



meditate

ON MY WORD

forgiveness

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

We enter a new year full of possibility and promise, with the lingering effects and upticks of the COVID pandemic. Personally, I will be so grateful when a newsletter of mine doesn't have to include notes about viral illness! But we are where we are, and I want to let you know the plans on the horizon.

1. We will stay safe and stay open.
We believe in the efficacy of vaccinations, as well as, social distancing and masking. We believe we can faithfully and safely continue offering in-person worship and program activities. We know that the wave of emotional and psychological health concerns that may be more acute than physical health issues at the moment can be eased by in-person fellowship, connection, and a commitment to be with one another.
2. We will maintain and strive to enhance all virtual connections.
We realize that many folks in our community may need to participate in our church at a distance because of work travel, family plans, or health concerns. We will ensure that our worship and programmatic events have effective and easy virtual access for all. The good news is that the next big Sunday snowstorm we have, church won't be cancelled; we will just be virtual! And, please remember, if our streaming capability is impacted by foul weather or New Canaan's notorious power outages, our new worship podcast will always be available to you!
3. We won't take unnecessary risks. While we are in a phase of the pandemic when serious illness and hospitalizations are exceptionally low thanks to the efficacy of vaccines, we want to avoid practices that might make COVID transmission more likely. We will take a break from fellowship activities that include food and drink until the end of the cold and flu season. We will pause our communion offerings until this next wave of COVID passes.



As we enter a new year, I want you to be aware of a new offering I will be making while asking you all to make an offering yourself. Starting January 3, the Monday Morning Message will focus on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. I am working on a project entitled "Christian: Practicing What Jesus Preached," and I will record

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From the Pastor's Study

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sections of that work for your devotional use in the New Year. If we want a closer relationship with Jesus, it might be best to resolve to attempt to live as Jesus encourages us to.

Finally, your offering, as difficult as this season of pandemic has been, your generosity has carried us through. Our church family remains strong, and our witness of the word and work of God remain uninterrupted. Your gifts make that witness possible. If everyone makes

a pledge for 2022 before our annual meeting on March 6, we will have everything we need for a truly robust year. I want to thank you in advance for your commitment to our church, and I encourage you to continue to be generous in your support.

I am excited to witness together what grand work the Lord will inspire within us and among us in 2022!

