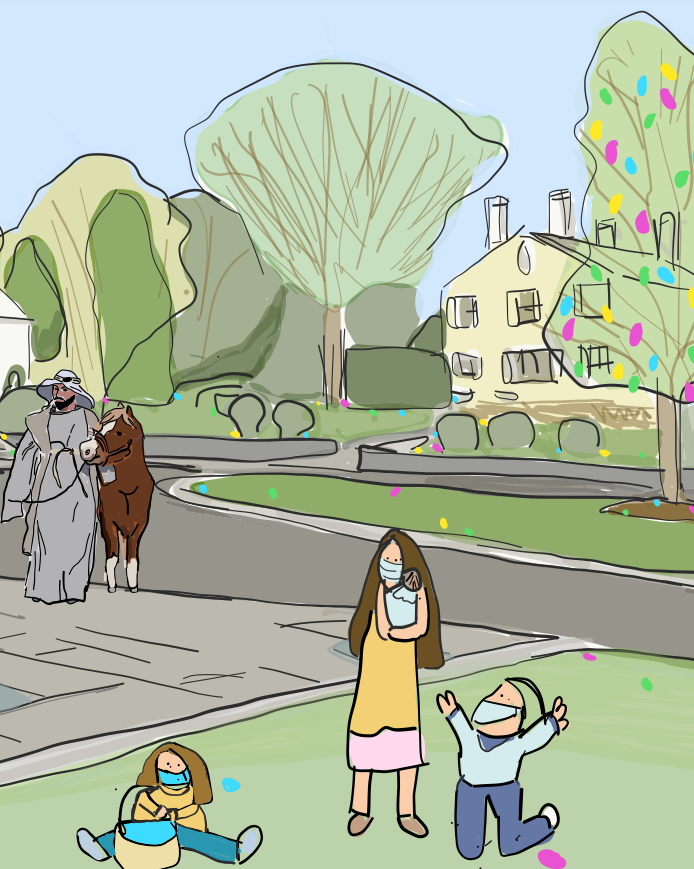




The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

news @ GOD'S ACRE

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 Our Senior Deacon

Dear Church Family,

As March begins, we experience a change of leadership at our Annual Meeting on March 7. I have served as your Senior Deacon for the last two years. One was a typical year. The other was highly unusual. What a unique experience and one I will never forget. It has been a pleasure to work with so many of you, in so many different ways, on so many different things.

March also brings us deeper into the Lenten season culminating in Holy Week. The Deacons decided to continue with virtual services for most of March (no indoor worship) since the pandemic is still raging.

We have made glorious plans for regathering on God's Acre during Holy Week. Tents will be erected, and beginning with **Palm Sunday**, we will worship together again at 8:00am, and 10:00am outside. Please join us and participate in the Blessing of the Palms; you may even be in the crowd that greets Jesus as he arrives for the 10:00am Family Worship service. In addition, all of our precious children are invited to participate in an Easter Egg Hunt following Palm Sunday worship.

Our Maundy Thursday, our **Tenebrae** service will be held outdoors at 8:00pm under the tent.

Holy Week will culminate with **Easter Sunday** celebrated on the front steps starting with our 6:30am Sunrise Service for all with our inspiring Youth Group taking the lead. Our 8:00am and 10:00am services will be held under the tent, and I am sure you won't want to miss the wonderful music and flowers this year.

I hope you plan to experience the resurrection of our in-person services during Holy Week – a rebirth of sorts for our faith community after a long season of Lent and pandemic. Virtual services will continue for those who are away or not ready to rejoin in-person.

It has been my great honor to serve our congregation as a Deacon, a commitment that comes from the love for all of you.

In gratitude,
Jill Robey



Our Lenten Mission – World Vision

No travel required

Usually, we are packing our bags this time of year for our annual OG Mission Trip but not this year. Fear not! We have found a novel way to travel. Kicking off March 14, we are partnering with World Vision to sponsor children in a Honduran community. In a new twist, rather than picking a child, our pictures will “fly” to Honduras, and the children will choose us. We hope that these children become, in essence, part of our youth group and that we will build relationships with the community in Honduras and travel there in the future. Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.

Take the Matthew 25 Challenge and begin your Lenten Journey to child sponsorship with World Vision.

