



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.

Dear Church Family,

I have said it many times before, but only because I am so blessedly reminded of it daily - it is such a gift to dwell on God's Acre. Our sacred little patch of real estate is not just beautiful, there is a deep holiness to it. Every time I step out of the parsonage and look up at the steeple pointing heavenward, the words of Psalm 84 leap to mind and prompt the recitation: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord." Those words were written, and recited, and sung as generations of Jewish Pilgrims made their way up Mount Zion in Jerusalem to the Temple. The Temple was the location of the Ark of the Covenant, where it was believed the presence of the Living God resided. No hill was more sacred to the Jewish people, than the Temple Mount where heaven and earth were joined together.

I know that God's Holy Spirit, as revealed in Jesus and by Jesus, cannot be contained in any one time or place...but I must say, I can't help but feeling that divine and heavenly Spirit's presence daily on God's Acre. I have been to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem many times and it is a deeply moving experience, but setting foot on God's Acre in New Canaan - frankly, having the opportunity to live atop this holy hill - is a gift and grace beyond compare. For me, however, the Lord's sacred presence is most palpable when our community gathers together. Our meeting house and grounds are indeed beautiful, but the true beauty of our church is expressed in the multiplicity of ways our community is drawn together.

There are so many sacred and holy moments I am blessed to witness each and every day. Sunday Worship in the Memorial Garden. The library filled at the crack of dawn on Monday mornings for Bible study. Kids racing around our property for one of the many youth offerings. Music filling the halls before worship as our choirs prepare to lead us. OG and YG mission trip commissioning. Seeing all our children gathered in the front of the sanctuary for a lesson in worship. Men's and Women's Small Groups coming together in the Chapel for a time of teaching and reflection. Kids laughing and climbing the trees in front of the parsonage as their parents enjoy conversing with one another. I could go on and on and on.

From the Pastor's Study



Continued on page four

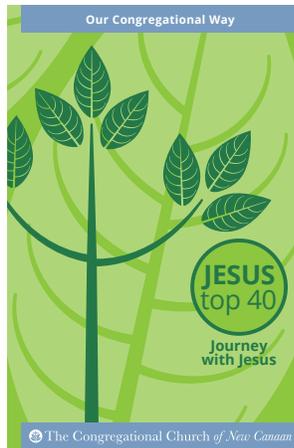
Adult Education

Fall into Adult Education

Last year, we organized our Christian education using a booklet we called *Bible Top 40: Bible Stories Everyone Should Know*. We identified the Bible stories we would focus on each Sunday in worship and encouraged our church families and individuals to spend time on Sunday evenings reflecting on those stories. We strongly encouraged, perhaps pushed, everyone to carve out some quiet time, to be together as family where possible, and to engage in Christian formation at home.

The response was overwhelmingly positive! Many individuals and families used the booklet throughout the year. Parents and children discussed the stories around the table. People took the booklet on vacation and business trips. It was a way for our members and friends to connect with each other and to stay connected with our church wherever they were on Sunday morning.

The year 2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims landing on Plymouth Rock. This anniversary provides us an opportune time to honor our religious and theological heritage. One of the foundational principles of the Congregational Way is the centrality of Jesus. Neither the pastor nor the Board of Deacons is the head of the church. That place belongs to Jesus. Therefore, for the 2019-2020 year, we will offer a second booklet: *Jesus Top 40: Journey With Jesus*. It follows the same format as



last year's booklet. We hope you will use it in the same way. This time the focus will be the life and teachings of Jesus.

As we begin this church year, the Church School will focus on these stories. The beginning of the church year is also a great time for adults to continue their biblical education by joining a Bible Study. Find the relevance these ancient teachings lend to our modern lives. New participants are always welcome to our classes. Adult classes will resume the week of September 15 with the following schedule.

Beginners Bible Study meets on Sundays from 9:00 - 9:45am in the Parlor with Eric. We will look at the scriptures being used in Sunday worship. Don't be embarrassed by your lack of biblical knowledge. You be right at home in this class. Bring your booklet and a Bible if you have one.

Gospel of Mark - Yale Bible Study meets on Mondays from 6:30 -7:30am in the Library with William Picard and Marianna Kilbride. Mark's Gospel is considered the earliest of the four gospels and is a good way to study the life and teachings of Jesus. Yale Bible Study materials for The Gospel of Mark can be found on our website.

Gospel of Mark - Women's Bible Study meets on Tuesdays from 9:30 -10:30am in the Parlor with Marianna Kilbride. This study follows the Yale Bible Study materials as the Monday class does. Join other women from the church for lively and engaging discussion.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study meets from 9:30 - 11:00am in the Parlor with Chapin. Chapin invites the group to look at the scriptures used in worship a couple weeks in advance. Your input and the discussion generated informs the sermon on each given text. The discussion is always interesting and provocative.

