



From the Pastor's Study

Sisters and Brothers,

I find it increasingly difficult to pick out Easter cards these days. In fact, this year it was nearly impossible for me. I stood for what felt like an eternity in front of a rack of dozens of seasonal cards considering my choices. There were numerous bunny cards, Easter egg cards, and floral arrangement cards. I searched for a card that would be explicitly faith-based, and only found a few. I was disappointed. While I appreciate and enjoy and even support traditions of bunnies and eggs and Easter baskets, I just can't buy a card at this time of year that doesn't at least attempt to express the great promise of our faith. I eagerly grabbed up the few religious cards I could find, with a quick scan of the description on the back indicating what the card said inside. Again, I felt disappointment. Each card proclaimed, "Happy Easter," but then seemed to focus more on the arrival of spring. Now, after a long hard winter, I love spring, or what passes for spring in Connecticut, as much as the next person. However, the promise of Easter and the arrival of spring are not the same thing. In fact, the only seasonal indication we get from the gospels is in John, and that suggests that Jesus' final days in Jerusalem may have been during winter. (Incidentally, having walked through Jerusalem in the icy rain of February, I can only imagine how torturous crucifixion must have been at that time of year.)



For over 280 years, we have gathered as a family of God's children in order to experience His presence, learn Christ's ways, and serve our neighbors – all to make faith a way of life.

I don't believe, or at least hope, this isn't the rambling musings of a curmudgeonly pastor. I just wanted a card that said, "Christ is Risen!" "Alleluia!" "Happy Easter!" That's all. Simple and to the point. I didn't want my card recipients to equate the promise of Resurrection with the crocuses pushing their way up through their front lawn. Easter is so much more than that. Resurrection is jarring, mind-boggling, radically unexpected Good News. It is a promise of something far more grand and revelatory than the change of seasons and how the earth seems to renew itself each spring. The resurrection of Jesus pronounced that God was doing something new in the world. The Easter promise is not merely a promise of the renewal of life, it is the complete resurrection of life after death. The resurrection of Jesus heralded to the world that, beyond even our ability to comprehend, life extends well beyond a horizon of time. Death had been defeated. There is nothing left to fear. We are free to live and love and work to the glory of God with wondrous and reckless abandon.

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Adult Education

All of our offerings are open to newcomers and the format of each class makes it very easy to simply drop in when you are able.

Sunday Beginner Bible Study Class: April 28 – May 26

Spring is the season of new beginnings and a great time to try a Beginner's Bible Study class. We will approach the Bible passages from the *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know* assuming participants have no knowledge at all. Classes will be offered weekly in the Parlor on Sundays from 9:00-9:50am. Classes will be led by Eric and BJ Flagg. Contact Eric at eric@godacre.org for more information.



The Parables of Jesus: Beginning April 23 & April 29

The Monday Morning Bible Study and Tuesday Women's Bible Study will study The Parables of Jesus. The first will be the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Monday class runs from 6:30-7:30am in the Library. The Tuesday Women's group meets from 9:30-10:30am in the Parlor. For more information contact Diana Beecher, beecherd@optonline.net or Allison Mangas, allisonmangas@gmail.com.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study with Chapin

This Bible Study is an exploration of the scriptures that Chapin and Eric will be preaching on Sundays in the coming weeks. This year, it will include the *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know*. This is not a lecture, but a conversation that helps our preachers form the themes and directions of their sermons. Sessions begin in the Parlor at 9:30am and end promptly at 11:00am each Wednesday. If you are interested in or have a passion for the Bible, and if you are willing to be honest with your thoughts and opinions – this study may be for you! Please contact Chapin directly for more information and to sign up at chapin@godacre.org.

Bible Study
WITH
CHAPIN



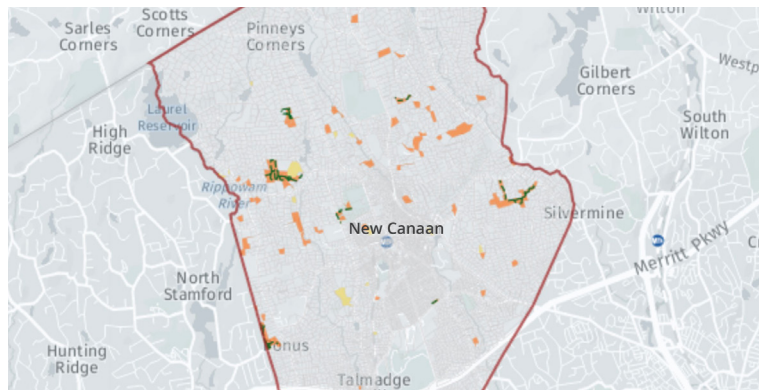
Summer Reading

Some of you will recall that the Interfaith Council of New Canaan invited author Debbie Irving to come to New Canaan. She spoke at the United Methodist Church and at the town Library. In light of race relations being in the news so frequently, there has been some interest among some church members to read and discuss her book *Waking Up White...and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. It is a memoir about how she became aware of race and its impact in her life and it provides an entry point into talking about these matters. What does race have to do with faith? What is the biblical witness regarding relating to "the other?" Stay tuned for more information on when a group will gather to discuss the book. Meanwhile, I invite you to get the book and begin reading. -Eric

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship Guided Nature Walk with New Canaan Land Trust

Ever wondered how to tell a beech tree from a birch tree? Come join Aaron Lefland, New Canaan Land Trust's Executive Director, on a guided walk beginning at Irwin Park in Thursday, May 2, from 11:00am-12:00pm. Rides are available. Please contact Stephanie Radman with questions, stephanieradman@aol.com or 203-952-4554.



