



# news @ GOD'S ACRE

November 2017



## All-Church Thanksgiving Service Project A-Z/pg 4

### From the Pastor's Study

Dear Church Family,

I love November in New England. The air is crisp. Skies can dawn bright blue. The last of the leaves turn color and fall, revealing landscapes and vistas that have been hidden since spring. I also love football, Thanksgiving, and those turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sandwiches that can be enjoyed for days after all the company has left your home. November also ushers us into the season of Advent, which leads to



one of the most remarkable annual events in our town - Christmas Eve on God's Acre.

I know I am getting way ahead of myself - uncomfortably so for anyone who may already be stressing about the holidays on the horizon - but I am a church guy, and we are edging ever closer to one of the great and glorious seasons of the church year. Personally, since our family will be hosting Thanksgiving in New Canaan

this year, I have already been trying to identify the best place to cut our own tree - which has become our tradition the Friday after Thanksgiving. I am also looking forward to bringing my extended family to church on Sunday, November 26 to introduce them to all of you. I find this to be such an exciting time of year, and I want you to not only be enthusiastic about it too, but also to prepare yourself for what is to come.

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“...there is an undeniable beauty and sacred-centeredness that can be experienced on our holy little hill, and participating in the vibrant life of our church has a way of making all of life better and more fully blessed.”

*From the Pastor's Study*  
*Continued from page 1*

The best way to thoroughly to enjoy the sacred seasons of Thanksgiving and Advent, is to show up. Make it to God's Acre. Steep yourself and your family in the stories of our faith. Be mindful of the time of year and the liturgical season so that Christmas doesn't catch you unaware and overwhelmed. I have noticed that a surprising number of folks from our community have been rather slow to reengage in church activities this fall. I know that busy schedules, beautiful and warm fall weekends, and a persistent cultural trend away from church attendance all likely play a role...but there is an undeniable beauty and sacred-centeredness that can be experienced on our holy little hill, and participating in the vibrant life of our church has a way of making all of life better and more fully blessed.

This fall, as we prepare for the arrival of Thanksgiving and the season of Advent there are so many wonderful events and gatherings you can be a part of at church that can give a lift to your spirits and add meaning to your life. I want to highlight two such happenings that might interest you. First, Eric will be offering a two-session class on Sundays, November 12 and 19 on how to have difficult conversations with people entitled "Having the Conversation: How to Communicate Across Differences". Religion, politics, social justice, and so many other topics can be divisive, but as people of faith, we need to develop a competency to have thoughtful and engaged discussions with people with whom we disagree. As Eric pointed out in worship last week, these sessions are conveniently timed right before Thanksgiving, so you will know how to carefully, yet effectively, converse with those relatives you have over to dinner with whom you rarely see eye to eye!

Second, I will be preaching a three-part series on the 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew entitled "Chapter for Life" on November 12, 19, and 26. I believe Matthew 25 is one of the most important chapters in the gospel, because in it Jesus wonderfully and provocatively expresses ways of living that are essential for salvation and deeply pleasing to God. Some of the people I most admire make an effort to live their lives by the wisdom and direction found in this particular chapter of scripture.

So, November is here and Advent is just around the corner! Enjoy the season. Reengage at God's Acre. Join a class. Make worship a priority. And, if you happen to be hosting family and friends for Thanksgiving like our family is this year, take the opportunity to introduce them to your church!

Yours in Christ,

Chapin

## Growing Through Giving

*"I will freely give to You; I will praise  
 Your name, O Lord, for it is good."  
 Psalm 54:6*

How do we adequately thank God for the life we have and the world in which we live? By giving back a portion of what God gives us.

We believe we grow in faith through giving to the church. Our engagement in God's work on God's Acre and in the larger community would not be possible without your financial support. Therefore, we invite you to *Grow Through Giving* by making a 2018 Stewardship pledge. Look for materials in your mail in the coming week!

Toddler time  
 Nursery School  
 invites you to  
 attend an open



**Toddler time**  
 Nursery School

house for the 2018-2019 school year where you will see our dynamic classes, inspiring teachers, and engaged learners in action. Families will have an opportunity to hear from the Director, and ask questions regarding curriculum, schedules, and our enrichment programs. Please call or email to schedule a tour at (203)972-3111 or [office@toddlertimens.org](mailto:office@toddlertimens.org).