Kickoff Sunday All Church Brunch

Sunday, September 8, 11:00am

All are invited to the Kickoff Sunday All Church Brunch immediately following the 10:00am worship service on Sunday, September 8. There will be plenty of food and fellowship on hand for all to enjoy! We are asking that congregants with last names A-L bring apple or orange juice(to serve 10), and congregants with last names M-Z contribute fruit or baked goods(to serve 10); these can be dropped off in Smith Hall before the 10:00am service.



From the Pastor's Study

Continued from page one

Much of our sacred activity and community gathering begins on Kickoff Sunday, September 8. We will have this year's study books (Journey with Jesus) prepared and waiting for you. After worship we will have our brunch that offers a time for reconnection after a bit of a summer hiatus. There will also be opportunities for church members, family, and friends to sign up for different activities that are offered throughout the year.

Most importantly, as we begin to regather for this new program year, we have the opportunity to experience and savor the goodness of God's Spirit alive and active in our community. We can be drawn, as God intended, into deeper and more committed relationship with the Lord and one another, together we can engage in activities that allow us to learn and grow as people of faith, and in our time together we might even be lead to discover the deep purpose of our lives and the work important God is calling us to. All of this when we ascend our Holy Hill on God's Acre!

I, of course, hope that you will not only join us for Kickoff Sunday on September 8, but engage in the faith activities throughout the program year. However, even more than that, I hope and pray, as you ascend our hill toward our Meeting House, that somewhere deep in your spirit you experience the joy the Psalmist wrote about over three thousand years ago. "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord."

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

Men's & Women's Small Groups

Small Groups within our church are essential to deepening our engagement with others and growing in our faith. Last year we had a wonderful response to both Men's & Women's Small Groups. We plan to expand this fall and invite you to be a part of it. Groups will begin gathering at the end of September and will meet monthly.

To learn more about Women's Small Groups contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org; Tammie Garner, rcgarner1010@msn.com; or Jill Robey, jrobey@optonline.net.

To learn more about Men's Small Groups contact Chapin, chapin@godsacre.org; Eric, eric@godsacre.org; or Steve Case, scase135@gmail.com.

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship Cheese & Wine Pairing

Thursday, September 26 from 6:30-8:00pm



A fun foray into fromage! Please join us as the owner of Plum Plums pairs some fantastic cheeses with outstanding white and red wines. Please mail your check in the amount of \$40.00, payable to "Plum Plums", to Stephanie Radman, 912 Weed Street, New Canaan, CT 06840 by September 23.

Plum Plums Cheese
72 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, New York 10576

Rides are available. Please contact Stephanie Radman (203)952-4554 or stephanieradman@aol.com for more information.

Fall Fellowship Social

Save the Date - Saturday, October 19

The Fellowship Ministry Team along with our gracious hosts Brendan & Ainsley Hayes invite you to the Fall Fellowship Social on Saturday, October 19 from 7:00-10:00pm.

Church School

Kickoff Sunday on September 8!

Join us on Sunday, September 8 as we begin another wonderful program year here on God's Acre! Worship Services will continue at 8:00 and 10:00am. Nursery care will be provided for both services, Church School will begin at 10:00am. Please join us in the Front Circle for the All Church "Kickoff" Brunch following the 10:00am service. There will be plenty of food and fellowship for all to enjoy! Looking forward to a great day on God's Acre!



Children & Families Ministry

Save the Date: All Church Sabbath Dinner

Join us on Sunday, October 6 at 5:30pm for an All Church Sabbath Dinner! As we gather to share dinner amongst fellow congregants, we will discuss the importance of taking faith formation outside the church and into our homes. Whether it is over a small family dinner in between extracurricular activities or a Sunday evening personal reflection, faith development can be explored in various ways. Please contact Eric Dupee, eric@godsacre.org or Caroline Leather, churchschool@godsacre.org for more information. We hope to see you all there!

Confirmation

Save The Date: Confirmation Discernment Meeting

Wednesday, September 18, 7:30pm
Chapel

Confirmation will be offered to all 8th-graders and 9th-graders. Those interested in this important milestone should attend this meeting which will immediately follow the 7:00pm MSYG meeting. The meeting is for parents and the potential confirmands.

Please contact Marianne Perry, mperry@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x822 for more information,

Staffing Update

Please join us in welcoming Erik Burns as our new Youth Director.

