



# meditate

## ON MY WORD

faithfulness

*By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

*Galatians 5:22-24*

### FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

#### Spiritual Home

A few years ago, my childhood home in Fort Worth, Texas, came up for sale. Though we have not lived there in over twenty years, I was able to walk through our house while it was under construction because the friend I was visiting knew the contractor. It was the first time I had been inside our home since my parents died. I must say, it was a mix of emotion chronicling with alarming detail every change that had been made to the house. The same yellow washer dryer set was in the utility room 22 years ago—is that a testimony to Whirlpool or neglect on the owner's part? And so it went, room by room. When we came to my sister's closet, something magical happened. The long metal ball chain that connected to the ceiling light was still broken half-way up, and it still had the same Laura Ashley Ribbon that we had tied on 25 years ago. My eyes widened; I pulled the chain, entered the attic, and looked for the place in the rafters where we had written in black Sharpie, "Kathryn and Chris Kibbie lived here 1972-1995." Tears. It was like standing on holy ground.



Presbyterian author and minister Frederick Buechner says a house is not a home until you have brought home a baby or two, until you have stayed up all night with a colicky child, or sat beside a loved one who is sick and waited until the morning hours when you can put the coffee pot on and call the doctor first thing. A home is not a home until you have finally made the team and come home to celebrate. Or until you've lost a job and come home to those who love you anyway. A home is a home when you have been accepted to college, and you pack all your worldly goods into a few suitcases and leave. Home is a sacred place.

Throughout the Scriptures, home is a powerful concept. No word in the English language stirs emotions as much as the word home. The Bible is full of stories about places that are sacred, places where people encounter God: the Garden of Eden, the promised land of Canaan. Mount Sinai, Bethlehem, the River Jordan, Nazareth, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Road to Emmaus.

Our Meeting House, our Chapel, and our Memorial Garden are sacred places for many people. Folks who have moved away or come back for holidays come early to the Meetinghouse simply to breathe the air and feel how good it feels to "be home." And any day of the week, I will see folks walking through the memorial garden, praying,

*Continued on page two*



## From the Pastor's Study

*Continued from page one*

remembering, and thanking God for this sacred space, this thin place where we can see clearly through the veil to the heavenly realm.

I hope you encounter the Risen Christ on God's Acre in many of the same ways I do.

In the fellowship, we share before and after worship, and at coffee hour.

In our children. In their startling frankness and their energetic joy.

In the deep conversations I have each week with our staff, as we share our lives.

In the extraordinary music that washes over us each week in worship and takes our breath away.

In the giggles and laughter of our children who come for music and youth group weekday afternoons.

In the incredible care that our staff puts into working together as a team. The way we build one another up and support one another when we struggle.

In the sermons that move us to think, to act, to pray, and to grow closer to Christ.

In our pastoral care as we reach out to those who need us most.

In our mission, as we care for a world in desperate need.

In our small groups, sharing our lives.

In the generous giving of gifts as people share their talents with us in so many selfless ways.

In the knitting of shawls, the arranging of flowers, in the writing of cards, and the preparing of communion bread. God is surely in this place.

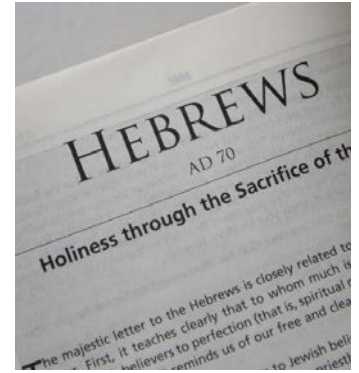
Welcome one, welcome all, welcome home!

Easter Blessings and peace,  
Kibbie

## ADULT FORMATION

### Yale Bible Study – Hebrews!

Historically, Hebrews is thought of as a letter from Paul, and it is therefore grouped with his other letters in the New Testament. However, Paul's authorship has been questioned since the third century. Equally mysterious is the audience of this document. Hebrews does not follow the form of an early Christian letter; the author calls it a "word of exhortation." To our ear, it sounds like a homily or collection of homilies.