Faith and Finance

A vital part of our stewardship is to provide for Christ's work in the world outside of our walls. Your pledges to the church allow our Missions and Social Action Committee (MSA) to financially support Christ's work in the world in multiple ways:

Locally

New Canaan Food Pantry. The pantry stocks food for our local neighbors who need assistance with groceries. Church members contribute groceries every other month. The pantry is part of New Canaan Health and Human Services who also receive heating oil and electricity funding for local residents in need from our special holiday offerings.

Pacific House. This men's homeless shelter offers many programs to assist independence and also acquires, renovates and creates deeply affordable housing. A missions team makes and serves dinner here once a month.

Inspirica. The mission is to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people achieve and maintain permanent housing and stability in their lives. We also partner on Thanksgiving baskets, sneakers, toys and Christmas and other special projects.

Open Door Shelter. Provides immediate food and shelter to homeless individuals and families and through multiple programs facilitates independence. A missions team serves lunch there every 4th Tuesday of the month.

Re-entry Ministry. Re-Entry Ministry is a non-denominational, Christian home, where women whose lives are controlled by addictive substances learn the causes of their addiction and overcome them for the rest of their lives. Teams from our church have partnered on construction needs with the group many times over the years.

Pivot House. Pivot is a Christ-centered and spirit-led men's addiction recovery program. The church has helped to renovate buildings to further the Pivot mission towards complete recovery and reintegration.

HomeFront. Yearly volunteers work to improve the home of a near neighbor who by ill health or income level is unable to do so.

Nationally

Emergency Relief. MSA works with various agencies to address immediate need after natural or other disasters.

UCC Mission. MSA contributes to the OCWM, Our Church's Wider Mission. UCC maintains multiple partnerships with churches around the world to address ongoing and disaster needs.

OG and Youth Mission Trips. MSA provides grants for construction projects on our Adult (OG), Middle School (MSYG), High School Youth Group (YG) and Quest mission trips each year.



Internationally

Maasai. A post 9/11 response partnership between our church and an at risk community in Kenya. Congregants participate in projects ranging from water pipelines to drought resistant goats to building classroom, and supporting students with scholarships.

Daystar University. Dedicated to developing managers, professionals, researchers and scholars to be effective, Christian servant-leaders, through the integration of Christian faith and holistic learning, for the transformation of church and society in Africa and the world. MSA supports 2 students with scholarships.

Just Hope. Agency dedicated to supporting impoverished Nicaraguan communities.

For more information about Missions and Outreach, volunteer opportunities or MSA, please contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org or 203-966-2651 ext. 832.

Resolve to connect @GOD'S ACRE in 2019!

Sign in to myConnect today!
www.godsacre.org/myConnect



connect
with each other



grow
in your faith



serve
your neighbor

Music News

Mary Bradley Clarke Concert Saturday, June 1 at 7:00pm

Hear Spirit Singers, Joyful Noise, Sonshine Singers, Chancel Choir and the section leaders sing Broadway and light-opera music. Reception follows. Childcare available at 6:45pm.



The Lenten season and Easter Day were especially beautiful because of the music. Thank you to the pianists who provided piano music for the Lenten meditation services. Thank you for the Chancel Choir who shared their talents the past months. What a blessing you are to the church!

Park Street Singers in Concert Monday, May 13 at 1:30pm Chapel

Reception following
Free and open to the public

The Park Street Singers are New Canaan ladies who rehearse in the church Parlor on Monday afternoons. To thank the church for this kindness, they will perform their spring concert for us. All are invited to this lovely occasion. A reception will follow.

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Okay, I know it's not easy to say all that in a card. It is expecting too much. But bunnies and eggs and Easter baskets and the promises and pleasures of spring fall far too short of what the Lord wants to communicate to you — to us all. Easter isn't a generic promise that life is renewed. It is the bold pronouncement that your — our — lives can be completely made new. We can be reborn here and now into new and more faithful women and men. And what cannot be accomplished for us in a single lifetime, the Lord will continue for eternity. That is the promise of Easter — new life, now and forever.

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

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

The Children's Music Corner

This May don't miss the "Bible Top 5" Musical! We will focus on 5 stories out of the "Bible Top 40," and act and sing them out. **The Musical will be presented on May 15 at 4:30pm (the Preview) and May 19 at 10:00am in the Meeting House,** and May 22nd at 4:30pm at the New Canaan Inn. Please invite friends and family!! We are so excited to share this Musical with you!



