



# PEACE ON GOD'S ACRE

## FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

As I walked out of the church last week, I saw the rising full moon seemingly sitting a top of the God's Acre Christmas Tree, and it was such a beautiful image I was prompted to take a picture, but only after audibly speaking the words "thank you, God."

I find myself quietly saying that refrain quite often in my life. It is not that life is perfect, or issue, or angst-free; it is just that I realize life is undeniably good. Beauty abounds even in the darkest and most trying of moments. Charity and generosity between people can be witnessed even when we are bombarded by images of war and reports of political acrimony.

God is good, and life is good, even as hard and disheartening as it can be at times.

So, in the midst of the complex, complicated, and extraordinary life we have been given, I hope you will allow your heart, and mind, and spirit to be moved from darkness to light, from the brutal to the beautiful, from frustration to gratitude this Advent season.

Take moments to look up and survey and savor your surroundings – the gatherings of family and friends, the cheer and goodwill of the season, a lit tree topped by a full moon – and somewhere in your soul, sing out the words the Angles proclaimed on the night of Jesus' birth: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all!"*

Yours in Christ,  
Chapin



# ADVENT ON GOD'S ACRE

## Adult Formation

### Advent Bible Study Jesus' Family:

#### John, Mary, and Joseph

Mondays, 12/4 & 12/11

7:00am, Library

Tuesdays (Women's), 12/5 & 12/12

9:30am, Parlor

### Advent Theatre: Casting the Pageant With Rev. Dr. Allen Hilton on Zoom

Thursdays, 12/7, 12/14 & 12/21

7:30-8:30pm, Register with Eventbrite

<https://castingthepageant.eventbrite.com>

## Children & Families

### Children's Advent Wreath Craft

Sunday, December 3

10:00-11:00am, Church School

### Children's Choirs Caroling

Tuesday, December 12

3:30pm, New Canaan Inn

### Christmas Craft Fair

Sunday, December 17

2:00-4:00pm, Smith Hall

RSVP to [churchschool@godsacre.org](mailto:churchschool@godsacre.org)

## Fellowship

### Women's Fellowship Christmas Gathering

Thursday, December 7

7:00pm, Carriage Barn Arts Center

Contact Lesley Cousley at [lcousley@gmail.com](mailto:lcousley@gmail.com)

### Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner

Wednesday, December 13

6:00pm, Waveny House

Contact Charles Crookenden at [crooko@gmail.com](mailto:crooko@gmail.com)

## Music

### Advent Musical Moments

Wednesdays at 12:30pm in the Meeting

- December 6 - Hans Tashjian, bass
- December 13 - Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano
- December 20 - Greer Lyle, soprano

### A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 3

5:00pm, Meeting House

### Christmas Carol Hymn Sing

Sunday, December 17

9:45am, Meeting House

## Youth

### MSYG & YG Christmas Worship

Sunday, December 17

7:00-8:30pm

### Littles Christmas Worship (Grades K-6)

Monday, December 18

4:30-5:30pm



# CHRISTMAS EVE

## ON GOD'S ACRE



## Sunday, December 24

### **Family Service with Nativity Pageant – 4:00pm**

Experience the joy of Christ's birth through a procession of light and nativity pageant in this service designed especially for families.

### **Worship Service – 6:00pm & 7:00pm**

Celebrate Christ's birth at these 30-minute services featuring Christmas scripture and classic hymns.

### **Caroling on God's Acre – 6:30pm**

Join your family, friends, and neighbors for caroling on God's Acre.

### **Candlelight Service – 11:00pm**

A contemplative, candlelight service with scripture, sermon, music, and a procession of light. Communion will be served. String Quartet prelude begins at 10:45pm.

Come Celebrate

*Jody Blaine Davis*

as she retires from her  
18 years of ministry with us!

Sunday, December 10  
10:00am worship,  
reception to follow  
in Smith Hall



Join us as we celebrate the 18-year tenure of Jody Davis as Director of Music Ministry at the Congregational Church of New Canaan as she prepares to retire this month. There will be special music during the 10:00 service, featuring past choir members, and a celebration of her incredible ministry following the service in Smith Hall.

Taking over for Jody in the interim, beginning Christmas Eve, will be local New Canaanite Dr. Michael Burnette.

