



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,

As Thanksgiving nears, I am reminded that most of my prayers to the Lord are prayers of gratitude. As you might imagine, prayer is a central and essential part of my life. This is not because I am a pastor, but because I am a Christian who longs to be in a deeper and more committed relationship with the Lord. All my life, prayer has been a key to that connection and closeness for which I have longed. In truth, I pray for a lot of things - I ask God to intercede for the well-being of my family, friends, church family, and the world. As someone who believes that the Lord wants to know all our desires, I do not withhold any thoughts or wishes from God in prayer. With that said, the vast majority of my prayer is given over to thanksgiving - thanking God for all the goodness of life and for all the blessings I have experienced. I do not have a perfect life, whatever that would be, but I am so very grateful every day for all that I have and for all I can experience. As Thanksgiving approaches, I am also grateful that it is a tradition instituted by our Pilgrim faith ancestors. Even after a severe winter that resulted in the deaths of half their community, our Pilgrims mothers and fathers gathered to thank God and celebrate all the blessings the Lord had bestowed upon them. Thankfulness is a hallmark of Christianity. Even when life is hard, God is still good.

This is worth thinking deeply about because Thanksgiving also coincides with our church's Stewardship Campaign. The reason for the alignment is simple: our giving should reflect our gratitude. Our gifts to the church are intended to be an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord. When deciding how much we will offer, we are prompted to reflect on the goodness of life, the graciousness of our Lord, and our desire to express our thanks. What should our stewardship gifts be? Gifts worthy of the great and generous God we worship and praise.

Stewardship is not the only activity and initiative that launches in November; as we find ourselves on the brink of Advent and the holiday season, our program offerings increase. This is not in an attempt to overwhelm the schedules of our church members and friends, but it is our effort to help our church family savor and celebrate the goodness of this blessed season. There are many times in

From the Pastor's Study



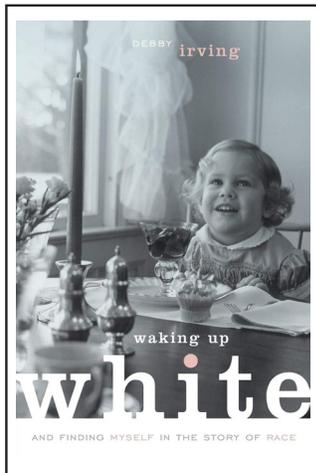
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Adult Education

Fall into Adult Education

For something a little different this November, I invite youth and adults to join me for a book group using Debby Irving's book *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. Recently, issues around race have been prevalent in the news. I believe our faith speaks to every aspect of our lives including race relations. I encourage you to read as much of the book as you can. Then, join me in the Parlor to discuss race and faith on two evenings: Tuesday, November 5 and Tuesday, November 12 from 7:00-8:30pm. Even if you can't read the book, you can still come for the conversation.

- Eric



In November, the topic of The Bible and Race will be present in some of our ongoing adult education classes as well. Please see the schedule below for program notes and class cancellations. As always, all of our educational opportunities are open to all and every class always welcomes new participants. Join us or contact Eric, eric@godsacre.org, for information on any of our offerings.

Sunday Adult Class

- 11/3 Jesus Top 40 Beginner Bible Study (Matthew 20:1-16)
- 11/10 The Bible and Race
- 11/17 The Bible and Race
- 11/24 Break: No Class

Monday Bible Study

- 11/4 Yale Bible Study: Gospel of Mark
- 11/11 YBS: Gospel of Mark Participants' Favorite Passages
- 11/18 The Bible and Race with Eric
- 11/25 Break: No Class

Tuesday Women's Bible Study

- 11/5 Yale Bible Study: Gospel of Mark
- 11/12 The Bible and Race with Eric
- 11/19 Break: No Class
- 11/26 Break: No Class

Card Ministry Team

Ready to Write

Did you know that we have a team of 20 church members who handwrite cards of support, notes of comfort, and letters of praise?

If you know of anyone who needs a pick-me-up, an encouraging word, or praise for good deeds, please let us know. We love to write and we are waiting to hear from you! Also, we would



love to hear from you if you would like to join our ministry team. Contact Stephanie Radman, stephanieradman@aol.com or (203)952-4554.

Pastoral Care

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is stronger than ever this fall. At a recent meeting in October, 14 women were in attendance and 6 shawls were completed. The group, having met over the summer, produced a dozen more shawls during that time. Meeting the second and fourth Monday of each month, women knit together, share stories, and pray together as the beautiful shawls are completed.



Prayer Shawls are offered to church members or friends who would benefit from being surrounded by the prayers and support these shawls offer them. As one recent recipient wrote "Your gesture of sending me a handmade shawl after my husband's death was very much appreciated. Your shawl is wrapped around my shoulders as I write this, keeping me warm. My thanks to everyone who participated."

