



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,

While still savoring the spirit of Christmas, and at the same time enjoying a few sun-filled unusually warm days in January, it is a challenge to turn our attention toward Lent. However, with Ash Wednesday arriving on February 26, that is what we must do. Over the years, Lent has become an increasingly important season for me. It is a time of deep spiritual reflection, it is a time of increased religious rigor, and it is a time to test and try the durability of our faith. I love Lent, and while it always seems to nip a bit too aggressively at the heels of Christmas, I am grateful for the annual invitation to experiment with new and more faithful ways of practicing our faith. It has been years since I have made New Year's Resolutions, but for the past twenty years, I have enthusiastically taken the opportunity to make faith commitments during the season of Lent.

The most common spiritual discipline to be considered during Lent is fasting. Fasting is a form of self-denial. In the book of Leviticus, the Hebrew people were instructed to engage in a fast - a period of self-denial - as a means of penitence in response to their corporate and individual sin. Abstaining from more carnal lusts and longings to focus on more spiritual pursuits is essential to a meaningful Lenten experience.

When we fast, we deal with what is going on inside of us instead of covering up our internal angst with food, alcohol, or some other less than healthy behavior. Fasting is a time to get real and to get right with God.

I know many folks, particularly our Catholic sisters and brothers, grew up with a tradition of giving something up for Lent. That tradition is a version of fasting. People try to give up chocolate. People try to give up alcohol. People attempt to give up swearing, or negativity, or judgmentalism. Abstaining from a habit, behavior, or compulsion that clutters our lives and gets in the way of our connection and conversation with God can be remarkably spiritually liberating.

From the Pastor's Study



Continued on page three

Children & Families Ministry

What's Happening in Church School!

February 2

Souper Bowl! Bring in canned soup and join us as we compete to be the Bible Bowl Champions!

February 9

Return to the classroom to discover how Jesus fed 5,000!

February 16 & 23

Combined Classes

Preschool 3s & 4s

Nursery

Grades K-4 - Room 7

Grades 5-7 - Meeting House

Calling All Church School Moms!



Mingle with fellow Church School moms over coffee & tea on Wednesday, February 5, at the home of Debbie Raymond, 150 White Oak Shade Road, at 9:30am! Hope to see you all there for this wonderful time of fellowship!

Ash Wednesday Family Service

Welcome the season of Lent by joining us for an Ash Wednesday Family Service from 4:00-4:30pm in the Chapel. Receive your ashes and enjoy music from our Children's Choir along with a Children's Message with Eric. All ages are welcome! Spirit Singers will begin immediately following the service

Clothing & Toiletry Collection



Our confirmands are preparing for a Mid-night Run on March 6 and need the support of the congregation in collecting winter clothing and toiletries to be

distributed to NYC homeless. All items can be dropped off in the bins located in Smith Hall. Contact Caroline Leather at churchschool@godsacre.org with questions.

Adult Education

February 2020

In February, our four Bible studies will continue! Classes are always open to new members. Please contact Eric if you have questions regarding any of our adult education opportunities.

Sunday Beginners Bible Study:

9:00-9:50am in the Parlor led by Eric

Jesus Top 40 Bible Stories – Consult your booklet for the story on each Sunday in February. Bring your Bible or use one provided and take part in the conversation.

Monday Morning Bible Study:

6:30-7:30am in the Library led by William Picard and Marianna Kilbride

Luke's Gospel – Use the link to the Yale Bible Study materials found on the church website and join us bright and early on Monday morning.

Tuesday Women's Bible Study:

9:30-10:30am in the Parlor led by Marianna Kilbride

Luke's Gospel – Use the link to the Yale Bible Study materials found on the church website and join us on Tuesday morning.

Wednesday Jesus Top 40 Bible Study:

9:30-11:00am in the Parlor led by Chapin

Join us for a lively discussion that informs our upcoming sermons. Each Wednesday, we look at the Jesus Top 40 Bible story that will be used in worship a week and a half out.

