



meditate

ON MY WORD

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

It is January, and that makes me think of New Year's Resolutions and new calendars, the gym, and a healthier diet. Supposedly 75% of people who make New Year's resolutions are still successful in keeping them after one week. After one month, the number drops to 64%. After six months, the number is 46%. Some people set unrealistic goals, others don't keep track of their progress, and others still make too many resolutions at once.

When we think of the Christian life, we can either focus on things we want to add or things we want to get rid of. Let's start with the latter. How do we get rid of unwanted baggage? Do you know 7,000 bags go to Unclaimed Baggage Centers in airports every single day in the US? 7,000! Some are eventually claimed. Some are not. A Delta baggage claim representative was once asked what are some odd things people checked?

Live things, dead things, smelly things, illegal things. What was the weirdest thing they found in an unclaimed bag? The answer? A live rattlesnake? Who checks a live rattlesnake at the Atlanta airport? Someone who is trying to get rid of it, that's who.

At the beginning of the New Year, there is a natural invitation to let go of those parts about ourselves we are not too proud of and focus on the things we do want to achieve. I invite you to take a closer look, a deeper look and think of something you would be better without – jealousy, anger, perfectionism, hatred, busyness, impatience, lack of gentleness, lack of kindness, cynicism, harshness, obsessiveness, competitiveness, sarcasm. You get the idea. Now, work on checking that unwanted baggage and letting it go.

And then focus on some things you would be good to pick up – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.

I think the real question we wrestle with is whether we can change. Change is a constant theme in the Bible. It is a basic Christian principle. The early church believed in growing spiritually through small groups for fellowship, sharing, praying, and breaking bread. Every church around the world has learned this secret. We will grow closer to God if we grow closer to each other. Why is this? We hold each other accountable.

Continued on page two

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

Ephesians 4:31-32



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Continued from page one

We share our failures and triumphs. In the same way that Alcoholic Anonymous and Weight Watchers thrive on accountability, the same way climbers rope together in case one of them falls, the others will help them back up. We are fellow climbers. Fellow travelers, if you will, who share our lives and grow together. Ever more gently toward the example of Jesus Christ.

One of my New Year's Resolutions is to speak my gratitude. So here goes. I am unbelievably grateful to serve this church and the amazing people here. I love our congregation and our amazing staff and feel every single day that I am blessed beyond words to serve among you. With you as we journey together.

