



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

Most of us are quite familiar with the stories of Jesus' expansive teaching and healing ministry. Jesus is said to have taught crowds of thousands while curing all manner of diseases. Jesus is even said to have fed the multitudes with a few loaves of bread and fish. What is perhaps even more astonishing is that in the gospel of John, Jesus lets his followers know that in his absence, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will do *"even greater works than these."* [John 14:12]

As Christians, as members of Christ's Church, Jesus believes we can accomplish far more in our ministry than he was able to accomplish in His. There is deep historical truth to this contention, for the Church of Jesus Christ has ministered to the world for 2000 years, bringing faith, support, and healing to innumerable people and countless communities. Jesus was signaling that His church would have an expansive impact that no one in first-century Palestine could have ever imagined.



We are blessed with a vital and growing community on God's Acre. We have not only made it through a pandemic together, but we have, through the grace and goodness of God, witnessed the expansion of so many of our ministries. Together with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we have accomplished so much. Now what? That is the question for everyone in our church to consider this Stewardship Season. We have been doing really good work together, but scripture insists that there is more to come. Together, we are being called to even greater works than that which we have witnessed to date.

This Stewardship Season, I invite you not only to pray and discern what financial commitment you feel called to offer through the church, but I also ask you to reflect on what "greater work" the Lord might be calling us to in this next season of our life together as a church family. What do you believe the Lord desires of us at this time? What important work might God be calling us to in the future?

To this end, there is a goal for the church this year. We are hoping and praying to have 425 pledges made this year. 425 financial commitments to the church. 425 visions for greater work together.

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THANKSGIVING SERVICE PROJECT

Sunday, November 19, 11:00am-12:30pm

On Sunday, November 19, our church will serve in one of its most beloved traditions, the Thanksgiving Service Project. We serve 140 families in neighboring towns in need. We will gather immediately after the 10:00am service in Smith Hall. We invite you to grab a box, decorate it, and then fill it with delicious food for a family to enjoy. Everyone in our church family is encouraged to participate in this all-church effort to feed our neighbors this Thanksgiving! Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of our packing event.

Church School

The children of our church are big contributors to our annual Thanksgiving Service project. All children received a “Turkey Bank” at the beginning of November and were encouraged to raise money through both acts of service and fundraising through family and friends. The money raised through Church School will contribute directly to the stipend provided to our Thanksgiving dinner recipients to purchase turkeys. Children will return their Turkey Banks to church on Sunday, November 19. On that day, all church school classes will participate in the Thanksgiving Service Project during church school and following the service with their families.



Youth

Our Youth Groups will have their part in our annual Thanksgiving Service Project! Our Guppies will make hot cocoa jars with marshmallows, and JYG will pack cookies in a jar mix for families served by the project. YG Fish will do their annual part of the project by assisting as volunteers during the all-church packing event and then delivering the boxes to the local non-profits. The schedule of events is below.

Monday, November 13

JYG makes cookie mix jars at normal program time 4:15-5:30pm.

Tuesday, November 14

Guppies make cocoa jars at normal program time 3:30-4:30pm.

Sunday, November 19

MSYG fish are expected to be at the church by 9:30am to help the church schoolers prepare the boxes during the service. They will help in church school from 9:30-11:00am. This is a covenant event for all MSYG fish traveling on the Mountainside trip in June.

YG traveling Mission Fish are expected to sign up either as an individual to help with the Thanksgiving Service Project Event or with their families to deliver the completed Thanksgiving boxes in the afternoon. We kindly ask that if you have multiple children in the program, please plan to help deliver boxes. Each car should be able to fit 5 boxes in the trunk or back seat.

Drivers/Families should pull in the front circle during your allocated time slot, where you will be greeted by a YG advisor who will tell you what local non-profit you are delivering to. To sign up, look for the sign-up genius from the ministry team in early November! Contact Emma Garner at emma@godsacre.org for more information.

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We plan to post in Smith Hall all the many dreams and visions we have as a community of faith. This scripture in John is not intended as a stewardship slogan; it is a call to vision and a call to action. While the kickoff to our 2024 campaign is still a few weeks away, I ask you to pray about what the Lord prompts you to give financially to the church and to help us discern the next great work the Lord is calling us into this year and beyond.

Together with the Holy Spirit, there is much to accomplish to the glory of God!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

Missions and Outreach

Our November plate offering goes towards the 2023 Thanksgiving Service Project. Benefitting the following local agencies:

Inspirica in Stamford

The program provides temporary housing and services for those in crisis.

Grace Baptist Church in Norwalk

Food is delivered to local families in need.

