



Easter on God's Acre

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Dear Church Family,

Easter arrives early on our calendar this year, March 31. A March Easter only falls once every four years, so this year is a bit unique. Easter is early, there is no public-school break, and the temperatures make it feel like early spring is upon us. I often wonder who will be with us on God's Acre to celebrate the central and most important promise of our faith, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the good news of eternal life extended to all who believe! With no conflicting break this year, we hope to have many of you, your families, and friends around to join us for this highest and holiest of days!

I am reminding you of our schedule because it is the only Sunday during the program year when our worship times change. We will have our Contemporary Sunrise Service on the front steps of the Meeting House at 6:30am, followed by our two Traditional Worship Services at 9:00 and 11:00am instead of our normal 8:00 and 10:00am. This has been our Easter worship schedule for years now, and we will advertise the adjusted worship times every day online and in print, but we hope you will help us spread the word and help people remember. While arriving at 8:00 or 10:00am will likely ensure you a good seat, you will have to wait a while for worship to begin!

I also wanted to invite you to the Easter Egg Hunt and Family Fellowship that will be offered at 10:00am between our two services. This wonderful event gives family and friends within our church time to connect and play before or after worship, depending on which service best suits your schedule.

So, this is your advanced warning: Easter is arriving early this year on March 31. Our lineup is as follows:

- 6:30am Contemporary Sunrise Worship
- 9:00am Traditional Worship
- 10:00am Easter Egg Hunt and Family Fellowship
- 11:00am Traditional Worship

We hope you will join us to celebrate the Resurrection and the new life that Easter inspires!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin



Holy Week on God's Acre

PALM SUNDAY
SUNDAY, MARCH 24

8:00am Worship Service
Chapel

10:00am Worship Service
Meeting House

MAUNDY THURSDAY
THURSDAY, MARCH 28

8:00pm Tenebrae Service
Featuring the Chancel Choir
Meeting House

EASTER SUNDAY
SUNDAY, MARCH 31

**6:30am Contemporary Sunrise
Worship Service**

Church Steps
- A light breakfast follows in the Parlor

9:00am Traditional Worship Service
Meeting House

- Prelude begins at 8:45am
*- Church School Chapel Service and
Nursery Care available*

**10:00am Easter Egg Hunt and
Family Fellowship**

Church Lawn

11:00am Traditional Worship Service
Meeting House

- Prelude begins at 10:45am
*- Church School Chapel Service and
Nursery Care are available*

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

Stewardship Update

Our 2024 Stewardship Campaign is making positive strides toward our goal, though we still have a ways to go. This year, we have aspired to reach 425 financial pledges. Beyond financial pledges, we invite you to envision what “greater works than these” the Holy Spirit is calling us to in the years ahead. Currently, we have 330 pledge cards (78% of goal) totaling

\$2.09M (98% of our goal). We are very grateful for the blessings of this community. If you have not yet pledged, please consider making a pledge to the Stewardship Campaign, and if possible, please consider increasing your commitment. Beyond pledging, we hope that you will also encourage others to participate in this year’s campaign.



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UPCOMING ANNUAL MEETING

The Trustees are reviewing the financial results for 2023. Last year’s results and the budget for 2024 will be presented at the upcoming Annual Meeting on March 3, 2024. Please join us for a full update from our Deacons and Trustees, nominating recommendations, and a review of our Raymond Trust. Contact Caroline Smittle at caroline@godsacre.org to RSVP and receive the Zoom link.

Flower Fêtes

Whether it's over a luncheon (thanks to Kris Johnson for hosting), an arranging class with the Women's Fellowship ministry (thanks to Lesley Cousley for organizing), delivering flowers to the community (thank you, Deacons), or welcoming and working with new members of our team (thanks to all our members, new and old) there is always something blooming in the Flower Ministry. Of course, arranging for weekly services is truly joyful, but the community the flowers bring together is the true beauty of the ministry.



Easter Flowers

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.”
– Lady Bird Johnson

We invite you to make contributions to our Easter flower display. Your contributions can be made in celebration of the season or in memory of loved ones to be listed in our Easter Sunday Bulletin. Please make your contributions by Monday, March 25. You can donate online and designate Easter Flowers or use the envelopes provided in the March 17 and 24 bulletins. If you have any questions, contact Tracy Goldman at office@godsacre.org.