Blessings and peace,
Kibbie

STEWARDSHIP

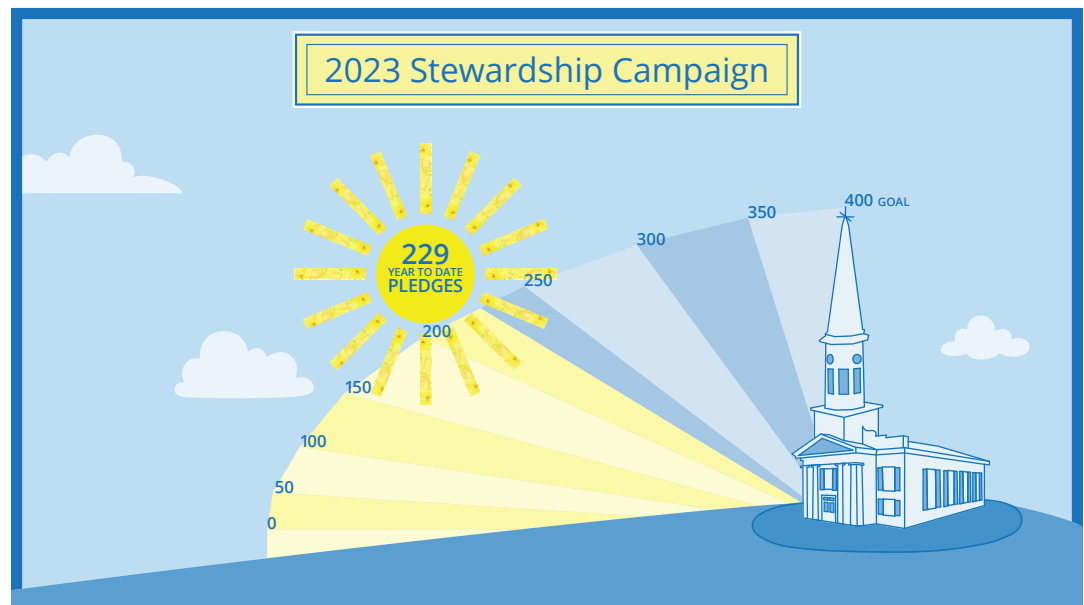
Stewardship Update

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.

This Stewardship season, we are focused on Jesus' call in the Sermon on the Mount to be light to the world, and to allow God's light to be reflected in our living and giving. We ask that you consider how our community of faith has brightened and enlightened your lives and that you support our church by pledging to the very best of your ability.

We do have a specific goal that we aim to achieve: We hope and pray that 400 individuals and families will participate in our campaign this year. We have set this bold goal knowing that we are reaching more people in-person and virtually than ever before.

More than 1,500 light years away from us, there is an open star cluster called Messier 34 that contains about 400 stars and whose light can be seen at night with the naked eye. If 400 stars can emit a glow that can be seen more than 1,500 light years away, imagine how luminescent God's light might be when reflected through the collective generosity of 400 members of our church family clustered here on God's Acre.



Currently, we are at 229 pledge cards (57% of goal).

Currently, we are at 229 pledge cards (57% of goal). We are very grateful for the blessings of this community. If you have not yet pledged, please consider making a pledge to the Stewardship Campaign, and if possible, please consider increasing your commitment.

Beyond pledging, we hope that you will also encourage others to participate in this year's campaign. Let's allow our light to shine brightly so that the world will see it and give glory to God in the heavens!

Women Enjoy Christmas Tea

On December 8, the women of the church were treated to a lovely lunch in Smith Hall. The menu included a selection of quiches from Walter Stewart's and a variety of salads and tea sandwiches from Palmers. Volunteers met on Wednesday afternoon to string lights and decorate trees for the "transformed" Smith Hall. Talented bakers from our church brought delightful goodies to share, and Anne Gunter led a surprise raffle for our seasonal teapot centerpieces.



Upcoming MG Events

We have 3 MG events scheduled during January and early February and hope the men of the church will consider participating. First, the M4 Breakfast career discussion group will continue on Friday, January 27, at 7:30am. Dirk Dunlap at dirkdunlap@hotmail.com is hosting at his office on Grove Street. Next, the Men's Small Groups are meeting on Monday, January 30 at 7:30pm. Finally, MG is also

hosting a breakfast on Saturday, February 4 in Smith Hall with our brothers from Pivot Ministries. Volunteers are needed, so please reach out if you would like to help.

Contact Steve Case at scase135@outlook.com or (203)434-0617 if you have any questions. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.



Fellowship Chili Paddle

All are invited to the 10th Annual Fellowship Chili Paddle Party on Friday, January 27, at Waveny Lodge from 7:00-10:00pm. Please RSVP by January 22. Guests are asked to BYOB and bring a side or dessert that compliments chili! If you would like to be a contestant in the chili cookoff, contact Dawn Doak, dawn.norris@gmail.com.

No need to play paddle to attend - we have plenty of seasoned players who are willing to teach new players, or if you prefer, just come for the chili and the fellowship.



Staff Update

Following Shean-Mei Sheu's retirement in December we are pleased to welcome our new Director of Finance, Maria Stadnik. Maria became a church member in 2019 with her children Christine and Michael Stadnik-Poteroba and looks forward to this new endeavor. Maria will start on January 3 and can be reached at finance@godsacre.org or ext. 108.



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

New Member Winter Class

Start the new year off by deepening your connection with God and joining our church. Please save these dates for our winter new member classes. We look forward to welcoming you into our family of faith. Contact Courtney Flynn, courtneywflynn@gmail.com, by January 15 to sign up.