Erik is a recent graduate of the University of Vermont with a B.A. in Political Science and Music Technology. During his four years at UVM he was an active member and co-chair of the DREAM Program; a mentoring organization that pairs college students with children living in affordable housing. His favorite part about the program is that it created a space for UVM and Burlington's community to act as one.



Erik's passion for service began and flourished in the halls of our church. He is an alumni of MSYG, YG and Quest, a graduate of NCHS ('15) and has been a member of the church since his confirmation in 2011.

Erik is excited to work with Kelly Leather Antonson (Senior Youth Director) and continue our youth group's ministry of service and justice. He hopes to build a strengthened community through fellowship, music, and an exploration of faith.

When he isn't with us at church, Erik is an avid musician who loves to ski, hike, and spend time with friends and family.

Caught Doin' Good

Kris Johnson does a lot for our church.

Many know Kris to be an avid, very talented gardener. She has been tending to the church gardens for years.

Kris is also a regular driver and deliverer for Meals on Wheels of New Canaan.

When her gardens are in bloom, Kris cuts flowers from her gardens to give to each of the Meals on Wheels clients. The clients love these small gifts, which are gifts from the heart. Thank you, Kris!



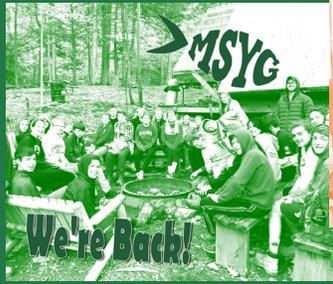
Youth Ministries

ALL ARE WELCOME! JOIN YOUTH GROUP!

Join us and find community at church! We know that we are all unconditionally loved by Christ, and that we are called by God to be one people. God calls us to share the unconditional love of Jesus with each other in abundance. Here on God's Acre our youth can follow that call by gathering together in community – join a Youth Group! This year join your fellow classmates in your youth group and come to know the unconditional love of God through fellowship, service, and an adventure of faith! Fall is the perfect time to start in Youth Group. If you're new- you'll find a new home, if you're returning- bring a friend! We can't wait to start this walk with you all. It's going to be a fun year!



Bring a New Friend to Youth Group! All are WELCOME on God's Acre!!



YG and MSYG will both kickoff on Sunday, September 8th 6:00pm!

Our YG Kickoff Carnival is such a blast and we can't wait for you to meet our new Youth Director, ERIK BURNS! Real carnival games, bounce obstacle course, food, plus all your YG friends. Your Senior Leaders are excited to welcome everyone back for an incredible new year! Come ready to throw your best fastball to dunk an Advisor or friend in the dunk tank! Typically YG meets weekly on Sundays from 7:00-8:30pm in Smith Hall.

MSYG, our ministry for all 7th and 8th graders, will start off with a Pool Party from 3:30-5:00pm at the Petitjean's home, 245 West Hills Road. All new and returning MSYGers should bring a suit and towel, big appetite, and be ready for a great time! Our stellar team of Advisors and High School Junior Advisors look forward to seeing you there! MSYG meets regularly on Sundays from 4:30-6:00pm in Smith Hall.

The following week on Thursday, September 19th both Guppies and JYG will kickoff their year of fun, faith, and friendship!

JYG will begin their year with a Rain Gutter Ice Cream Social at 5:15pm. JYG also meets Thursdays from 5:15-6:30pm and invites all 5th and 6th grade students to join.

Guppies launch into a new program year with their Crazy Kickoff at 4:00pm in Smith Hall. Guppies meets each Thursday from 4:00-5:00pm and is open to all 3rd and 4th graders.

Mighty Minnows will have their first meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 24th from 4:00-5:00pm in Smith Hall!

Keep your eyes peeled for our full schedule for the upcoming year. Our monthly events will build upon what Minnows learn in Church School through creative games and programming.

Questions about our Youth Groups? Please contact Kelly Leather Antonson, leather@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x824 to learn more.

Music News

New Director of Children's Music and Drama

Please welcome Anush Avetisyan as our Director of Children's Music and Drama! This past year Anush sang in the Chancel Choir and was a soloist for the Lenten Musical Moments. She joined our staff in August and is excited to meet the children of our church.

"I've enjoyed hearing your beautiful voices all year and I look forward to working with such a dedicated and talented group!"

Anush has a double major in Elementary Music Education and Vocal Performance from UCLA, a certificate from Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, and a Master of Music degree from Yale University. You will be blessed by Anush's spirit, her lovely personality, and her musical expertise.



Please contact Anush Avetisyan, anush@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x821 for more information.

