



meditate ON MY WORD

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

As we edge toward the end of our program year, I just wanted to mention a bit about our plans for the summer and one or two items for you to consider for the upcoming program year yes, even though everyone is getting ready for a summer break, your church staff is already preparing for next season!

First, summer worship will commence on June 18. We will hold one service at 9:00am as we did last year. We will pack into the Memorial Garden if the weather is nice and head into the Meeting House if the weather is inclement or threatens to be so. Bear in mind, with one service, there is a lot to set up for an outdoor service, so if the weather is a bit "iffy," we won't take the chance of getting caught out in the rain!

We will offer an optional combined church school class from June 18-July 30 for ages 4 through 4th grade and nursery care for children three and under throughout the summer. Our services are shorter in the summer, 45 minutes or so. While summer is an opportune time for children to learn how to worship, we also want to ensure that kids can engage in other activities that might be more age-appropriate. Bottom line, we are glad to have you join in whatever way suits you, and we would love to have all the kids with us too!



Now, when we return from a welcomed summer break, there are at least two new features to our program year that we plan to roll out. On Kickoff Sunday, September 10, you will receive an activity card that will include all the scriptures we will focus on in worship for the year. We will organize all our adult programs in four categories of Christian practice that existed from the very origin of our faith tradition: Worship, Learning, Service, and Fellowship. Our hope is that you will look at the four quadrants of activity to examine where you spend most of your time and explore other faith engagement opportunities that you have perhaps not focused on as much as you would like. We are aiming to be well-rounded and well-balanced people of faith! So, for instance, if you notice you are heavily involved in the church's mission work but haven't taken a Christian education class, maybe you choose to enroll in "Adult Confirmation" next year!

Continued on page three

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

Open Doors Food Drive June 25

Open Doors is a Norwalk-based organization that serves the greater Norwalk area. Their goal is to 'End Homelessness by preventing it from happening in the first place'.

Services are provided out of Norwalk but serve neighboring towns. To do this, Open Doors has created an innovative model consisting of three targeted areas:

- 1. PREVENTION:** Open Doors provides a food pantry and a clothing center to eliminate small financial barriers, access to affordable health care, and a Financial Opportunity Center to assist area residents in gaining financial stability and success.
- 2. HOMELESS SERVICES:** Open Doors provides shelter to men, women, and families, with case management and hot-served meals. They also have street outreach and employment services to ensure that every person experiencing homelessness in Norwalk has access to housing and income.
- 3. HOUSING STABILITY:** To move people from homelessness to housing stability, Open Doors created affordable and deeply affordable housing for those transitioning out of homelessness.

Summer is a time when Open Doors' grocery pantry is particularly in need as there are fewer food drives (schools are out for the summer, many professional offices are on summer hours and have more employees on vacation). At the

same time, the need for food is greater (no school means no school breakfasts and lunches for lots of kids in the community). Join us on June 25 in a food drive to help Open Doors stock their summer pantry!





OPEN DOORS

Help Make A Difference!



Food Pantry Most Needed Items
Low-sodium and sugar-free options are appreciated

Manual can openers	Fresh fruit and vegetables!
Canned tuna	Canned chicken
Spaghetti sauce	Canned pasta dinners
Peanut butter	Jelly (grape or strawberry)
Rice (2 lb bags)	Dried beans (red or black)
Canned soup	Canned beans (red or black)
Canned vegetables	Fruit cups or canned fruit
Mac & cheese	Vegetable oil
Sugar (2 or 4 lb bags)	All-purpose flour (2 or 5 lb bags)
Pancake mix	Pancake syrup
Cereal	Oatmeal
Snack bars	Juice or juice boxes
Coffee	Dry or shelf-stable milk
Spices	Reusable grocery bags

Please donate what you can!

Regular sizes are better than big family/economy size products! Many homes have limited storage, and it's also easier to carry for people who are walking or taking public transit.

Bring items to the church circle on Sunday 6/25, 8:15-noon!