God's Blessings!
-Mrs. Mya



Celebrate Music



Benefit Concert for the
Mary Bradley Clarke Fund

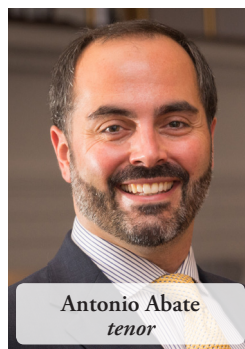
Saturday
June 1, 2019
7:00 p.m.

The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

free community concert
reception following



Chancel Choir



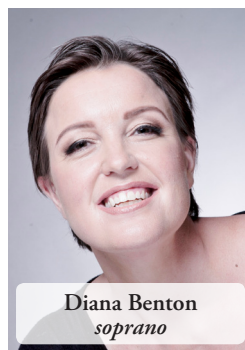
Antonio Abate
tenor



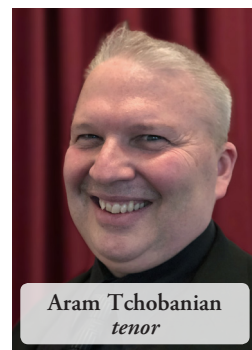
Dimitrie Lazich
baritone



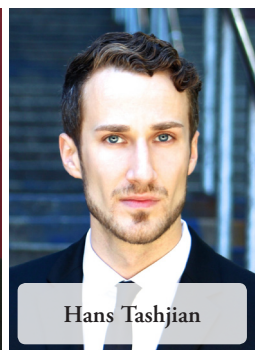
Anne Maguire
mezzo soprano



Diana Benton
soprano



Aram Tchobanian
tenor



Hans Tashjian



Celebration Sunday will be
Sunday, June 9th.

Join us as we celebrate a year's worth of
accomplishments in Church School and Confirmation!



Youth Ministries



Join us for worship, dinner, and treats from the ice cream truck!
Wednesday, May 22, 6:30-8:30pm
at The Congregational Church of New Canaan
Tickets are available @ www.godsacre.org/beaconoflight2019

MSYG Mountainside Commissioning

MSYG is preparing their hearts for their annual mission trip to Mountainside Treatment Center next month. On Sunday, May 5 our MSYG Mountainside participants will be commissioned by our congregation for the important work they will do at the end of the month. If you think you are eligible and have yet to sign up please reach out to Morgan Flagg, morgan@godsacre.org to do so. MSYG Fish should arrive at the church at 9:45am for the 10:00am service.



Mountainside Fundraising Efforts:

5/5 - MSYG will host a bake sale at Fellowship Hour. Stop by for a sweet treat!

5/11- Annual MSYG Car Wash! Come by the church to have your car washed by our middle schoolers and support their mission trip!

Mission

Cleanliness is Next to Godliness: MAASAI Latrine and Sanitation Project

The Beloved Daughters of the Maasai Recue Center in Kenya has tripled its population since OG built a dormitory there in 2014. Their numbers have grown to 96 girls who share 2 latrines. Funds we raise this year will build a new facility of 6 stalls, 4 for latrines and 2 for bathing. Handwashing stations will be placed outside. The project addresses both issues of safety and sanitation education for the girls. Visit us at the missions table during Fellowship Hour to learn more.

Pacific House Dinner Service 5/16, 4:30pm
Open Door Lunch Service 5/28, 11:15am

For more information contact Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org.



The Rescue Girls at the 2014 OG Mission Trip Final Celebration



Employment Opportunity

We are looking for a full-time Pastoral Care Coordinator to provide administrative support for our ministers and coordinate pastoral care and outreach. Must be able to multi-task, have attention to detail, excellent follow up skills, and enjoy working as part of a team. Responsibilities are varied and include the coordination of minister's schedules, frequent communication with members, correspondence, program support, special events, and coordination of an active pastoral care outreach program. Training in pastoral care is a plus. Must be proficient in Microsoft applications. Please contact: kelly@godsacre.org by May 10.

Our Church Community

Ministers

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

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

Staff

Laurel Carr, x833
Program Manager

Debbie Chapman, x831
Pastoral Care Coordinator

Dr. Jo Deen Blaine Davis, x827
Director of Music Ministries

Morgan Flagg, x834
Youth Director

Mya Gill, x821
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Anthony Jones
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832
Director of Missions & Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835
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

Debbie Raymond, x837
Christian Formation Coordinator

Avril Sweeny, x836
Director of Pastoral Care Ministries

Church Lay Leadership

Stephanie Douglas-Parkin
Chair, Board of Trustees

Jill Robey
Chair, Board of Deacons

Janis Hennessy
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Jeff Altman
Chair, Personnel

Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the June Newsletter, please submit by May 19th.
Email submissions to: laurel@godsacre.org.

my connect 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 marie-ange@godsacre.org



The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

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We are a Stephen Minister Church