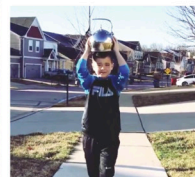
for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”
Matthew 25:35-40

What is the Matthew 25 Challenge?

The Matthew 25 Challenge is a week-long challenge that will help you and your family step out of your comfort zones and engage in God’s love for “the least of these brothers and sisters” who Jesus calls us to care for in Matthew 25:35-40. Sign up, and you’ll get a text a day beginning March 14, with your daily challenge, impactful stories, and ways to pray and talk about Matthew 25 with your family.

TAKE THE MATTHEW 25 CHALLENGE

Experience God’s Word in community through a week-long daily text challenge.



How can I be “Chosen” by a child in Honduras?

Become a sponsor for just \$39 per month and allow a child from Honduras to choose you! On March 21, after completing the challenge our congregation will be invited to become child sponsors and if you are able to commit by 9:00pm that day you will be able to “meet” your child at our in-person Palm Sunday services on March 28. Many more details will follow so keep an eye on your inbox and social media.

Here are a few important dates to be sure you can fully engage in this amazing Lenten Journey!

- March 14** Sign up for the Matthew 25 Challenge, Text ‘Canaan’ to 56170. If you prefer to participate by email, go to www.worldvision.org/M25 and select March 15 as your challenge start date.
- March 21** Sponsor a child in Honduras, Text ‘Canaan’ to 56170 or visit www.worldvision.org/canaan to upload your photo and become a sponsor.
- March 28** Reveal Sunday, Come to our outdoor services at 8:00am & 10:00am to “meet” the child who chose you!



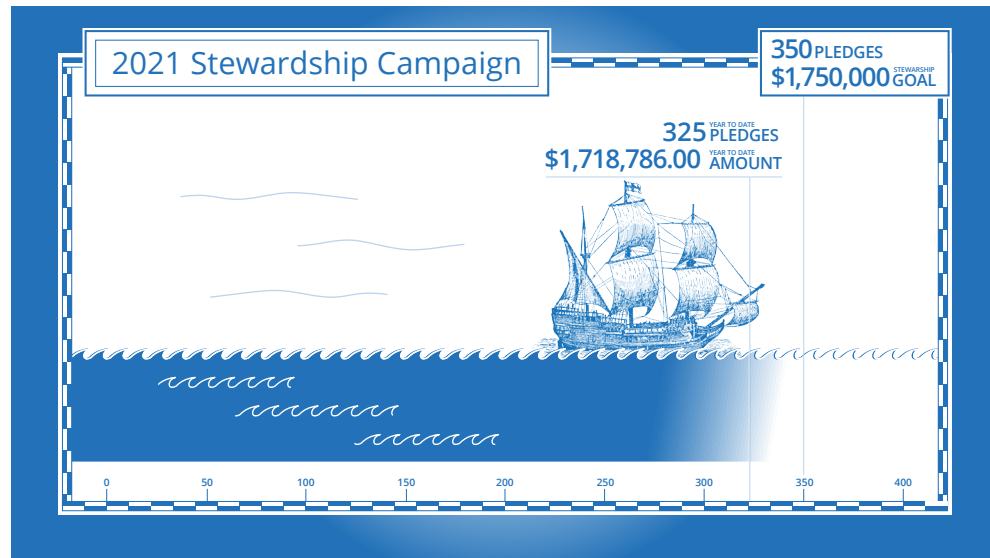
From the Trustees

Stewardship Campaign Update

Our Pilgrim Journey 2021 Stewardship Campaign that set sail last fall has almost reached Plymouth.

We are so grateful for the generosity and the commitment you have shown during this difficult time. As we honor our Pilgrim forebears on this 400th anniversary of their arrival, we give thanks that our church can continue to serve God and our community of faith.

If you have not sent in your pledge card or pledged online there is still time. Help us make our goal by March 7.