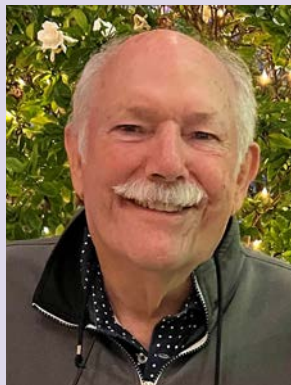
LIVE EVENTS

In Loving Memory

Remembering our dear brothers in Christ who returned to Jesus' loving arms.



Thomas H. Gillespie Jr.
August 21, 1933 – April 25, 2023



Robert Bailey Stewart
July 15, 1943 – April 26, 2023

Birth

Jason and Jennifer Russell welcomed their son, Ford Patton Russell on April 12, 2023.



Filling in the Blanks – August Mission

Filling in the Blanks aims to fight childhood hunger by providing children in need with meals on the weekends. Filling in the Blanks fulfills this mission by delivering meals directly to children from low-income families each weekend to bridge the gap when they are not receiving nutrition from their schools, after-school programs, or camps. When enrolled in the program, children benefit by knowing where their weekend meals will come from and arrive at school each Monday morning ready to learn. The expected outcome is to remove one worry from their lives, put them on more equal ground with their food-secure peers, and provide consistent nutritional support. Every weekend, students in the program receive a weekend meal bag containing four meals and four snacks.



The program is designed to allow every child consistent access to life's most basic necessities, enough food. Since 2013, Filling in the Blanks has delivered over 2.3 million individual meals to local children who are food-insecure in Fairfield and Westchester Counties. Filling in the Blanks has increased the number of children served each year since 2013. Seventy new locations have been added to the Weekend Meal Program since June 2022. Children are added weekly. Meals are currently being delivered to 5,316 students at 155 pre-schools, schools, or after-school programs in Bridgeport, Fairfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford, and Westport, CT, as well as in Bedford and Mt. Kisco, NY. As an extension of our Weekend Meal Program, Filling in the Blanks has implemented a School-Based Pantry at two high schools, where they deliver weekend meal bags. These pantries will increase access to healthy food for the students enrolled and give them the power of choice over their food.

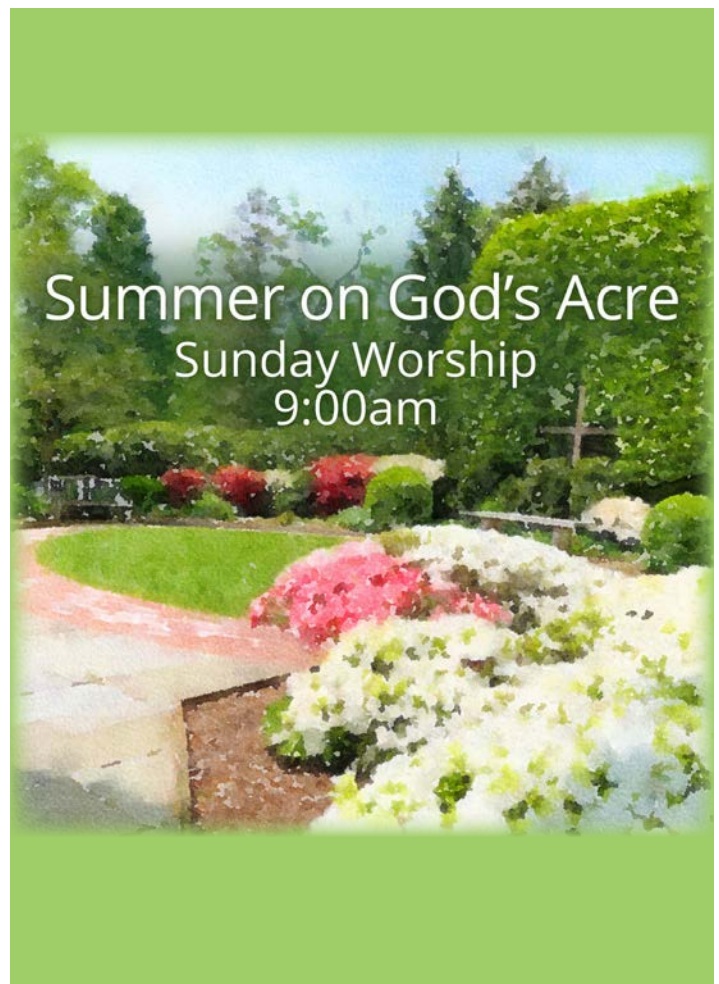
Join Filling in the Blanks' efforts in August by bringing a new full-size back to church or drop one (or three or five!) off in Smith Hall anytime during the month. Contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org to learn more.

