

Note: Figures based on Vanguard Investment account and Bank of America operating cash account balances as of calendar year end 2019 and 2020.

2020 Budget and Unaudited vs 2021 Provisional Budget			
(K\$)	2020 Budget	2020 Actual*	2021 Provisional
Sources of Funds	2,940	2,861	2,608
Salary & Benefits	1,507	1,316	1,436
Parish Administration	179	221	218
Children's Christian Formation	240	181	75
Adult Christian Formation	37	24	4
Deacons & Pastoral Care	6	5	6
Music	127	92	127
Missions	334	383	334
Buildings & Grounds	225	190	223
Capital Improvements	285	249	185
Total Expense	2,940	2,661	2,608
Surplus (Deficit)		200	
o/w Restricted			
* 2020 results unaudited, subject to year-end adjustments			

Capital Projects

2020 Capital Projects Completed

2020 Capital Projects (K\$)		
	Budget	Spending
Capital Endowment	\$261K	\$246K

The Buildings & Grounds Ministry Team oversees maintenance and capital improvements to the existing campus and facilities. The most significant capital project completed in 2020 was the installation of a new HVAC system and the removal of an obsolete radiant heating system in the school wing, the Parlor, and Chapel.

Due to COVID, the Parlor has been made available to ToddlerTime, and safety remediation was required to allow it to be used as a play area. The grounds were adorned with numerous plantings replacing overgrown shrubbery, and the removal of dead trees along with ongoing tree pruning took place. The rear fence was repainted, and the Parsonage at 7 St John Place was readied for our new Acting Minister.

Other various Capital Projects completed were:

- Installation of new shades in the Meeting House
- New Live Stream Camera in the Meeting House
- Upgrade Smith Hall Projector to enable Live Stream overflow
- New Wi-Fi Mesh system and upgraded internet link throughout the campus allowing better Live Stream and Zoom capabilities

All Capital Projects were completed with approved budget guidelines.

2021 Capital Projects Identified

The Buildings & Grounds Ministry team maintains a five-year plan for capital projects to preserve our historic campus.

The Capital Endowment for 2021 is \$185K. Capital Projects planned for 2021 include upgrades to our AV System in the Meeting House, replacement of front Meeting House windows, school wing and office windows, interior painting of the Meeting House, offices and bathrooms, and exterior painting of the Pollard House and Parsonage.

Final project selection will be based on the availability of funds, safety, code compliance, and structural concerns.



Investment

The Investment Committee is responsible for managing the Church's Investment Portfolio (endowment) and reports to the Trustees. Seven unique funds, each established under various agreements and bequests, comprise our endowment.

Each year, the Investment Committee recommends to the Trustees an appropriate level of income to be distributed for expenditures. These expenditures are used in accordance with each fund's directive. The pooled investment accounts generated a net gain of 9.1% in calendar year 2020. This represents a net increase of \$840,254 during 2020. The increase is attributable to a capital gain of \$1,018,134, dividend and interest income of \$174,535, and withdrawals of \$352,415. The blended expense ratio for the pooled investment fund was 0.063% (6.3 basis points).

In accordance with Church policy, a maximum of \$386,138 will be transferred in 2021 from the pooled investment accounts to the Church's operating account to help fund the Church's mission. This amount is based on 4.5% of the average of the month-end balance for the rolling 36 month period ending on September 30, 2020.

Leadership

The Leadership Committee is made up of the Chairs of the Board of Trustees, Deacons, Nominating and Governance, Personnel, and the Senior Minister.

The Senior Minister acts as the Chair of the Leadership Committee. The group meets bi-weekly to assist in the management of the day-to-day activities of the church and carry out the duties and the functions as requested by the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees. In the ordinary course of business, substantive matters of the church are taken back to the Boards of Deacons and Trustees, but the Leadership Committee has the authority to act on items that cannot wait until the next scheduled Board meetings.

MSA

MSA The eight members of the Missions and Social Action Committee (MSA) offer loving support, on behalf of the Church, to dynamic organizations assisting those in need in local communities and further afield. Each member of MSA serves as a liaison to one of the recipient organizations. This model allows for the development of meaningful partnerships through which MSA comes to know each organization's mission, obstacles, and achievements on a more personal level. It is a truism often shared amongst MSA that the MSA members are well aware of the incredible gift with which we they been entrusted by the Church. By supporting those in

need; by carrying out mission work on behalf of The Congregational Church of New Canaan; by seeking ways to support and to Love Our Neighbors and to share God's love, all grow richer in return. The members of MSA thank the Church for the tremendous opportunity to serve the congregation and our neighbors.