Macedonia Church in Norwalk

Food is delivered to local families in need.

Carver Foundation of Norwalk

After-school program for children in need.

Person To Person in Darien

Provides food, clothing, and other programming predominantly to the working poor.

Mid Fairfield AIDS Project in Norwalk

Provides social services to people living with HIV and AIDS

Open Doors in Norwalk

Serves the unhoused with a food pantry, shelter, and 3 meals daily.

Pacific House/Stamford Shelter for the

A shelter and kitchen serving homeless men in our area.

Pivot Ministries Inc.

Rehabilitation program for men addicted to drugs and alcohol.

Liberation House/Liberation Programs in Stamford

Rehabilitation program for men addicted to drugs and alcohol.

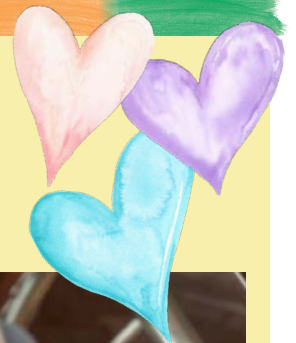
During the month of November, we partner with these agencies to feed a full Thanksgiving meal to over 100 families. We will gather at the church the Sunday before Thanksgiving, November 19, to pack, stack, decorate, and deliver boxes of food to our neighbors in need. Congregants wishing to support this beloved church tradition may make a monetary donation to this project by visiting our website, using the GIVE button, and designating the gift to the "Thanksgiving Project." You can also donate cash or check in the Sunday plate or stop by the church office. Contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org to learn more.



LIFE EVENTS

Birth

Greg and Jenny Kops welcomed daughter Vivienne Kops on September 22, 2023



Special Music

Ken Gioffre, saxophonist

Ken Gioffre, internationally renowned jazz saxophonist, will be in the 10:00am service on Sunday, November 12. He will accompany the Chancel Choir and Children's Choirs on anthems. Mr. Gioffre currently tours and records as a saxophonist for Nile Rodgers and Chic, with an estimated 3 million in audiences since spring 2023. Mr. Gioffre continues with Blood, Sweat, and Tears and is the conductor/saxophonist for Smokey Robinson. He has appeared nightly on the television show New York at Night. He has also appeared regularly on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, NBC's Today Show, HBO's The Sopranos, A & E's Breakfast With The Arts, Fox News' Fox and Friends, Sinbad's Soul Music Festival, as well as the movie Last Holiday starring Queen Latifa. Mr. Gioffre has recorded for numerous labels and for all major television networks.



Sing During Advent with the Chancel Choir

If you would like to sing with the Chancel Choir but have limited time, consider singing in the December services! The Chancel Choir will sing traditional Christmas anthems in the 10:00am services on December 3 and 10 and A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on December 3 (5:00 pm). December 17 will be the featured work with brass/timpani, Christmas Cantata by Daniel Pinkham. Come Thursday evenings from 7:30–8:15pm for quick rehearsals for the Advent season. You will sit next to a helpful singer who will guide. There is a place for you!



SAVE THE DATE

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will be Sunday, December 3, at 5:00pm. All are invited to this traditional one-hour service of scriptures read by the congregants and music presented by the Chancel Choir.

Sunday, December 10 We Say Goodbye to Jody

Jody Blaine Davis will retire as Director of Music Ministries, effective December 20. The church will recognize her years of service to the church in the Sunday morning services and during fellowship on December 10.



Welcome Michael Burnette Interim Director of Music Ministries

We welcome Michael Burnette as Interim Director of Music Ministries. Michael will begin part-time in mid-November to shadow Jody. Michael received a Bachelor of Music degree in sacred choral conducting and organ from Westminster Choir College and a Master's and Doctorate in organ performance from the Eastman School of Music. He has held Presbyterian, Congregational and Episcopal positions during his career. Most recently, he was Director of Music at Christ and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Westport, a position he held for 22 years.



Michael Burnette is a freelance collaborative musician in Connecticut. He retired from Christ & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Westport, in September 2021, where he was the organist-choirmaster and artistic director of the Music & Arts Series for 22 years. Previously, since the age of 12, he served congregations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and California. Michael holds degrees from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York; major teachers included David Craighead, Harald Vogel, Donald McDonald, and Raymond Ocock. He is also an experienced choral singer; he has performed as an organist and singer throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Michael is a member of the Association of Anglican Musicians and the American Guild of Organists and has held various leadership positions in both organizations over the years.

