



meditate

ON MY WORD



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

While I didn't have allergies as a kid, now the first hints of spring tend to come to me in the form of itchy red eyes and a rather scratchy throat. I can remember back to my childhood when spring was first revealed in the wisps of green in the midst of the grey bark of the forest. I have vivid memories of riding in the back seat of our Chevrolet station wagon, looking out the window, and noticing the contrast of the light green budding leaves of the scrub brush against the towering hardwoods that did not yet seem ready to wake from their winter slumber. For whatever reason, I loved seeing that contrast of green and grey together, for a brief moment, just before flora and fauna burst to life in a myriad of forms and colors. The advent of springtime in New England is worth all the antihistamines one might have to take to manage through the glorious buddings and blooms!



The Bible acknowledges that the springing forth of life in the natural world around us bespeaks God's goodness, God's provision, and God's intention that what looks like dead wood is merely life at rest.

The Psalms are replete with the exultation of the divine expressions of creation - "The Heavens are telling of the Glory of God, and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork." "Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD." And Jesus himself was fond of pointing out the wonders of the created order as proof of God's provision for us all: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these."

For those who doubt the presence and possibility of God, wondering why God doesn't reveal God's self to us, consider the glory of early spring in New England - what more revelation is needed? Hints of the glory and presence of God are revealed in bird songs, tulip bulbs, and the warming sun that never fails to lift our spirits. God and God's goodness have greater expressions than these, to be sure, but the advent of spring in our region reminds us of the indomitable force of life that God has endowed all creation with, including ourselves.

Continued on page four

Mary Bradley Clarke Benefit Concert and Reception

Saturday, May 6
7:00pm, Meeting House



The Gala Benefit Concert and reception for the Mary Bradley Clarke Fund which supports guest instrumentalists in our services will be held at 7:00pm this Saturday, May 6. The Chancel Choir, section leaders, and children's choirs will present favorites from Broadway, opera, and popular repertoire. Free and open to the public.



A Holy Thank You

The Lenten season and Easter Day were especially beautiful because of the music! Thank you to the Chancel Choir, Junior Worship Team, Joyful Noise, Spirit Singers, Cherubs, and Joyful Ringers, who shared their talents. Also, much gratitude to the musicians who provided exquisite Lenten Musical Moments. What a blessing you are to the church!

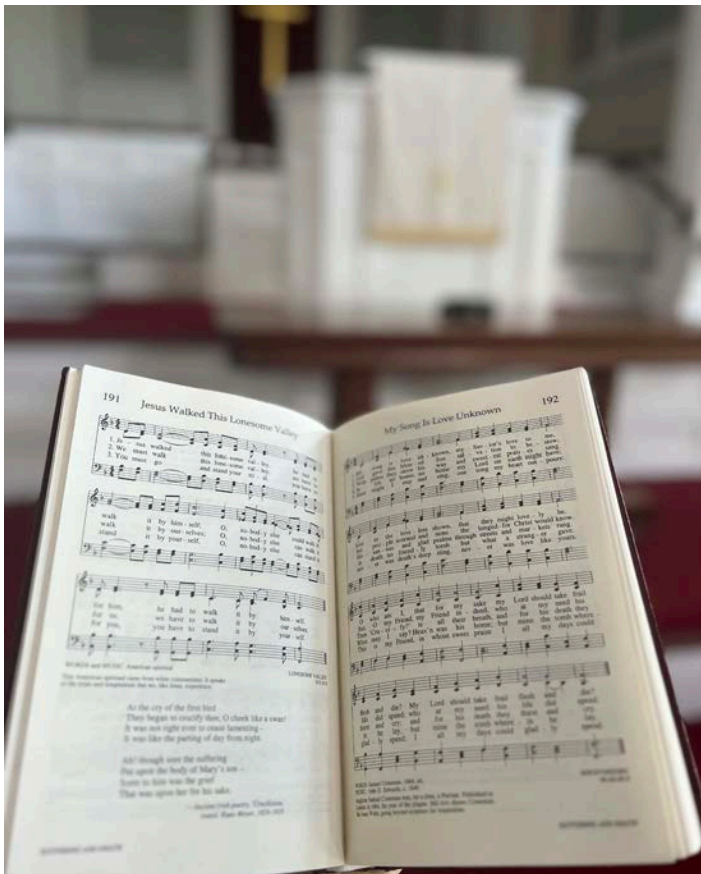
JOIN US

Chancel Choir, Joyful Ringers, Junior Worship Team, Joyful Noise, Spirit Singers, Cherubs, & Grace Notes!