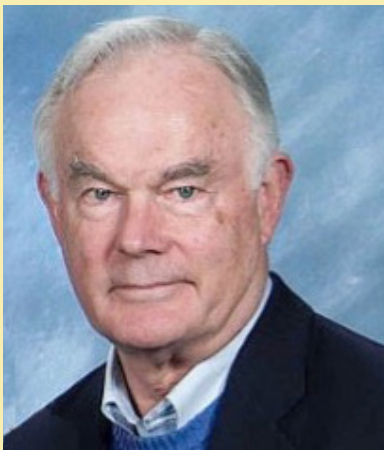
A Gathering of Hearts and Minds

Last month, our Pastoral Care ministry team members gathered to mingle and share ideas by the fireplace at the Bakers’ barn. In addition to catching up with one another, ideas were shared about the various ways we, as a church family, care for one another. Having recently changed the name of our Visitation Team to the Pastoral Outreach Team, we talked about our vision of connecting with one another not only through visits, phone calls, and notes but also by offering occasional rides and meals.

As always, we welcome all Church members to join us in our mission to love one another as God loves us. If you are interested, please contact Beth Baker at beth@godsacre.org or Barb Clayton at barb@godsacre.org.



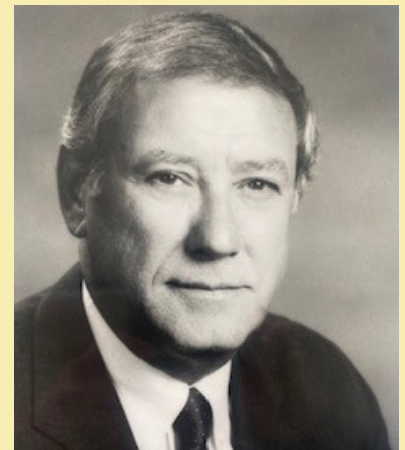
IN LOVING MEMORY



Thomas B Towers
June 9, 1938 - February 3, 2024



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



Raymond Spinola
August 10, 1929 - February 10, 2024

Children's Music in Church

Our children's choir graced us with their angelic voices on the last Sunday in Epiphany, filling the sanctuary with joy and hope. One of the highlights was the heartfelt rendition of "Be a Light," a powerful anthem reminding us to spread kindness and compassion in a world often dark and uncertain. Another moving piece was "Worthy," lifting our hearts in worship and adoration, reminding us of God's infinite grace and worthiness of our praise. The children's choirs will open our worship with a joyful Hosanna on Palm Sunday, March 24.



Spring Musical: The Fruits of the Spirit

Join us for an exhilarating spring musical adventure presented by our Children's Music and Drama Ministry! This year, we're delving into the vibrant theme of the "fruits" of the spirit. Each church school class will embark on a journey to explore the spiritual fruits mentioned in Paul's teachings in Galatians. Did your child delight in our Nativity Pageant and now yearns to participate beyond singing? We have engaging roles awaiting them! This presents a wonderful opportunity not only to contribute to our musical scenes but also to delve into the richness of our faith. Through this experience, our children will not only memorize verses but also deepen their understanding of this vital aspect of Christianity.

Rehearsals will be held both during Church School and Children's Choir rehearsals on Tuesdays starting March 19. Please email Greer Lyle at greer@godsacre.org to sign up!

SAVE THE DATE

The Spring Musical will be presented during Worship on Pentecost Sunday, May 19 at 10:00am.

You won't want to miss this celebration of faith and creativity!



Children's Easter Happenings

On Sunday, March 24, in addition to the musical share from Children's Choirs in worship, all children will be invited to participate in a Palm Sunday Chapel Service led by our middle school students. Through interactive stations, we will explore Jesus's triumphant entry and the days leading up to His miraculous resurrection.

On Easter Sunday, March 31, Children's Chapel will be offered at both 9:00am and 11:00am. We hope all children will join us for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on the church lawn between services. We will have different egg-hunting sections for each age group and several golden eggs with mystery prizes inside! There may even be a visit from the Easter Bunny. Keep an eye out for an email inviting you to bring a baked good to our family fellowship that will also take place during the egg hunt. We look forward to a special Easter morning with all of you!



Lenten Collection - Little Free Pantry of Stamford

Take What You Need, Give What You Can

Little Free Pantry of Stamford offers free food and other necessities from the small outdoor and always open pantry at St. John's Lutheran Church in Stamford. As a Lenten practice during the month of March, we will partner with LFP, supplying their most difficult-to-collect items. Please bring small laundry detergent jugs, bar soap, shampoo/conditioner, hand soap, toothpaste, diapers, toilet cleaner, household spray cleaners, and feminine care products to the bin in Smith Hall by March 31. Contact Tracy Goldman at office@godsacre.org.



March Madness

In all its forms, the Men's Group continues at an active pace during the Lenten season. On March 8 at 7:30am the M4 breakfast discussion centered around faith and career will continue at Dirk Dunlap's office on Grove Street.

The MG Book Group will meet at 7:00pm on April 7 at Jim Clayton's home to discuss David Grann's book *The Wager*; the author is speaking at the New Canaan Library on March 14.

A March Madness social get-together at Steve Case's home, 135 Comstock Hill, will be held on Thursday, March 21, starting at 6:30pm. Pizza, salad, and BYOB with a \$10 contribution suggested. An email invite will go out soon, so watch your inbox.