Nominating and Governance

The Nominating and Governance Committee has two main responsibilities: first, to identify and recommend members of the Church for election to the Boards of Deacons and Trustees, and the Standing Committees (Investment, Mission & Social Action, and Personnel) for approval by the congregation at the Annual Meeting; second, to address governance issues, as they arise, and make recommendations to the Deacons, Trustees, and ultimately the congregation for their consideration. The Committee presented a full and balanced slate of nominations at the 2020 Annual Meeting, which was approved unanimously by the congregation. Any vacancies that may occur during the year and filled on an interim basis will be subject to approval by the congregation at the next Annual Meeting. Our committee is very pleased to report that we have a number of congregants who will be "first-timers" stepping up and serving in these positions and are happily accepting nominations for the upcoming positions and looking forward to a strong year of leadership.



Standing Committees

Personnel

The Personnel Committee works to support the Senior Minister with all church staff resourcing projects and concerns. The committee members collectively led or participated in an array of activities including; position description development, recruitment and interviews, performance reviews, personnel policy review and updates, compensation planning and advice and counsel to staff on personnel matters.

2020 was a year like no other. First and foremost, the committee was focused on ensuring our employees health, safety, and wellbeing and ensuring that staff felt supported as we learned to operate in a new normal. As we reflect on 2020, two words best describe our church staff – resiliency and innovation. It was an entire team effort to seamlessly pivot and transition from “normal operations” to an entirely virtual ministry experience . . . then pivot again to a combined virtual and outdoor ministry experience . . . then pivot once more to returning to the meeting house for Sunday worship combined with a virtual experience and finally culminating in a unique outdoor Christmas Eve experience. With every transition, the quality of our ministry experience was never compromised - simply “amazing”. The Personnel Committee and speaking for the entire congregation would like to publicly thank the entire church staff for their admirable dedication, collaborative efforts, and unparalleled flexibility this year.

During 2020 many staff members took on enhanced roles and increased responsibilities. We also said goodbye to a few dedicated staff members and welcomed others.

Highlighted below are the more significant transitions within the Church staff:

- Our beloved Minister of Christian Formation, Eric Dupee, was called to lead his own congregation as the Senior Pastor at First Parish Church in York, Maine. We thank Eric for four wonderful years of memories and wish him the very best.
- On the heels of Eric’s departure, the Reverend Kathryn “Kibbie” Laird joined the staff as the Acting Associate Minister of Children, Youth and Families. We are so thankful for the passion, dedication, and leadership that Kibbie has demonstrated during these unprecedented times.
- Marianne Perry took on an increased role as the Director of Operations for the church and continues to administratively support our Pastoral Care ministries.
- Marie-Ange Masters, who announced her retirement last year, has taken on a part-time role and will be retiring in June of 2021. Her dedication and generosity of spirit is greatly appreciated.
- Zak Carroll is a Yale Seminarian Intern and helps Chapin with special projects and groups. In addition to his intern role, he was named as one of our Raymond Fellows. We are so grateful for the fresh enthusiasm Zak brings to our church.

In 2021, the committee will continue to support the goals and objectives of Church Leadership as we begin to transition to a more typical operational environment. We will reflect upon what we have learned in 2020 and use that information to help align our organization to the needs and desires of our church community.

The Personnel Committee is grateful for the gifts and talents of our exceptional ministers, program, and administrative staff who are deeply committed to their work and to every member of our congregation. We also thank Jeff Altman and Lonnie DeMarco for their leadership of the Personnel Committee during this unique period in our church’s history.



A special note of thanks goes to all the staff who have been most patient and helpful, responding to the challenges and changes required during this challenging time of COVID.

Church Officers

Clerk (2023)

Lisa Platt

Treasurer (2023)

Danita Ostling

Assistant Treasurer (2022)

Dirk Dunlap

General Counsel (2023)

Sally Hagerty

Board of Deacons

Class of 2022

Jeanne Fredericks

Twee Haffner

Tom Muller

Andrew Parkin

Class of 2023

Hoyt Davidson*

David Haddad

Twee Haffner

Martha Palmer

Nancy Upton

Class of 2024

Sara Bakker

Steve Case

Susanna Nichols

Doug Simpson

Board of Trustees

Class of 2022

John Burges

David Carlson*

Steve Palmer

Julia Portale

Class of 2023

Stephanie Radman

Rick Selvala

Julie Tedford

Eileen Thomas

Class of 2024

John Stichter

Steve Busby

Chris Baker

Anne Worcester

Investment Committee

Class of 2022

Nick deMarco

Class of 2023

John Sheffield

Class of 2024

John Fusek*

Rick Selvala

Leadership Committee

Rev. Stephen Chapin Garner
(Senior Minister)