Hymn-Sing-Along

Sunday, May 21 at 9:45am in the Meeting House

Select your favorite hymn and the congregation will sing a few verses! All ages are invited for this monthly Hymn Sing. Any season, any page in our Hymns of Truth and Light hymnal. Jody will lead at 9:45am to hear your selections!



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH CHOIRS

- Church Choirs follows the teaching of the Bible: "Sing praises! Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing it everywhere around the world."
- Church Choirs can be an avenue for introducing outsiders to the church and the Christian faith.
- Church Choirs are open, welcoming, and diverse groups.
- Church Choirs support good congregational singing.
- Church Choirs present a broader repertoire for the congregation.
- Church Choirs add creative artistry and beauty to a worship service.
- Church Choirs give a visual presence as an encouragement for worship to the congregation.
- Church Choirs help singers develop and improve their musical gifts.

We Say Goodbye

We bid farewell to Sergio Andres Martinez, who has been our Choir Scholar in the bass section of the Chancel Choir since COVID. What a blessing to hear his beautiful voice and to enjoy his friendship. Sergio is from Columbia and will graduate this month from Yale University with a master's degree in fine arts. He will sing at Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, NY, this summer and, this fall, begin an apprenticeship with the Washington National Opera in Washington, DC. Thank you, Sergio, for your time with us! Sergio will sing at the 10:00am service on May 21.



Please Welcome Our New Members

Leslie Bisesi
Old Studio Road
Ella, Sam & Brooke

Christopher & Mary Carter
Soundview Lane

Eric & Molly Denlinger
Orchard Drive
John, George & Annie

David & Malia Frame
Old Studio Road
Taylor, Sadie & Luke

Lauren Gargiulo
Ramhorne Road
Avery, James & Luke

Katrina Hering
Bank Street

Brian & Dana Marchiony
Devonwood Lane
Kaitlyn, Kelly & Courtney

Todd & Lizzi Meadow
West Hills Road
Pierce & Lillian

Megan Moreland Sherer
E Maple Street
Samuel & Juliet

Mike & Laura Novosel
Brooks Road
Andrew & Kate

Steve & Kimberly Quinn
Weed Street
Olivia, Regan, Reese

Thomas & June Reinman
Old Kings Highway, Wilton
Connor

Jeff & Charlotte Wilbur
Rosebrook Road
Crosby, Lucy, James &
Genevieve

Jason Wolter
Marshall Ridge Road
Christian, Alex, Molly &
Madison

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All things great and small have necessary seasons of dormancy; all of creation needs rest, but by the grace of God, life is always renewed, within and without. That blessed reality is worth remembering and celebrating, not merely every spring but every single day!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin



Life Events ~ Births



Charlie and Sarah Arestia welcomed son,
William "Whit" Tucker Arestia on March 28, 2023