Hebrews contains a rich message regarding the significance of Jesus' life and death. This style of writing is not familiar to twenty-first-century readers, so some study and discernment are required to "mine the gold." This study aims to help the learner reflect on each of the letter's distinctive claims, to understand the context in which they were originally presented, and to reflect on the application of their understanding to a Christian life today.

New members are welcome to any and all sessions! Join us Mondays at 7:00am in the Library and Tuesdays (Women's) 9:30am in the Parlor or on Zoom. Contact Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org)

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

### Women of Wisdom Luncheon

All women of the church are invited to a Spring Fellowship Luncheon. This year's buffet lunch will be held at The Country Club of New Canaan on Friday, May 20, at 11:30am. The cost is \$40. We hope you will join us for this social occasion. RSVP by May 6.

Please RSVP using this registration form: <https://godsacre.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/114/responses/new>

Contact Lesley Cousley, [lcousley@gmail.com](mailto:lcousley@gmail.com) with question or to learn more.

Women of Wisdom  
Spring Luncheon  
Friday, May 20  
New Canaan Country Club





During Lent, thirteen of us came together to talk about things we believe at this particular moment, things that are pressing on our hearts, and committed to writing them down. When we sit together in conversation and ask the spirit to move us, the spirit does not disappoint. The proof is in the resulting group of essays, a few of which we will share with you over the next few months of newsletters.

## This I believe: What we need most is each other.

Our world is full of valuable, wonderful things: Diamonds, bars of gold, sunrises, and the morning's first sip of coffee. Which of all the currencies of existence truly matter most? I believe that it is each other; our support, friendship and even – sometimes especially – what we do differently that is of most value. It's no coincidence that birds flock together.

On Halloween night, 2017 my town roared with celebration. Bonfires dotted lawns and the streets were crowded with trick-or-treaters. An entire community seemingly dedicated to the children's hunt for candy. Seeing my candy basket was nearly empty, I went inside to refill it and learned that, sadly, the candy had run out. While my host debated what best to do, I walked, deflated, back onto the porch. A Darth Vader and two Elsas were waiting. "Hey kids" I asked, "Does anyone have anything in their bag that they are allergic to or don't like? We are running out of candy." Without missing a beat, they turned their bags upside down and tipped some of their candy into my basket. As they ran off, they stated simply to the children on the lawn, "They need candy." Word spread and trick-or-treaters flooded towards the porch. My hosts came out and we filled my very large basket as well as the several others on the porch. Our very own loaves and fishes moment and we were saying, "Thanks! This is enough, we are all set!" Yet, the candy kept coming. Unquestionably the children had equal fun filling our baskets as they did filling their bags. It turned out candy was not the true currency of the evening, but rather the joy of passing sweetness around.

I am not saying I believe altruism is our true state of being. When I learned that those cute communities of penguins huddling together for warmth in the arctic à la Happy Feet are actually struggling to push themselves to the center of the group and others out to the chilly borders, I was sorry but not surprised. We all struggle for our own identity and safety. A look at politics or the corporate world is certainly a look at conflict. But intentionally or not, the penguins are still saving each other. Being out in the cold together is better than alone in any wilderness. The penguins have each other to lean upon, as do we.

There is little that I do without the collaboration, support or inspiration of others. I never bother to prepare a fine meal unless it will be enjoyed with others. Singing with a choir is simply more fun than singing alone. In the poetry world, we call it a \*prompt\*, in sports, a team. In the best of circumstances, a family. I am a far better writer with the support and encouragement of my writing groups. I am a far better gardener for having clients who are allergic to bees and need special plants or ask for something they love.

This I believe, the very atoms which form the building blocks of our universe bond together though positive and negative attraction. Community allows us to thrive. Candy is sweeter when shared.

Juliet Howe 3/30/2022



## Beacon of Light Celebration

It is hard to believe that a full year of youth programming is coming to an end! What a wonderful year we had. We were back in Smith Hall, once again had shared meals, sang songs at youth worship, served on a mission trip to Allendale, and Mountainside is rapidly approaching too! Each year we invite all our youth grades K-12th, their families, and our entire church family to a special celebration to lift up gratitude and thanks to God for all that was made possible this year. Our kids' faith has been formed, and friendships have grown. We hope the memories we've created together will be in the hearts of our youth for a long time!