Lenten Offerings

Lenten Book Study

Sundays, March 1 - April 5

9:00 – 9:45am in the Parlor

Pauses for Lent: 40 Words for 40 Days by Trevor Hudson
Sometimes a pause is good for the soul. It gives us the chance to regroup, reflect, and refocus on God. In *Pauses for Lent*, Trevor Hudson offers a beautifully minimalist book in which he focuses on one word for each day of Lent. You are invited to pause, focus on the word, read a scripture and a brief meditation related to the word, and then offer a prayer. Pausing in this way will help you carve out time for God and refresh your spirit even in the midst of a busy life. You may find yourself sensing God's presence in a new way and discovering that God wants to meet you amid your life as it is, muddles, and all.

Learning Contemplative Prayer

Thursdays, February 27 - April 2

9:00 – 9:30 am in the Chapel

Lent is a great time to focus on spiritual disciplines such as fasting, prayer, study, and service. My Lenten observance will include spending time in the Chapel and engaging in the form of prayer called contemplative prayer. It utilizes the practice of Lectio Divina (holy reading) and meditation. I invite you to join me. I will spend just a few minutes describing Christian contemplative prayer and providing instruction. We'll spend the rest of the time contemplating and meditating over a short scripture passage. No experience is necessary. Just show up a few minutes before 9:00am. Make 9:00am on the Thursdays in Lent an appointment with God that you need to keep.

Youth Ministry

See Christ in Others, Be Christ to Others!

Be a Mission Sponsor! This year, 75 Youth Group Mission Fish will be working with Sierra Service Project in Sacramento, California. Our Mission Fish will continue sharing Christ's love through repairing homes and building relationships with the people of Sacramento.



The work that will be done together will be life-changing for the homeowners and for our YG mission fish, and we invite you join in this effort by making a Mission Sponsor contribution. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to support the outreach efforts of our youth. Mission Sponsors receive handwritten letters sent from the mission fish on-site, describing their day-to-day experiences. Sponsors are also invited to meet and celebrate with the mission fish at the Mission Sponsor Brunch on Youth Sunday, March 8. If you would like to become a Mission Sponsor visit <https://www.godsacre.org/mission-sponsor-2020/>.



In January, our MSYGers traveled up to Camp Jewell to explore their faith, have some serious winter fun, and of course make

s'mores. On February 2, our middle schoolers will be heading to Filling in the Blanks to help fill backpacks with food and school supplies for children in our surrounding communities.



Our JYGers are getting in on the Mission Sponsor action by packing and sending off the YG Missionaries with care package

bags on February 6. After the trip some of our high schoolers will visit JYG to thank them and share more deeply about their mission to Sacramento, California. Join the effort to love and support our YG Mission Fish by becoming a Mission Sponsor today!



YG will join forces with Church School on Sunday, February 2nd for our 4th Annual Bible Bowl!

As part of this SOUPer Bowl

Sunday we ask that all youth bring cans of soup to support local partners who serve our communities. See you at 10:00am on February 2 in the Meeting House!

From the Pastor's Study

Continued from page one

Lent is a six-week-long season that begins on Wednesday, February 26. During our Ash Wednesday service, we will be providing resources for everyone in attendance to help guide and support our respective Lenten journeys. I know it may feel too close to Christmas to begin thinking about Lent, but I have found that preparation is key to having a most fulfilling Lenten season.

I hope you can join us at 8:00pm on Wednesday, February 26, for our Ash Wednesday service. I love the holiday season on God's Acre, but there is something truly blessed about the Lenten and Easter on our sacred patch of real estate.

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

Fellowship

Save the Date: March 7, 2020 Fellowship Dinner Parties

The Fellowship Ministry Team invites you to an adult dinner party on Saturday, March 7 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 guests 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 congregants please contact Dawn Doak, dawn.norris@gmail.com.



