



meditate

ON MY WORD

Love

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends ... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

It is both a bit surprising and quite a delight to realize that the season of Advent is now upon us. You may remember that we were gathered outdoors last Advent season, bundled against the cold, protecting ourselves against the coronavirus. There was no caroling, no string quartet at our candlelight service, and plenty of church members chose to observe the season at home and virtually. While there are still concerns around the pandemic, thanks for all the good and faithful work of scientists, healthcare professionals, and civic efforts to offer vaccinations, we are in a truly different place. We are meeting indoors for Advent, our Christmas Pageant returns, and we will be able to sing the carols of our faith on God's Acre once again!



As you might expect, it is my great hope and prayer that you all will join us in person throughout the season. Still, even more so, I hope that you will pause to savor the goodness and blessing of the life the Lord has given you to live, the friends and family you are able to enjoy, and the warmth and cheer of what will certainly be a more connected Christmas season this year. Pre-pandemic, our holiday season was so completely overrun by parties, events, and preparations for Christmas. So much of that was stripped away last year, and perhaps that was a blessing in its own way. Less is often much more in our faith tradition, and we might want to hang onto that ethic this year. Less social commitments, more time with family and friends. Fewer presents, more resources to give those in need. Less busyness, more sense of the sacredness of life all around us.

I hope you will gather with us as often as you are able on God's Acre to celebrate the season. Still, wherever you are, whatever you do, I hope that you will take the season of Advent and Christmas at a pace that allows you to enjoy, savor, and give thanks to the One from whom all blessings flow.

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

Advent on God's Acre

Music

Advent Musical Moments

Wednesdays at noon in the Meeting House

- December 1, Aram Tchobanian, tenor
- December 8, Anne Maguire, alto
- December 15, Jenny D'Alba, soprano
- December 22, Dimitrie Lazich, baritone

Messiah selections

by Georg Frederick Handel

Chancel Choir and Chamber Ensemble

Sunday, December 12, prelude at 9:50am

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 19, 5:00pm

Meeting House

Youth & Family

Youth & Family Contemporary

Christmas Worship

Sunday, December 19, 7:00-8:30pm

Meeting House

Missions & Outreach

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Walter Stewarts Market

December 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 & 18

Contact Marianna Kilbride,

marianna@godsacre.org

Fellowship

Women's Fellowship Christmas Tea

Thursday, December 9, 11:30am-1:00pm

Smith Hall

Contact Lesley Cousley, lcousley@gmail.com

Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 14, 6:00pm

Waveny House

Contact Charles Crookenden, crooko@gmail.com

Adult Formation

Advent Bible Study

Second Isaiah

Mondays, 7:00am, Library

Tuesdays (Women's), 9:30am, Parlor

Pastoral Care

Prayer Shawl Ministry Tea

Monday, December 13, 11:00am

Parlor



Christmas Eve on God's Acre



Friday, December 24

Family Service with Nativity Pageant - 4:00pm

Experience the joy of Christ's birth through a procession of light and nativity pageant 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.

Candlelight Service - 11:00pm

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

Advent Bible Study

Mondays at 7:00am and Tuesdays at 9:30am, the Monday Morning Bible Study and Women's Bible Study are reading Second Isaiah. Much of the language in Handel's *Messiah*, which the Chancel Choir will sing this year, comes from this book. Join us in exploring this most quoted of texts in the New Testament. Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.

FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship Christmas Tea

**Thursday,
December 9,
11:30am-1:00pm
in Smith Hall**

Our annual Women's Fellowship Tea is an event not to be missed! Please come and enjoy fellowship and Christmas spirit with the women of the church.

We will serve a beautiful lunch, desserts, and beverages in a transformed Smith Hall. RSVP by December 5 to Laurel Carr, laurel@godsacre.org.



Please get in touch with Lesley Cousley, lacousley@gmail.com, if you would like to bake or decorate in preparation for this festive, fun afternoon. We will meet from 2:00-4:00pm on December 8 to decorate Smith Hall.

** There is no cost to attend this event, but we would like to support women in need this holiday season. If you are able, please purchase women's warm socks and gloves to benefit the Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project and bring them to the tea.*



Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner

**Men: Our Christmas dinner is back!
December 14 at Waveny House, 6:00pm.**

Simply Delicious is catering a mouth-watering, four-course meal. We expect a full house, so we encourage you to sign up by December 4.