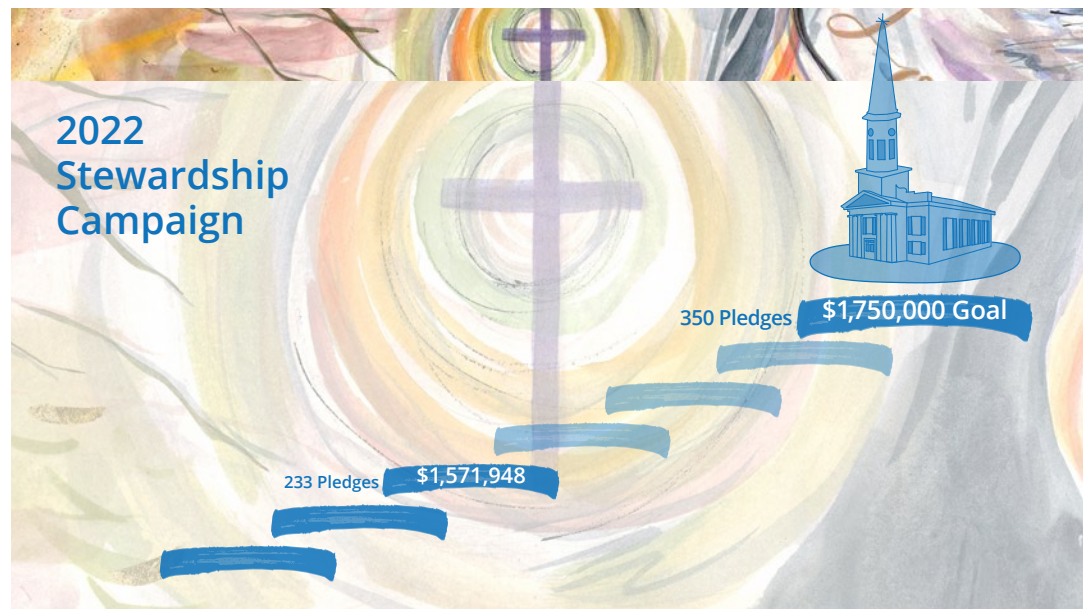
Yours in Christ,
Chapin

STEWARSHIP

Stewardship Update

Thank you to all who have already generously pledged to the Stewardship Campaign. We have had a healthy start and are hopeful that our community will continue to come together to support our church.

Over the course of 2021, Chapin and the church staff responded nimbly to the challenges of ministering to a disparate congregation that not only sustained us but also expanded our opportunities to serve God. AV equipment, for example, enabled weekly worship for our community and also expanded our ministry to worshippers across the country that now join us regularly. It increased the vibrancy and reach of our Bible study classes and enabled easier access to worship for our disabled and elderly. Our youth programs persevered under tents and steadily provided essential community and connection for our kids whose schools and activities were so limited. Our outreach team stepped up to provide meaningful relief and resources not only for our mission partners but to a broader group of people whose meals and shelter were threatened by the economic fallout of the pandemic. Your stewardship support enabled all this and more.



Currently, we are at 233 pledge cards (66% of goal) for \$1,571,948 (89% of goal).

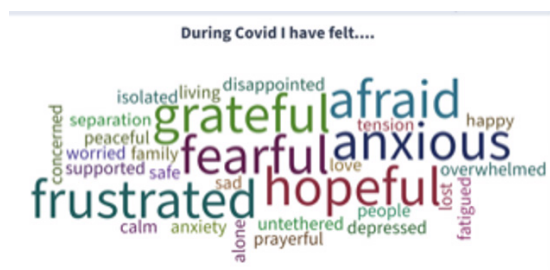
We are very grateful for the blessings of this community. Our church's ability to thrive during this challenging time is a reflection of our community's commitment and support.

If you have not yet pledged, could you please consider making a pledge to the Stewardship Campaign and, if possible, please consider increasing your commitment. Like our Pilgrim forebears, we are relying on all members of our church to help carry this extraordinary community through this challenging year into the upcoming season of promise and possibility.

Stephen Ministry

Does someone you love need a Stephen Minister?

Stephen Ministry has blessed our congregation since 2006. Why? We believe you don't have to go through stressful times alone. The Congregational Church of New Canaan has over 20 active Stephen Ministers, trained in Christian caregiving and ready to help during a difficult season of life. Contact Beth Baker at bethcudabaker@gmail.com or Kibbie Laird at kibbie@godsacre.org to learn more.



Bible Studies Resume



The Second Isaiah Bible Studies

Will resume on January 10 and 11.

New members are always welcome and the new year is the perfect time to get started. No experience is needed. Hope to see you there! Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org for more information.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

with Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin Garner

Wednesday from 9:30am-11:00am, Parlor

The group looks at the scriptures used in worship a couple of weeks in advance. Your input and the discussion informs the sermon on each given text. Contact Chapin Garner, chapin@godsacre.org for more information.

Sundays Beginner Bible Study

with Kibbie Laird and BJ Flagg

Begins on January 9 at 9:00am in the Library.

Contact BJ Flagg, bjflagg@gmail.com for more information.

PASTORAL CARE

Prayer Shawl Christmas Tea

On December 13, Debbie Chapman and her team of baking elves made 27 dozen types of cookies for the Prayer Shawl Christmas Tea. Around a roaring fireplace with Christmas music playing, the staff came to thank the dedicated ladies who knit shawls for our beloved members experiencing a loss or challenge. If you would like to join this wonderful ministry, please reach out to Twee Haffner, tweehaffner@gmail.com or Troy Elliott, troy.elliott518@gmail.com. We would love to have you join us twice a month on Mondays for knitting and fellowship.