Please Welcome Our Fall 2023 New Member Class

Sue & Jackie Cook

Aiken Street
Norwalk

John & Brynn Loboda

Jonathan Road

Jamie & Kim Loner

Old Kings Highway
Brooks

Mark & Valarie McLain

Hickok Road
Mason & Liam

Allen & Liza Miller

Logan Road
Elsie

Cheryl Ponzeka

Smith Ridge Road
Sawyer & Peyton



Our Children Are Flourishing in Music!

The Children's Choirs have been musically exploring the ideas of what it means to be a good neighbor, encourage each other, and live a life pleasing to God. Our new Director, Greer Lyle, has been in awe of both their musical talents and incredible positive energy. They look forward to sharing their hearts with you through a musical offering during the 10:00am service on

November 12. Be sure so come early to hear them sing the prelude! Has your child expressed an interest in music? They are welcome to join at any time. This is the perfect environment for them to learn musical skills while exploring spiritual concepts and having fun! Contact Greer Lyle at greer@godsacre.org to learn more.



Seeking Families for Advent Wreath Lighting!

During the season of Advent, we invite church families to participate in our worship service by lighting our Advent Wreath each week at the 10:00am service. Should your family be interested in participating in this holiday tradition, please reach out to lindsey@godsacre.org by November 15.



Save The Date: Children's Christmas Craft Fair

We invite all children and their families to join us on Sunday, December 17, from 2:00-4:00pm for our first Christmas Craft Fair. Come visit our Holiday Workshop to create and wrap presents for your loved ones in time for Christmas. This is not a drop-off event, but we will encourage caregivers to escape to the parlor for some refreshments and a brief moment of calm amidst the holiday bustle while their gift-givers are hard at work creating. Light refreshments will be provided. We hope your family is able to come and experience the magic of giving during the Christmas season!

Upcoming Church School Schedule November/December

November 5:

Children's Chapel, Kick-off for Turkey Banks
No Church School 5-7th grade

November 12:

Regular Church School

November 19:

Bring in Turkey Banks
Church School Thanksgiving Service Project

November 26:

Nursery available and Combined Church School Class for Children through 4th grade

December 3:

Children's Chapel, No Church School 5-7th grade

December 10:

Regular Church School, Middle School service project

December 17:

Regular Church School

December 24:

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

December 31:

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



Happy November

Happy November, 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 October. This past month in YG, we enjoyed fellowship and pizza with our annual Family Agape Dinner, faith, and reflection with our first YG Worship, and leadership and service with our church-wide Trunk-or-Treat celebration! Our MSYG Fish have been learning the value of service through events such as Cooking for a Cause and Filling in the Blanks. MSYG also enjoyed community-building and fellowship with our annual Fall Super Day, sharing caramel apples and participating in fun fall activities at the Nature Center. As for our JYG, Guppies, and Minnows – we reflected on the Greatest Commandment and the Power of Prayer. In addition, we supported our YG alums by sending care packages.

Our theme for November is gratitude as we serve our greater community and continue to grow together in faith and fellowship. This month, our youth focus will be on service. Our youth will have various opportunities to give back and serve others in upcoming events. For YG, these events will include the Senior/Freshman Lock-In. This allows our upperclassmen to strengthen their connections with our younger fish, making them feel known and welcomed into our YG community. We also have our first Youth Worship of the year with a reflection

on gratitude. Youth Worship is open to fish in second grade and above. We also would like to highlight our Thanksgiving Service Project, which will be a significant church-wide service opportunity open to all our youth and families to serve together as a church community. This will take place on Sunday, November 19, throughout the day. We look forward to seeing you there!

As December will be here before we know it, please mark the following dates in your calendar for upcoming youth events:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

YG Progressive Supper @ 7-9pm

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

MSYG Salvation Army Bell Ringing @ 3:30-5:30pm

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

YG/MSYG Christmas Worship @ 7-8:30pm

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

Little's Christmas Worship (Grades K-6) @ 4:30-5:30pm

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!



Inspirica is Overwhelmed With Gratitude!

Thanks to our church family and friends we were able to give 51 children brand new sneakers and socks. Your generosity has made such a difference in their lives. Thank you!



A Request from Israeli and Palestinian Friends in Israel and Palestine:

Navigating how to be an ally to Israelis and Palestinians is complex, and we encourage you to center on our shared humanity during this time. Continue to speak out against violence, and don't get swept up in talking points.

If you don't know what to say, know this.

Your Palestinian friends are looking to you to know you see their humanity and their right to a life without disenfranchisement.

Your Jewish friends are looking to you to know you do not support the loss of innocent Jewish lives and that their Jewish identity does not mean they support the actions of the Israeli government.