David Carlson (Trustees)

Hoyt Davidson (Deacons)

Barb Clayton (Nominating
& Governance)

Lonnie deMarco (Personnel)

Marianne Perry (Director of
Operations)

Missions and Social Action

Class of 2022

Will Flynn

Marianne Toldalagi*

Class of 2023

Susan Garofoli

Tom Robey

Larry Serven

Class of 2024

Janis Hennessy

Laura Herman

Frank Lyons

Nominating and Governance

Class of 2022

Donna Reinman

Class of 2023

Rob Mallozzi

Tia Whinery

Class of 2024

Paul Foley

Barb Clayton*

Personnel

Class of 2022

David Carlson

Lonnie deMarco*

Class of 2024

Diane Bailey

Ministry Teams and other Small Groups

Buildings & Grounds

Children & Family Ministries

Children's Music and Drama

Christian Formation

Fellowship
(Adult, Men's Women's)

Flower Ministry Team

Gifts & Talents

Maasai

Men's Small Groups

Middle School Ministries

Missions & Outreach
Steering Team (MOST)

Music

Pastoral Care Leadership
Team

Pastoral Ministries

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Stephen Ministries

Welcoming/New Members

Women's Small Groups

Youth Group

Minister's and Staff

The Rev. Dr. Stephen
Chapin Garner,
Senior Minister

The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird,
*Acting Associate Minister for
Children, Youth & Families*

Kelly Leather Antonson,
Senior Youth Director

Anush Avetisyan,
*Director of Children's Music
and Drama & Videographer*

Erik Burns,
Youth Director

Laurel Carr,
Director of Communications

Zak Carroll,
Student Intern

Dr. Jo Deen Blaine Davis,
Director of Music

Anthony Jones,
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride,
*Director of Missions and
Outreach*

Caroline Leather,
*Director of Children's
Formation*

Marie-Ange Masters,
Director of Accounting

Marianne Perry,
Director of Operations

* Indicates Chairperson

Membership

January 1 - December 31, 2020

Deaths (9)

Cyrus Anfindsen	Marian Rose
Muriel Kilbride	Annika Sotirhos
Willie Potts	William Souders
William Warner	Elsie Spinosa
Edith Bickley	

United by Reaffirmation of Faith (12)

Alice Burnham	Juli Johnson
Bill Burnham	Bonny Plosker
Zak Carroll	Todd Plosker
Kimberly Jetnil	Rich Sharp
T.J. Jetnil	Elizabeth Sharp
Tom Johnson	Bethany Zaro

United by Letter of Transfer (14)

Martha Burnham	Mary (Re) Telep
Dave Burnham	Susan Schroeder
EmmaRae Carroll	Bob Schroeder
Starling Cousley	Josh Stinchcomb
Lesley Cousley	Alexandra Stinchcomb
Lynne Krasnauskas	Anne Wagner
Peter Telep	Jim Wagner

United by Confirmation (31)

Miller Burr	Matthew Raymond
Jackson Carbonier	Eddie Rodgers
Audrey Carr	Charlie Ruvinsky
Luke Crystal	Jack Sheffield
Elizabeth Doak	Sophia Sotirhos
Aaliyah Doscher	Michael Stadnik-
Catherine Haddad	Poteroba
Fletcher Heron	Christine Stadnik-
Faith Hobbs	Poteroba
June Holland	Benji Sturcke
Audrey Ives	Logan Thom
Jacob Kozar	Tema Wagner
Mills Legge	Alex Werner
Henry Naylor	Ted Werner
Anne Nichols	Theodore Whittaker
Celia Parkhill	Robert Williams
Lucy Parsons-Hills	

Demographics

January 1 - December 31, 2020

Total Active Membership at January 1, 20201332

Members Received During the Year

Reaffirmation of Faith	12
Transfer from other churches	14
Confirmation	31
Reactivation	3

Decreases

Due to Death	7
Transferred to other churches.	4
Other removals.	194
Net Change	145

Total Active Membership at December 31, 20201187

Pastoral Record (includes all minister's activities)

Baptisms

Children	4
Adults.	5
Total.	9

Marriages

Members	0
Non-Members.	1
Total.	1

Funerals, Memorial Services and Interments

Members	5
Non-Members.	1
Total.	6

Church Attendance Records (Average)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Program Year				
8:00am	44	58	62	57*
9:30am	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
10:00am	258	245	247	307
11:15am	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average	307	308	311	360
Summer Months	157	150	151	283
Average Per Sunday	273	274	273	347