Chapel at Church School

Church School Chapel

On the first Sunday of the month and sometimes also on special days, our children meet in the Chapel for worship. In November, we talked about Hunger Awareness before the Thanksgiving Service Project. The kids read scriptures, hear a story, and then lead worship. Miss Sydney played her ukulele which was a highlight. Children are naturally drawn to sacred and holy moments, and we are grateful to have them lead us in worship.



Nurturing Nest Returns - New Day

Nurturing Nest is a wonderful program for children 3 years old and under and their parents or caregivers. We will now meet on Tuesdays beginning January 11 from 9:30-10:30am for music with Ms. Jody, a story with Ms. Twee Haffner, and interactive play and crafts with Kibbie. The class is ongoing, and we hope those in this age group will join us! Contact Tracy Goldman, office@godsacre.org to sign up.



Joseph's Woodworking Store

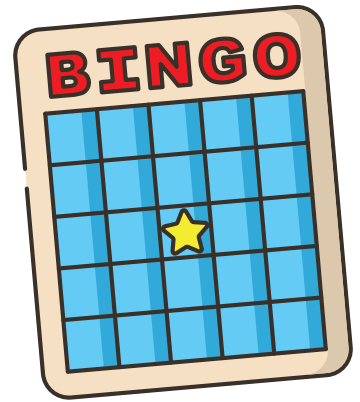
On Christmas Sunday, Church School celebrated Jesus' birthday through the eyes of his parents, Mary and Joseph, as they traveled back to Bethlehem to make wooden toys at Joseph's toy store, play games, and sing Happy Birthday.



Children and Family Bingo Night

Come Beat the Winter Blues!

On Friday, January 21, from 5:00-7:00pm, our Children and Family Ministry Team is bringing back a favorite tradition! Come beat the Winter Blues at our Children and Family Bingo Night! Bring a few new or "gently used" treasures such as board games with all of the pieces, a Rubik's cube, or even a scooter, and come try your luck! B-I-N-G-O spells FUN!



Children Enjoy Advent Wreath Making

To begin the Advent season, children, youth, and families enjoyed an afternoon of Advent Wreath Making. We prepared our hearts for the Advent season and took pause with our families to light the candles each week, and remember that Jesus is the reason for the season.



Church School Calendar • JANUARY 2022 •

JANUARY 2 No Church School
JANUARY 9 Church School
JANUARY 16 Church School (MLK)
JANUARY 21 BINGO Night!
JANUARY 23 Church School
JANUARY 30 Church School



Bringing our Gifts to God in the New Year

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
Matthew 2:10-11

Youth Ministries looks forward to all that is ahead in 2022, especially the opportunity to bring our gifts to God's and God's church through fellowship and service of neighbor. Like the Magi, we too have gifts to bring to Christ. Through our time and our talents, we have the opportunity to give back some of the gifts we have received. The New Year offers many opportunities to serve our neighbors both near and far.

YG Commissioning Sunday – gifts of love from our congregation

YG will be partnering with Together for Hope & Emma's House this year in Allendale, South Carolina. Our partners will be joining us for the weekend of January 7-9. Make sure you join us in church as our Mission Fish are commissioned at the 10:00am service Sunday, January 9. Come to worship with our young people and hear more about the trip, the incredible work, and faith-building that will happen in Allendale, SC!



MSYG Winter Weekend – gifts of fellowship

MSYG will embark on their first Winter Weekend retreat in two years! The group will travel up to Camp Silver Lake in Sharon, CT on Friday, January 21, for a weekend filled with activities, team building challenges, and fellowship.



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



Support our Mission Fish - Become a Mission Sponsor

About Our Mission To South Carolina!

