



news @ GOD'S ACRE

March 2018



Lent @ God's Acre / pg3

From the Pastor's Study

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am writing this newsletter the morning after our Ash Wednesday service. As I made my way to church last night, as details of another mass shooting were trickling in from news outlets, I received a text from a church member who wanted us to pray for the students, teachers, and families affected by this tragedy in Florida. I responded, "Absolutely!" But honestly, in my heart, I could hardly summon up the will to pray



yet again for an atrocity we could be taking steps to prevent.

I know that our congregation would not be in absolute agreement about issues of gun control and gun freedom. However, regardless of what our opinions are, there should be no doubt about the convictions of Jesus and the Christian faith. Jesus did not endorse violence of any kind for any reason. Jesus did not advocate for war, even if it was for a seemingly just cause. Jesus did

not believe violence was an effective way to solve problems. There is only one passage in all of the gospel accounts where Jesus endorsed carrying weapons [Luke 22:36 & 38], but the moment one of those weapons was used to defend Jesus against arrest, Jesus immediately responded saying: "No more of this!" Jesus then healed the soldier who had been injured by a sword strike.

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“...Christians should understand [Jesus's] position on weapons and the use of violence. Jesus chose to hang on a cross instead of swing a sword.”

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

...Jesus went on to accept His own torture and death without a fight, and without an argument. Jesus did not practice self-defense, but rather self-sacrifice, believing that offering our lives, rather than the taking life, is the way of God and the way of peace.

There is no way Jesus would endorse, support, or affirm a culture that is awash in guns and that maintains a belief in redemptive violence - the use of deadly force to overcome evil. You may not agree with Jesus...but Christians should understand His position on weapons and the use of violence. Jesus chose to hang on a cross instead of swing a sword. That isn't an opinion, it is a fact.

Personally, while I agree with our constitutional rights to bear arms, I do not believe we should be able to possess weapons and armaments that allow an individual to slaughter innocent citizens on a massive scale. Careful background checks, diligent licensing practices, and gun regulations that limit assault-like weapons with high capacity magazines seem entirely reasonable to me, and even necessary.

In meeting with the leadership of CT against Gun Violence, I learned that the only thing we can do to promote reasonable gun regulation is to work at our state and local levels to ensure change. Congress does not have the votes nor the resolve to make meaningful alterations on a national level. While I am certain some members of our community will challenge this assertion and the assumed causality: the State of Connecticut has the second toughest gun regulations in

the country and the fifth lowest rate of gun deaths in the nation. For those who desire greater gun regulation, the only way forward is to advocate for and to vote to ensure that gun regulations remain strong in our state.

I suspect there are numerous variables that contribute to the frequency of mass shootings in our country: the proliferation of guns; the enormous consumption of entertainment - video games, films, and television - that glorify violence; the woefully poor funding for research, treatment, and care of people who struggle with mental health concerns; and the development of an online and virtual culture that can exacerbate the deep loneliness and isolation that many people feel. Gun violence is a complex and often divisive issue in our country, and there is no lone culprit to blame. But just because something is complicated, doesn't mean we shouldn't resolve to work toward a resolution. We can pray all we like, but change requires action.

And the best action each of us can take immediately is to choose to follow the ways of Jesus to the best of our ability - choosing to act in love instead of hate, choosing to forgive instead of fight, and even choosing self-sacrifice over self-defense. That is not an easy path to take. It goes against our internal and intense survival instincts. But it may very well be the only way to save the world from the violence that continually threatens us.

Yours in Christ,

Chapin

The Congregational Church of New Canaan

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, March 4, 2018 at 11:00am
in the Meeting House

Worship Services at 8:00 and 10:00am

Proposed Agenda:

- Deacons' Report
- Trustees' Report
- Nominating
- Raymond Fund Update
- Recommendations

Children and Family Ministries

Midnight Run

Our confirmands are gearing up to serve in New York City on March 9 for their second Midnight Run this year.



Please offer your support by donating your gently used jackets, toiletries, and new men's socks and underwear. All donations can be left in the donation box in Smith Hall. Your support is greatly appreciated!



Save the Date: Easter Egg Hunt!

Please join Children and Family Ministries on Sunday, March 25, from 11:30am - 12:30pm for an Easter Egg Hunt!

Come hunt for treat-filled eggs all across God's Acre and enjoy a delicious lunch in Smith Hall! Please bring an Easter basket to fill with your eggs.

We will also use this opportunity to help stock the New Canaan Food Pantry as we are requesting that each child bring a non-perishable food item. See you there!

lent & holy week

@ GOD'S ACRE

Wednesday Lenten Prayer Services

9:00am and 8:00pm, Chapel

Deacon-led 15-minute services with prayer, music, Scripture, and contemplation. Communion will be served.