- November 14, 7:00pm
- November 17, 9:30am
- December 8, 9:30am

*There are still limited openings  
 for the current 2017-18 school year.*

## Parish News

### BAPTISMS

Brady Klein Seaman, son of John and Jennifer Seaman on October 29, 2017 in the Meeting House. The Rev. Eric M. Dupee officiated.

### MARRIAGES

Nancy Alison Clayton and Kevin Michael Baker on October 28, 2017 in the Meeting House. The Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin Garner officiated.

# Lifelong Learning

## Having the Conversation: How to Communicate Across Political and Theological Difference

*led by Eric Dupee, Minister of Christian Formation*

**Sundays, November 12 and 19 at 9:00am in the Parlor**

We live in a time of political and religious polarization. That polarization makes dialogue and conversation difficult and sometimes painful. Conversations disintegrate, feelings get hurt and controversial topics are simply avoided. All this makes family gatherings stressful, hampers our Christian witness and hinders our ability to love our neighbor as Jesus instructed.

Come to this two-part class and explore:

- the dynamics of difficult conversations
- the role feelings play in our communication
- a set of guidelines for effective communication across difference
- how to express our views with confidence and clarity

The tools we will cover in this class are not just tips for coping with disagreement. They provide a way to approach of life. The goal is to transform the way we relate to one another and begin to create an environment in which contentious issues can be addressed more safely and effectively in the church.

## Advent Book Study

Mark your calendar for an Advent Book Study. Classes begin on Wednesday, November 29 at 7:30pm and Sunday, December 3 at 9:00am. Eric will lead both groups for 4 consecutive weeks in the Library and will explore *Names for the Messiah*, by Walter Brueggemann.

## Program on Alzheimer's, Memory Loss, and Dementia

Have you ever found yourself driving home when you meant to stop at the drugstore? Or "lost" your keys or cell phone? Most of us dismiss these little detours as lapses due to inattention, or laugh them off as "senior moments". When are these glitches something to be worried about?

It is a sad fact that growing problems plaguing our town and our congregation are Alzheimer's and dementia. There are those in our congregation who have experienced the complexities of caring for someone with dementia, and we were asked by two members to host a program on Alzheimer's. Depending on the interest, we will host a series of programs on this topic.

The first such program, The Basics, will be on Sunday, November 12, in the Parlor. Come at 11:30am and enjoy a light lunch before our speaker begins at noon. The speaker will be Shanon Jordan of the Alzheimer's Association. All are welcome. To have enough seating and enough food for all, we ask that you please RSVP to Debbie at [debbie@godsacre.org](mailto:debbie@godsacre.org), (203) 966-2651, x831. Please pass this information along to anyone you know who might be interested; this program is not just for church members.

## dance, love, sing, live HAPPY Marriage Series: Love!

Tracy Fox, NYU Certified Life Coach, Bestselling Author and Marriage Solutions Expert will return on November 15 at 7:00pm to share her top solutions to creating the Happy Marriage of your dreams. This year's topic will focus on the 4 specific strategies: Create a Mission Statement; Revere Conflict For Personal Growth; Forgive, Forget, and Get a Fresh Start; and Faith for a Strong Union. Each participant will leave with a Happy Marriage Handbook. Please join us for the interactive, upbeat presentation in our Chapel. \*Come early and enjoy a Fellowship Dinner with our youth at 6:30pm in Smith Hall. RSVP to Laurel Carr; [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org) or 203-966-2651, x833.

## Save the Date: Women's Fellowship Christmas Open House

Enjoy fellowship, fabulous food and desserts, tea and coffee, December 1st, 11:00am-1:00pm at the home of Stephanie Joyce, 1578 Ponus Ridge Road. Let's get into the Christmas spirit together! Rides available. Questions? Contact Stephanie Radman: [stephanieradman@aol.com](mailto:stephanieradman@aol.com) or 966.4439

# The All-Church Thanksgiving Service Project A-Z

## Sunday, November 19

Every year our church provides the fixings for Thanksgiving dinner for 140 families. It's a big project and groups of all ages take part to make it a success!

First, MSA agrees to designate funds for the purchase of turkeys which Walter Stewart's kindly provides at cost!

Next, Church School collects funds in their Turkey Banks for canned goods, all are welcome to contribute. The goal this year is \$1,500.

The Children and Family Ministry Team orchestrates the purchase of canned goods for family baskets and large quantities for shelters (the Dads' specialty).