Ben and Lindsey Leboza welcomed daughter,
Ella Grace Leboza on April 5, 2023

The Exploration of the Neuroscience of Spirituality

A Bold New Paradigm for Health, Healing, and Resilience

Tuesday, May 9
7:00-8:15pm
Meeting House

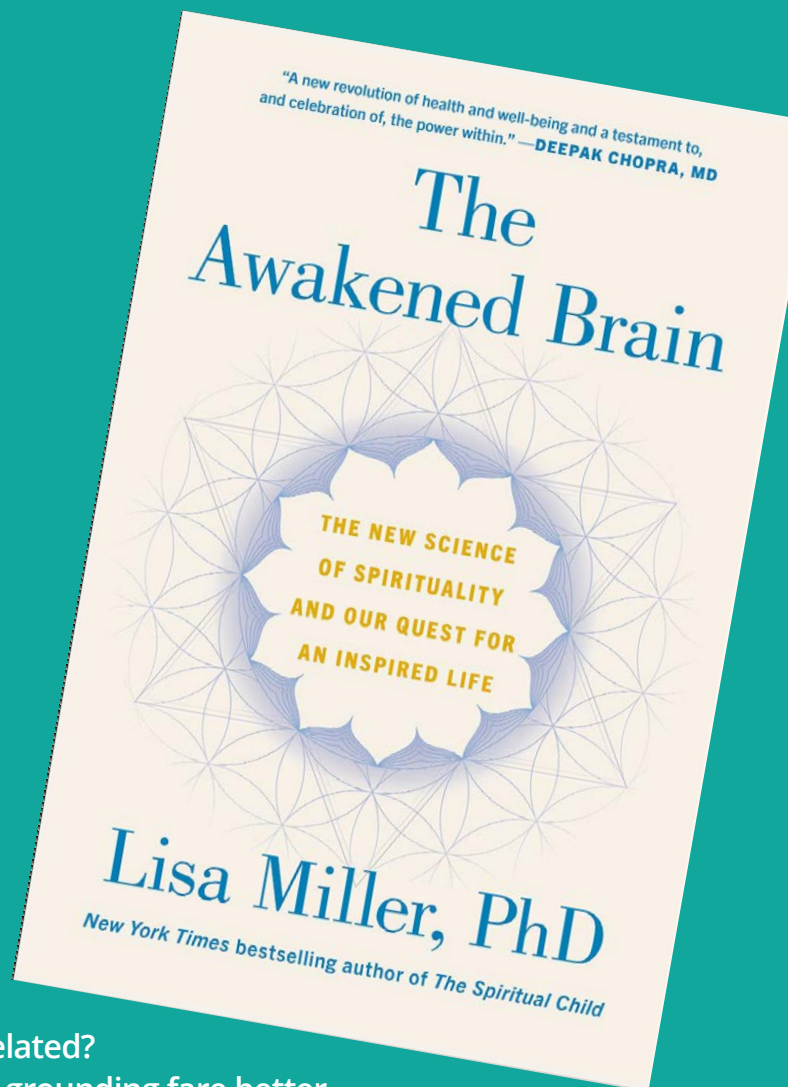


Dr. Lisa Miller, Ph.D.

We are thrilled to have with us New York Times Bestselling author Dr. Lisa Miller, who will be speaking about her book *The Awakened Brain*.

How are mental health and spirituality related? Come find out how those with a spiritual grounding fare better in times of difficulty and are more resilient in times of change. Whether meditation, a walk through nature, saying a prayer or reading sacred text, there are many ways to tap into the heightened awareness around you. The program will discuss parenting and youth but is open and applicable to all.

Contact Rev. Kibbie Laird at kibbie@godsacre.org to learn more.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women of Wisdom Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, May 31, at 11:30am

All women of the church are invited to a Spring Fellowship Luncheon in honor of our Women of Wisdom. This year's buffet lunch will be held at The Country Club of New Canaan on Wednesday, May 31, at 11:30am. The cost is \$45 per person, and you will have the opportunity to sponsor one of our honorees through the registration link. We hope you will join us for this social occasion. RSVP by May 24. Register today at this [link](#). Please contact Lesley Cousley lcousley@gmail.com with any questions.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

MG Family Hike with Pivot Ministries

Our annual MG Family Hike will take place on Saturday, May 6, at 8:30am. We plan to hike a moderate loop trail at Trout Brook Valley Preserve in Weston, CT, for 2-2.5 hours, then gather for a picnic lunch (provided). The hike and lunch should conclude by noon. Dogs on leash are welcome! Contact Don Moyle at donmoyle@gmail.com with questions.