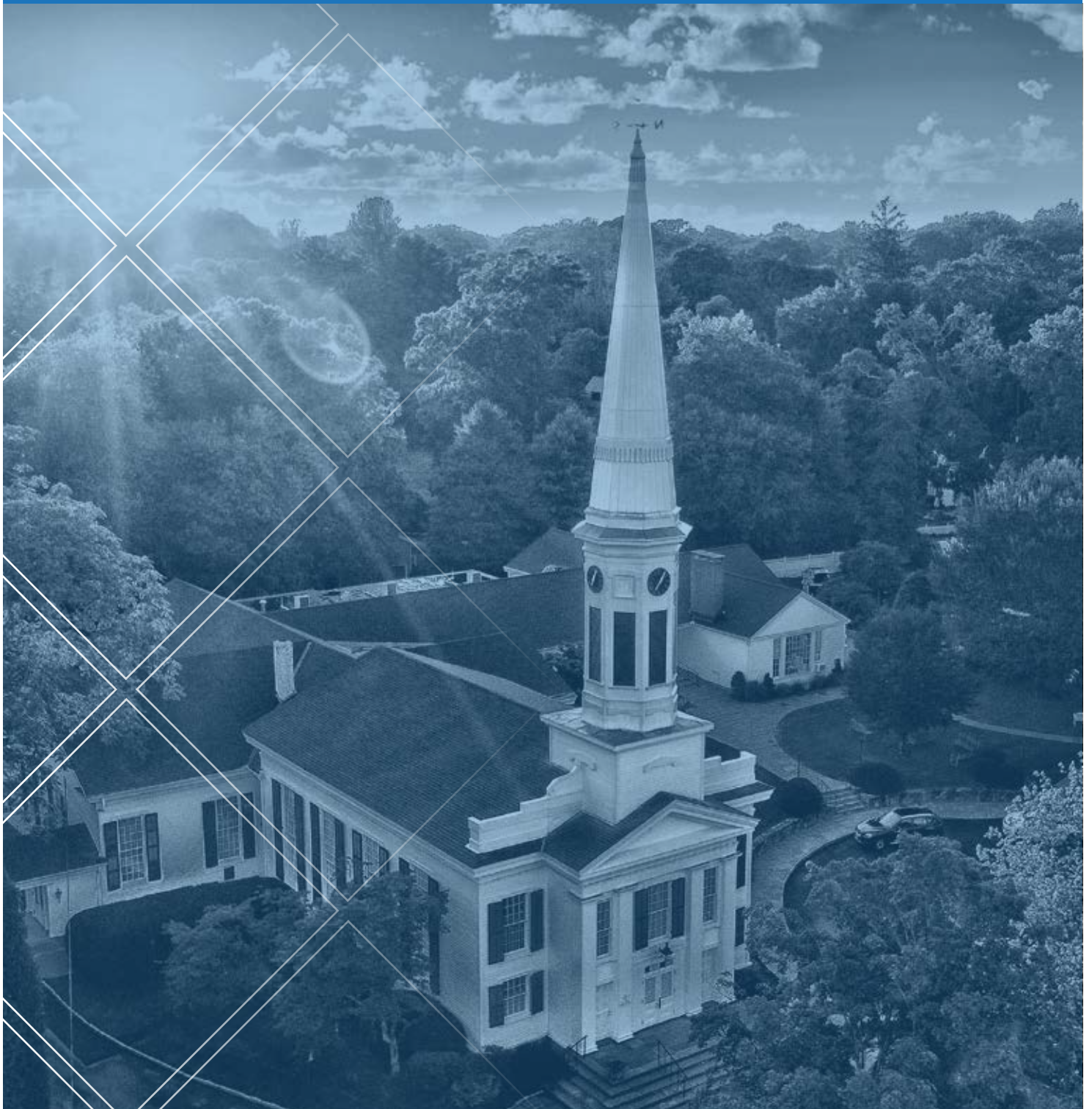
*Jan-Jun. only ^Sept-Dec. only

Church Attendance - Special Events

Easter Sunday	932	937	954	1401
Celebration Sunday	349	401	475	433
Lessons & Carols	215	175	150	114
Christmas Sunday	364	413	403	271
Christmas Eve	1436	1238	1336	874

Church School

Enrollment	175	176	167	n/a
Average Attendance	76	70	65	n/a



The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

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We are a Stephen Minister Church