Youth Groups and Children's Choirs get into the action by assembling and donating the following: Guppies - hot cocoa jars, JYG - cookie mix jars, Cherub and Grace Notes Choirs - tea bags; Joyful Noise, Spirit Singers, and Sonshine Singers Choirs - Napkin Rings.

### The Day Of at Mission Central

On November 19, Smith Hall will be a sea of boxing, wrapping, laughing congregants.

The schedule is:

**1:00pm** - Led by the Children and Family Ministry Team an All-Church effort to decorate, fill and tie up boxes for 140 in-need families kicks off the day. **All are welcome to come and help!**

**2:30pm** - Turkeys are delivered and off loaded by muscular congregants.

**4:00pm** - MSYG Advisors meet and set up for their group.

**4:30pm** - MSYG packs and makes cards for the shelter boxes which will feed another 700 people on Thanksgiving.

**6:30pm** - YG Advisors arrive on the scene.

**7:00pm** - YG descends on Smith Hall, parents in tow as drivers, to load and deliver EVERYTHING to our outposts: Inspirica, Pacific House, and Liberation House in Stamford;

Macedonia Church, Grace Baptist Church, George Washington Carver Center, Mid-Fairfield Aids Project, Open Door Shelter in Norwalk; Pivot Ministries in Bridgeport; and Person to Person in Darien. In each location YG is treated to an over-view of the good work done there.

***Everyone is welcome to join the effort!***

Questions? Want to know how to participate? Contact Caroline Leather at [churchschool@godsacre.org](mailto:churchschool@godsacre.org) or Marianna Kilbride at [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org).



Scenes from the 2016 Thanksgiving Service Project (clockwise from top left): JYG making cookie mix jars, MSYGers packing boxes, a family decorating boxes, and Guppies making jars of hot cocoa.

## Missions & Outreach



11/12 - Angel and Dove Tree  
Kick-Off

11/16 - Pacific House, 4:30pm

11/19 - All-Church Thanksgiving  
Project

11/28 - Open Door, 11:15am

Contact Marianna Kilbride at  
[marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org)

## Newest Neighbors



The Newest Neighbors ministry team continues to wait for a family for resettlement. Although

it has been taking longer than expected (another 90 day suspension of the program was announced last week), IRIS is hopeful that the flow of refugees into CT will pick up in the new year and that we could get a family in the spring.

We are searching for storage space for the apartment furnishings that we have gathered for the family. If you have an empty garage bay, basement, shed or barn that you could lend us for 6 to 9 months, we would love to hear from you!

Please contact Sally Anderson ([andersonsallyjean@gmail.com](mailto:andersonsallyjean@gmail.com)) or Marianne Grandin ([marianne.grandin@gmail.com](mailto:marianne.grandin@gmail.com)) to join our team, discuss storage, or with any questions about this ministry.

## Jody Blaine Davis, Organist, in Recital

*Friday, November 10 at 7:00pm with a reception following*

*Free and Open to the Public, Childcare provided*

Our own Director of Music Ministries, Dr. Jody Blaine Davis, will perform her annual organ recital, Friday, November 10 at 7:00pm in the church. Repertoire includes arrangements of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God", a tribute to the Armed Forces, and works by Bach, Dupré,



Vierne, and female composer Errolyn Wallen. This free one-hour recital has something for everyone so invite a friend! A reception will follow hosted by the Music Ministry Team and childcare is provided. For more information, please contact Jody at (203)966-2651, x4 or [music@godsacre.org](mailto:music@godsacre.org).

## Tune in...to Music

*Wednesday, November 8, 11:15am – Noon in the Meeting House*

Hear Jody Blaine Davis in a casual and informative conversation about her organ recital program on Friday evening, November 10. Jody will talk about the composers whose works she will perform and then you will hear excerpts from the repertoire on her recital. Stay for lunch at noon, too! All are complimentary to friends of music.

## Save the Dates

**Sunday, December 10**  
**at the 10:00am service**

John Rutter's *Gloria* will be presented by the Chancel Choir, accompanied by guest instrumentalists.

**Sunday, December 17**  
**at 5:00pm**

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols presented by the Chancel Choir and Joyful Noise.

## Yale Opera Scenes

*7:30pm, Friday, November 3 and Saturday, November 4*

Yale University, Sprague Memorial Hall, New Haven

Hear Chancel Choir scholar and Yale opera student, Stephen Clark, in opera scenes presented by Yale University's Opera department. Tickets (\$15 for adults and \$10 for students) may be purchased at <http://music-tickets.yale.edu>.