Introduction

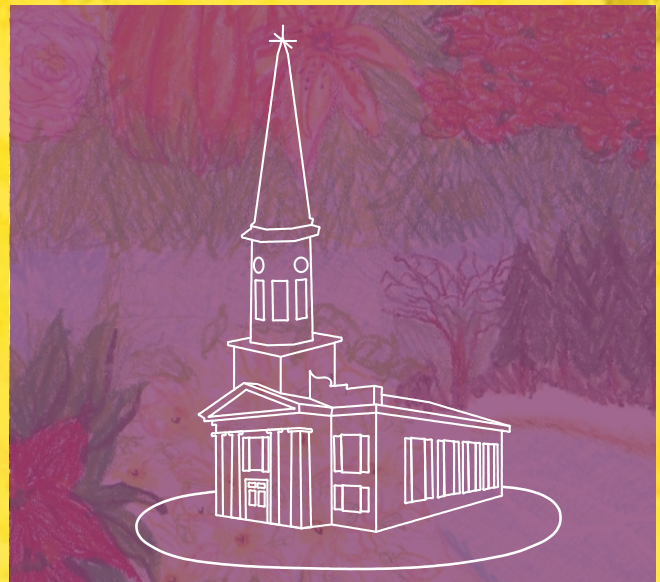
Sunday, January 22, 3:00-5:00pm

Faith Sharing

Wednesday, January 25, 7:00-9:00pm

New Member Sunday

Sunday, January 29,
8:30am breakfast, 10:00am worship



Thank You For The Gift Of Music

The Advent and Christmas seasons were especially beautiful because of the music. 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 so admired, and we are grateful. You inspire us when you lead in worship.



Epiphany Sunday January 8

The Chancel Choir will celebrate Epiphany Sunday with the Kings' procession and special music at the 10:00am service. They will sing "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" and "Behold, the Star!"



NEW YEAR'S 2023 RESOLUTION!

YOU ARE INVITED TO
~ Sing Or Ring ~
IN A CHOIR

Start the New Year by singing in a Church Choir. There's a choir family for You.

Cherubs (*preschool ages 3 and 4*)
resume Monday, January 9, 3:30-4:00pm

Spirit Singers (*grades K-2*)
resume Monday, January 9, 5:00-6:00pm

Joyful Noise (*grades 3 and 4*)
resume Monday, January 9, 4:00-5:00pm

Joyful Ringers
resume Thursday, January 12, 6:15-7:15pm

Chancel Choir (*high school through adults*)
resumes Thursday, January 12, 7:30-9:00pm

For more information, please contact Jody Blaine Davis at (203)966-2651 x104 or music@godsacre.org or Sydney Anderson at (203)966-2651 x115 or sydney@godsacre.org

Start the Year with Gratitude

In November, several of us got together to think about things we are grateful for in conjunction with our *This I Believe* writing workshop. Our conversation was rich, and some wonderful and moving essays resulted. See for yourself below and consider taking the plunge during Lent when we take up the topic of “the table.”



I Believe In Books

by Teri Reed

I believe in the power they possess to educate, elucidate, confuse, and enrage me. I believe in their ability to let me experience places in the world where I have never been and may never visit. Books give me insight into others' perspectives I may not understand, and I believe that books should be allowed in libraries even if I may disagree with the principles or the beliefs expressed within them. I believe that discussing a book is one of the best ways to glimpse other readers' attitudes and beliefs.

I believe that free and easy access to books are integral to a democratic society because they offer all citizens equal access to knowledge of what they are curious about. People like Ray Bradbury educated themselves mostly in public libraries. I believe that libraries contribute to the way I feel about my town and that they should be well-funded and treasured as the center of my community.

