



## FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

We are honored to lead Pastoral Care this year and are already enjoying connecting with many of you. It is our mission to support you and your families as we experience our faith journeys together. We feel a deep sense of call to this ministry.



We believe we can provide the gift of time and an empathetic ear to listen with compassion to those seeking a deeper faith or struggling with difficult moments. We are committed to being generous of time and presence with no agenda. We might not always have the perfect pearl of wisdom, but we will journey with you and support you.

The benefits of our sharing the pastoral care role are many. Most importantly, we each have different training and life experiences. Beth has formal Stephen Ministry Leadership training and eldercare experience with Alzheimer's Disease and pet therapy for residents at Waveny Care Center. Through these ministries, Beth has established long-term relationships with many of our elderly members and their families. Barb is a Stephen Minister with formal EMS training and experience, and she has two years of formal CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) training. Barb is an EMT with NCEMS and provides bedside chaplain service at Norwalk Hospital and spiritual care support for those struggling with addiction, recovery, and mental health instability at Silver Hill Hospital.

An important part of pastoral care is community. We are blessed to have our many flourishing Pastoral Care Teams to provide opportunities to engage in community and to provide additional support for our church members. Please consider joining one of these ministry teams: Prayer Shawl Knitting, Card Writing, Flower Ministry, or consider becoming a Stephen Minister.

God calls each of us to love thy neighbor, and it is through His love that we comfort, support, and uplift one another. Please know that we are here for you. We are committed to be loving of our neighbor (YOU!), compassionate, and generous of spirit, all while recognizing God's will in leading us all.

Blessings are abundant!  
Barb Clayton and Beth Baker  
[barb@godsacre.org](mailto:barb@godsacre.org) and [beth@godsacre.org](mailto:beth@godsacre.org)  
(203)966-2651 x102





## About Our Prayer Chain

Our Prayer Chain has a long history with our church. Everyone can submit prayers through the website home page by clicking on the button that says "Request a Prayer." Over 50 members in this pastoral care ministry actively pray for people each week. The group holds all prayers confidentially, and we welcome new prayers daily. BJ Flagg leads the group and has enjoyed helping our church in this capacity for many years. We have added an email address for prayer requests as well: [prayerchain@godsacre.org](mailto:prayerchain@godsacre.org). Please indicate in your message if you would like your prayer read aloud during Sunday services.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry - New Participants Wanted

Please consider joining this wonderful team to sit, knit, and enjoy each other's fellowship. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month from 10:00-11:30am in the Parlor. No experience is needed. We can teach you! Please contact Twee Haffner at [tweehaffner@gmail.com](mailto:tweehaffner@gmail.com) or (203) 917-7374 if interested.



## BBQ & Bluegrass Weekend

The Fellowship Team pulled out all the stops for the BBQ, Brews, and Bluegrass Event on September 30. Over 100 congregants gathered under the tent at the Park Street Parsonage for an evening filled with food, friends, and fellowship. We were blessed with a beautiful fall evening, and our dear friend, Eric Dupee, gathered with us.





## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

## ADULT FORMATION



### Cake and Coffee

We are looking for one or two hosts to open their homes to the ladies of the church. You pick the day and time; we will bring the coffee and baked goods. We are thinking of simply meeting to enjoy fellowship in the comforts of someone's home. Contact Lesley Cousley at [lacousley@gmail.com](mailto:lacousley@gmail.com) if you might consider hosting or with any questions.

### Bible Studies - New Participants Welcome!

#### Bible Study Options

Monday Morning Bible Study, Library  
7:00-8:00am, Gospel of Matthew

Tuesday Women's Bible Study, Parlor  
9:30-10:30am, Gospel of Matthew

Wednesday Morning Bible Study with Chapin, Library  
9:30-11:00am, Chapin's Study