# ADVENT

## Musical Moments

Wednesdays at 12:30pm  
for 30 minutes

DECEMBER 6

DECEMBER 13

DECEMBER 20



HANS TASHJIAN  
bass



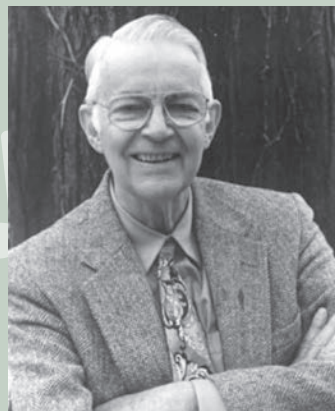
ANNE MAGUIRE  
mezzo soprano



GREER LYLE  
soprano

Christmas Sunday, December 17  
Christmas Carols Hymn Sing  
9:45am in the Meeting House

*Christmas Cantata* by Daniel  
Pinkham during the 10:00am  
Worship service



Daniel Pinkham

The Chancel Choir,  
brass quartet, tympani,  
and organ will present  
Pinkham's three-movement  
work, *Christmas Cantata* at  
the 10:00am service.

Join Us For  
**CHRISTMAS  
EVE**  
on God's Acre

**Sunday, December 24**

**10:00am service**

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano and Dr. Michael Burnette will present festive music.

**4:00pm**

**Family Worship Service**

Cherubs, Spirit Singers, and Joyful Noise will sing at the Family Christmas Eve Service.

**6:00pm and 7:00pm**

**Informal 30-minute services**

Hear section leaders Anne Maguire and Greer Lyle sing Gesu Bambino and Bryan Griffin sing "O Holy Night" as they lead in Christmas carols.

**11:00pm**

**Contemplative Candlelight Service  
with Communion**

*String Quartet prelude begins at 10:45pm*

Hear the string quartet, led by Mariusz Skula, play a contemplative prelude of Christmas carols before this candlelight service. Singing anthems of the season will be Greer Lyle, Anne Maguire, Bryan Griffin, and Hans Tashjian.

**Sunday, December 31**

**8:00 am & 10:00am services**

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano and Dr. Michael Burnette will present festive music.

**There will be NO choir rehearsals the week of December 25 and January 1.**

All Choirs resume in 2024.

**Cherubs: Tuesday, January 9 at 3:00pm**

**Spirit Singers: Tuesday, January 9 at 3:30pm**

**Joyful Noise: Wednesday, January 9 at 4:30pm**

**Joyful Ringers: Thursday, January 11 at 6:30pm**

**Chancel Choir: Thursday, January 11 at 7:30pm**

A Festival of Nine Lessons  
and Carols



**Sunday, December 3 at 5:00pm**

You are invited to A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols presented by the Chancel Choir and readers from the church. This candlelight service of scripture, carols, and anthems is a tradition in our church and around the world. The entire family will enjoy this Christmas service, which is open to the public. Come to find out who this year's "Once in Royal David's City" youth soloist is! For more information, please contact Jody Blaine Davis at [music@godsacre.org](mailto:music@godsacre.org) or (203) 966-2651 x104.

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

## Card Writing Ministry

Are you interested in helping to bring a smile to fellow church members? Please consider joining the Card Ministry Team. We send handwritten notes to do-gooders, unsung heroes, those needing support, and those going through a life change. Please join us and write cards that make a difference in someone's life. We will supply you with beautiful church note cards, the recipient's name, address, and reason for the card. Contact Stephanie Radman at [stephanieradman@aol.com](mailto:stephanieradman@aol.com) to learn more.



## Flower Ministry

“Hallelujah!” The celebration of Christmas 2023 is about to come alive in the Meeting House. The tradition and beauty of our annual floral display will be organized by the Flower Ministry Team. The congregation is invited to contribute to creating a living tribute to our love of the season, our families and friends, and the pure joy of being together. Donations and bulletin listings should be sent to Tracy Goldman at [office@godsacre.org](mailto:office@godsacre.org) by Monday, December 11.



## Filling in the Blanks Packing Event



The women of the church are invited to participate in a rewarding packing event at Filling in the Blanks on January 9, 2024 from 1:00-3:00pm. Located in Norwalk, Filling in the Blanks fights childhood hunger by providing children in need with meals on the weekends. Advanced registration is required for all participants. Please contact Lesley Cousley at [lacousley@gmail.com](mailto:lacousley@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining this fun and meaningful event.



Please join us for our annual Women's Fellowship Christmas Gathering on Thursday, December 7, at 7:00pm for a lovely evening of fellowship and hors d'ouvres at the Carriage Barn Art Center. We will also have an ornament swap this year, so please bring a new ornament (price limit \$20). Registration is \$30 per person, and a portion of your entry fee will go toward one of our favorite non-profit partners. Please contact Lesley Cousley at [lacousley@gmail.com](mailto:lacousley@gmail.com) with any questions. Contact Laurel Carr at [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org) if you need assistance with the cost.