I believe in Bookmobiles. I walked home from my New Jersey elementary school every day wondering if today would be the lucky day I got to use my very own library card in the Bookmobile that was occasionally parked on the corner before I reached my block. I felt honored that the whistling man who drove the Bookmobile and the checkout woman were there just for me. The BookMobile had fabulous child-height red plastic seats built in the walls where I could luxuriate in browsing the children's section books all by myself. I wondered at the incredible abundance of books I could choose from, and I walked a little higher because of the



pride I felt knowing that I was able to check out any of the books in the Bookmobile all by myself, not on my mom's schedule. Choosing books in the BookMobile and at my school library was one of the ways I learned independence and autonomy.

I believe in that beautiful new pulpy/woody/ink smell I get when I open a book for the first time. I believe there are few gifts more personal or treasured than books I have received from a friend or family member. A friend of mine believes that books are not meant to be held onto, but passed onto others who will perhaps love the book as we did. (I confess I am working up to this as I like to hang onto my favorite books).

I believe in the miracle of a thin, light Kindle that allows hundreds of books to be easily transported, highlighted, and lit appropriately for either sun or a darkened room.

I believe that the most beautiful decoration in anyone's home is a bookshelf that displays the books they have read and loved. It is always the first thing I look at in a house and I confess I do a small personality analysis based on the books my host chooses to display. Looking at my beloved books on my bookshelf comforts me and makes me feel as if I am surrounded by old friends.

I believe that as I continue to age, books will be one reliable enjoyable constant in my life as they have been for the past 56 years.



I Believe In the Gift of Compassion

by Larry Serven

I had a difficult home life growing up. My mother suffered from an undiagnosed brain tumor that led to her depression, and my father coped as many did in his day by leaning on alcohol, which sometimes led to incidents of rage.

My own coping wasn't much better, and I grew into a very angry young man. By the time I left for college I was, admittedly, remorseless. It was a cruel world out there and you better get used to it. Need a friend kid? Get a dog. I remember reading an article in the Wall Street Journal about a corporate raider who said that were white rats and black rats. He was a self-proclaimed black rat, explaining the difference was "a black rat will eat his own leg off to get out of a trap." Color me black.

Compassion could make you vulnerable, weaken you, make you soft. Just the opposite of what you needed in this world to thrive, to wind up with the most toys. I laughed hard at dark humored jokes that would make light of a tragedy, reaffirming I was immune to what tugged at a lesser person's heart.

And then, at the end of my senior year in college, CT Scan replaced outdated EEG technology, and my mother's slow growing brain tumor was finally diagnosed. She had the most renowned brain surgeon at Sloan Kettering operate on her, and he was able to remove most of the tumor. But my mother needed a combination of Radiation and Chemotherapy afterward. It made her terribly sick and sapped her energy till there was very little left.

Her lungs had a bad reaction to the treatment, and she died. I was 23.

If there was one person in this world who could still reach me, who I knew would always be in my corner, it was my mother. And now she was gone.

This story, if it followed a straight line, would end with that angry young man being more convinced than ever that the world was cruel, and the best answer would be to roll a stone in front of a tomb of his own making – sealing the entrance to his heart forever.

But God does not give up on lost causes.

The day my mother died my father had me call Charlie Smith, Reverend at the Congregational Church of New Canaan, where I had attended Pastor's Class and had been confirmed. My father wanted me to make funeral arrangements and Charlie asked me to come down and see him.

We met in the church parlor, I in a chair and Charlie on the couch. We talked for a bit, and then Charlie told me a story.

When his own mother died Charlie was in his fifties with grown kids. He woke up in the middle of the night not long afterwards crying – absolutely sobbing. His wife woke up and asked him what was wrong. He cried, "I'm all alone." This with his wife of 30 years right beside him.

That, my friends, is what compassion looks like.

He could have quoted from the bible. He could have offered kind words of comfort and faith. All well intentioned but not what I needed. I needed someone who knew the depths of my pain from experience and express it.

And Charlie risked something. Aren't Pastors supposed to be pillars of strength and faith? But here Charlie was, opening himself up, laying himself out at probably his most vulnerable. Maybe that openness takes more strength than anything.