Men's Small Groups will meet on March 25 at 7:30pm in the Chapel for Easter week reflection.

All men of the church are welcome to attend all events. If you have questions, please contact Steve Case at 203-434-0617 or scase135@outlook.com.

Cake and Coffee

All women of the church are invited! Please join us for cake, coffee, and camaraderie at the beautiful home of church member Malia Frame on Thursday, March 7, at 9:30am. We will serve coffee and light refreshments. Let us enjoy some fellowship time together. RSVP to the email invite or contact Lesley Cousley at lacousley@gmail.com by March 3



Lenten Bible Study Resurrection Stories

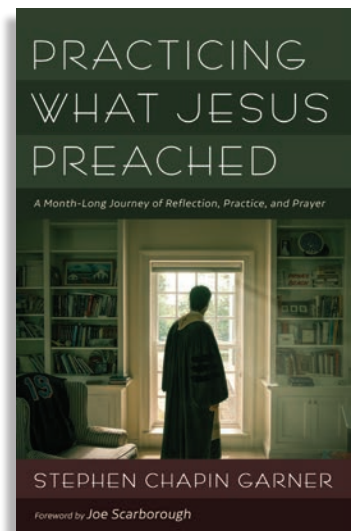
The Monday Morning Bible Study (7:00-8:00am) and the Tuesday Women's Bible Study (9:30-10:30am) will gather this lent to reflect on the resurrection stories as evocatively told in the Gospels. Join us on Mondays, March 4, 18, and 25, in the Library and on Tuesdays, March 5, 19, and 26, in the Parlor. Contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org to learn more.



Practicing What Jesus Preached

Lenten Podcast: Practicing What Jesus Preached

Each weekday in Lent, Chapin offers a daily podcast with reflections, questions, practices, and prayers, on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Take time to journey with Jesus this Lenten season, by striving to put what Jesus preached into practice. The podcast is available on all major podcast platforms. Chapin's book, *Practicing What Jesus Preached* is available at the church, Elm Street Books, Wipf & Stock Publishers www.wipfandstock.com, and other online vendors.



La Camaraderie: Petits dîners entre amies! Fellowship Dinner Parties – A Night in France

Congregants are invited to join in a celebration of faith and French-inspired gastronomy on Saturday, March 23, at 6:00pm. Our French-themed small dinner parties will be scattered across various locations bound by the unifying thread of fellowship on a single evening. Organized by our Fellowship team, this unique evening aims to foster deeper connections among its members while indulging in the delights of French cuisine and culture.

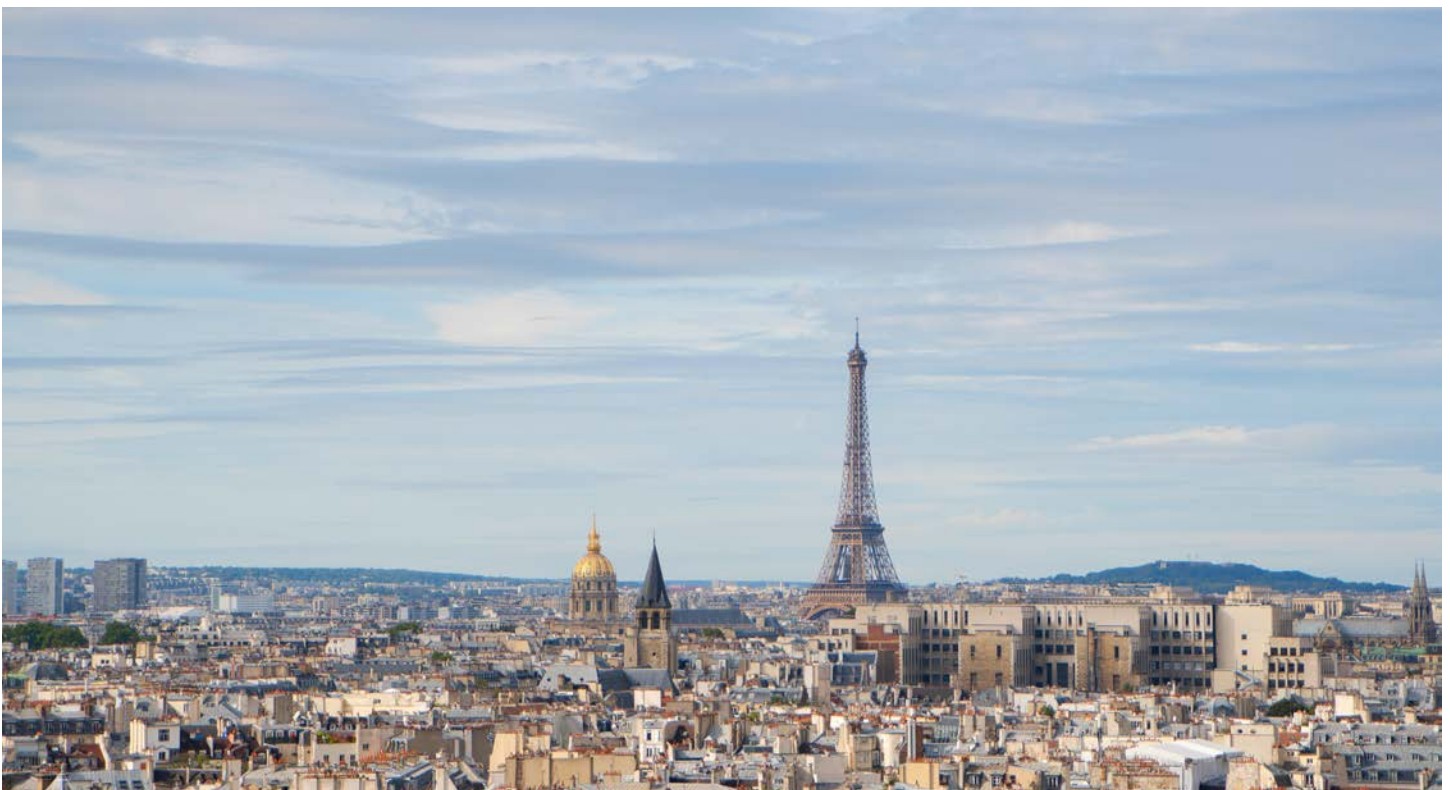
As the sun begins its descent, church members and friends will eagerly make their way to the designated venues. At each gathering spot, guests will contribute to the feast by with menus inspired by the culinary treasures of France. Of course, no French-inspired soirée would be complete without a selection of wine to complement the meal. Guests will be asked to bring an assigned dish and contribute their favorite beverage.