Music Ministry

Lenten Musical Moments

You are invited to hear our exceptional section leaders sing Lenten contemplative music. Join us beginning Wednesday, March 4, at 12:00pm in the Meeting House for 30 minutes each week.

MARCH 4



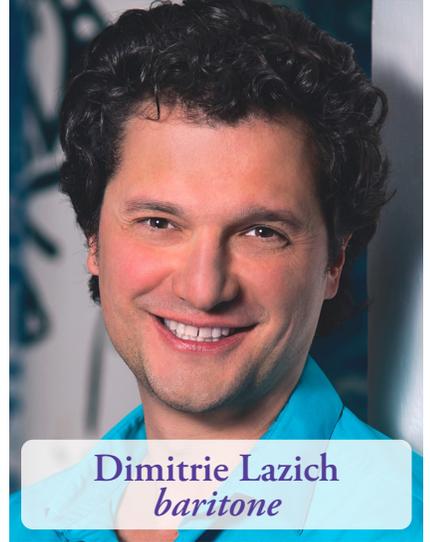
Diana Benton
soprano

MARCH 11



Hans Tashjian
bass

MARCH 18



Dimitrie Lazich
baritone

MARCH 25



Aram Tchobanian
tenor

APRIL 1

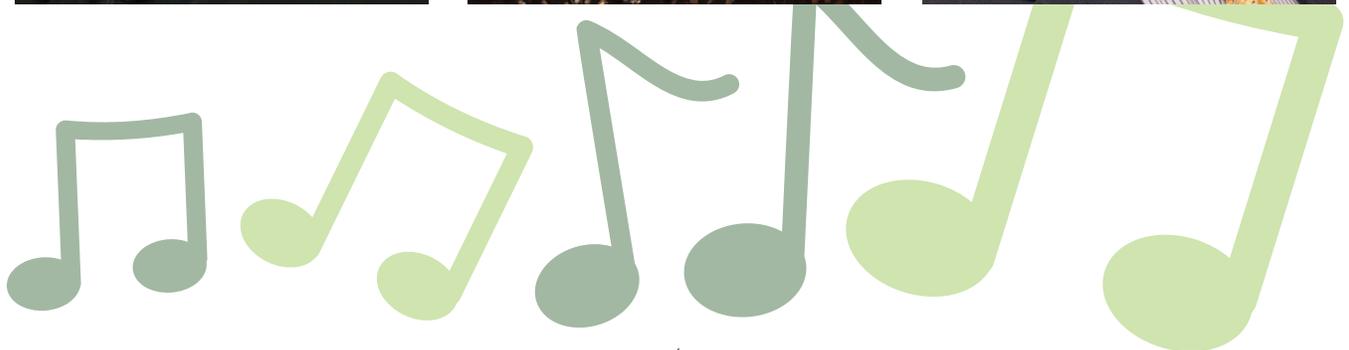


Anne Maguire
mezzo soprano

APRIL 8



Antonio Abate
tenor



**Did You Forget to Join a Choir?
It's not too late! Join in February!**

Sunday

Bell Boys, 11:15 - 11:45am

Monday

Grace Notes, 4:00 – 4:30pm

Cherubs, 4:30 – 5:00pm

Wednesday

Spirit Singers and Joyful Noise, 4:00 – 5:15pm

Thursday

Chancel Choir, 7:30 – 9:00pm



Plan Ahead

If you would like to sing with the Chancel Choir but have limited time, consider singing during the Lenten season and on Easter Day.

The Chancel Choir will sing Lenten anthems beginning Ash Wednesday, February 26, and Sundays beginning March 1. The special Lenten musical presentation of Charles Gounod's Messe Solonelle (St. Cecilia), with guest instrumentalists, will be at the 10:00am service on Sunday, March 29. Also, you may sing the Palm Sunday service with trumpets on April 5; Maundy Thursday Tennebrae Service on April 9; and Easter Day on April 12 with brass and tympani. There's a place for you!