SIGN UP HERE: <https://godsacre.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/103/responses/new>

At check out, select whether you want the Chicken or Sole Francese as your main course. There is also an option to sponsor a Pivot House guest. Contact Charles Crookenden, crooko@gmail.com with questions.



Music in December

Advent
MUSICAL MOMENTS

WEDNESDAYS AT NOON FOR 30 MINUTES

December 1	December 8
	
Aram Tchobanian, tenor	Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano
December 15	December 22
	
Jenny D'Alba, soprano	Dimitrie Lazich, baritone

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



Messiah
by Georg Frederick Handel
Sunday, December 12 at the 10:00am service
Prelude begins at 9:50am

The Chancel Choir and an orchestral ensemble will sing many of the Advent selections from Handel's Messiah. The prelude will begin at 9:50am to include more music.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
Sunday, December 19
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. For more information please contact Jody Blaine Davis at music@godsacre.org or (203) 966-2651 x827.



Friday, December 24

4:00pm - Family Worship Service

Grace Notes, Cherubs, Spirit Singers, Joyful Noise, and featured Middle School soloists will sing at the Family Christmas Eve Service. Director Sydney Anderson will sing "O Holy Night."

6:00 and 7:00pm - Informal 30 minute services

Hear section leaders sing traditional Christmas Eve favorites: Bryan Griffin sings "O Holy Night," and Sydney Anderson and Anne Maguire sing "Gesu Bambino," as they lead in Christmas carols.

11:00pm - Contemplative Candlelight Service with Communion

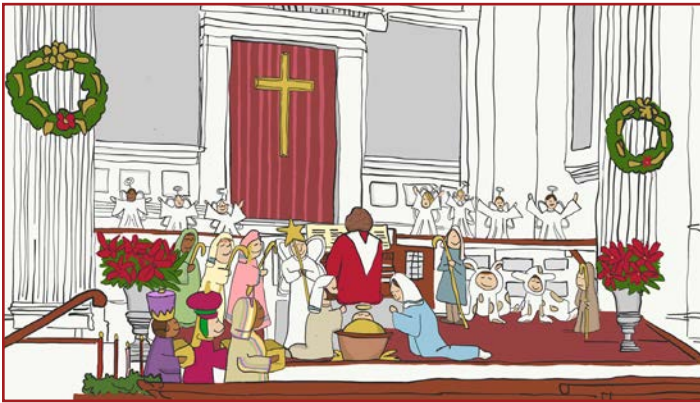
String Quartet prelude begins at 10:45pm

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 Sydney Anderson, Anne Maguire, Bryan Griffin, and Dimitrie Lazich.

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Annual Nativity Pageant

The children of the church are hard at work preparing for the beloved Annual Nativity Pageant. Rehearsals are continuing on Sundays throughout December, from 11:15am-12:00pm in the Meeting House. If you have a child from PreK-7th grade who would like to participate, we could still use some non-speaking roles, such as Greeters and Tech Crew. Email sydney@godsacre.org with interest.



Children's Choir Appearances in December

December 5 at 10:00am worship:

Junior Worship Team sings their first Sunday anthem

December 19 at 10:00am worship:

Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise Choirs join the Adult Chancel Choir to preview selections for Lessons and Carols later that evening.

The children will also preview one of their anthems for Christmas Eve.

There will be NO choir rehearsals the week of December 26.

All Choirs resume in 2022

Chancel Choir: Thursday, January 6 at 7:30pm

Grace Notes: Monday, January 10 at 4:00pm

Cherubs: Monday, January 10 at 4:30pm

Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise (combined):
Wednesday, January 12 at 4:00pm

Joyful Ringers: Thursday, January 13 at 6:15pm

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Ministries this December

This December, Youth Ministries is kicking off the month with bell ringing for the Salvation Army. Guppies, JYG, and MSYG all will bundle up, sing Christmas Carols, and spend the second week of Advent ringing outside of local New Canaan stores. Later in the month, our youth team will be putting on a church-wide contemporary Christmas Worship for families of our programs. Please join us on December 19 and get into the Christmas spirit with an evening of songs, reflection, and refreshments. All are welcome, please contact leather@godsacre.org with any questions.