Your Palestinian friends are looking at you to demonstrate you don't equate their existence to Hamas and that additional innocent people shouldn't face starvation, continuous violence, and the stripping of their human rights.

Your Jewish friends also want you to know their grief may be complex, and they deserve time to process, and that their mourning is not an endorsement of violence. Their fears and grief are valid and have a historical basis.

While there are loud extremists on all sides, there are even more people who are scared and trying to process, figuring out how to take action, how to grieve, and wondering how this cycle of violence can stop.

You can be critical of Hamas and the Israeli government while holding space and compassion for Jewish and Palestinian people. We need a solution that centers on humanity. We cannot continue to justify human rights violations, and we must confront the reality that the failure to solve this conflict has allowed tensions to boil over in a way that puts innocent people at risk.

Israelis and Palestinians who desire peace ask that you pray for peace for us all.

Advent Project Kickoff

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.



Signups begin November 12, or contact Tracy Goldman at office@godsacre.org.

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. Signups begin Sunday, November 5.



Love Thy Neighbor

We are so grateful for those who participate in our Pastoral Care community. Our church life is full, and our bonds with one another are strong because of the labor and love of our members. We engage and connect with one another by providing words of love and encouragement through a thoughtful prayer, a special visit, a beautiful prayer shawl to cover one with comfort and love, a handwritten note with carefully chosen words, a lovely bouquet of flowers delivered at just the right moment or a long term, deep and caring relationship provided by our Stephen Ministers.

Please join our Pastoral Care community!

If you're interested in one of our pastoral care ministry teams, contact Beth Baker at beth@godsacre.org or Barb Clayton at barb@godsacre.org.



Advent Theatre - Admission Free!

Join us in participating 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 the behind-the-scenes social world in which they live, we'll develop a historically based character profile for each part.

November 30

The Big Shots

Augustus Caesar, Quirinius, Herod, and the Magi

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 four sessions will occur on November 30, December 7, 14, and 21, 7:30-8:30pm. After attending all four sessions, participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Use the link to sign up with Eventbrite:

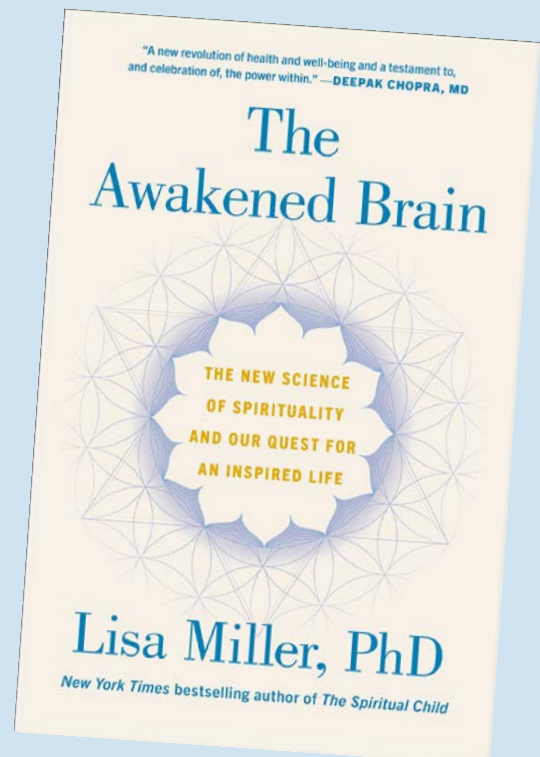
<https://castingthepageant.eventbrite.com>



The Awakened Brain Book Chat

Wednesday, 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 Lesley Cousley at lacousley@gmail.com.



Women's Fellowship Christmas Gathering

Please save the date for our annual Women's Fellowship Christmas Gathering! Join us Thursday, December 7 at 7:00pm for a lovely evening of fellowship, hors d'ouvres by Simply Delicious, and an ornament swap at the Carriage Barn Arts Center. Registration is \$30 per person, and a portion of your entry fee will go toward one of our favorite non-profit partners. Invitation coming soon! Check your inbox.

If anyone needs assistance with the cost, contact Laurel Carr at laurel@godsacre.org.



Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner

Save the Date

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Waveny House

Fellowship: 6:00pm

Dinner: 7:00pm

The Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner will once again be at Waveny 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 Braciolo or Roasted Sake-Yuzu Glazed Salmon.

Please contact Charles Crookenden at crooko@gmail.com with any questions or special requests. [Register now at this link.](#)

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.

There is limited space, so please sign up at your earliest convenience.



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

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(203) 966-2651
www.godsacre.org

We are a Stephen Minister Church

Newsletter Submissions

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