I can tell you that in that moment, and many that have followed since, I understood the Gift of Compassion. Not just to receive it, but to freely give it to others. I learned I don't have to wait for some monumental opportunity. Just recognizing the waiter who's having a bad day and cutting him some slack, letting someone into traffic, lending an ear to a friend in trouble.

I may not know your pain, but I know pain. I am a better human being for it. Don't be afraid to pass it on.



The Unexpected

by Pamela Crum

Have you ever really thought about where things come from? When the trees become ablaze in the fall, do you gaze in awe and wonder? When you see an empowering sunrise or spectacular sunset, do you think about why? When something unexpected happens, is it by happenstance and by design?

When we were travelling this fall, our trip was filled with natural beauty and unexpected opportunities. We saw the amazing fall foliage and fjords that were God's glorious and unmatched artwork on nature's canvas. Almost every day we enjoyed beautiful sunrises and spectacular fiery sunsets that only the Lord could have created. Each of these had unexpected beauty and uniqueness which bookended some unexpected opportunities that shined brightly in their own way during our travels.

Sharing a meal with a stranger can lead to unexpected consequences, and we had two such experiences. The first was at the start of our trip in Oslo when we were seated for dinner next to a couple of Country & Western singers on a European tour. We struck up a conversation and they invited us to come to their show the next night ... and unbeknownst to us, Brandy bought our dinner. A little voice moved us to venture out of our safe "Covid" comfort zone and go to the show. Hoping the trolley, we went and had a wonderful time along with their 1,000 fans. These "angels" helped us start to grow out of our safe Covid shell.

Another was at lunch in Bordeaux when a couple shared our bistro table and their wine with us, and subsequently invited us to join them to visit the winery afterwards. The irony was that, unlike in Oslo, this couple did not speak English. We all felt comfortable enough to expose our often vulnerable lack of having the right words and move forward over the meal, striking up a conversation and a momentary friendship that transcended language and communicated on a different level. Sharing and connecting over a meal with a stranger can be wonderful.

Weather ... often a source of the unanticipated. Our trip included the Baltic countries, and prior to finishing our Baltic cruise, we were scheduled to sail back to Sweden from Latvia, but there was a major storm brewing. The black sky meeting the tumultuous sea ahead would be like sailing into the abyss. Our ship was diverted to Lithuania, which was another amazing unexpected opportunity. We were welcomed with music, enthusiasm, generosity, and a desire to teach us about their town and country. The Lithuanians, who are proud of their independence and democracy, are trying to revive the religious practices and culture they lost during the years as part of the USSR. However, the remnants of how life was under the Soviet Union – the architecture, work environment, and "scars" - still resonate there. The feelings and experiences that the rest of the Baltics shared were interesting and expected, but this visit to Lithuania was the most informative and unexpected opportunity to get insight into what life had been as part of the Soviet Union.

Churches can often bring unforeseen opportunities. One Sunday we visited Canterbury Cathedral, an amazing and humungous multi-layered church with historical significance dating back to 597 A.D. While in the lower level crypt we were drawn to join a procession that led to a service starting there. Sitting on the fringes, it felt good to be in church again joining the attendees in liturgy and the distanced communion circle. It was a sacred opportunity to thank God for all he has given us.

How blessed are we that we can start and end our days with God's natural beauty and have the middle filled with unexpected opportunities to grow, connect, share, learn, and thank God. I for one need to make sure to recognize and appreciate these days – grabbing the unexpected opportunities in both hands and following that up with hands in a prayer of gratitude for all these gifts from God.

J-Term – Colossians Study

If you've never done Bible study, now is the perfect time to try a two-week winter term study. We will look at the short but beautiful book of Colossians in January. Traditionally attributed to Paul, scholars now differ on authorship. Come and decide for yourself and read some oft-quoted passages in context. Mondays, January 9 & 16, 7:00-8:00am, in the Library, and Tuesdays (Women's), January 10 & 17, 9:30-10:30am, in the Parlor. Optional Zoom links are available. Contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org.