Palm Sunday, March 25

Worship Services at 8:00 and 10:00am

Blessing of the Palms, 9:30am, Church Steps

Maundy Thursday, March 29

Living Last Supper Worship and Dinner, 6:00pm

Participate in a Living Last Supper, share in a worship experience, and enjoy an eastern inspired meal.

Service of Tenebrae, 8:00pm

A dramatic candlelight service with Scripture readings and music by the Chancel Choir. Communion will be served.

Good Friday, March 30

Chapel Open for Silent Prayer

Pivot Good Friday Prayer Breakfast

Woodway Country Club, 7:00am Open to all! \$60/person. To reserve tickets, email prayerbreakfast@pivotministries.org.

Join us as we celebrate the joy of the Risen Lord!

easter @ GOD'S ACRE Sunday, April 1

**Services at:
6:00am**

Contemporary Outdoor Sunrise Service

This service is led by our YG Fish and YG Worship Team.

Warm drinks and Easter treats to follow in the Parlor!

9:00 and 11:00am

Traditional Worship Services

Preludes will begin 15 minutes prior to each service

Fellowship Dinner Party



The Fellowship Team invites you to an adult dinner party on Saturday, March 10 from 7:00-10:00pm! There will be several dinner parties taking place simultaneously throughout the town. Each house will have 8-10 people in attendance and each person will be assigned a dish to prepare and asked to bring a beverage to share. If you are able to open your home to a group of 6-8 fellow congregants please contact Elizabeth Bliss at Elizabeth.bliss1@gmail.com If you have questions or want to RSVP to attend, contact Laurel Carr; laurel@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x833.

Women's Fellowship Himalayan Salt Cave Sessions



Please join us as we relax and rejuvenate at the Salt Cave of Darien. Experience the beneficial effects of pink Himalayan salt. After our session, you will feel relaxed and peaceful.

Thursday, March 8

11:00am - 12:00pm or 12:00pm - 1:00pm

\$27.00 payable the day of the event

Salt Cave of Darien, 555 Post Road, Darien

Rides are available. Questions? Stephanie Radman (203)966-4439 or stephanieradman@aol.com.

Lifelong Learning

Falling Upward in Lent

Sunday mornings at 9:00am during Lent, we will read *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, by Richard Rohr. This book will be a nice complement to the Lenten Quest activities taking place at 7:00-8:00pm every Wednesday during Lent in the Parlor. Biblically-based and deeply spiritual, this book explores spirituality at the different stages of the faith journey. Join us each Sunday in March. We will have some books for sale at the church or they can be purchased at Elm Street books in New Canaan. Please contact Eric Dupee with any questions.

Lifelong Learning Offerings



On numerous occasions, I've experienced an activity with the Quest youth group and thought, "This is something from which the adults would really benefit!" Therefore, for the season of Lent, we will offer "Lenten Quest" for

adults. Lent is a time of taking on spiritual disciplines in preparation for Easter. Many people of faith look forward to Lent with anticipation because it is a season in which we intentionally take a "deeper dive."

Each Wednesday night during Lent, we will engage in a different spiritual practice: prayer, meditation, yoga with a Christian slant, etc. During Lent, we will develop our contemplative side and explore how it enhances and sustains our work and activity

Each of our adult education classes always welcome new members! Feel free to contact me at eric@godsacre.org if you have any questions about which class might be right for you.

Adult Education Opportunities in March

- Sundays, 9:00-9:50am: *Falling Upward* book study, Library
- Mondays, 6:30-7:30am: Reformation Yale Bible Study, Library
- Tuesdays 9:30-11:00am: Reformation Women's Study, Parlor
- Wednesdays 9:30-11:00am: Bible Study with Chapin, Parlor
- Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00pm: Lenten Quest for Adults, Parlor

Missions & Outreach

Pivot with Us Saturday March 3, 9:00am-2:00pm

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19*

On Saturday, March 3 we will meet in the Church Circle at 9:00am, travel to Bridgeport, and depending on progress to date, either help finish the kitchen or work on the new property, Noble House.

No Experience necessary, just willing hearts and hands! Wear sloppy clothes, sturdy shoes, and bring work gloves and goggles if you have them. Please join us!



3/15 – Pacific House Dinner Service, 4:30pm

3/27 – Open Door Lunch Service, 11:15am

Signups/questions, contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org.

🎵 Music in March 🎵

Jody Blaine Davis in recital

Jody Blaine Davis will be the guest organist in a Lenten recital series at First Church Congregational, 148 Beach Road, Fairfield on Wednesday, March 7 at 12:15pm. All are welcome to attend this 30-minute recital.