This I Believe - Experiences At the Table

The table was an important feature of Jesus life and faith. As a Lenten practice this spring, and using the This I Believe Writers Workshop format, some of us got together to discuss what the table and its experiences brought to mind for us and our beliefs. The responses and subsequent essays were varied and rich. Over the next few newsletters please enjoy reading what this thoughtful and gifted group came up with, including those who thought they were not writers!

Table (Kitchen) Matters

Barb Clayton, April 2023

Life happens in our kitchen - with preparing and cooking and enjoying a meal. It is truly the heart of our home. And something much bigger, more important happens as well. Relationships are deepened, blessings are counted, gratitude is realized. Our bodies and our souls are fed. This, I believe...

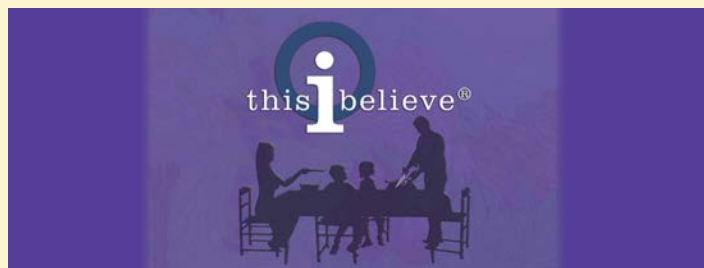
Sometimes the kitchen is a quiet room for enjoying a cup of coffee and a book.

At other times, it is a remote and virtual office. Zoom calls are hosted from here - usually with friends and family in their kitchens across the country. Our golden retriever is always present and part of the quiet and the chaos.

Other times, our kitchen feels electric, bursting with warm and contagious energy. Footsteps heard, eye contact gained, and then smiles broaden. All senses are heightened and incoming people are greeted with warm and welcoming hugs. All who enter are now family - whether invited, intended or related.

Conversations often begin with life updates, recommendations of good books read, athletic accomplishments achieved, music discoveries and recipes tried. Laughter erupts about cooking mishaps and questions are asked about recipe discoveries, special ingredients and accomplishments. Sometimes more serious topics are brought up and strategies for moving forward during difficult times are developed. This happens in our kitchen, and we are often around our table.

Shared favorite recipes and cooking experiences encourage conversations; memories come to fore. Everyone has a favorite recipe. Funny how memory works. My mom and dad were both wonderful cooks, and they loved to welcome guests into their home - their friends and my friends. They both shared their love of cooking with me and my siblings, and now our children. I remember standing on a step stool, under the guidance of my mom, learning to follow recipes, measure, fold, stir and mix ingredients, and then bake, sauté or braise to the final reveal! I thought it was part ingredients and the other part magic! When I am cooking, I often have strong memories of both parents - creating



their favorites. We have a self-published book of my mom's and dad's recipes; some are in their perfect handwritten script. Special recipe traditions are important. Beginning with Thanksgiving, and continuing through Christmas, my siblings and I share animated conversations about cooking methods for turkey, favorite Christmas cookie recipes and so on. The piece de resistance is the unmolding - and unveiling - of my mom's classic Christmas Jell-O ribbon salad. Yes, Jell-O. Picture it red, "white" and green - in a beautiful jiggling ring. Voila!

My mother-in-law was a decent cook - more basic southern heaping quantities of fuel. I believe that southern cooks were on a mission to fill to bursting every stomach, no matter how great that task, that pulled up to their table. However, she had one recipe for Peanut Butter Fingers that is in a different category, and might be my most repeated cookie recipe. Who can resist the combination of peanut butter oatmeal bar cookies with dark chocolate? Oh yes, there is a layer of peanut butter frosting on top. These delicious cookies were always made - and delivered - for moments of celebration or comfort for grieving and everything in between.

Set a pretty table, and finish with a memorable delicious (chocolate!) dessert. I believe that careful cooking is truly a gift of love.

We are not completely food obsessed in our family. You might more aptly label us "kitchen obsessed". Our kitchen is a place of warmth and comfort and safety and celebration. In a healthy way, food is our love language. Our kitchen is the safe haven for our family conversations of a myriad of subjects. There is no end to the imagination or conversations that happen in our kitchen. This I believe... The pleasures of the kitchen and table within are infinite.