Sunday Bible Study – Sermon Reflections

Our 9:00am Sunday Bible Study is suitable for any adults who want to explore in depth the liturgy bible reading for the week along with the sermon preached that week. Join Rev. Kibbie Laird and BJ Flagg as we dive a bit deeper into the scripture readings and sermons. We welcome all new people any week for some lively discussion. Contact BJ Flagg at bj@nurenu.com to learn more.



Clementine's Playgroups Expand

It is hard to believe that Clementine's Playgroups began in March of 2022. The Mommy and Me playgroup for children three years old and younger and their caregivers features music with Ms Jody, playtime with friends, and a story and snack with Rev. Kibbie. Clementine's has been so popular that in the fall of 2022, both classes sold out in under 50 minutes. Now we are expanding the playgroups to meet the need of our new member classes and the many folks in New Canaan who are looking for a church home.

Clementine's Playdates registration for the Winter/Spring of 2023 will open on January 17, 2023. We hope you will join us for so much fun!



Class Schedule

Wednesday
9:15-10:15am and
10:30-11:30am
Friday
9:15-10:15am

Members Only Class

Friday
10:30-11:30am



Church School Celebrates Jesus' Birthday

On December 18, Church School pulled out all the stops and celebrated Jesus' birthday with a wonderful birthday party. Our older youth enjoyed their leadership roles in running the tables for the younger kids. The kids relished Snow Globe making, Crown Making, and various delights in Joseph's Woodworking station.



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Movie Night is January 27!

On Friday, January 27, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, our Children and Family Ministry Team will host **Movie Night** in Smith Hall. We can't wait! How do you break the Winter Blues? Bring your kids and come have a fun night with us!

Children Enjoy Advent Wreath Making

To begin the Advent season, children, youth, and families made Advent wreaths at our Advent Wreath Making Workshop. The evening concluded with lighting the first Advent candle and singing carols around the piano with Jody in the Meeting House. This event is always a family favorite, and we love to start the holiday by celebrating Jesus, the reason for the season.



Church School Calendar • JANUARY 2023 •

- JANUARY 8 Church School
- JANUARY 15 Church School (MLK)
- JANUARY 22 Church School
- JANUARY 27 Family Movie Night
- JANUARY 29 Church School

Children's Choirs Resume!

After a well-deserved holiday break, all Children's Choirs resume along with other Youth programming.

Junior Worship Team (5th-8th grade)

Sunday, January 8 – 11:15am-12:00pm

Cherubs (3-4 year olds)

Monday, January 9 – 3:30-4:00pm

Joyful Noise (3rd & 4th grade) and Spirit Singers (K-2nd grade)

Epiphany Sing-a-long, Monday, January 9 - 4:00-5:00pm

No Choirs on MLK Day, Monday, January 16

Normal Schedule resumes Monday, January 23

If your child is interested in joining a Children's Choir, please email sydney@godsacre.org.



Epiphany Sing-a-long Party

On Monday, January 9, Children's Choir members in grades K-4th will combine for one final musical party of the holiday season. Children are encouraged to bring their friends to choose their favorite Christmas carols to sing one more time before we put them away until next Advent, and then learn the first new song of 2023 together. Snacks and drinks will be provided! (This will serve as Minnows Youth Group activity for the day, and there will be no separate choir from 5:00-6:00pm.)

Busy December for Children's Music and Drama Ministry!

All Children's Choirs sang on the Second Sunday of Advent. They sang front and center to add their voices to the monthly Hymn Sing, sang carols downtown while ringing the Salvation Army Bells, and participated in the beautiful Lessons and Carols Service for the first time!



Of course, the highlight of the month was the 4:00pm Family Service on Christmas Eve, which was a magical event. After months of rehearsals, children from PreK-8th grade retold the story of the birth of Jesus in all of its beautiful, mysterious, and sometimes chaotic glory! We had over 50 children participating in the pageant this year, and the front of the church was filled with little smiles and an electric excitement that only Christmas can bring.