## All men of the church are invited to our Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner.

Our RSVP deadline is quickly approaching! Don't delay register today at: <https://godsacre.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/162/responses/new>

The Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner will be held at the Wavenny House. There will be a fun raffle for a range of prizes, and we look forward to the wonderful voices of Pivot House and our very own Congregational Church Men's Carolers!

The cost is \$70.00 and includes wine and beer provided by the Men's Fellowship Fund. Don't forget to select your main course, Braised Short Ribs Bracirole or Roasted Sake-Yuzu Glazed Salmon. Please contact Charles Crookenden at [crooko@gmail.com](mailto:crooko@gmail.com) with any questions or special requests.

**Sponsor a Guest:** We are also offering the opportunity to treat a Pivot House guest or other guest who may require support. Should you wish to do so, please increase the number of dinners you wish to reserve.



## December Events

Our next M4 Breakfast meeting will be held at Dirk Dunlap's office on Friday, December 8 at 7:30am.



Men's Small Groups will meet on December 18 at 7:30pm in the Chapel. All are welcome. Contact Steve Case at (203) 434-0617 or [scase135@outlook.com](mailto:scase135@outlook.com) with questions.



## 2024 Stewardship Campaign

On November 19, we kicked off our 2024 Stewardship Campaign. As we begin this new season preparing for our future together, we are focused on Jesus' teaching that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will do "even greater works than these" [John 14:12]. We ask that you reflect on what "greater work" the Lord might be calling us to in this next season of our life together as a church family and that you support our church by pledging to the very best of your ability. We hope and pray that 425 individuals and families will participate in our campaign as we strive to reach our financial goal of 2.2 million. We invite you to reflect and prayerfully consider how much you would be willing to give to thank God and support His work in the world through our church in 2024. Please return your pledge card to the church by mail or pledge online at [www.godsacre.org/pledge](http://www.godsacre.org/pledge) by December 31.



## Sharing God's Love Through Song

Last month, our Children's Choirs had the joy of joining the Chancel Choir and Saxophonist Ken Giofre for a jazz worship. They lifted their voices proudly and beautifully. This month, the children have been steadily preparing for their upcoming Christmas Pageant on December 24! Join us at the 4:00pm Family Service on Christmas Eve to experience the story of Jesus' birth firsthand and share in the singing of Christmas Carols. The Children's Choirs will venture to the New Canaan Inn on December 12 at 3:30pm to sing the carols from our pageant and a few famous Christmas tunes to our senior neighbors. All church children are welcome to join us for this outing!



Children and Family Ministries invites you to the  
**Christmas Craft Fair**  
 Sunday, December 17  
 2:00-4:00pm, Smith Hall

We invite all children and their families to join us on Sunday, December 17, from 2:00-4:00pm for our first-ever Christmas Craft Fair. Come visit our Holiday Workshop in Smith Hall to create and wrap presents for your loved ones in time for Christmas. We will have several stations set up with an assortment of crafts and presents to make – ornaments, candles, and more! This is NOT a drop-off event, but we will encourage caregivers to escape to the Parlor for refreshments and a brief moment of calm amidst the holiday bustle while their gift-givers are hard at work creating and wrapping. Please RSVP if you plan to attend so we have an appropriate amount of supplies for all. We hope your family is able to come and experience the magic of giving during the Christmas season!

### December Church School Schedule

#### December 3

Children's Chapel and Advent Wreath Craft,  
 No Church School 5-7th grade

#### December 10

Regular Church School, Middle School Service Project

#### December 17

Regular Church School

#### December 24 at 10:00am

Nursery available, No Church School  
 (all children attend worship with families)

#### December 24 at 4:00pm

Family Christmas Eve Service and Nativity Pageant,  
 Nursery available

#### December 31

Nursery available, No Church School  
 (all children attend worship with families)



# Happy December

Happy December, YG friends and family! We have so much to look forward to this month for our youth programming. But before we dive into those upcoming events, let's reflect on the wonderful events we held this past November.

This past month in YG, we had our annual Freshman/Senior Retreat, where upperclassmen were able to connect and welcome the freshmen during a Lock-In at the church! During Team Reveal, YG Fish connected with their new team members and cooked lasagnas for Inspirica Women's Shelter in Stamford. Our MSYG fish spent a night at the church, building friendships and connecting through faith at the Lock-In.

As for our JYG, Guppies, and Minnows – we reflected on the value of humility and the strength of God's love for us. We held our first youth worship of the year, where kids of all ages came together to praise God and be in fellowship with one another. We also would like to highlight our successful Thanksgiving Service Project that happened this month. This was a significant church-wide service opportunity where all our youth and families served alongside one another as a church community.