Continued from page one

Not so subtle truncation here; we will offer a 12-week Adult Confirmation program next year that aligns closely with what we teach our kids through their year-long confirmation process. This is an opportunity for you to learn what our kids come to know through confirmation. I am excited to be offering this program once in the fall and again in the spring of next year. It will be a hybrid program in person and online, and we hope that over time all of our church family members will take this course that will reacquaint us with core Christian faith practices and beliefs. It will be a fun and informative program that will help us keep pace with our kids!

We still have some program year left, Celebration Sunday is on June 11 and will conclude our program year, but summer is fast upon us. I hope and pray you will enjoy the slower pace and restorative rhythms that often accompany this season in New England. And, when you happen to be in town, consider joining us for worship in the Garden at 9:00am!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin



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. As part of your summer reading, please enjoy what some of this thoughtful and gifted group came up with, including those who thought they were not writers!



I believe in a communion table of equals.

By Terri Reed

As a child growing up in the Catholic church, I was accustomed to only seeing male priests lift the host and wine on Sundays. I wished that women could be priests and in positions of more influence than nuns, but I never questioned if anything else was possible because that is just the way it was.

My grandmother's church was one of wonder to me as a child, with its huge fresco of God, Jesus and angels peering holily down at us from the round ceiling above the sanctuary. There was a marble railing around the altar and in front of it padding to cushion our knees as we knelt to receive communion while the altar boys held little golden plates under our chins for catching the host if it fell so it would not be dropped on the ground. One Christmas Eve when we were allowed to take it in our hands, I did indeed drop it on the ground and my sister and I earned a few threatening glances from my grandmother as we tried our best to stifle our giggles.

During the 1970's my childhood Catholic church was very liberal, run by loving Franciscan Friars who prided themselves on delicious, often Italian communal dinners in the Friary, frequently cooked by Father John Carnevale, who married Fran and me. My mother and father-in-law lovingly baked delicious unleavened bread for communion on our wedding day. That was such a pleasure to eat instead of the cardboard-like wafers that were usually offered.

During college, I would see the thoughtful, wise Jesuits lifting the host year after year, week after week. Women were allowed to be eucharistic ministers and participate in communion that way, which I supposed was better than nothing. My dear friend Martha was a eucharistic minister back then and continues to be one today at her church in MA.



Soon after we moved to New Canaan, we went church shopping, mostly due to the pedophilia in the Catholic church. Attending the First Presbyterian Church in New Canaan for the first time, I saw the Associate Minister Joan Priest on the altar celebrating the sacraments along with the pastor Gary Wilburn. I was so surprised and elated by seeing that that I found myself in tears. I had never before known how much it would mean to me to see a woman able to celebrate communion in that way. Seeing Rev. Priest up there shifted something in me that day - faith for me became something not fixed and dogmatic, but something that can be sought after and shaped. I felt that I was in the right church, and even though it was different from what I knew, it felt more welcoming and comfortable than any church I had ever been in before.