Bringing our Gifts to God in the New Year

Youth Ministries looks forward to all that is ahead in 2023, 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 already received. The New Year offers many opportunities to serve our neighbors both near and far.

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

MSYG Winter Weekend – Gifts of Fellowship

MSYG will embark on its annual winter retreat on January 20-22. This year we will spend two nights at Camp Silverlake in Sharon, Connecticut, for a weekend of sledding, s'more making, teambuilding, and crazy winter fun. If your 7th or 8th grader would like to join us, we still have some space! Please contact Erik at burns@godsacre.org for more information.

Youth Worship – Gifts of Gratitude

Worship is our opportunity to say thank you to God and be together as a beloved community. Youth in grades 3rd-12th will worship together on Wednesday, January 18. Family-style dinner at 6:30pm in Smith Hall followed by worship from 7:00-8:00pm. Questions? Please contact Erik at burns@godsacre.org for more information





For 32 years, The Congregational Church of New Canaan has had a mission to create a community in which youth can experience and share the love of God. All year, we have continued to walk with Christ to create a community for our youth marked by love, covenant, and participation. This year we will once again partner with Blueprint Ministries.

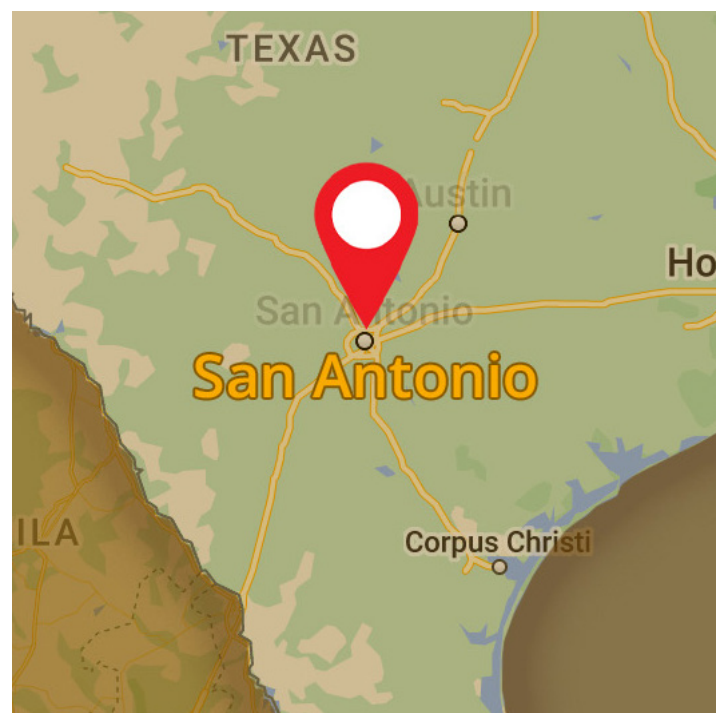
This February, 92 of our YG fish will embark on a truly life-changing pilgrimage to San Antonio, Texas, to work with our partner, Blueprint Ministries, to serve those brothers and sisters living in substandard housing. This is YG's fourth time serving with Blueprint over the years, and the great needs of this community continue to exist.

San Antonio has the second largest amount of substandard housing in the country. People often live with failed roofs, lack of functioning indoor plumbing, and collapsing floors. Blueprint Ministries is committed to helping those most in need. Their mission can only be accomplished with the help of volunteer groups like YG.

YG provides a space for the spirit to move and allows our youth the opportunity to foster a greater relationship with God and one another. Today I ask you to join us as a mission sponsor. Our YG families pay a fee to participate, but that

fee covers only about half the actual cost of this trip. Your donation will not only help provide housing, food, and other needs but, more importantly, make this trip possible for our Mission Fish in need of scholarships.

God's work can only be accomplished with the help of volunteer groups like YG. And we can't do it without sponsors like you! Will you be a Mission Sponsor?





Thank you!