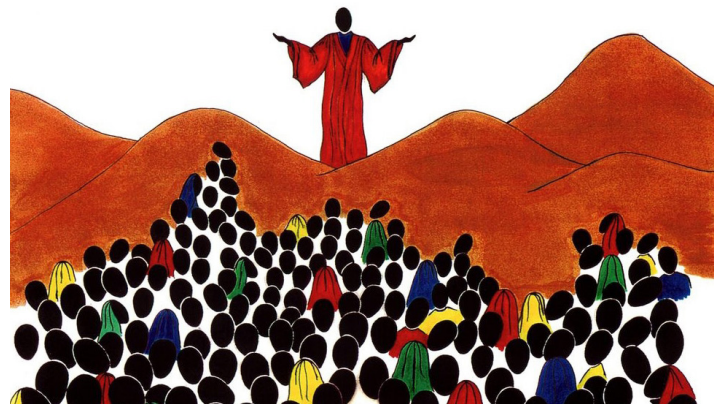
Friday Online/Zoom Contemplative Book Discussion  
8:00-9:00am, *The Divine Dance, The Trinity and Your Transformation*, by Richard Rohr

Contact Marianna Kilbride at [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org) or Tracy Goldman at [office@godsacre.org](mailto:office@godsacre.org) for more information



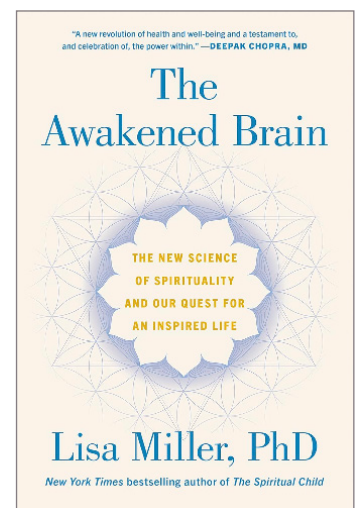
### Sign up by October 15

Small Groups within our church are essential to deepening our engagement with others and with God. Join us to explore together our faith journeys as they play out in our daily lives. Groups are now forming and will begin in October and will meet monthly. Participate in person or via Zoom. To learn more, contact Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org).



### Save the Date: November 8, 7:00pm on Zoom

On November 8, as a follow-up to Dr. Lisa Miller's talk in May, we are offering a book discussion on "The Awakened Brain: The New Science Of Spirituality And Our Quest For An Inspired Life." Maria Hemmings and Lesley Cousley will facilitate the discussion. To sign up and receive the Zoom link, please contact Tracy Goldman at [office@godsacre.org](mailto:office@godsacre.org). A limited number of the books are available at the church office.



## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



MEN'S SMALL GROUP

BOOK GROUP

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

MEN'S GROUP

### OCTOBER

Sun. Oct. 1 BG Kickoff Book Group, Jim Clayton's Home

Fri. Oct. 13 M4 Breakfast Small Group, Dirk's Office

Mon. Oct. 30 MSG Small Group, Chapel +

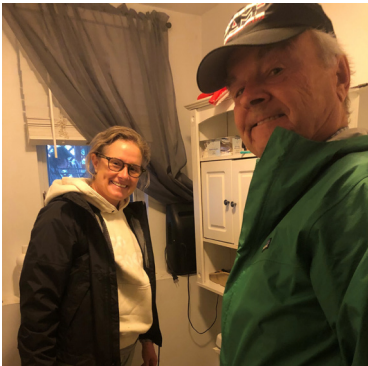
Contact Steve Case at [scase135@outlook.com](mailto:scase135@outlook.com) to learn more about our Men's Ministries opportunities.



SAVE THE DATE  
**OG 2024 Mission Trip**  
 PUERTO RICO Part Dos  
 March 9 - 15!!!!



**A Huge Thank You for a Great HomeFront Day!**



**Pivot House Men's Choir**

**Sunday, October 15, 10:00am Service**

On Sunday, October 15, the men of Pivot Ministries Choir will join us in the Meeting House to sing and praise the Lord. Over three decades of partnership make for warm and happy visits. If you haven't experienced Pivot, you are in for a treat. They are our ministry partner and plate offering recipient for October.

Pivot Ministries was founded in 1970 and is a residential treatment program in Bridgeport, CT. Pivot's mission is to treat drug and alcohol addiction as a spiritual problem and return the men to their families whole. Reverend Richard Williams became Executive Director 15 years ago and immediately prioritized capital expenditures as many buildings and systems were in disrepair and outdated.