Since I have started attending the Congregational Church, I find it so moving when Chapin, Marianna or Kibbe wholeheartedly invite everyone up to the table, no matter where they have been or where they are going, and say that all that is needed to approach the table is a willing heart. I find that so accessible and inspiring. I know that in his life Jesus chose to dine and associate with people, sinners and virtuous people from all walks of life and I cannot imagine Him barring anyone from His table. This past Sunday, I was honored and blessed to offer the bread and wine to our fellow church goers for the first time. It was so beautiful to walk around my section of the church and offer the elements to women and men, old and young. As I see it, we are all seeking a clearer path together, using the bread and wine to sustain us on our faith journey.



There's No Place Like Home

By Lesley Cousley

Just like Dorothy said in the 1939 classic film, I believe that there is no place like home. People often look bewildered when I tell them that we spend July and August in Mississippi. I assure people that yes, it is hot and humid and the bugs are relentless but...we are used to it.

Going on 8 summers now, we have packed our car and made the 19 hour trek down South to our "Summer Home" located in Oxford, Mississippi. Most people don't know much about Oxford but it's a quintessential small southern town with an old town square, courthouse in the middle with local shops and restaurants around it and two long avenues running north and south lined with old beautiful homes. It's the home of Ole Miss and a haven for authors, musicians, professors, chefs and artists.

I love our house in Oxford, not just because it's a unique design nestled in a steep hill, has rustic woods floors, big porches and a pool. I love it because of what it represents. Our time down South represents HOME and FAMILY. Whether we are gathered at my parents house for a cook-out, gathered around my husband's great-grandmother's dining table for Sunday dinner, or whether we are playing dominoes on the porch picnic table on a rainy afternoon, we are making memories.

Going back to my childhood, I remember so many family gatherings surrounded by my Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, and cousins. There were family reunions, Sunday lunches, Christmas dinners, birthdays, weddings, and funerals. There was always a reason to be together.

Coming together with family is an important part of my roots and by spending summers in Mississippi, I hope to create the same family-grounded childhood for my kids.

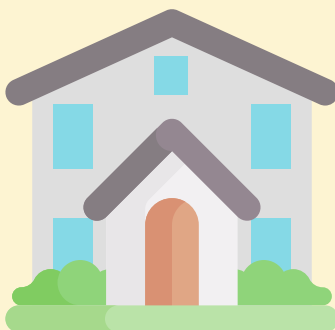
When I was in middle school, I fondly remember spending a night with my Grandparents who lived about 30 minutes away. My Grandmother was a night owl and that night, my

Grandparents set up a cardboard table in the middle of their living room and we played round after round of dominoes and I remember laughing endlessly. So much so that my Grandmother teased me, telling me my giggle box got turned upside down. I think it was close to midnight before we finally called it a night. Just last summer, after several days of rain, my kids and I duplicated that same scene at my parents house. We set up a table in their den and played rounds and rounds of Tripoley,

using pennies to make our bets.

Home not only represents family, it represents a sense of belonging. I love running into my 6th grade language arts teacher walking on the square and introducing her to my kids. I love catching up with classmates that have known me since elementary school. I love running into my parent's friends in the checkout line at the grocery store. I love taking the kids to hole-in-the-wall restaurants that my Dad ate at when he attended Ole Miss. I love worshiping in the church where I was baptized and got married.

I'm so thankful for the many opportunities I've had to gather around a table with my family and more so, I'm lucky to be able to share the place that made me with my kids.



Food is Love or Is It?

By Kim Hall

It was hard to know the journey I would personally embark upon when we decided to put Lindsay in clinical trial to desensitize her to dairy, eggs, hazelnuts, peanuts and almonds almost 10 years ago. For most people, food is love, and for those with severe food allergies, food can mean a life-threatening reaction or worse.

While this first-of-its-kind, multi-allergen trial seemed so promising on the outside, what I personally underestimated was what we would put Lindsay through. It included numerous food challenges, bringing her to the brink of a deadly anaphylactic shock each time to determine her tolerance to her allergens. My 5th grade child would be poked and prodded 2500 miles away from home over the course of 8 weeks. And this was just to qualify for the study. What did I do?