Thank you so very much for your radical Christmas love. Because of your generosity, we gave 101 Dove meals, and more than 50 children received gifts who would not have otherwise. Close to \$4,000 was raised by 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 noontday.

– Isaiah 58:10



The Hayes Family ringing at Walter Stewart's Market.

Pacific House Dinner Service

Serve with us on January 19, 2023.

During the winter months Pacific House Emergency Homeless Shelter in Stamford feeds about 100 men every night. Our church takes responsibility for one dinner per month. Along with other churches and organizations we help to offset the approximately \$250,00.00 per year that would cost.

Volunteering can be as simple as dropping off a bunch of grapes or as involved as making baked ziti and or serving a hot meal to the men at the shelter. Their warm applause after that meal speaks volumes. Please contact Andy Parkin at andyparkin7@gmail.com for details on how to help.

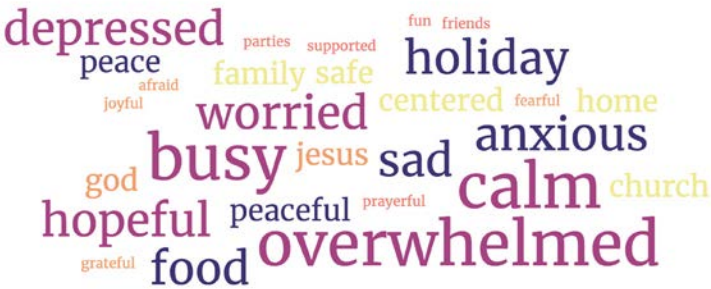
For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...

– Matthew 25:35



Does Someone You Love Need a Stephen Minister?

Stephen Ministry has blessed our congregation since 2006. Why? We believe you do not 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.



Pastoral Care Team Delivers Christmas Flowers

Our pastoral care team delivered flowers on December 18 to many families and members of our church who lost loved ones this year and those in need of special TLC. We are a very hands-on church when it comes to pastoral care, and if you are interested in joining our visitation team or our prayer shawl team, please reach out to Kibbie Laird at kibbie@godsacre.org



Prayer Shawl Christmas Tea

On December 12, Debbie Chapman, Michelle Crookenden, Tracy Goldman, and Kibbie Laird hosted the Annual Prayer Shawl Tea for the women who give of themselves so generously and so lovingly to knit our beloved prayer shawls. This year, we sent out over 45 shawls (some were mailed across the country, and others were mailed overseas)

to folks who need our prayers and the assurance of God's presence. This year the tea featured a cookie swap, so our knitters brought their best baked goods, knitted by the fire, and then enjoyed each other's company, played Christmas games, and sang Christmas carols, thanks to Jody Davis! What fun it is to dance and sing together!



OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Check out our new staff phone extensions!

We have upgraded our phone systems to better serve our congregation. Please take a moment to see the new extensions.

Ministers

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin Garner, **x101**
Senior Minister

The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird, **x102**
Associate Minister of Children, Youth,
and Families

Staff

Sydney Anderson, **x115**
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Kelly Leather Antonson, **x110**
Senior Youth Director

Erik Burns, **x111**
Youth Director

Laurel Carr, **x107**
Director of Communications

Lindsey Daly, **x112**
Director of Children's Ministries

Dr. Jo Deen Blaine Davis, **x104**
Director of Music Ministries

Tracy Goldman, **x109**
Administrative Assistant

Sarah Haddad, **x113**
Church School Coordinator

Karl Hedrick, **x115**
Organ Scholar

Anthony Jones, **x116**
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, **x105**
Director of Missions and Outreach

Caroline Leather, **x106**
Director of Operations

Maria Stadnik, **x108**
Director of Finance

Allison Wolter, **x114**
Youth Ministries Administrative Assistant

Church Lay Leadership

Diane Bailey
Chair, Personnel

Chris Baker
Chair, Board of Trustees

Barbara Clayton
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Hoyt Davidson
Chair, Board of Deacons



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 February newsletter, please submit by January 19. 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

