



Dear Church Family,

As we enter February, I want to highlight a few events we are looking forward to in the coming weeks.

First, believe it or not, Lent is just around the corner. I know this entire pandemic has felt like an extended Lent, a prolonged season of deprivation, but Lent formally begins again on February 17, Ash Wednesday. We will be sending you a virtual service featuring a dear friend of mine, Dr. Josef Sorett, [josefsorett.com](http://josefsorett.com). Josef and I have been friends for over twenty years. He is currently the Chair of the Religion Department at Columbia University, where he focuses on Religion and African American Studies. Josef will offer our message on Ash Wednesday, and I hope this will be the beginning of a fairly regular connection between Josef and our community. Josef is an incredibly gifted scholar and teacher, and I have long wanted to invite him into a bit of our life on God's Acre and thanks to schedules aligning, this Lent is the time!

Second, thanks to Susan and Harry Rein and Elm Street Books, we will have the opportunity to have a Zoom conversation on February 28, with Nathaniel Philbrick, [nathanielphilbrick.com](http://nathanielphilbrick.com), author of *Mayflower* and numerous other wonderful books. Hopefully, you have had an opportunity to read the copy of *Mayflower* we sent you this fall. If not, you have plenty of time to get to it before the 28th. More details to come!

Third, we have our Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 7, at 11:30am via Zoom. We will send out additional information and the Zoom link well in advance. We hope you can join us. It has been an extraordinary year, and we are excited about what is to come.

Finally, your Stewardship Team has, with the help of Anush Avetisyan, created a wonderful video of our Christmas Eve celebration on God's Acre. This month we focus on the pilgrim ethic of "Unity," and this brief video captures some of the togetherness many of us experienced on that sacred and holy night.

View it at <https://vimeo.com/503904463>

Yours in Christ,  
Chapin

## From the Pastor's Study



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.

## From the Trustees

### Upcoming Annual Meeting

The Trustees are reviewing the financial results for 2020. Last year's results, along with the budget for 2021, will be presented at the upcoming Annual Meeting, to be held March 7, 2021. In a tumultuous year due to the pandemic, it's gratifying to report that pledge receipts and other donations came in slightly above budget. Total expenses for the church came in slightly below budget, and the year ended with a modest surplus. Please join us at the annual meeting for the full details.

#### NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING



The Congregational Church  
of New Canaan

**Sunday, March 7, 2021**  
**11:30am on Zoom**

Proposed Agenda:

- 1) Deacon's Report
- 2) Trustee's Report
- 3) Nominating Recommendations
- 4) Raymond Fund Update

### Stewardship Campaign Update

Our Pilgrim Journey 2021 Stewardship Campaign is well and truly sailing, though we are far from reaching Plymouth yet.

Our Church's ability to thrive during this challenging time is a reflection of our community's commitment and support. With your help and generosity, we can honor our Pilgrim forbears on this fourhundredth anniversary, while ensuring our Church can continue to serve God and Jesus Christ with its outreach to our members, our town, and the wider Church community.

If you have not yet pledged, come on board on our Pilgrim Journey, and if possible please consider increasing your commitment.

## Adult Formation



### It's Never Too Late!

New members are always welcome to join our Bible Studies.

**Monday Morning Bible Study - Reading Romans**  
7:00-8:00am

**Women's Tuesday Bible Study - Reading Romans**  
9:30-10:30am

**Chapin's Wednesday Bible Study -**  
**Focus on upcoming sermons**  
9:30-10:30am

**Transformation with Rev. Dr. Allen Hilton on**  
**Wednesday Evening**  
7:30-8:30pm

**Thomas Merton's New Seeds of Contemplation essays**  
**on Friday Mornings**  
8:30-9:30am

Contact Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org)  
for a Zoom invite to any or all!