During one of her off days, my incredibly brave Lindsay and I travelled to Half Moon Bay 25 miles away from Palo Alto to put our toes in the ocean. That day, on that beautiful beach, Lindsay was her carefree and happy self away from the sterile rooms of Stanford Hospital. As I was watching do her gymnastics on a log, a sense of peace overcame me. The lights got brighter, the day got happier and my fears and anxiety were swept out to sea. I felt a sense of inner peace that it still tough to put into words. I knew it was something so much bigger than me.

After we left the beach, I felt like I was walking on the cloud. I was having complete out-of-body experience but still able to put one foot in front of the other. We went for lunch, which was dangerous for Lindsay because if she had

an allergic reaction, she could not do her food challenge scheduled for the following day. We had the kindest, most incredible waitress. All I could see was the glow of pure love in her face. And I felt so much love and gratitude for how she took such safe and amazing care of Lindsay. Each person we encountered thereafter seemed have that same glow of love. To best describe it, I am quoting Thomas Merton on his mystical experience, "people were all walking around shining like the sun."

That day we went a cigar store for my husband Tom. The gentleman who helped us did not seem to even have a face; he was pure light and love. I say to this day, I found God in a cigar shop. From that day onward, I felt like I was walking around suspended between heaven and earth. Everything changed. Everything was opposite. I went from a type-A personality to type-B. I could

hardly get myself dressed or out the door (yet everything got done it needed to). I went from drinking too much to not drinking at all. I went from shopping to giving everything away. I went from pushing a boulder up a hill to following God's Will.

I believe when I am I am trying to usurp God's Will it is always harder, more painful and more stressful. I believe when I follow my heart, pray and pay attention to the God-given coincidences, I feel lighter, I have peace and serenity, I am closer to God. I believe when I start my day by placing God first, I will have a day filled with love and driven by love.

Turns out food is love!



Women's and Men's Small Groups

Small Groups within our church are essential to deepening our engagement with others and growing our faith. Join us to explore our faith together as we live it out in the world. Groups will begin gathering in October and will meet monthly. Participate in person or via Zoom. To learn more, contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org for Women's Small Groups and Steve Case at scase135@gmail.com for Men's Small Groups.



Men's Small Group BBQ

Please join us for a Men's Small Group BBQ!
Baker Barn @ 88 Lukes Wood Road, New Canaan
Monday, June 12, 6:00pm-9:00pm



Food and beverages will be provided. RSVP by June 9. A suggested \$20 donation will be collected at the event. Contact Steve Case at scase135@outlook.com, with any questions.

Please do not park on Lukes Wood Road as it is busy and narrow. The Baker residence is the white house on the corner of Lukes Wood and Wakeman Road. Driveway entrances are on the left side of Wakeman: 1st entrance is by the side of the house and in front of the barn; 2nd entrance is past the barn on the left. Both entrances offer ample parking. Please don't block anybody. Overflow parking on Wakeman Road (one side only).

SAVE THE DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

Wavny Summer Concert

Join your church friends for an evening of fellowship and fun at Wavny Park on Wednesday, June 28, at 7:30pm (Raindate: Thursday, June 29). The Country Western band, Gunsmoke, will be performing. Grab your blanket, bring a snack to share, and look for the blue and white tablecloth on the side of the house closest to the open fields. All ages are welcome!

Women's Fellowship Garden Tour

We want to extend a huge thanks to Debbie Raymond for organizing a lovely walking tour and light lunch at Lee Memorial Garden on May 10. Maintained by the New Canaan Beautification League, this hidden gem dazzled us with blooming azaleas, rhododendrons and various native plants.



Women of Wisdom Spring Luncheon

The Women's Fellowship Team hosted a lovely luncheon on Wednesday, May 31, at the Country Club of New Canaan. In addition to honoring our Women of Wisdom, we enjoyed a time of fellowship while being entertained with Broadway Showtunes by Jody Davis. We are so thankful for this special group of ladies who have contributed so much to our church over the years.