As we look toward December, our youth and families will be getting in the spirit of Christmas through the many events we have planned. YG will have our annual Progressive Supper and Christmas Worship. These are events that emphasize the value of fellowship and generosity.

**PLEASE MARK THE FOLLOWING DATES IN YOUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS:**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**  
YG Progressive Supper @ 7:00-9:00pm

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**  
MSYG Salvation Army Bell Ringing @ 3:30-5:30pm

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17**  
YG/MSYG Christmas Worship @ 7:00-8:30pm

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 18**  
Littles Christmas Worship (Grades K-6) @ 4:30-5:30pm

MSYG fish will be participating in Salvation Army Bell Ringing and Team Reveal. Our JYG, Guppies, and Minnows will continue to grow in their faith journeys through our Christmas Worship. Christmas is an exciting season in the life of our church. December will be a month of fellowship for our youth groups, where they will continue to build friendships and grow in faith community!

We are looking forward to the many events that our program has to offer this month. But most of all, we are grateful for our youth and families who make these programs so special!



**Worship with us!**

**YG/MSYG & Alumni Christmas Worship**  
Sunday, December 17, 7:00-8:30pm

**Littles Christmas Worship (K-6th)**  
Monday, December 18, 4:30-5:30pm

# Be An Advent Angel

Families in need have hard choices at Christmas. Paying for food and winter utilities often leaves no room in the budget for gifts. In working with local partners, our three annual Christmas projects target that issue.



The Angel gifts we buy are for children in the homeless or working poor communities.



The Dove donations provide food for an entire day for a family or individual in need.



The Salvation Army Bell Ringing funds provide help with heat and electricity needs of local residents through our Health and Human Services Department.

Contact Tracy Goldman at [office@godsacre.org](mailto:office@godsacre.org) to participate.



## 2024 Adult Mission Trip to PUERTO RICO Part Dos – March 9 - 15



JOIN US AS WE CONTINUE OUR MISSION WORK IN PUERTO RICO. All are welcome. For more information and to sign up, stop by the Missions Table in Smith Hall during Fellowship hours or contact Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org). Signup deadline is December 10.



## Save the Date!

January 23, 2024, Open Doors

In January our much-missed (thanks to Covid!) Open Doors lunch service will resume. An Open Doors Ministry Team is in the process of being reformed. Up to 4 team members will help make and serve lunch the 4th Tuesday of each month to the unhoused and underserved community in Norwalk. The first service will be January 23, 11:30am. If you are interested in participating or for more information, please contact Susie Swindell at [susies1@optonline.net](mailto:susies1@optonline.net).



## Jesus' Family Advent Study

We kicked off in November with Jesus' Cousin, John the Baptist. Join us for Mamma Mary and Papa Joseph, December 4 and 11, 7:00-8:00am, Library, and December 5 and 12 (Women's), 9:30-10:30am, Parlor. Contact Marianna Kilbride at [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org), for a Zoom link.



## Advent Theatre - Admission Free!

Even if you missed the first session, you can still participate in, *Casting the Pageant — Meeting the Characters of Christmas: A Yale Zoom Series*, Thursdays at 7:30pm, during Advent. Our dear friend and one-time minister, the Rev. Dr. Allen Hilton, will flesh out the cast of characters we know from the annual Christmas pageant. Through understanding of the behind-the-scenes social world in which they live, we'll develop a historically based character profile for each part.

### December 7

**The Heavenly Host**  
*Unnamed in Matthew,*  
*Gabriel in Luke,*  
*Host of Heaven in Luke*

### December 14

**The Lovely and Lowly**  
*Shepherds, Innkeeper,*  
*and Animals*

### December 21

**The Adorable Couple**  
*Mary and Joseph*

The three remaining sessions will occur on December 7, 14, and 21, 7:30-8:30pm. Contact Marianna Kilbride at [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org) to receive a link.

## December History Committee

The Church's History Committee is actively researching the origins of our church from the 18th century onward. If you are interested in participating in this research - or simply have tidbits of information you find interesting - please feel free to attend a committee meeting. The next one is scheduled for December 7 at 4:00pm in the Church Library. Want more information? Contact Steve Case at (203) 434 0617 or email at [scase135@outlook.com](mailto:scase135@outlook.com).



## OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

### 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**  
Minister of Pastoral Care

Laurel Carr, **x107**  
Director of Communications

Barb Clayton, **x102**  
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**  
Community Life Coordinator

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



The Congregational Church  
of New Canaan

23 Park Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
(203) 966-2651  
[www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org)

*We are a Stephen Minister Church*

## Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the January newsletter, please submit by December 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)