If you would like to learn how to knit and be a part of this ministry, contact Judy Hyde, judyhyde4@optonline.net or (203) 966-8028 or Troy Elliott, troy.elliott518@gmail.com or (203) 966-8183.

Flower Ministry

Flower Donations

The flowers that adorn our meeting house on Sunday mornings bring joy and beauty to our service but they can also honor loved ones and occasions in our lives. There are many reasons to donate flowers. In addition to remembering a loved one you can give flowers in celebration of:

Birthdays

Anniversaries

Weddings

Baptisms

To say "Congratulations" or "Thank You"



Floral arrangements are also a gift to those in our community who cannot physically be present in church. After each Sunday worship service, the flowers are delivered to the homebound or church members who need extra cheer.

The Flower Ministry team, along with the Pastoral Care team, invites you to make a contribution to cover the cost of an arrangement this year. Please consider a Sunday when you would like to thank God and honor a special person or moment with a gift of flowers. The suggested donation is \$75. Contact Marianne Perry, mperry@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x822 for more information.

Members of our Flower Ministry team create all of the arrangements.

If you have any questions please contact Juliet Howe, juliet@eehowe.com.

From the Pastor's Study

Continued from page one

our lives, however, when the holiday season doesn't feel like the joyous affair everyone else seems to be intent on celebrating. Because of the loss of a loved one, or the loss of a job, or the loss of a marriage, or a myriad of other concerns plaguing our hearts and minds, the continual prompts to be joyful can feel painfully hollow at best and soul-grating at worst.

To this end, we are co-hosting with St. Mark's Church, a program entitled "Managing Grief and Loss through the Holidays." Julie Hall from the Center for Hope and Renewal will lead us in a session about how to observe the holidays when we are struggling with relational challenges and loss. We have all had holiday seasons when our spirits were muted because of difficult situations and deep grief. To support our respective members and to allow us all to understand and more faithfully respond to the challenging dynamics the holidays often usher in, St. Mark's and our Congregational Church will be hosting this event together on God's Acre after worship on November 17.

When I think of all the activity, all the programming, all the giving, and all the many points of connection between people and with the Lord that our church provides and promotes, I am a bit awed. As the holiday season approaches, my thankfulness and gratitude for all God has done and promises to do within our lives and our community increase. I am undeniably thankful. I am grateful to God. I offer praise to the Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

Caught Doin' Good

Tom Fisher is a regular volunteer at the Open Door Shelter. Tom serves every month, always with a big smile on his face. He may or may not be called the "Frymaster"! Thank you for your service, Tom!



Faith & Finance

During this beautiful New England autumn on God's Acre, we are constantly reminded of our many blessings. I read this line recently from a seasonal prayer (author unknown):

May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance we have been given and bounty we are to share with others.



In November the Stewardship Campaign will kick off, and you will receive Campaign materials shortly. The theme for this year is “Honor the Past, Serve the Present, Provide for the Future”, which recognizes the historical beginnings of the Congregational Church in our country four centuries ago, furthers the obligation to serve our current congregation and the larger community by providing vibrant programs and living our faith outwardly, and enables future generations to build upon those foundations.

The stewardship team seeks your engagement not just financially, but through your time and talents; therefore we ask that everyone, after prayerful consideration and regardless of the numerical pledge, return pledge cards quickly.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our Church.

Stephanie Douglas-Parkin
Chair, Board of Trustees

Children's Formation

Thanksgiving Service Project!

It's turkey bank time! We are striving to raise \$1,500 for this year's Thanksgiving Service Project and we are encouraging the children to EARN their donations on their own to help feed over 140 families. On November 24 from 1:00-2:30pm we welcome all members of our church family to join us as we prepare packages to be delivered to families in need this holiday season.



Election Day Extravaganza

Get out and vote! Drop off your kids in Room 7 on Tuesday, November 5 from 9:30-11:30am for a movie & craft! Contact Caroline Leather, churchschool@godsacre.org for more information.



Youth Ministry

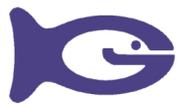
November launches us into a season of gratitude and giving. Join our Youth Groups this month as we give thanks to God and give our time to others!



We begin this month with gratitude for an incredible weekend of service. Thirty-three of our 9th and 12th graders traveled to NYC on October 25-26 for our annual Senior/Freshman retreat. Our YG fish put their faith in action as they served the 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 bonded before returning home they were challenged to “Escape the Room” together for some extra fun and fellowship!

Save the Date to Participate in Our All Church Thanksgiving Service Project!

This project is a fantastic opportunity for our youth to participate in a church wide Thanksgiving mission which reinforces the idea that Christ calls us to be servants to others.



Thursday, November 21, 4:00-5:00pm
Guppies will be creating hot cocoa containers.



Thursday, November 21, 5:15-6:30pm
JYG will pack cookie mix in jars – yum!



Sunday, November 24, 4:00-5:30pm
MSYG will wrap Thanksgiving boxes.