As part of this celebration, we send off our seniors with prayers for their bright futures. Many of our seniors grew up in the youth programs, and they look forward to this special

capstone on their time with us. It is really a beautiful sight to see how our younger fish look up to them all year, especially at this event!

Please join us on Wednesday, May 25, from 6:00-8:00pm as we celebrate this year with all of Youth Ministries and send off our seniors with prayers for their life beyond God's Acre!

The event will take place on the church grounds and includes dinner from Seaside Sliders and dessert!



Please register your entire family by May 18 at [tinyurl.com/YGBOL2022](https://tinyurl.com/YGBOL2022).





# Youth Ministries this May

MSYG heads to Canaan, CT, for its twentieth annual Mountainside Mission Trip! 38 of our MSYGers, juniors, and adult advisors will depart New Canaan on May 20 for an incredible weekend of service as we share and grow in our faith.



# MOUNTAINSIDE



To raise money for their mission trip, MSYG will be holding a car wash on May 7 from 10:00-2:00pm at the church, along with a bake sale after the 10:00am service on May 8. Come out to support the mission team and keep them in your prayers!



On Wednesday, May 18, Youth Ministries will host its final Youth Worship from 6:00-7:30pm. Please join us in the parlor and Memorial Garden for an evening of fellowship and worship. All youth K-12 are welcome.



May is a great time to try out a youth group and bring new friends to check out Minnows, Guppies, JYG, MSYG, and YG this month!

# Our Fish this April





## Easter on God's Acre

Our Children had a wonderful Holy Week on God's Acre! From the Stations of the Cross to the Cross and Empty Tomb, we celebrated the great stories of our faith. And after all the wonderful learning, we celebrated with an Easter Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt with 2,000 eggs all over the property! Such fun!





## Stations of the Cross Teach Easter Story

During April, the 5th, 6th, and 7th graders led Church School through the stories leading up to Easter. The Triumphal Ride to Jerusalem on a Donkey, Jesus Teaches Love, Jesus Washes his Disciples' Feet, The Last Supper, Judas' Betrayal, the Arrest in the Garden, The Trial, the Crucifixion, and the Empty Tomb. Fun was had by all; the children really loved getting to know and understand the stories that are the foundation of our faith.



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



## The Tale of the Three Trees Musical



The cast and crew of our Spring Musical, "The Tale of Three Trees," by Allen Pote and Tom S. Long, have been hard at work rehearsing throughout March and April. Children in grades PreK-7th grade are excited to present their interpretation of this touching folk tale this month!

Please join us on Monday, May 16, at 4:30pm for our musical presentation in the Meeting House, followed by light refreshments in Smith Hall.

This will be the children's "dress rehearsal" for their outreach performance at The New Canaan Inn on Wednesday, May 18. Come wish them luck!



## Junior Worship Team

Members of our newly established Junior Worship Team can be heard next on Sunday, May 15 during the 10:00am Worship Service, singing "Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone."





## Thank You!

The Lenten season and Easter Day were especially beautiful because of the music. Thank you to the singers and pianists who provided music for the Lenten Musical Moments each Wednesday afternoon. Thank you to the Chancel Choir, who shared their talents for many beautiful services over the past months. Our church is so blessed!



## The Mary Bradley Clarke Fund Benefit Concert

*The Congregational Church of New Canaan  
invites you to join us to  
Celebrate Music!*