Come Thursday evenings, from 7:30-9:00pm for quick rehearsals for these occasions. You will sit next to a strong singer who will support you along the way. For more information, please contact Jody Blaine Davis at music@godsacre.org or (203)966-2651, x827.



Charles Gounod





Missions and Outreach

Who Is my Neighbor?

Find out by serving with Meals on Wheels!

The mission of Meals on Wheels, New Canaan is to provide nutritious meals to residents of New Canaan whose physical, emotional, mental, medical or social condition makes it difficult to provide these meals for themselves, regardless of their ability to pay. Neighbors serve neighbors, respecting and facilitating their independence and desire to stay in the homes in which they raised their family, had careers, friends, memories, and continue to contribute to our community.



Meals on Wheels, New Canaan is an integral part of our town, and imperative to securing the ability for residents to stay in their homes independently for as long as they want or can. In a 2016 study by AARP, it was found that daily recipients of MOW reported improvements in mental health and self-rated health, reduced rate of falls, improvement in feelings of loneliness and isolation and decrease in worry about ability to stay in their homes.

There are several CCNC members on the board of Meals on Wheels, one of whom, Beth Baker, heads up the Meals on Wheels Ministry Team of dedicated volunteers, who weekly cover two New Canaan routes delivering lunches, normally working in pairs. They are in need of some new volunteers to take a regular route or be part of a substitute list. If you can help please contact Beth Baker at bethcudabaker@gmail.com or Marianna Kilbride at marianna@godsacre.org.

February 20 - Pacific House Dinner Service, 4:30pm

February 25 - Open Door Lunch Service, 11:30am

Lenten Love

For children who live at Open Doors, a homeless shelter in Norwalk and longtime CCNC partner, the Children's Resource Center is a welcoming place where they come to learn, play, and get much-needed support. Children in the shelter and children of families who come to Open Doors for services other than sheltering receive educational enrichment from preschool through high school.

As part of our Lenten practice we will collect the items listed in support of the After-School Buddies Food Drive. Items may be dropped in the boxes provided in Smith Hall during Lent.



- Individual bags of pretzels or tortilla chips
- Shelf-stable fruit cups or applesauce
- Grape or strawberry jelly
- Juice boxes
- Mini bagels
- Fruit snacks
- Ice cream cones
- Shelf-stable milk boxes (like Horizon)
- Gift cards: Stop & Shop, ShopRite, or Costco to help purchase fresh fruits and veggies, string cheese, and other perishable items

Flower Ministry

Everyone is familiar with the beautiful floral arrangements in the sanctuary, chapel, narthex, and even the garden during the summer services. These flowers are arranged by a ministry team of fifteen creative women.

After Sunday services, we help the deacons to repurpose these blooms into smaller arrangements so the deacons can deliver them to church members who might be recovering, grieving or celebrating. The floral ministry team often designs special requests when a church member wishes to remember a loved one or celebrate a special event by making a financial donation to the altar