Visitor's Evening

You are invited to a visitor's evening with the Chancel Choir

Thursday, September 19, 7:30pm – Music Room

Come sing with the Chancel Choir. You will be seated with helpful singers to rehearse music that will be sung in upcoming weeks. After a short rehearsal everyone will go to the home of Jody and Ray Davis for refreshments and a Get Acquainted Time.

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 services December 1 and 15; A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols December 15, 5:00pm. December 8 will be the featured work with orchestra, *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi. Come Thursday evenings, beginning September 12 from 7:40 – 8:00pm for quick rehearsals for the Advent season. You will sit next to a helpful singer who will guide you along the way. There's a place for you!

Chancel Choir

Ken Gioffre, saxophonist

Ken Gioffre, internationally renowned jazz saxophonist, will be in the 10:00am service on Sunday, September 29. He will play the prelude, postlude, and accompany the Chancel Choir on anthems.

Mr. Gioffre currently tours and records as saxophonist for Blood, Sweat, and Tears and conductor/saxophonist for Smokey Robinson. He has appeared nightly on the television show *New York at Night* and 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. He has recorded for numerous labels as well as for all major television networks.



Congratulations Jody

In June, Jody Blaine Davis was the organist at the national United Church of Christ Synod, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. With approximately 4000 people in attendance, Jody played for worship services and plenaries. In July, she completed her four-year tenure as President of the United Church of Christ Musicians Association at UCCMA's national conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Church musicians from all over the United States attended the four day conference.

Jody will play her annual organ recital on Friday, November 8, 2019

Please contact Jody Blaine Davis, music@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x827 for more information.



Missions and Outreach

Introducing Bell Boys

This year a new group will be begin in September:
Bell Boys



Boys in grades 1-8 are invited to learn to ring handbells. Starting Sunday, September 15 from 11:15am-12:00pm, join Mrs. Jody in the Chapel for a fun time together. The church owns four-octaves of Whitechapel handbells from England. You do not have to read music and there are plenty of bells for everyone! Invite your fathers, too!

Join a Choir This Fall

You are invited to sing with the choirs this year. There is always room for You. All choirs meet in the Music Room. Chancel Choir resumes September 5 and sings in the services beginning September 8. All children's choirs begin the week of September 15.



Please contact Jody Blaine Davis, music@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x827 for more information.

Grace Notes, ages 2-4 with a parent/guardian

Mondays, 4:00 – 4:30pm

Cherubs, ages 4-K

Mondays, 4:30 – 5:00pm

Spirit Singers, grades 1-4

Wednesdays, 4:00 – 5:00pm

Joyful Noise, grades 5-8

Wednesdays, 5:00 – 6:00pm

Chancel Choir, high school and adults

Thursdays, 7:30 – 9:00pm

Bell Boys, grades 1-8

Sundays, 11:15am – 12:00pm

Inspirica Sneaker Tree

Inspirica's goal is to ensure that the homeless children in their care do not grow up to become homeless adults. Our sneaker tree project, which buys sneakers for children in the afterschool program, aims to help by chipping away at the negative stigma attached to homelessness. New sneakers in the right size allow the children to feel as they should, just like everyone else. Receiving their new sneakers is the favorite day of the year for the kids at Inspirica. Stop by the Mission Table during Fellowship Hour to sign up and make a child very happy!



Pacific House Dinner Service on September 18

Pacific House is the only regional shelter for men and young adult men in lower Fairfield County serving the four-town area of Stamford, Darien, Greenwich, and New Canaan. Pacific House typically houses 60-82 men, and can accommodate up to 110 men during extreme-weather months. Every third Thursday of the month we make, buy and/or take and serve dinner at Pacific House Shelter for men in Stamford. For more information or to help contact Suzanne Brannan, suzbrannan1@mac.com.



Open Door Shelter Lunch service on September 24

Open Door's mission is to address the causes and complexities of homelessness by providing shelter, food, clothing, case management, and other services leading towards independence. Every fourth Tuesday of the month we serve lunch at Open Door Shelter in Norwalk. To serve or find out more contact Stephanie Radman, stephanieradman@aol.com.



Our Church Community

Ministers

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

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

Staff

Kelly Leather Antonson, x824
Senior Youth Director

Anush Avetisyan, x821
Director of Children's Music and Drama

Erik Burns, x834
Youth Director

Laurel Carr, x833
Program Manager

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

Anthony Jones
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832
Director of Missions & Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835
Director of Children's Formation

Marie-Ange Masters, x823
Director of Accounting

Marianne Perry, x822
Pastoral Care Coordinator

Debbie Raymond, x826
Christian Formation Coordinator

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



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 October Newsletter, please submit by September 19th.
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 marie-ange@godsacre.org