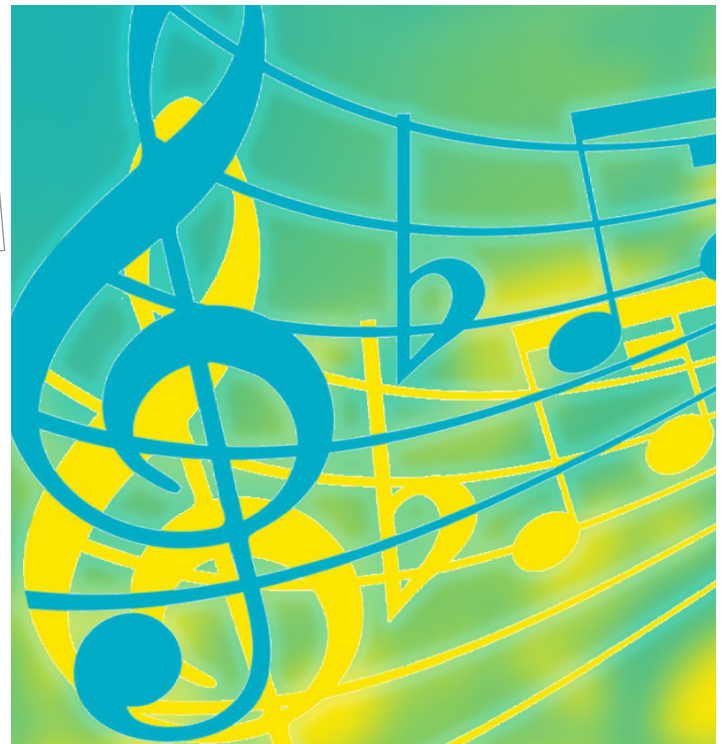


*at a Benefit Concert for  
the Mary Bradley Clarke Fund*

*Saturday, June 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.  
23 Park Street, New Canaan  
Free community concert  
Reception following*

*Reply card enclosed  
Reservations not required*

*Child care provided*





## Growing the Garden

In these difficult times, there seem to be so many intractable problems in every corner of the globe, including ours. We often don't know how we could make a difference or where to start. Here's a problem we can address for people we know and care about.

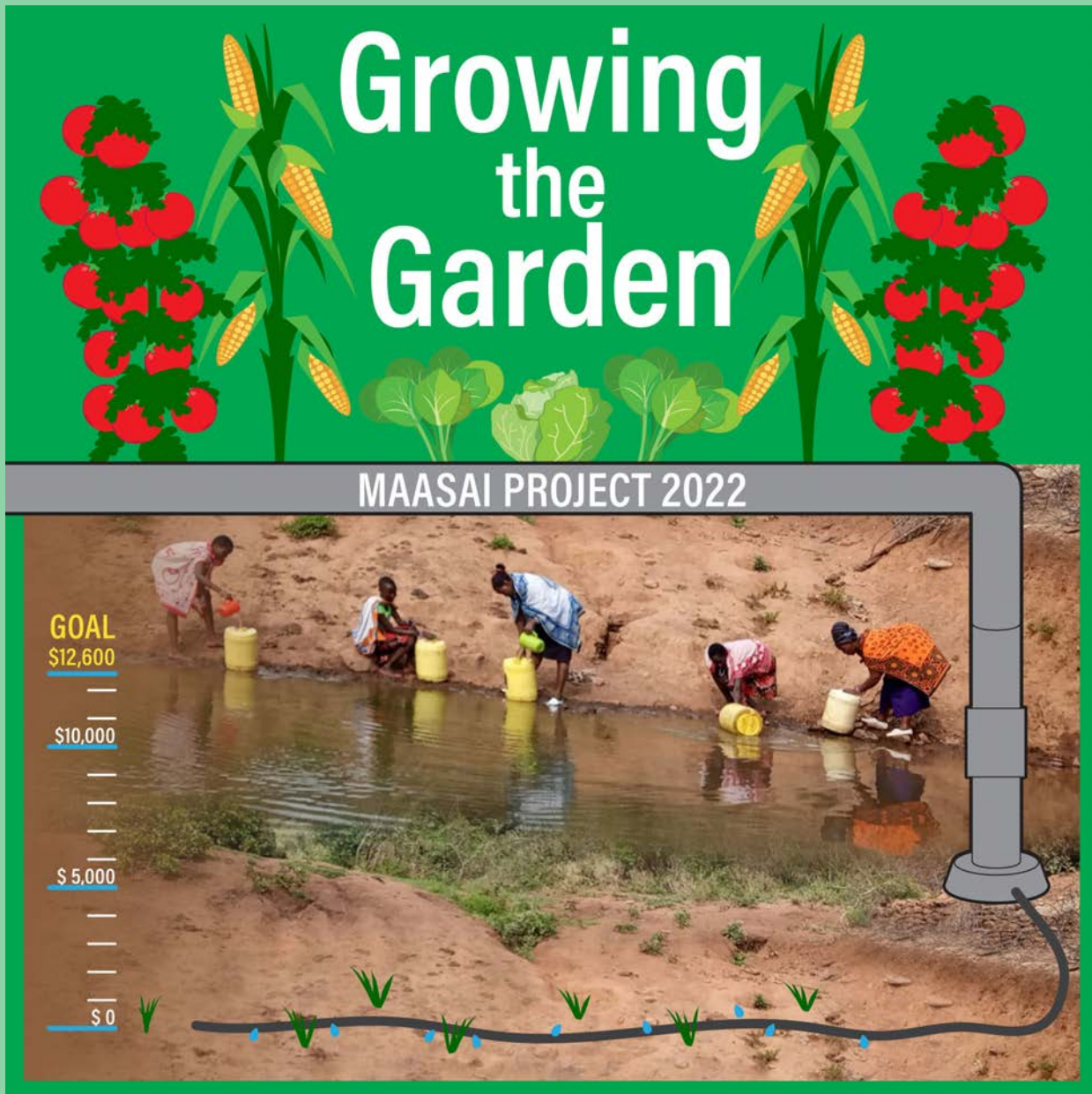
Our friends, the Maasai have struggled through a persistent drought this year. Their crops failed, and many of their livestock died. On your behalf, MSA sent emergency funds on two occasions totaling \$5,575 to help tide them over. And thankfully, modest rains have returned in recent months, but their water supply and, therefore, their food supply remains precarious.