Gratitude and blessings! Our kitchen is a happy place, and it is also a familiar and warm place. I have always felt deep gratitude for the food to create a meal and the people around the table. Health, happiness and well-being are all bound together by a bow of gratitude and can be found in a kitchen. Enjoy the food and company, but also savor the blessings and gratitude. If food is the love language and music sets the tone.... Play on! (Misquoting Shakespeare in Twelfth Night)

A Seat at the Table

L. Serven, April 2023

At the home of Jane Hunt, on 401 East Street, Waterloo, New York, there were four seats at the table awaiting a tea party. Jane's old friend Lucretia was in town visiting her sister Martha. Rounding out the tea party were Jane's friends Mary Ann M'Clintock and Elizabeth Stanton.

I'm pretty sure there was a fifth seat at the table for the Holy Ghost because that very same day the four women wrote a notice that appeared in the local Seneca County Courier newspaper. It read as follows:

A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious rights of women will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls, New York, on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July, current; commencing at 10 o'clock a.m.

My Grandmother, Elizabeth Marshall, was born 40 years later but just a mile down the road from where that tea party was held... a quarter mile from where the *Declaration of Sentiments* were drafted... and just 3 miles from where the First Women's Rights Convention was held.

Elizabeth's parents were influenced by all that followed in Seneca County and beyond, so much so that her father – a lawyer – told her, *"Elizabeth, you're the only child with any real brains in this family, so I'm happy to pay for college for you."*

True, she was always number one or two in her class; but I'm not sure how that went down with her 4 brothers and sisters.

Elizabeth graduated Mount Holyoke, president of the Class of 1910, having majored in Latin. Fluent in German and French as well, she became a schoolteacher. Later on, she earned her nursing degree from Penn and volunteered with the Red Cross just after the end of the first world war.

As Jane Austin noted *"If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad."*

Elizabeth was stationed in Constantinople, Turkey to help with the refugee crisis as the Bolshevik revolution drove 100,000 Russians to flee from Odessa across the Black Sea. One of those refugees was a charming blond-haired, blue eyed, 30-year-old man named Mikael who had escaped with the last White Russian General.

As my grandmother occasionally noted, *"It's not the man that chooses the woman, it's the woman who chooses the man."* She chose Mikael.

When her assignment with the Red Cross was over, they moved to Prague and were married. She was 35. A year later, my father was born, and they returned to the United States.

Having never worked a day in his life, Mikael had few marketable skills except for judging Faberge Eggs and Oriental Carpets. So my Grandmother became the breadwinner.

Despite the 19th Amendment, which progressed women's equality, it was a man's world in the 1930s. And during the Depression, it angered some people that a woman was employed while so many men were out of work.

Nonetheless, she persisted.

It didn't get any easier. Elizabeth lost her husband and became a single mother at 44. She told my Dad, who was just eight years old at the time, *"Mickey, I can't be a father to you but I'll be the best mother I can be."* She was true to her word.

By the time World War 2 began, she had seen the underbelly of life as a nurse in New York City. She learned that she had to steel herself or risk getting emotionally entangled and not delivering the healthcare her patients needed. That gritty attitude was on full display when my father got drafted. She told him, *"There are worse things that can happen in life than getting killed in a war."*

Fortunately for me, my father did survive the war, came back home, married my mother and raised a family here in New Canaan.

My Grandmother got remarried to her old college roommate's brother, Frank S. MacGregor, and they retired to the mystic Blue Ridge mountains of North Carolina.

She lived to be 90, and true to form, when she was diagnosed with cancer that had spread to her lymph nodes, she faced it with steely realism. During her final days she was in quite bad shape, but for what she knew would be my father's last visit to her in the hospital, she managed to get dressed, put on her pearls, and sit up in a chair.

"Mother," he said, "You're looking so much better!"

"I didn't want you to remember me lying in bed." She replied.

Two days later she was gone. Broke my heart.