# November launches us into a season of gratitude and giving. Join our Youth Groups this month as we give thanks to God and give of our time for others!

We begin this month with gratitude for the incredible weekend of service 33 our 9th and 12th graders experienced on October 20-21 in NYC for our annual Senior/Freshman retreat. Our YG fish put their faith in action as they served those hungry and homeless across the New York boroughs. They answered the charge to see Christ in others and be Christ to others with compassion and grace. To ensure that our freshmen and seniors were well bonded before returning home they were challenged to “Escape the Room” together for some extra fun and fellowship!



## First Youth Worship of the Year!

We invite all youth groups (1st-12th graders) to share a meal and worship together on Wednesday, November 15. Our giant family dinner will be held in Smith Hall at 6:30pm followed by a youth-led worship from 7:00-8:00pm in the Meeting House.



## Save the Date to participate in our All-Church Thanksgiving Service Project!

### Guppies:

Thursday, November 16, 4:00-5:00pm

We'll be creating hot cocoa containers

### JYG:

Thursday, November 16, 5:15-6:30pm

JYG will pack cookie mix in jars – yum!

### MSYG:

Sunday, November 19, 4:30-6:00pm

MSYG will wrap the Thanksgiving boxes

### YG:

Sunday, November 19, 7:00-9:00pm

YG will deliver the boxes across Fairfield County



*Submissions for the December Newsletter are due November 15.  
Email submissions to Anne Wilkinson at [anne@godsacre.org](mailto:anne@godsacre.org).*

## Children and Family Ministries

Check out What's Going on this month!

- November 5: 4th Grade Introduction to Communion, 10:00am
- November 5: New Members for Kids, 8:30-9:45am
- November 12: New Members for Kids, 8:30-9:45am
- November 19: Turkey Banks are due
- November 19: New Members for Kids Intro. to Worship, 10:00am
- November 19: All-Church Thanksgiving Service Project, 1:00pm
- November 26: Church School Combined Class

### Turkey Banks are collected every Sunday!

We are striving to raise \$1,500 for this year's Thanksgiving Service Project! As we drive to reach our goal we are encouraging the children to EARN their donations on their own to help feed over 140 families! The more money we raise the more food we can provide for our neighbors in need.

Some ways kids have earned money for their turkey banks are:

- Isabelle P. set the dinner table and brought her dishes to the sink
- Nancy, Charlotte, and Ellie S. turned in cans and bottles at ACME

***Let us know what your child has done as we can acknowledge their work!***

### Children's Offering has begun!

Church School has started a Children's Offering that will take place during each class. The children gather around in a circle and discuss ways in which they have earned the money they are contributing. Whether it is washing the dishes, hosting a bake sale, or taking the garbage out, the children take pride in earning their own donations!

As a class they then pray for God's guidance as they learn to be generous Christians through the act of giving. For the month of October through November 19 all offerings will go towards the Thanksgiving Service Project Event. Following that event, children's contributions will go toward an organization called Heifer International whose mission is to work with communities to end world hunger and poverty, and to care for the Earth.

Look for more information to follow regarding how you and your child can help the Children & Family Ministries make a difference!

## Our Church Community

### Ministers

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin Garner, x1  
*Senior Minister*

The Rev. Eric M. Dupee, x2  
*Minister of Christian Formation*

The Rev. Chris Tate, x829  
*Transitional Director of Children's Formation*

### Staff

Laurel Carr, x833  
*Christian Formation Coordinator*

Debbie Chapman, x831  
*Pastoral Care Coordinator*

Dr. Jo Deen Blaine Davis, x4  
*Director of Music Ministries*

Morgan Flagg, x834  
*Youth Director*

Joellen Ford, x839  
*Christian Education Coordinator*

Noëlle Francis, x821  
*Director of Children's Music and Drama*

Anthony Jones  
*Sexton*

Marianna Kilbride, x832  
*Director of Missions & Outreach*

Caroline Leather, x835  
*Assistant Director of Children's Formation*

Kelly Leather, x824  
*Senior Youth Director*

Marie-Ange Masters, x823  
*Director of Accounting*

Kelly Morrissey, x822  
*Chief Administrative Officer*

Anne Wilkinson, x836  
*Director of Communications*

### Church Lay Leadership

Tom Robey  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

Mark Tedford  
*Chair, Board of Deacons*

Ally Dunlap  
*Chair, Nominating and Governance*

Debbie Simpson  
*Chair, Personnel*



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 MINISTRY CHURCH**