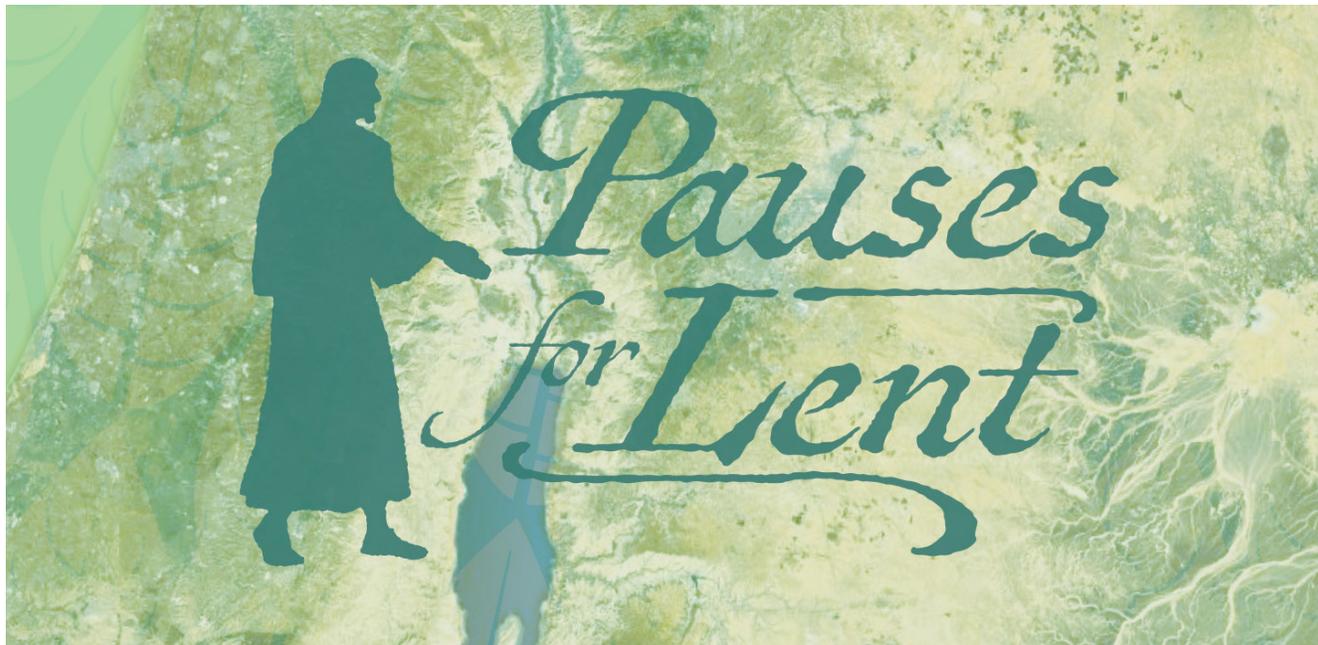
flowers. In addition, we work together with the pastoral care team to donate over 50 plants each holiday to those who have lost loved ones or are homebound.



We also gather as a ministry team just to enjoy each other. In May 2019 we met for lunch and toured the spectacular garden of Kris Johnston.

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

Lent on God's Acre



Ash Wednesday Family Service

Wednesday, February 26, 4:00pm, Chapel

All ages are welcome to receive ashes, hear a Children's Message and enjoy music from our Children's Choirs.

Traditional Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 26, 8:00pm, Meeting House

Complimentary copies of *Pauses for Lent: 40 Words for 40 Days* by Trevor Hudson will be distributed.

Lenten Love Food Drive - Open Doors Children's Center

February 26 – April 12

Shopping list: individual bags of pretzels or tortilla chips, fruit cups or applesauce, grape or strawberry jelly, juice boxes, mini bagels, fruit snacks, ice cream cones, shelf-stable milk boxes, and grocery gift cards. Drop off donations in Smith Hall

Contemplative Prayer with Eric and Marianna

Thursdays, February 27-April 2, 9:00-9:30am, Chapel
Practice Lectio Divina and meditation.

Lenten Book Study with Eric

Sundays, March 1-April 5, 9:00-9:45am, Parlor

Pauses for Lent: 40 Words for 40 Days by Trevor Hudson

Lenten Musical Moments

Wednesdays at 12:00pm, Meeting House

- March 4 Diana Benton, soprano
- March 11 Hans Tashjian, bass
- March 18 Dimitrie Lazich, baritone
- March 25 Aram Tchobanian, tenor
- April 1 Anne Maguire, mezzo-soprano
- April 8 Antonio Abate, tenor

Lenten Youth Worship

Wednesday, March 18

Dinner, Smith Hall, 6:30pm

Worship, Meeting House, 7:00-8:00pm

The Chancel Choir presents Charles Gounod's Messe Solonnelle (St. Cecilia)

Sunday, March 29, 10:00am, Meeting House

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 5, 12:00-1:00pm

Hunt at noon on the Front Lawn with lunch to follow in Smith Hall.

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

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 March Newsletter, please submit by February 12.

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