## We're Virtual in February

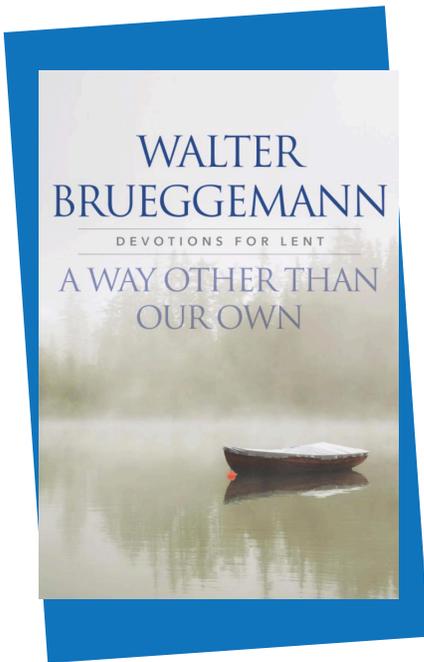
We have a lot planned for the New Year on the Virtual God's Acre. Join us for worship, Bible studies, small groups and so much for the children and youth groups! Follow along on the website for details!  
[www.godsacre.org](http://www.godsacre.org)



*We are at 289 Pledging Families and \$1,429,936 toward our goal.*

## Lenten Devotion

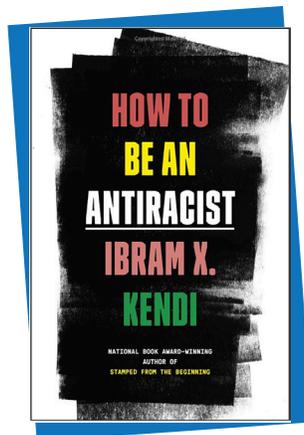
Devotion is time set aside for worship and prayer, to devote oneself to being with God. Lent is a season of reflection and preparation for the celebration of Easter. It is made for devotion.



The devotional booklet, *A Way Other Than Our Own* by Walter Brueggemann, is available for pick up in the grey trunk outside the church office. Email Laurel Carr, [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto:laurel@godsacre.org), or Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org), if you need a copy delivered to you.

## Lent: Read, Reflect, Transform

You are warmly invited to join Fatou Niang and Mike Rodgers in conversation with fellow congregants in reading Ibram X. Kendi's memoir, *How to Be an Antiracist*, for 5 weeks beginning Wednesday February 24th at 7:00pm. Knowing we are all made in God's image and called to be one people, it is in the spirit of hope that we seek not only an understanding of racism and its causes, but to be part of the formation of a just and equitable church and society.



What better way to mark the Lenten season than to reflect with one another on the injustice of racism and envision together a more Godly way. Books are available to be ordered at Elm Street Books online. Contact Marianna Kilbride, [marianna@godsacre.org](mailto:marianna@godsacre.org) for a Zoom invite.

## Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Mark the beginning of Lenten contemplation and prayer at our candlelit virtual Ash Wednesday Service.

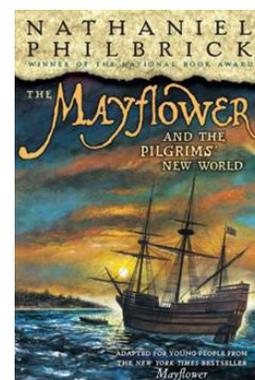


We welcome to the pulpit Chapin's friend, author, scholar, Josef Sorett, Professor and Chair, Department of Religion; Professor, Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, and Columbia University. Tenor Antonio Abate and Solo Bell Ringer Thomas Lezon are the featured musicians.



## Save the Date for Nathaniel Philbrick!

We have tentatively scheduled a talk with Nathaniel Philbrick, author of *Mayflower*, for the evening of February 28. Watch church emails for confirmation and details. In the meantime, get your questions ready!



# Children & Youth Ministries

## See Christ in others, be Christ to others!

In February, our youth will continue their virtual fellowship via Zoom. This month will provide us with plenty of opportunities to engage with our faith community online.