Join us for Celebration Sunday on June 11

Mark your calendars for 10:00am on Sunday, June 11, and join us in celebrating a wonderful church year, with particular emphasis on lifting up the spiritual growth of the children of the church. All Church School classes will present their spiritual milestones (touchpoints throughout their faith journey in Church School that we hope they will carry with them always) at the 10:00am service, with the capstone event being the Confirmation of our eighth graders.

Following the Celebration Sunday service, we hope you will join us for an all-church picnic featuring the Super Duper Weenie Hot Dog Truck, inflatable slides and obstacle courses, Old Faithful Rides, and more! Check your email to sign up to bring sliced watermelon or desserts and help with picnic set up or clean up!



Children's Summer Happenings on God's Acre

Vacation Bible School "Stories from the Sea"

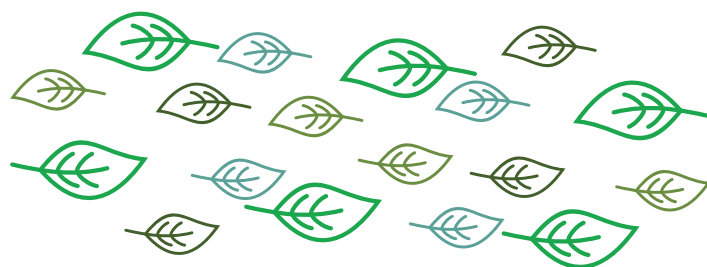
Vacation Bible School, "Stories from the Sea," will take place on August 21-24 from 9:00am-12:00pm. We will explore many of the exciting stories of the Bible that take place in and around the sea, deepening our understanding and experience of God's love through activities, games, stories, songs, and crafts. VBS is for children ages 4 - 4th grade (grade in September 2023). Middle Schoolers in grades 5-8 can register to be Junior Counselors and High Schoolers can register as Senior Counselors. See your email for registration forms or contact Sarah Haddad at churchschool@godsacre.org. Please register by June 15!



Summer Worship Childcare Offerings

Nursery care will be available for children three and under all summer long. For six weeks this summer (June 18 - July 30, no session on July 2), we will also offer summer children's programming in a combined class for children ages 4 through 4th grade. While our short 45-minute summer service is an excellent opportunity for children of all ages to learn more about worship with their families, we also want to provide some space for fun, fellowship, and kid-friendly activities during our summer months.

We encourage you to make a plan that works best for your family and your children, knowing that, in the end, we are glad to have you join in whatever way best suits you!



2023 Children's Ministries Fall Preview!

We wish you a restorative and joyful summer and are already excited to welcome you back in the fall. Please save the date for some fun children and family fellowship opportunities coming your way when we return!

August 21-24

Vacation Bible School
"Stories from the Sea"
ages 4 - 4th grade

August 27

During summer worship,
Blessing of the Backpacks
and Children's Back to
School Chapel

September 10

Kickoff Sunday: First day of
Church School and Welcome
Back Celebration

September 14

Family Playground Pizza
Meet up

October 5

Blessing of the Animals

October 27

Family Halloween Party

October 29

Trunk-or-Treat

November 19

Turkey Drive Service Project

December TBD

Family Christmas Party

December TBD

Advent Festival during
Church School

Some Moments From This Year



Youth Ministries and our congregation will celebrate all together in June!

It has been an amazing year in Youth Ministries! All the groups have had their own transformative and faith-deepening moments while learning about and experiencing God's love. Now that we are wrapping up the year, we can't wait for next year to start!



MSYG made its 25th trip to Mountainside at the end of May. Fish had an incredibly transformative experience growing in their sense of self, faith, and community. The group arrived in the foothills of Canaan, CT, on Friday, May 19. They kicked off the weekend with an introductory dinner with the Mountainside Staff and extended care clients. Saturday, Fish got to work building a handful of woodsheds to extend the campsites. After a hard but rewarding day, MSYGers shared a meal and heard stories about addiction and recovery from a handful of Mountainside Clients. The group woke up Sunday, packed their bags, and set out to hike to the peak of Mountainside. At the top, after admiring the view, MSYGers participated in a final worship celebration to cap off an incredible weekend.