CHURCH SCHOOL

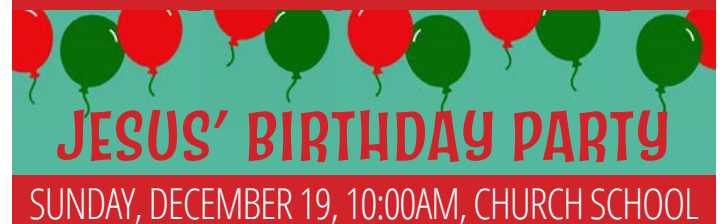
Fourth and Fifth Grade Communion

On Sunday, November 7, 2021, our Fourth and Fifth Graders received communion in the Meeting House and celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We are so excited to mark this spiritual milestone with them and with their families.



Birthday Party for Jesus

On Sunday, December 19 Church School will celebrate Jesus' birthday! We hope you will come and celebrate the reason for the season.



Christmas Flowers

“Hallelujah! The celebration of Christmas 2021 is about to come alive in the Meeting House. The tradition and beauty of our annual floral display will be organized by the Flower Ministry Team. The congregation is invited to make contributions to create a living tribute to our love of the season, our families and friends, and just the pure joy of being together. Contributions and bulletin listings should be sent to Tracy Goldman, office@godsacre.org by noon on Tuesday, December 14. The flowers will be on display beginning on the third Sunday of Advent, December 19.



Christmas Flower Delivery

Following the 10:00am service on December 19, the congregation is invited to deliver flowers from our Christmas display. Simply take one of the prewritten notes, already divided by neighborhood, and choose a plant after the service. This is a wonderful way to bring the joy of Christmas beyond the church and into our community!

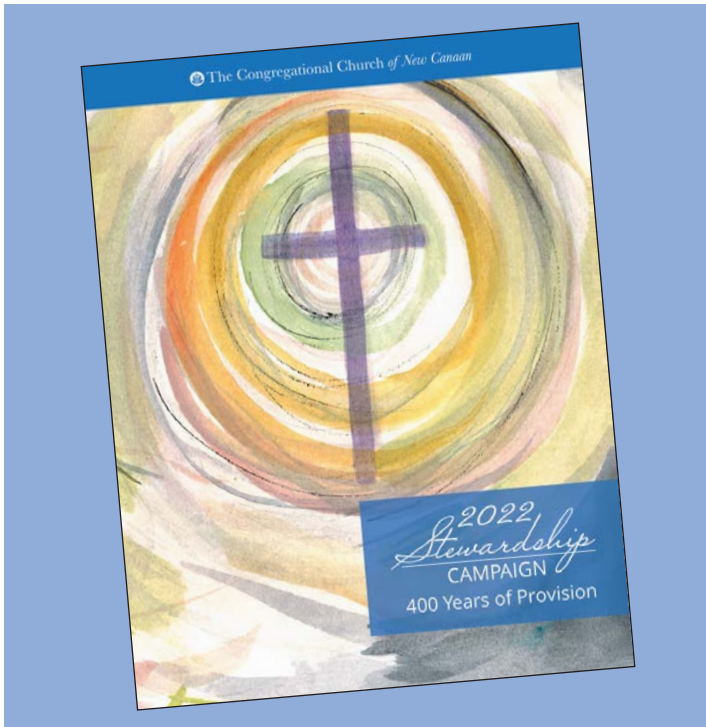
Rabbi MJ Newman Guest Speaker at Stephen Ministry

On Monday, November 15, 2021, Rabbi MJ Newman the chaplain at Greenwich Hospital was the guest speaker at Stephen Ministry. She led a captivating discussion for an hour and a half answering questions about how to listen to others and not fix, how to be with those who are suffering, how to take care of yourself while you are caring for others, and how to care for those who are dying. We were so richly blessed by her talk and look forward to welcoming her back in the spring as she leads us in her award-winning “Circle of Hope.”



2022 Stewardship Campaign

On November 21, we kicked off our 2022 Stewardship Campaign. As we begin this new season preparing for our future together, we ask all our church family members and friends to consider giving generously this Stewardship season. After an extended period of distance and isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our church community has finally recaptured our normal practices of worship, service, and fellowship. Like the Pilgrims, who inspired our annual Thanksgiving holiday by pausing with their Wampanoug friends to celebrate their first harvest after a winter that devastated their community, we pause to thank God for providing for us during this pandemic and the church community that supports and sustains us.