Sunday, November 24, 7:00-9:00pm
YG will deliver the boxes across Fairfield County.

Missions and Outreach

All Church Thanksgiving Project and More!

11/21 Pacific House Dinner Service, 4:30pm

11/24 Sign up to drive and deliver turkeys and trimmings to our mission partners, 5:00pm

11/26 Open Door Lunch Service, 11:30am

Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org, for more information.



Women's Fellowship

Learning Session: Fueling the Fabulous Female

Local nutritionist extraordinaire, Barbara Schmidt, will educate us on proper strategies to strengthen our bodies, reduce risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and enhance our energy

to enjoy life. November 8 from 10:00-11:00am, at the home of Penny Mardoian. Rides are available.



Enjoy fellowship, a fabulous lunch, and dessert on Thursday, December 5 from 11:30am-1:30pm, at the home of Eileen Thomas, 33 Woods End Road. Let us get into the Christmas spirit together! Rides are available. Contact Stephanie Radman, stephanieradman@aol.com or (203)952-4554 for more information.

Music Ministry

Celebrate All Saints Sunday

Sunday, November 3 at the 10:00am service
To celebrate All Saints Sunday, hear Charles Burges and Anush Avetisyan sing Andrew Lloyd Webber's Pie Jesu at the prelude. The Chancel Choir will sing two movements from Faure's Requiem, accompanied by harpist, Joy Plaisted.

Tune In . . . to Music

On Wednesday, November 6 at 11:15 am – 12:00pm
in the Meeting House

Hear Jody Blaine Davis in a casual and informative conversation about her organ recital program on Friday evening, November 8. Jody will talk about the composers whose works she will perform and then you will hear repertoire excerpts from her recital. Stay for lunch immediately following at 12:00pm. All are complimentary to friends of music.



Jody Blaine Davis, Organist in Recital

Our own Director of Music Ministries, Dr. Jody Blaine Davis, will perform her annual organ recital on Friday, November 8 at 7:00pm in the church. Repertoire includes a variety of music and composers from different countries: Bach, Vierne, Schumann, Bovet, Candlyn, Foote, and Alma Hamilton a female composer from Stamford.

This recital is free and open to the public. There is something for everyone so invite a friend!

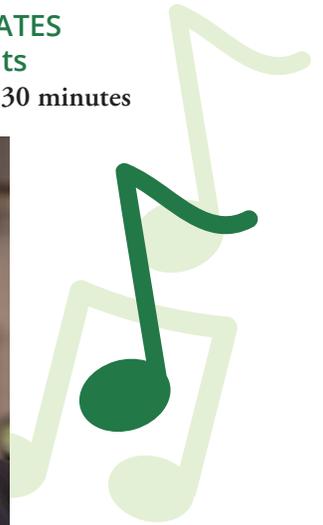
A reception hosted by the Music Ministry Team will immediately follow in Smith Hall. Childcare is provided.

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

DECEMBER SAVE THE DATES Advent Musical Moments Wednesdays at 12:00pm for 30 minutes



December 4
Antonio Abate, tenor



December 11
Jenny D'Alba, soprano



December 18
Anne Maguire, mezzo-soprano



Anush Avetisyan Sings at Carnegie Hall

Friday, December 6 at 8:00pm

Anush Avetisyan will be a soloist in concert at Carnegie Hall.



AGBU Performing Artists in Concert at 8:00pm

Presented by the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Since 2008, the AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC), under the auspices of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, has celebrated the achievements of Armenian youth.

Tickets on sale NOW:

carnegiehall.org – Weill Recital Hall

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

Children's Music Corner

Children's Choir: Spirit Singers & Joyful Noise

Annual Nativity Pageant: The Story of Christmas – It's almost here!

Praising God through Music!

Spirit Singers & Joyful Noise are singing this month, so please listen for our children's choirs on:

Sunday, November 3, and Sunday, November 24.



Your Music Director Is in Recital!

Our very own Mrs. Jody has a recital at church on Friday, November 8! All Children's Choirs and their parents are invited for dinner at Gates Restaurant, 10 Forest St, at 5:30pm. After dinner, we will walk back to church for the recital. Pick up is at 8:15pm in Smith Hall.



Nativity Pageant News

Pageant Parents will meet in the Meeting House on Sunday, November 3 from 11:00-11:15am. The Rehearsal Schedule will be distributed then.

PLEASE CONSIDER HAVING
YOUR CHILD JOIN A CHOIR

Spirit Singers (Grades 1-4):

Wednesdays 4:00-5:00pm

Joyful Noise (Grades 5-8):

Wednesdays 5:00-6:00pm

Bell Ringers (Boys Grades 1-8):

Sundays 11:15-11:45am



THANKSGIVING WEEK

All choirs are cancelled the week of
November 24 – December 1.



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

Claire Carbonier, x839
Youth Program Coordinator

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

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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 Advent/Winter Newsletter, please submit by November 15th.

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