The entire congregation and families of Minnows, Guppies, JYG, MSYG, and YG celebrated together at the Beacon of Light Worship and Dinner on Sunday, June 4. The event was held in the Meeting House and outside on the church lawn. We are so proud of all our youth have accomplished this year, and we are looking forward to an incredible start to the 2023-2024 program year in September!



Quest is praying and preparing for their second pilgrimage to Israel. Fish have been meeting with Chapin every Sunday to map out their trip, discuss, and discern the path of Jesus. The group looks forward to learning more about their faith, who we are as Christians, and connecting with a new community. None of it would be possible without our mission sponsors and everyone here at home; we are so grateful for your support and prayers along the way.

While our usual programming has slowed for the summer, we are taking time to work with our upcoming Senior Leaders. At the end of August, we will head out for a retreat to discuss the upcoming year and further the leadership. We are so excited about the leadership of the class of 2024 and all that God has in store for them.

MOUNTAINSIDE



The End of our Confirmation Year

The Deacons joined Confirmands on the night of June 7 to share a meal, review, and discuss their statements of faith. This was a wonderful evening of faith and fellowship centered around the soon-to-be newest members of our congregation.

Please join us on June 11 for Celebration Sunday. We will be lifting up our Confirmands for all the hard work and effort they have put into learning what it means to be a Christian and how to walk like Jesus. A special thanks to Doug Simpson, Twee Hafner, and Chapin for making this another exciting and thought-provoking year of confirmation.



Mary Bradley Clark Concert

Members of the Children's Choirs joined the Chancel Choir and Joyful Ringers to sing at the Mary Bradley Clark Concert. Thank you to all who offered their voices to this special event! The children also got to sit on the floor while Karl played the organ and feel the vibrations of our church's largest instrument!



The Story of Noah's Ark

The Children of the Music & Drama Ministry gave two beautiful presentations of the story of Noah's Ark in May. On May 7, they presented the full musical during the 10:00am service and added even more brightness to Maasai Sunday!

Then on Monday, May 15 the children walked, in costume and two-by-two, to the New Canaan Inn and shared the

musical with the grateful residents there! Everyone did a wonderful job bringing the story to life through dialogue and song and sharing the moral of the story, which is that with God, there is always a "100% Chance of Love!"



Music Recognition in June

Chancel Choir Recognition

The Chancel Choir members were recognized at the 10:00am worship service on Sunday, June 4. The Chancel Choir rehearses weekly over nine months a year and sings nearly every Sunday in the worship services. Their voices lead us in worship, comfort us and inspire us. What a blessing to have this musical church family. Thank you to Darren Anderson, Sydney Anderson, Linda Avgerinos, Elana Bell, Debbie Chapman, James Doak, Steve Freije, Tammie Garner, Bryan Griffin, Greer Lyle, Anne Maguire, Sergio Andres Martinez, Ana Mora, Ruth Morgan, Tereza Nemessanyi, Sarah Owen, Marianne Perry, Andrea Ritter, Hans Tashjian, Aram Tchobanian, Pat Thatcher, and Nancy Upton. They will resume Thursday, September 7. All are invited to join us!