Sunrise Mass by Ola Gjeilo

Sunday, March 18, 10:00am

A 10-minute prelude will precede the service

The Chancel Choir will present Gjeilo's *Sunrise Mass* during the 10:00am service on Sunday, March 18. There will be a 10 minute prelude before the service to include more music of the work. "Sunrise Mass" with four movements is orchestrated for strings and choir.



Composer Ola Gjeilo

work, "Shout the Glad Tidings" and "Lift Your Voice" by David Lantz. The somber music by Pablo Casals, "O Ye People," will be sung as the benediction response as Holy Week is introduced in the service.

Maundy Thursday, March 29

Service of Tenebrae, 8:00pm

The Chancel Choir will present anthems for this somber and beautiful occasion of the Last Supper. There will be a variety of music: "O Ye People" by Pablo Casals; "Ubi Caritas" by Marcel Duruflé; "Ave Verum" by Philip HJ Stopford; "Drop, Drop Slow Tears" by Robert Graham; "Lamb of God" arr. by F. Melius Christiansen; and "Thee, We Adore Thee" by T. Frederick Candlyn. Hear Dimitrie Lazich sing "The Lord's Prayer" by Albert Hay Malotte.

Palm Sunday, March 25

The Chancel Choir is accompanied by guest trumpeters as we celebrate the Procession into Jerusalem. The Chancel Choir will sing Paul Lindsley Thomas's famous

Save the Date!

Friday, May 4 at 7:00pm – Mary Bradley Clarke Fund Benefit Concert with reception following. Childcare provided.

Stephen Ministry at The Congregational Church of New Canaan



Stephen Ministry is a Christian caregiving lay ministry that enhances pastoral care. It was founded by Rev. Kenneth Haugk Ph.D. in 1975. Through this ministry, laypersons help pastors and their churches provide one-on-one care and support for members of congregations and communities who are experiencing difficulties such as illness, loss of a loved one, divorce, unemployment, substance abuse, loneliness, or discouragement.

Our church's Stephen Ministry was established in 2006. We are one of 12,000+ churches worldwide that offer this type of care. Our church has 32 trained Stephen Ministers led by Beth Baker, Jim Cole and Avril Sweeny.

Our pastors, Chapin and Eric, will always be on the front line of pastoral care, especially during times of crisis. Stephen Ministers are available to give supplemental care and support when needs arise. Stephen Ministry is confidential, Christian caring for anyone going through a life transition.

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If you think you would like to have a Stephen Minister, or if you would like to know more about this ministry, please contact Avril Sweeny at (203)966-4597.



Stephen Leaders Avril Sweeny, Jim Cole, and Beth Baker

Prayer Shawl Ministry

What is a Prayer Shawl?

A prayer shawl is a knit or crocheted shawl made with love, blessed with prayers, and given to a person in need of comfort.

Who makes the Prayer Shawls?

A group of knitters meets twice monthly to work together. Some are experienced knitters; others have just learned to knit.

When does the Prayer Shawl Ministry meet?

Every 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:00am, in the Parlor.

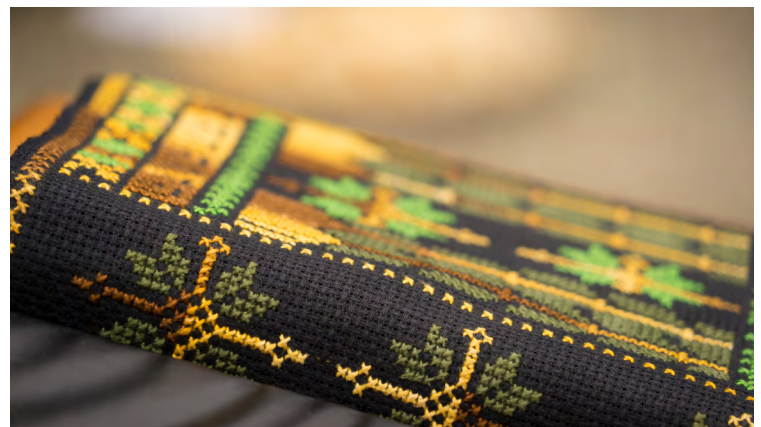
Contact Judy Hyde (below, left) at (203)966-8028, or Troy Elliott (below, right) at (203)966-8183. Yarn, needles and instruction supplied.



Prayer Chain Ministry

The Prayer Chain Ministry is a group of devoted members who pray confidentially and individually for those who have requested special prayers.

Prayer requests are submitted via email or prayer request cards which are filled out during Worship Services. To submit a prayer request, please email BJ Flagg at bj@nurenu.com.



Youth Ministries

A Mission Trip Thank You!