At the end of January, YG and MSYG participated in Virtual Escape rooms to engage in teambuilding activities despite being apart. Both of these groups also took time to tie-dye t-shirts, masks, and pillowcases.



Minnows, Guppies, and JYG have continued to combine church school, music, and youth group on each Zoom. This month there will be a focus on the Lord's Prayer and Communion, along with many fun activities sprinkled in.



We take hope in brighter days ahead and look forward to continuing on this journey with the youth of our congregation.

## Bedtime Bible Stories from God's Acre

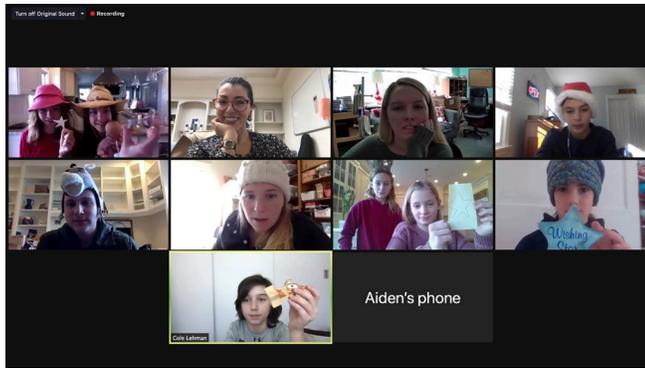
Cozy up with your favorite blanket and stuffed animal and enjoy our Bedtime Bible Stories from God's Acre! Chapin and Parry Grogan have teamed up to bring our Bible stories to life for the young children of our church each Sunday. Chapin, as our very own Mr. Rodgers, presents the kids with different hints relating to each story before 'phoning in' Mrs. Grogan from down the street! Parry displays her decked out felt board that is a fan favorite from our Church School classrooms and presents the kids with her insights of the story and a message to prepare them for each week ahead! Tune in each Sunday via our Facebook page or email [caroline@godsacre.org](mailto:caroline@godsacre.org) to be added to the email list!



# Children's Music Ministry

## Share Your Talent, Youth Group Team Musical Worship

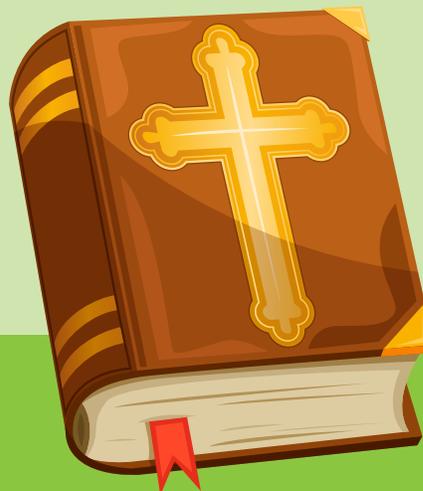
We continue to praise God's name through music in our combined youth group sessions now via Zoom. Every week we share our talents, pray, play, and sometimes have show and tell with our favorite household items! All are welcome, so please join us for our next session!



# Children's Formation

## Bible Extravaganza!

Calling all youth! February 1-3 during our regularly scheduled programming we invite you to participate in our Bible Extravaganza! We will learn how to properly navigate the Bible, pronounce the many names inside correctly, and discover how we can use it as a guide for life! Join us on Zoom with your Bible from home and the best virtual background! We can't wait to 'see' you there!



# Lenten Wednesday Musical Moments

You are invited to hear Lenten contemplative music in our live-streamed Wednesday Worship Services.

These begin Wednesday, February 24 at noon.