When we come into the presence of an older, wiser person, and their eyes light up as they see us, we glimpse Wisdom that is infinite.

My Grandmother was born before women could even vote. But she pulled up her own chair to the table that offered **Life as an Adventure** and she never looked back.

MSYG Mountainside Car Wash & Commissioning



MSYG is preparing their hearts for their annual mission trip to Mountain-side Treatment Center this month. On Saturday, May 13,

our middle school fish will run the annual car wash to raise money for their Mountainside trip. Please swing by the church between 10:00am-2:30pm to get your car washed and support MSYG. On Sunday, May 14, our MSYG Mountain-side participants will be commissioned by our congregation for the important work they will do over the May 19 – 21 weekend. If you think you are eligible and have yet to sign up, please reach out to Erik at burns@godsacre.org to do so. MSYG Fish should arrive at the church at 9:45am for the 10:00am service.



SPRING YOUTH WORSHIP

Calling all youth from 3rd-12th grade for our final Youth Worship service of the year! Join us for a special outdoor Youth Worship in the garden on Wednesday, May 3, led by our YG Senior Leaders. Dinner will be served at 6:00pm in the Parlor and our service will conclude by 7:30pm. Can't wait to see our fish there!



Beacon of Light

Your entire family is invited to celebrate together at our annual Beacon of Light Dinner! Please join us on Sunday, June 4, at 5:30pm to share a meal and send-off our graduating seniors with prayers for their life beyond God's Acre. We start with a worship service to celebrate our year in Youth Ministry including photos and videos. A fellowship dinner outside to follow, with food catered by Seaside Sliders - all included in your ticket price. The cost is \$20 per person.

Make sure to register your entire family no later than Sunday, May 21 at the link [here](#).

Easter on God's Acre

Easter on God's Acre featured an Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt with 3,000 eggs and a fellowship table for the adults filled with coffee and yummy treats of every kind. Thanks to all who brought things and baked!

In Church School, we studied Stations of the Cross, rode the donkey to Jerusalem, learned about Judas' betrayal, and hammered nails into the cross. And on Easter Sunday, we celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, shouting "He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!"



Looking for a Summer Camp?

Christian summer camp experiences are a fantastic way for young people to have fun, spend time in God's Word, and be mentored by young adults who love the Lord! If you are considering a summer camp experience, please consider Camp Brookwoods and Deer Run in New Hampshire or Moose River Outpost in Maine. They offer one, two, and four-week sessions beginning June 25. Learn more at: www.christiancamps.net. Many of our church families go to camp at Brookwoods, Deer Run, or Moose River Outpost. If you would like to be connected with one of them, please contact Laurel Carr at laurel@godsacre.org.



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

**Celebration Sunday is
coming up on Sunday, June 11.**

All of our children will be presenting
their Spiritual Milestones, and we
will celebrate another wonderful
year together.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL WILL RETURN: August 21-24.

We will begin registration in
May for 4 year olds-4th grade,
and 5th-7th graders can sign up
to be junior counselors!

Would You Like to Join a Ministry Team?

Pastoral Care in our church takes on many different forms. All of them focus on taking care of God's people, providing care for our flock, and walking with those in need through difficult and joyful times of life. While everyone in the church is called to "love your neighbor," we are blessed by a large number of people who have joined organized ministries

within our church to use their gifts and talents to serve others. In addition to our pastors, who are the first line of defense in emergency situations, and who make daily and weekly pastoral calls and visits, these ministry teams support our members and bring joy and support, prayer and fellowship.

Our **Visitation Team** supports our ministers in providing care and support to members who need help and support on a temporary basis. Whether it is help when someone returns from the hospital or calling to make sure a parishioner is doing alright after a transition in life, our visitation team is there to help and support when a Stephen Minister is not needed.



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



Our **Stephen Ministry Team** is comprised of twenty-five trained Stephen Ministers, Stephen Leaders, and two pastors who support our flock during a difficult season of life. Stephen Ministry is a nationwide program that teaches lay members to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, depression, or loneliness. Stephen Ministry is completely confidential and free, and Stephen Ministers become skilled at walking beside another in crisis after receiving 50 hours of training. Our Stephen Ministers meet weekly with their care receivers and meet twice monthly for supervision and continuing education. The program began in our church in 2006, and we are blessed to have them.