We have \$75,000 to raise for our mission!
Will you support our YG Fish?

This year, 74 of our YG fish will embark on a truly life-changing pilgrimage to Allendale, South Carolina to work with our partners, Together for Hope & Emma's House, to serve those brothers and sisters living in substandard housing.

Youth will be working to repair the homes of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Allendale is a community that was once prosperous and thriving, but life in this community has drastically shifted over time. The town was once a tourist stopover on the way to coastal resorts. Once I-95 was built just a bit of a distance from the town, they saw a dramatic drop in guests coming through on their way to vacation. Since then, opportunities for employment and economic growth have ceased.

Residents of Allendale have no option but to make a long commute each day to Hilton Head, Charleston, and other resort areas to work. For parents, this makes caring for their children particularly difficult. Lottie and Frank Lewis are residents of Allendale who saw this great need for support for parents and took action to help their neighbors. We see God at work in Emma's House, the organization which the Lewis' founded in memory of Lottie's beloved Mother. Emma's House helps students with tutoring, skill-building, and general care while their parents are hard at work to make a living to provide for them. We are excited to partner with Emma's House and Together for Hope for our mission trip this year.

Both organization's missions can only be accomplished with the help of volunteer groups like YG. And we can't do it without sponsors like you!

YG fish will build a playground and safe outdoor space at Emma's House. Fish will also work on home repair projects for local community members in great need identified by Together for Hope!

The work that will be done together will be life-changing for those we will serve and for the YG members, and we invite you to join in this effort by making a Mission Sponsor contribution using the envelope included in this bulletin. Please prayerfully consider donating to support the outreach efforts of our youth. Mission Sponsors receive handwritten letters sent from the Mission Fish on-site, describing their day-to-day experiences. Sponsors are also invited to meet and celebrate with the mission fish at the Mission Sponsor Brunch on Youth Sunday, March 13.

Finally, to stay updated on our trip progress and maybe catch a photo of your favorite YGer, follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/ccnc1733](https://www.facebook.com/ccnc1733) (you don't need to have a Facebook account to check the page!). We try to get photos of all of the kids but our main focus is keeping everyone safe and happy so we can't guarantee that everyone will be featured. Photos will be on our website, www.godsacre.org/youth, after the trip.

The Christmas Pageant

Each year the children's gift to the congregation is to tell the story of Jesus' birth in our nativity pageant. On Christmas Eve, our children once again did not disappoint. It is one of the great highlights of the year. Enjoy these pictures!



Thank You For The Gift Of Music

The Advent and Christmas seasons were so beautiful because of the music, especially after missing out on all of our beloved musical traditions last year. Thank you to all the singers and ringers who worked many hours to present lovely music for our services. Your talents, time, and devotion to the church are admired and we are grateful. You inspire us when you lead in worship.



Handel's Messiah with Chancel Choir and chamber ensemble, December 12.

Epiphany Sunday, January 9

The Chancel Choir will celebrate Epiphany Sunday with the Kings' procession, and special music at the 10:00am service. They will sing "There's a Star in the East," "There Shall A Star from Jacob," "Mary Had a Baby," and "Go, Tell It on the Mountain."



New Year's 2022 Musical Resolution: Sing Or Ring In A Choir

Start the New Year by joining a Church Choir. Whether you're 2 or 92, a natural singer or not, there's a choir family for you!