Through the grace of God and loyal supporters like the Congregational Church of New Canaan, Pivot was able to cast a fresh vision and stabilize financially. For the 2023 year, Pivot has been operating at full capacity, maintaining a daily census of 23 students, ten live-in staff graduates, seven men in transition housing, and 25 men placed in jobs upon graduation. In May, they had 29 graduates in their program, making it the largest class in recent history.

The Bridgeport campus has three buildings on Jane Street and has just purchased another building adjacent to it on Shelton Road that needs a complete renovation. The first floor will be designed for ministry use. It will house three separate counseling offices and a communal space. Counseling is critical and at the core of what they do, and they feel confident that it improves outcomes and moves men to wholeness. The second floor will be used for beds, taking in 5 more men. Since January 2022, there have been occasions where their beds are full, and they must employ a waitlist.

Pivot Ministries offers secular counseling by a Christian therapist who can incorporate Biblical principles, vocational services to prepare them for job placement, and, of course, the wonderful Pivot choir we know. Health and wellness is an important goal; the men can start their day with an early morning run with Reverend Richard, and they strive to offer better culinary choices. Their strategic long-term plan is to add more beds, a women's program, and perhaps a second location.



## The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass by Carol Barnett

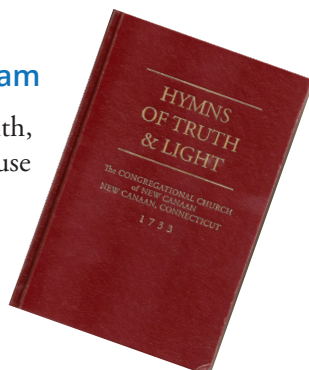
The Chancel Choir was accompanied by a 5-piece Bluegrass band singing Carol Barnett's Bluegrass Mass, The World Beloved. Movements of this delightful work were interspersed throughout the service.



## Let's Sing Your Favorite Hymns Together!

Sunday, October 15 at 9:45am

On the third Sunday of each month, we will gather in the Meeting House to sing your favorite hymns! Jody will ask the congregation to select hymns to sing during this pre-worship fellowship.



## You are invited to a Visitor's Evening with The Chancel Choir

Thursday, October 5, 7:30pm – Music Room

All singers are invited to sing with the Chancel Choir! You will be seated with helpful singers to rehearse the music we will sing in the upcoming weeks. After a short rehearsal, everyone will go to the home of Jody and Ray Davis for refreshments and a Get Acquainted Time.



## Sing with the Chancel Choir during Advent

If you would like to sing with the Chancel Choir but have limited time, consider joining just for the Advent services! There's a place for you! Come Thursday evenings, from 7:30-8:00pm, for quick rehearsals on the Advent season music. You will sit next to a helpful singer who will guide you along the way.

### Sunday Services

- November 26 Advent Anthems
- December 3 Advent Anthems
- December 3 5:00pm – A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
- December 10 Advent Anthems and Our Recognition Sunday for Jody Blaine Davis, our Director of Music Ministries, who is retiring.
- December 17 Christmas Cantata by Daniel Pinkham (with brass instruments)





## Playground Meetup

It was such fun to informally gather some of our community one afternoon in September for pizza and playing on our new playground. Please utilize this space for socializing and gathering throughout the week and on the weekends. The playground is open for playing anytime after 2:00pm. All are welcome!



## Clementine's Playdates Begin October 4

We are so excited to kick off another season of Clementine's Playdates: A Parent/ Caregiver and Child Social Class for children ages 0-3. Join us for play, songs, snacks, and stories - while building a faith foundation! This year, we are offering this program on Wednesdays from 9:30am-10:30am and from 10:45am-11:45am in the Parlor. The Fall/Winter session will begin on October 4 and will meet for 14 sessions, (no classes on 11/12, 12/20, 12/27).



Email [churchschool@godsacre.org](mailto:churchschool@godsacre.org) for more information.

## Blessing of the Animals Thursday, October 5 4:00-4:30pm



The beloved tradition, Blessing of the Animals is back. Bring your furry/scaly/feathery friends to the front steps of the church at 4:00pm on Thursday, October 5, for a short but oh-so-sweet Blessing of the Animals. We hope that all members of our community (from the youngest to the oldest) will bring their beloved pets for this special community event.