Flower Team Ministry, under the direction of Juliet Howe, chooses flowers for our weekly worship or responds to specific flower requests when members wish to memorialize a loved one. The member of the committee in charge weekly and goes directly to the wholesale florist and chooses their flowers for the week. Following worship, the flowers are then divided into smaller arrangements and delivered to members needing pastoral care.



The **Card Writing Ministry** Stephanie Radman is our point person for our card ministry team. Our ministers request cards for those who need prayers and fellowship.



The **Prayer Shawl Ministry Team** meets monthly to knit prayer shawls for our members who need an extra measure of God's grace and care during a difficult time in life. Every church has a thing or two, and these prayer shawls are one of our most prized gifts. The women on the prayer shawl ministry use this gift to bring healing and hope to those in crisis in our church. The shawls are blessed in worship and given with love through this amazing ministry.



If you would like to join any of these pastoral care ministry teams, we would love to have you! Reach out directly to their leaders, or email Rev. Kibbie Laird at kibbie@godsacre.org.

Be(e) Keepers

April rains are bringing May flowers. What a blessing it is to live in such a lovely, fertile, and lush corner of God's world!

In Kenya, though, the drought persists, now entering a third year. The crops have failed, and now most of the Maasai's livestock, which is a primary store of wealth, has died. Yet our friends remain hopeful and faithful.

We are calling on our church to share a bit of our bounty with our Maasai partners again. This year, they've asked us to help with two projects.

The first is a new solar array and an electric pump to ensure a reliable source of water from one of their wells. We helped them with a similar project on another well two years ago. That project was a great success; it replaced a creaky diesel engine that consumed expensive fuel and was subject to frequent breakdowns. As a result, they've had a reliable source of drinking water despite the lack of rainfall. The new system will cost \$18,200.

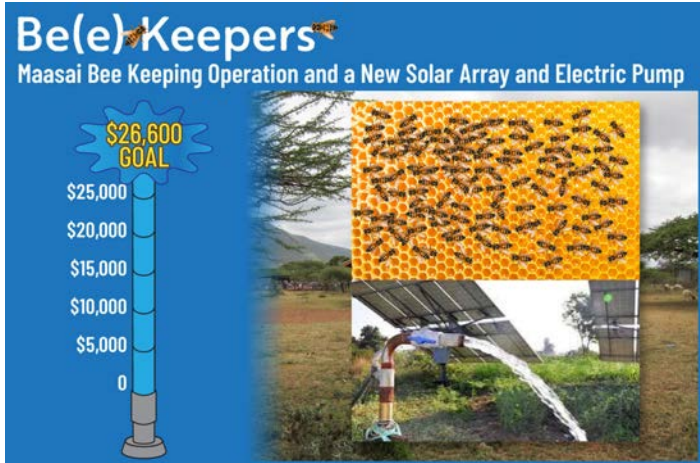
The second proposed project may surprise you. They've requested \$8,400 to begin a beekeeping operation. Bees, apparently, are drought-hardy. The local acacia trees are deep-rooted and tall enough that the giraffes can't completely defoliate them, and they're an ideal pollination target for bees. The honey produced will be organic (as they have no pesticides), and the Maasai believe they can find a ready market in nearby towns and cities.

We hope to fulfill their request for \$26,600. It is a small amount in relative terms for us, but for our friends, it is a lifeline. And, in that spirit, we will offer the Maasai the option to redirect as much as \$8,400 to direct food aid if the drought continues and they have not been able to secure funding for sustenance from other sources.

We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Please consider a gift.

Noble Street Renovation

Thanks to everyone who helped with the demolition of a new sober house project in Bridgeport. Watch for workdays as we start to rebuild!



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 Spiritual Formation

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

Dionna Carlson
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 June newsletter, please submit by May 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