Chancel Choir (high school through adults) resumes Thursday, January 6; 7:30 – 9:00pm

Grace Notes (ages 2 & 3) resume Monday, January 10; 4:00 – 4:30pm

Cherubs (ages 4 - K) resume Monday, January 10; 4:30 – 5:00pm

Spirit Singers (grades 1 - 4) resume Tuesday, January 11; 4:00 – 5:00pm

Joyful Noise/Junior Worship Team (grades 5-8) resume Tuesday, January 11; 5:00 – 6:00pm

Joyful Ringers (Bells) resume Thursday, January 13; 6:30 – 7:30pm

For more information, please contact Jody Blaine Davis at (203) 966-2651 x827 or music@godsacre.org

Children's Music Welcome Back Event January 11



Choristers in grades 1-8 are invited to a “Bring-A-Friend Sing-A-Long” on Tuesday, January 11, for an evening of singing, playing instruments, and musical games. If your child has been unsure about joining a choir, this will be a great chance to try it out. We will sing a farewell to our favorite church songs from the Christmas season, and look ahead to exciting spring music!

Starting the week of January 9, we will begin a new Children's Choir rehearsal schedule to better coincide with some of our other beloved youth activities. This change will be kicked off with this Sing-A-Long and Informational Night. Spirit Singers (grades 1-4) will meet from 4:00-5:00pm and Joyful Noise/Junior Worship Team (grades 5-8) will meet from 5:15-6:15pm after JYG. For more information, please contact Sydney Anderson at (203) 966-2651 x821 or sydney@godsacre.org.



Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise prepare to lead morning worship; Chancel Choir is joined by the children's choirs during 10am Worship; Junior Worship Team joined the Worship Team for the first time November 17.



OG Back in the Saddle!

March 19-26, 2022

Warm work days, evening reflections with our teams and a Mexican meal or two or three make up this year's OG trip to San Antonio, Texas. Join us to visit our longtime mission partner Blueprint Ministries, who seek to share Christ's extravagant love and hope with the local community most in need of help. San Antonio has one the most significant percentages of sub-standard housing of any major US city, with a poverty rate of almost 18 percent. Blueprint Ministries facilitates teams of volunteers in making much-needed repairs for homeowners unable to do the work due to age, disability or income level. Home repairs range from roofing and drywall repair to subflooring installation and painting. The goal is to make homes safe, warm, and dry. In the process, lasting relationships are established between homeowners, Blueprint Ministries, and the groups who serve, as we did in 2015 and 2018. Watch for signups in church emails and bulletins this month! Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.



Thank you!

Thank you so very much for your radical Christmas love. Because of your generosity, we gave 88 Dove meals and more than 50 children received gifts who would not have. Close to \$4,000 was raised ringing the Salvation Army Bells to support community families in need this winter with heat, electricity, and food.

If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will be like the noonday.

Isaiah 58:10



NEW! Christian Women's Book Club

All church women are invited to attend an informational meeting on Thursday, January 20 at 7:00pm in the Parlor to learn more about our New Christian Women's Book Club. The club will meet monthly and focus on fiction selections with a faith-based message. Contact Lesley Cousley, lcousley@gmail.com to RSVP or learn more.

A stack of three books is shown, with the top book open. The pages of the open book are fanned out, creating a fan-like shape. The books are resting on a dark surface, and the background is a warm, textured brown.

The program will begin with a lecture from Drs. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, professors at Yale University, and Co-Directors of the [Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#). Their presentation will link conservation and environmentalism to the teachings of many of the world's religions. Drs. Tucker and Grim will also help us to understand how different faiths interpret and and ask us to respond to the environmental issues that we face today.

Following the lecture, we will host a panel discussion with faith leaders from in and around New Canaan. The panel will be moderated by Reverend Stephanie Johnson, a former student of Drs. Tucker and Grim, who has spent many years working at the intersection of theology and environmentalism and facilitates faith-based environmental programs. Additional information about the panel is below.

Join us in-person at The Congregational Church of New Canaan, or online via a livestream. We kindly request that all participants wishing to attend in-person be fully vaccinated. We will have reduced capacity at The Congregational Church Meeting House to allow for social distancing, and require that attendees wear masks for the duration of the program.

Register here: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/9Cx-7W1wnAQWKRGGrM5uvSg

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

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(203) 966-2651
www.godsacre.org

We are a Stephen Minister Church

Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the February newsletter, please submit by January 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