Our Mission Fish returned from our mission to San Antonio, Texas with a renewed spirit and greater understanding of the needs of all of God's people. As in previous years, the mission trip was a huge success and the entire mission team is grateful to our congregation for supporting this important work. We felt blessed by the continuous prayers before and during our mission – THANK YOU! Please take time to read the note from Caroline Callahan, written after the first few days of our mission trip (right).

We lift up an extra special thank you to all those who generously gave as Mission Sponsors – our trip would not be possible without you. We hope you enjoyed your letters from the field from our mission fish!

Youth Sunday

The YG Mission Fish will lead our 10:00am Worship Service on Sunday, March 11. Worship Team will lead the music, Senior Leaders will share their testimonies, and a lot of YG love will be shared! Please join us for worship and stay for our Mission Sponsor Brunch celebration in Smith Hall at 11:00am. We promise you will be moved by the passion our kids have for sharing their experiences.

Youth Worship

All youth grades 1-12 are invited to Youth Worship on Wednesday, March 21! Dinner is at 6:30pm in Smith Hall followed by Worship in the Meeting House at 7:00pm. Join us as we usher in the season of spring and prepare our hearts for Easter.

JYG Overnight

Our 3rd annual JYG Overnight to Pivot is just around the corner! Your middle schoolers are eager to worship, be in fellowship, and serve alongside their Pivot brothers in Christ. This experience is not one to be missed!



Now is the time for your JYGer to get signed up for the JYG Overnight to Pivot. JYG will leave after school Friday, April 20 and return at noon on April 21. Check your mail for registration or email Kelly Leather at leather@godsacre.org.

A Mission Sponsor Letter from the Field

Dear Congregation,

On behalf of YG, I would like to sincerely thank you for your pledges and contributions to our community. The work that we do, and the indescribable impact it has on all of us would not happen. I am a senior on team Croc, and this is my 6th mission experience with YG. Each has taught me new lessons not only about myself and my peers, but also about being a better Christian.

This year, your donations were put to work in a variety of home repairs in San Antonio. My team is working on the home of Christina Flores who, despite being half blind, helps to take care of her young grand and great grand children. It feels like such a blessing to be able to give back to someone who dedicates her life to taking care of those around her.

On each trip, we get to attend a worship service of a local church, which is one of my favorite parts. No two services are ever the same, and it allows us as mission fish to be inspired by the faith of those around us as we head into the week of service to others.

Thank you all again for allowing us to live as Christ has taught us to, and to put our faith in action and experience what it means to truly give love to the world around us. Not only have I formed lasting relationships through this group, I have also strengthened my relationship with God.

LONG LIVE YG,

Caroline Callahan

*Submissions for the April Newsletter are due March 14.
Email submissions to Anne Wilkinson at anne@godsacre.org.*

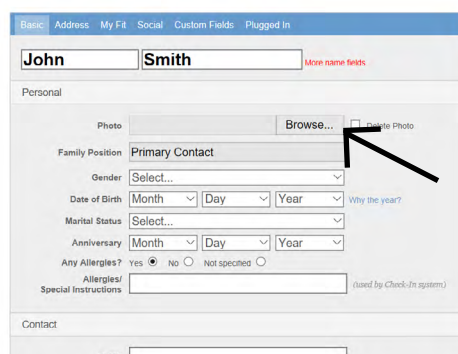
myconnect corner

***Help us get to know one another:
upload a picture today!***

Three Simple Steps from your computer:

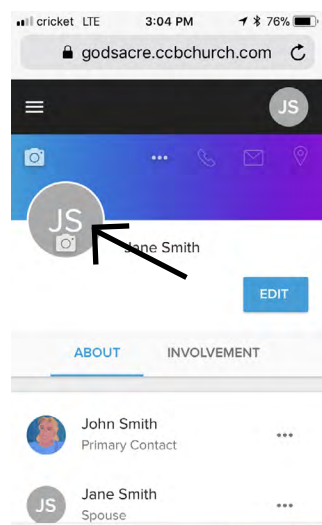
1. Login to myConnect* at www.godsacre.org/myconnect
2. Click on your name in the upper right corner, then “Edit Profile” in the menu that will drop down.
3. Click “Browse”, navigate on your computer to the picture you would like to use. Select it, click “save”, and then click “save” at the bottom of the edit profile screen.

The Congregational Church of New Canaan



Three Simple Steps from your phone or tablet:

1. Enter your login info at www.godsacre.org/myconnect, then choose “Mobile Preview”.*
2. Touch the circle with your initials in the upper right hand corner.
3. Touch the circle with your initials and the icon of a camera. Either take a picture or use one saved on your device. Wait for the picture to appear within the circle and you're done!



*Need an Account?

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

Questions? Contact anne@godsacre.org

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

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

Beth Picard, x839
Administrative Assistant

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

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WE ARE A STEPHEN MINISTRY CHURCH