**February 24**



**Dimitrie Lazich**  
*baritone*

**March 3**



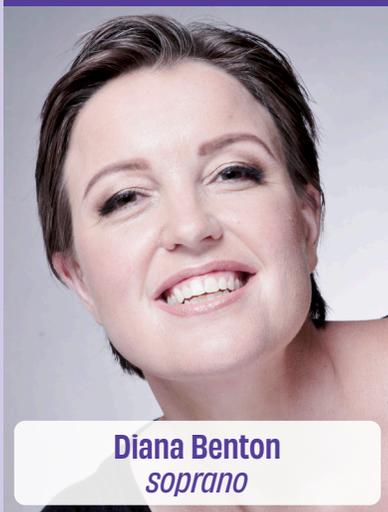
**Anne Maguire**  
*mezzo soprano*

**March 10**



**EmmaRae Carroll**  
*soprano*

**March 17**



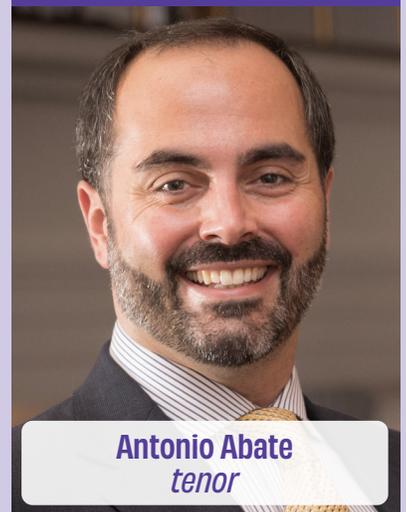
**Diana Benton**  
*soprano*

**March 24**



**Aram Tchobanian**  
*tenor*

**March 31**



**Antonio Abate**  
*tenor*

# Adult Formation

## Stephen Ministry Training Beginning

Beth Baker and Rev. Kibbie Laird will be teaching a Stephen Ministry training class for seven weeks starting on February 7, finishing before Easter. The class will be done via Zoom Sundays 1:00-3:00pm and Thursdays 7:00-8:15pm. Stephen Ministers are lay members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, depression or loneliness. Stephen Ministers provide Christian

compassion and care during a “difficult season of life.” Stephen Ministry is completely confidential, and Stephen Ministers become skilled at walking beside another in crisis after receiving 50 hours of training. If you know someone who needs a Stephen Minister, or if you would like to become a Stephen Minister, please contact Beth Baker, [bethcudabaker@gmail.com](mailto:bethcudabaker@gmail.com) or Rev. Kibbie Laird, [kibbie@godsacre.org](mailto:kibbie@godsacre.org).



# Flower Ministry

## Winter Flowers

The once dreaded icy winter days have become brighter with our flower ministry. Filled with quiet calm, now with the flower market re-opened, these sweet, short days are also filled with floral beauty in our Sunday virtual worship. If you are celebrating an event, remembering a loved one, or simply, like me, feeling grateful for winter, you might want to donate an arrangement. Your flowers will appear in the virtual service, be prayed for

during the morning prayer for that service and then your dedication will be displayed over the flowers at the end of the service. After the service, an arrangement created from the altar flowers can be delivered to your door in a completely contact-free manner. If you are interested, contact Marie-Ange Masters, [marie-ange@godsacre.org](mailto:marie-ange@godsacre.org) or Marianne Perry, [mperry@godsacre.org](mailto:mperry@godsacre.org) 203-966-2651.



# Our Church Community

## Ministers

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

The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird, x831  
Acting Associate Minister of Children,  
Youth, and Families

## Staff

Kelly Leather Antonson, x824  
Senior Youth Director

Anush Avetisyan, x821  
Director of Children's Music & Drama/  
Video Production Technician

Erik Burns, x834  
Youth Director

Laurel Carr, x833  
Director of Communications

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

Anthony Jones  
Sexton

Marianna Kilbride, x832  
Director of Missions and Outreach

Caroline Leather, x835  
Director of Children's Formation

Marie-Ange Masters, x823  
Director of Accounting

Marianne Perry, x822  
Director of Operations

## Church Lay Leadership

David Carlson  
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](http://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 18. Email submissions to: [laurel@godsacre.org](mailto: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](http://www.godsacre.org/myconnect)
2. Go to [www.godsacre.org](http://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](mailto:marie-ange@godsacre.org)