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. Contact Caroline Leather, caroline@godsacre.org to RSVP and receive the Zoom link.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

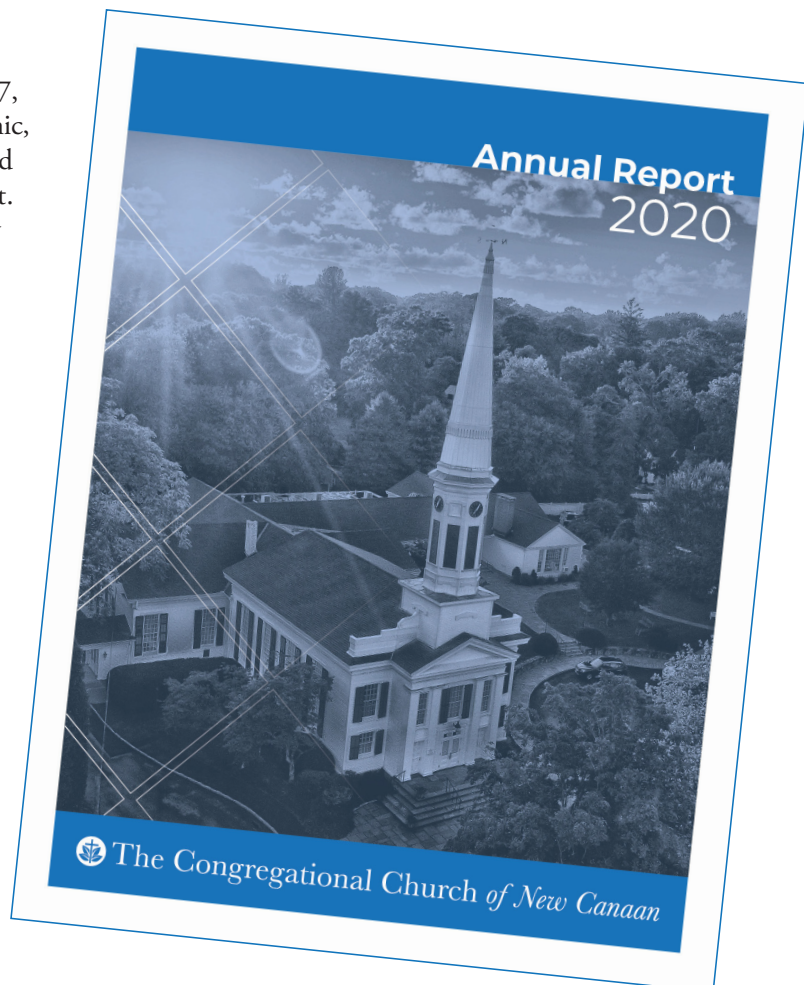


The Congregational Church
of New Canaan

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



Countdown to Holy Week & Easter

Join us for in-person worship
under the tents for Holy Week.



PALM SUNDAY Sunday, March 28

8:00am & 10:00am Outdoor Worship
Egg Hunt following the 10:00am service

TENEBRAE SERVICE Thursday, April 1

8:00pm
Outdoor Worship

EASTER SUNDAY Sunday, April 4

6:30am Sunrise Service
Outdoor Worship
8:00am & 10:00am Easter
Outdoor Worship

* Virtual Services will be made available for all of Holy Week.

Easter Egg Hunt on God's Acre!

Join us on Sunday, March 28, Palm Sunday, for an Easter Egg Hunt on God's Acre! Following the outdoor 10:00am Palm Sunday service on the front lawn, children ages 12 & under are invited to meet in the Youth Tent for an Easter message and our egg hunt extravaganza! Masks are required and we ask that you bring your own egg collecting basket! We cannot wait to share in this exciting Holy Week activity with YOU!



Easter Sunrise Service

Join our Youth Team and wake up with the sun this upcoming Easter Sunday. On the morning of April 4, YG Worship Team will lead our annual Sunrise Service. We invite all of our congregation to join us for a small worship at 6:30am on the steps of the church. What greater way to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord than sharing an in-person worship-filled sunrise.

We look forward to continuing on this journey with you and our youth in this ever-changing world. Our hope is that this spring will be ever abundant and flourishing.

Children's Music Ministry

Sing your Heart Out!

Calling all singers and musicians to express themselves this Lenten season. If you have missed making music please contact Anush Avetisyan, anush@godsacre.org, to be recorded praising God through music in our very own Meeting House. Your piece will be shared in our community and will continue to give our youth positive experiences that will allow them to grow during this time.

Below, Abby Deane is featured in Virtual Worship Service in February, singing the hymn "In the Garden."



Children & Youth Ministries

New hope and new beginnings in the Season of Lent!