## Family Halloween Fun!

Friday, October 27 from 4:30-6:00pm

Join us on for a fun and festive Halloween Family Celebration. Come in costume (if you'd like!) and be prepared to craft, eat, decorate and have some family-friendly Halloween fun. \*This is a not-so-spooky event friendly for kids of all ages.





## Children's Choir is Rewving up and Pageant Signup is Here!

Our new Director, Greer Lyle, has been having a blast getting to know our young singers and contributing music during church school on Sundays. Our choirs are preparing for their first musical offering of the season to the church on Sunday, October 22. They will be singing the prelude and first hymn, so be sure to bring your child to church early that week! We will be singing our "song of the month" that the children have been learning both in choir and church school.



### Not sure if your child would like to join choir?

Come try it out! All children Pre-K-4th grades are welcome to participate. Another great way to get your young ones involved this year is by signing up for our Nativity Pageant. We are incorporating pageant rehearsals into church school and choir rehearsals this year, with only a select few after-church rehearsals as needed. Sign up by October 17.

### Parent Meeting Sunday, October 22

There will be a Parent Meeting in the Chapel on Sunday, October 22, after church at 11:15am. The Christmas Nativity Pageant will take place on Christmas Eve, and rehearsals will begin on October 22 during church school. Being involved shouldn't be a burden; this is the perfect time to let your children participate in this timeless Christmas tradition. Signups can be made via email to [greer@godsacre.org](mailto:greer@godsacre.org) or through our casting/ signup sheets available after church starting October 1.

## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### October Youth Newsletter

#### YG Friends and Family!

We want to thank you for a wonderful first week back to programming! Although the weather brought some challenges, the rain could not stop us from a successful kick-off Sunday for MSYG and YG. Our annual MSYG pool party was held at the Salami's house, where our MSYG fish enjoyed an afternoon of pool games, smores, and fellowship! Thanks to the wonderful Salami family and parents who supplied food and drinks, it was a huge success. In addition, our numbers for the YG Kick-off Carnival surpassed 100 kids! It was an evening of successful senior leadership, fun carnival games, and building the foundation for our YG community for this upcoming year. As for our JYG, Guppies, and Minnows – we held our annual Rain Gutter Ice Cream Social! We enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new faces as we continue to grow in community and faith throughout this year.

October is a month filled with fellowship and service! We will be holding our first Youth Worship this month as we establish our roots in faith and grow in relationship with each other this year. All fish 3rd grade and up are welcome to join us for this evening of worship. Other important YG events to look forward to this month include our Family Agape Dinner and Senior Commissioning. For our MSYG fish, we will make the most of our wonderful, Connecticut fall weather through events such as Mead Park Games and Fall Super Day. Our JYG, Guppies, and Minnows will be learning about the greatest commandment, the power of prayer, and important Bible stories.

As a church family, we look forward to our special Trunk or Treat event, where kids from all age groups will be able to participate in Halloween fun and fellowship! Please save the date for Sunday, October 29 following the 10:00am service for a morning of time together as a church community.

We cannot wait for the year ahead as we grow together in faith and fellowship!





## Ministers

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

Pastoral Care Emergency, **x103**

## Staff

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

Beth Baker, **x102**  
Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

Laurel Carr, **x107**  
Director of Communications

Barb Clayton, **x102**  
Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

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

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

Emma Garner, **x111**  
Youth Director

Tracy Goldman, **x109**  
Administrative Assistant

Sarah Haddad, **x113**  
Church School Coordinator

Anthony Jones, **x116**  
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, **x105**  
Director of Spiritual Formation

Caroline Leather-Smittle, **x106**  
Director of Operations

Greer Lyle, **x115**  
Director of Children's Music and Drama

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

## Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the November newsletter, please submit by October 19.  
Email submissions to: [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org).

## myConnect Corner

Become part of myConnect, our online church community!

Within myConnect you can:

- view an online directory
- interact with groups
- set up and manage your online giving
- view giving statements
- register for events
- find ways to volunteer

Two ways to login:

1. Visit [www.godsacre.org/myconnect](http://www.godsacre.org/myconnect)
2. Go to [www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org) and click "myConnect@God's Acre" in the upper left corner.

Need an Account?

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

Questions?

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