But beyond the culinary delights, the true essence of the evening lies in the spirit of fellowship that permeates every gathering. Here, amidst the clinking of glasses and the laughter of friends, bonds are strengthened, and relationships are forged anew, transcending the boundaries of church pews and Meeting House walls.

As the evening draws to a close and guests bid adieu to their fellow diners, hearts are full, and spirits are uplifted by the warmth and camaraderie shared throughout the night. In the end, it's not just about the food or the drink; it's about the shared journey of faith and friendship that unites us all.

If you would like to participate as a host, please contact Dawn Doak at dawn.norris@gmail.com. Please check your email for the invitation and to RSVP. Dinner assignments will be sent out by email on Tuesday, March 19.





Hymn Sing

March 17 at 9:45am

Select your favorite hymn and the choir will lead us in singing a couple verses! It will still be the penitential season of Lent, during which we typically refrain from speaking or singing “Alleluias,” so let’s save the “Alleluia” hymns for next month. See you in the Meeting House on the 17th at 9:45am!



Palm Sunday

March 24 at 10:00am

Join CCNC's children's choirs, Chancel Choir, and the Joyful Ringers as we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Wave palm branches, sing favorite hymns, including “All Glory, Laud and Honor,” and hear festive anthems!



Maundy Thursday

March 28 at 8:00pm

On this night, we commemorate the Last Supper, the final meal shared by Jesus and his disciples in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. The service concludes with Tenebrae, Latin for “darkness,” characterized by scripture readings that tell the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and the gradual extinguishing of candles. The Chancel Choir will sing sublime anthems by Ola Gjeilo, Richard Shephard, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. All are welcome in the Meeting House for this time of contemplation as we anticipate the hope of Easter.



Easter Day

March 31 at 9:00 and 11:00am

Voices, trumpets, trombones, tympani, and organ join forces to proclaim the glorious resurrection of Jesus! Come early to get a seat and enjoy the prelude which will begin 15 minutes before each service. Festive music by Giovanni Gabrieli, Arnold Sherman, Richard Shephard, and Charles-Marie Widor will raise our hearts to heaven on this day of joy, hope, and renewed faith.

THANK YOU MISSION SPONSORS! JOIN US FOR YOUTH SUNDAY 2024

Our mission would not have been possible without the prayers, love, and gifts from our Mission Sponsors! Please join us for our Youth Worship Service, followed by a lovely fellowship coffee hour and a preview of our YG Mission Trip video.



Sunday, March 10
10:00am Worship Service
11:00am Mission Sponsor Fellowship



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**
Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

Dr. Michael Burnette, **x104**
Interim Director of Music Ministries

Laurel Carr, **x107**
Director of Communications

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

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

Lonnie deMarco
Chair, Personnel

Amy Werner
Chair, Board of Trustees

Peter Wilson
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 April newsletter, please submit by March 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