As the days get longer and the crocuses begin to peek through the snow Youth Ministries is gearing up for the spring ahead. Starting on March 7, all youth programming will be back in person under the Youth Tent. In order to keep your youth and our staff safe please review our **Behavioral Covenant** with your child.

Sunday:
YG - TIMES TBD

Mondays:
7-8th Grade 4:00-5:00pm

Tuesdays:
K-2nd Grade 4:00-5:00pm

Wednesdays:
5-6th Grade 1:00-2:00pm
3-4th Grade 2:30-3:30pm



Save The Date

On the morning of March 14, YG will embark on the second annual hike in Ward Pound Ridge Reservation. Youth will hike in teams, enjoy the wonders of God's creation, and finish off the afternoon with vespers in their respective teams. Please reach out to leather@godsacre.org with any questions about travel and timing.

YG Mission Trip Parent Meeting

We are moving full steam ahead to have a late June mission trip with our fabulous Fish! While certain details are still pending due to NCPS graduation and last day

of school we are confident we have found a partner to serve with! Parents please keep your eyes peeled for an e-mail for a March meeting with further information.



Music Ministries

Lenten Wednesday Noon Worship Services

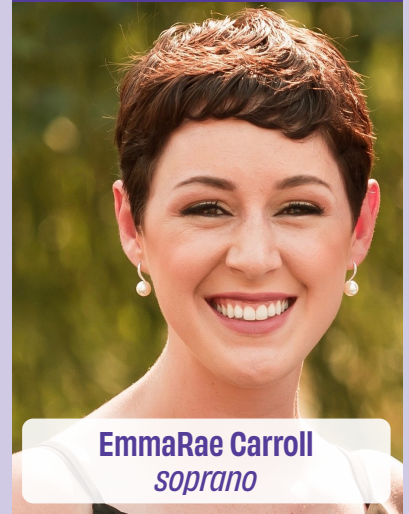
You are invited to Wednesday noonday worship services during Lent. This contemplative service will be live-streamed and afterwards, it can be viewed virtually. Join us for 30 minutes of scriptures, prayer, a short sermon, and beautiful music.

March 3



Anne Maguire
mezzo soprano

March 10



EmmaRae Carroll
soprano

March 17



Anush Avetisyan
soprano

March 24



Aram Tchobanian
tenor

March 31



Antonio Abate
tenor



Flower Ministry

Remembering those we Love

It is with great joy that we see flowers, once again, donated in honor of loved ones and featured in our services. We are a congregation that supports and remembers each other. From the plaques on the walls documenting the names of ministers past to our youth group headed towards the future. Each worship service honors tradition and holds hope for the future, even virtually. How wonderful that the flowers are part of this. We look forward to Easter, and its floral display as well.



Adult Formation

Death and Resurrection, Four Takes

Join us in the Monday Bible Study at 7:00am or the Tuesday Women's Bible Study at 9:30am during Lent to read and contemplate death and resurrection as portrayed in each of the four Gospels.

- ✝ **Mark** March 8 & 9,
- ✝ **Matthew** March 15 & 16,
- ✝ **Luke** March 22 & 23, and
- ✝ **John** March 29 & 30, Holy Week.

For a Zoom invite contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Beautiful prayer shawls continue to be made by our cheerful, faithful, and talented knitters.

We have the opportunity to help people during difficult times or in times of illness by wrapping them in the love and prayers of a handmade shawl.

The Prayer Shawl ministry looks forward to gathering again in person in April when they can enjoy each other's fellowship and friendship.

For more information, or if you would like to join this fun ministry (no experience necessary), please contact Twee Haffner, tweehaffner@gmail.com or Troy Elliott, troy.elliott518@gmail.com.



Pastoral Care

Stephen Ministry Training in Session

Beth Baker, Kibbie Laird, and Marianne Perry have begun teaching 22 new Stephen Ministers.

This combined class of men and women meet twice a week over Zoom; Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Once the instruction is completed at the end of March, we look forward to commissioning our new ministers when we return to in-person worship.

Stephen Ministers are lay congregation 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, or relocation. Stephen Ministers share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need.

For more information or if you would like to learn more about the Stephen Ministry program in our church, please contact Rev. Kibbie Laird, kibbie@godsacre.org, or Beth Baker, bethcudabaker@gmail.com.



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

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

We are a Stephen Minister Church

Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the April newsletter, please submit by March 18.

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