Our partners have asked if we could help with two more water-related projects this year. First is a pipeline to the village of Enkusero Sampu from their existing well; this is similar to several very successful pipeline projects we funded in the past. And second, they want to install a drip irrigation system in a two-acre vegetable garden to use of their precious water better and improve the security of their food supply.

The cost of the two projects, \$12,600, is modest by our standards, but will significantly impact their quality of life. Please consider a gift.



WHAT'S YOUR M.O. ?





## Can A Stephen Minister Help You?

Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. Our church has been proud to be a Stephen Ministry church since 2006, and we have 25 active Stephen Ministers right now. If you or someone you know and love need some extra support and care right now, please reach out. Let us walk beside you. Contact Beth Baker [bethcudabaker@gmail.com](mailto:bethcudabaker@gmail.com) or Rev. Kibbie Laird [kibbie@godsacre.org](mailto:kibbie@godsacre.org).



*Christ caring for people through people*

**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

## Blooming Gratitude

Our church family truly came together this past Easter Sunday to create the floral display. We donated generously towards the flowers, helped arrange the display, and then, best of all, helped deliver them in the New Canaan community and beyond. What joy to be in our church sanctuary surrounded by a virtual garden of spring blooms and a chorus of voices. Remembering it inspires true gratitude. Sincerely thanks to all!



## Prayer Shawl Knitters Is a Wonderful Ministry

On the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, between 10:00-11:30am in the Parlor, the ladies who knit prayer shawls gather for this beautiful ministry, for fellowship, and to enjoy one another's company. This is a truly intergenerational group. Some have been knitting for years, and some are brand new. All agree it is worth the time and effort. Each month we receive thank you letters from near and far from folks who are grateful for our prayer shawls. If you would like to join us, please reach out to Twee Haffner or just come! You are most welcome.





## 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

Tracy Goldman, x829  
Administrative Assistant

Karl Hedrick, x839  
Organ Scholar

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](http://www.godsacre.org)

*We are a Stephen Minister Church*

## Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the June newsletter, please submit by May 18.  
Email submissions to: [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto: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](http://www.godsacre.org/myconnect)
2. Go to [www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org) and click "myConnect@God's Acre" in the upper left corner.

Need an Account?

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

Questions?

Contact [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org)