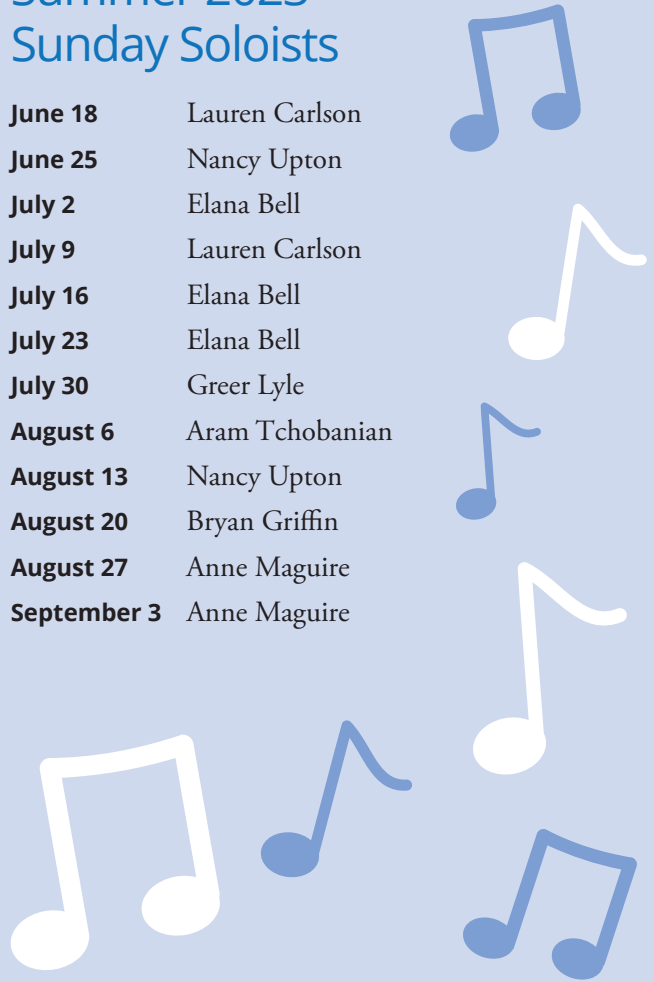
Join the Children's Choirs Sunday, June 11, as they lead us into worship with the prelude and opening hymn on Celebration Sunday! Church School classes will also be sharing some Biblical Milestones with musical elements throughout the service.

Children's Choir rehearsals resume Monday, September 11.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!

Summer 2023 Sunday Soloists

June 18	Lauren Carlson
June 25	Nancy Upton
July 2	Elana Bell
July 9	Lauren Carlson
July 16	Elana Bell
July 23	Elana Bell
July 30	Greer Lyle
August 6	Aram Tchobanian
August 13	Nancy Upton
August 20	Bryan Griffin
August 27	Anne Maguire
September 3	Anne Maguire



Congratulations to the cast and crew of "100% Chance of Rain"

by Walter S. Horsley

dialogue adapted by Sydney Anderson

Thank You from the Music Ministry!

Thank you to the musicians who sang and played instruments this year in our services. Your talents and time devoted to church music have been an inspiration, blessing, and joy to all. Thank you to parents who transported their children weekly to Children's Choir rehearsals and to sing on Sundays. The theology of the church is presented through music, so the congregation receives Biblical stories with God's love.



Mary Bradley Clarke Fund Benefit Concert



What a night of great entertainment! The Chancel Choir, Section Leaders, and Children's Choirs performed Broadway, popular, and light opera music. The reception, hosted by the Music Ministry Team, was a delicious finale for a fun evening. Thank you for your contributions to support guest instrumentalists in our services. You will "Hear" these efforts starting on Kickoff Sunday, September 10.

Plan Ahead for Next Fall

Choir Begins September 7



Chancel Choir meets Thursdays from 7:30pm-9:00pm. All singers, High School through Adults meet weekly for rehearsals. The Chancel Choir sings Sunday services and special presentations throughout the year, many with orchestral ensembles. Join church members and section leaders in this choral family – there's room for You in the choir loft.

Bells Begin September 14



Joyful Ringers meet Thursdays from 6:15-7:15pm. The handbell choir rehearses weekly and rings monthly in the 10:00am service. It is very helpful if you read music but not necessary. Our five octaves of White Chapel and Schulmerich bells are great fun!

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.



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

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 committee member in charge weekly goes directly to the wholesale florist and chooses their flowers for the week. Following worship, the flowers are divided into smaller arrangements and delivered to members needing pastoral care.



The **Card Writing Ministry** Stephanie Radman is the 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 in 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.

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/Emma Garner, **x111**
Youth Directors

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 September newsletter, please submit by August 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