Our church is a blessing that sustains us in the best and worst times of our lives, yet it is something that we so easily can take for granted. On this 400th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving, let us take time to reflect upon and be grateful for our church family and all that it provides us. And can we pledge to the church a financial gift that expresses our gratitude for all that the Lord does for our community and us on God’s Acre?

We hope we can count on your support. Please return your pledge card to the church by mail or pledge online at godsacre.org. We are looking forward to receiving your pledge commitment by the end of this year.

We do covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His blessed word of Truth. Amen

Your Mission and Outreach

The Missions and Social Action Committee has stewardship of allocating the missions portion of our church budget. Yearly they contribute to the operating budgets of many wonderful agencies both near home and internationally, serving the poor, the homeless, and those in need of emergency assistance and supporting our adult and youth mission trips.



WHAT'S YOUR M.O. ?

In addition to assisting with general operating needs, MSA can sometimes help with special requests that enable the missions of our partners. This year the committee was able to provide Open Door Shelter in Norwalk with funding towards 2 defibrillators; a substantial donation towards a replacement van for Pacific House Homeless Shelter in Stamford to transport clients, food, and goods; the completion of funding for HVAC needs for YG partner Delta Hands for Hope in Shaw, MI; and funding for a special request from Americares to address current emergency hotspots which include Hurricane Ida in Louisiana, the most recent earthquake in Haiti, Afghanistan refugee resettlement, and COVID-19 support in 40 countries.

The committee seriously considers and deliberates over each request for funding and is grateful for the generosity of the congregation that enables their task.

Advent Outreach Projects

Please stop by our Missions Table at Fellowship Hour to find out how to participate in our beloved traditions of Christmas giving! Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godacre.org.



Doves: A suggested donation of \$50.00 to Person to Person will go towards grocery gift cards to buy a day's worth of food on Christmas for those in need. Please take a Dove from the tree to participate.

Contact Debbie Simpson, dcdsimp@aol.com.



Angels: Thank you for being an Angel and purchasing a gift for a homeless child. You can either buy it online and have it shipped directly to Inspirica (<https://amzn.to/3jDRQdm>) or shop in-store and return it to Smith Hall by December 5. Pick up an Inspirica flier with a toy list and additional information.

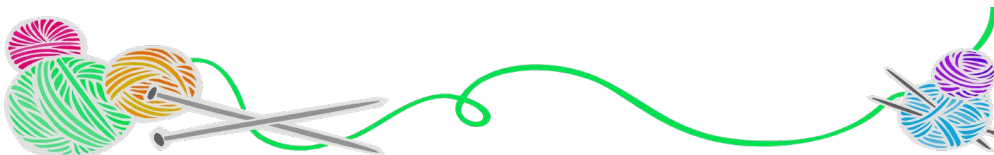
Contact Tracy Goldman, office@godsacre.org.



Bells: Be A Bell Ringer! Be heard, ring a bell! Each year, we ring the Salvation Army Bells at Walter Stewart's Market to raise funds for our local neighbors in need. Bell ringing is an excellent service opportunity for all. To sign up, contact Tracy Goldman at office@godsacre.org, and she will send you a link for the available time slots. Thank you for taking a bell and signing up for an hour slot.

Prayer Shawl Committee seeks more knitters!

A few of our long-time Prayer Shawl members have moved away, and we are hoping others might join us to sit, knit, and enjoy each other's fellowship. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month from 10:00-11:30am in the parlor. We can teach you how!



OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Ministers

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

The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird, x2
Acting Associate Minister of Children,
Youth, and Families

Staff

Sydney Anderson, x821
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Kelly Leather Antonson, x824
Senior Youth Director

Erik Burns, x834
Youth Director

Laurel Carr, x833
Director of Communications

Sarah Haddad, x826
Church School Coordinator

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

Sam Garner, x839
Youth Ministries Assistant

Tracy Goldman, x829
Administrative Assistant

Anthony Jones
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832
Director of Missions and Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835
Associate Director of Operations

Shean-Mei Sheu, x823
Director of Finance

Church Lay Leadership

David Carlson
Chair, Board of Trustees

Hoyt Davidson
Chair, Board of Deacons

Barbara Clayton
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Lonnie deMarco
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 17.
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 laurel@godsacre.org