

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,

It feels as if we are emerging from a long, difficult spiritual slumber into something like a new and resurrected life. As we begin to break free of the pandemic, life will be renewed, but different like resurrection itself. There will be marks of our previous life, but there will be evidence of a new way of being that might be decidedly different. I know we still have a ways to go, but I hope optimism is no longer on some distant horizon with vaccines and dropping infection, hospitalization, and death rates; hope finally seems within grasp. While I suspect masks, more careful interactions, and actually staying home when we are sick will be part of this new life, I am hopeful that commitment to togetherness, the joy of embrace, delight in relationships combined with a renewed emphasis on service to others will also be hallmarks of the new life that is to come. I think we are potentially on the verge of a great age of appreciation when our gratitude for the simple but profound blessings of life will abound.

From
the Pastor's
Study



There will be many adjustments within the life of our church in the coming months as we make our way back from virtual engagement to actual physical presence with one another. We return to in-person worship and programming for all ages on March 28, Palm Sunday! We will worship outdoors under tents, so anyone who wants to join us can attend.

Our Tenebrae service on Thursday night at 8:00pm will be under the tents, as well. And we will be celebrating Easter with a Sunrise service at 6:30am, and then with an 8:00am and 10:00am service. [We might even be able to engage in a little outdoor congregational singing!] We will move back indoors for worship the following week, April 11. Because we still believe being outside is preferable to being inside, we may choose to begin our summer worship schedule, which allows for an 8:00am outdoor service earlier in May or June. There will be a youth mission trip this summer, a vacation bible school, and many of our adult education opportunities will be accessible in-person and virtually. We will find ways to continue to engage the many of you who are joining classes when you are away from God's Acre. Soon, we will be meeting and communicating in-person again. We will try to dial back a bit on the regular communication we send out almost daily so not to overwhelm members and friends with too much church information.

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Easter on God's Acre



Service of Tenebrae

Maundy Thursday, April 1, 8:00 pm - Outdoor Worship
Anush Avetisyan, Anne Maguire, Aram Tchobanian, and Dimitrie Lazich will present music for this somber and beautiful service. They will each have an open window and microphone in the Meeting House and sing with the organ. They will be singing “Drop, Drop Slow Tears” by Robert Graham and the hymn, “My Song Shall Be Always of the Loving Kindness of the Lord.” The service will end with Anne singing the spiritual, “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” Providing the weather is appropriate, Joyful Ringers will play the prelude.

Easter Day

Sunday, April 4, 6:30am Sunrise Service, 8:00am and 10:00am Services - Outdoor Worship
Hear the brass quartet, led by New Canaan High School band director, Scott Cranston, play festive music 15 minutes before each service. There will be one player per open window in the Chapel. Like Maundy Thursday, singers Anush Avetisyan, Anne Maguire, Aram Tchobanian, and Dimitrie Lazich will sing from the Meeting House. Jody will be at the organ. Music sung will include from Messiah, “Hallelujah Chorus.” Jody will play the traditional Widor’s “Toccata” for the postlude then the brass will continue with a festive postlude.



Virtual Worship

Look out for more solos from our children on Easter Day in our Virtual Worship service! If you would like to sing or play an instrument, please reach out to Director of Children’s Music and Drama, Anush Avetisyan – anush@godsacre.org

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



From the Trustees

Annual Meeting and Stewardship Update

For the first time in 288 years, the Church conducted its annual meeting without the congregation meeting in person. The pandemic required that we hold the Zoom meeting, but we had solid attendance and a successful meeting. The 2021 budget was passed with a forecast of approximately \$2.6 million in income and expenses for the year.

The 2021 Stewardship Campaign continues to track well versus our goals. To date, we have 347 pledges (goal of 350) for a total of \$1.760 million, slightly ahead of our goal of \$1.75 million. Thanks to all of you who have given so generously this year.



From the Pastor's Study

Continued from page one

We will also be transitioning from “Daily Meds” to a weekly “Monday Morning Message,” which will focus on the Psalms during the summer. Bible Bed-time Stories will continue through April and will be back in the fall with a few added characters!

While we will continue to be careful, safe, and prudent, there is an undeniable feeling that our church will be springing back to life in the coming weeks, a true Easter Miracle after a long hard year of forced Lenten-like observances.

So, dear church family, Happy Easter in advance. Christ the Lord is Risen, and, blessedly, life on God's Acre is being renewed!

Yours in Christ,
Chapin

A Pilgrim's Journey Wednesday Night Bible Study Continues April 7th!

We are returning back to our program book of the year and will review the messages from the week prior. This is a great bible study for beginners or life long learners!

Join us Wednesday, April 7th at 7:00pm to 8:00pm. If you want a Zoom invite reach out to BJ Flagg at bj@nurenu.com. If you are on the email list you will receive an invite!

Adult Formation

Calling All Artists and Art Lovers – April 18, 5:00pm

Through the ages, faith has influenced art, and art has informed faith. Join us in discussion with Josef Sorett, Professor of Religion and African American and African Diaspora Studies at Columbia University, and also chair of the Department of Religion and director the Center on African-American Religion, Sexual Politics and Social Justice (CARSS) and Stephanie Joyce, visual artist and longtime member of our church. We will consider the role of art in the church past and present and consider its part in our future spiritual life. A Zoom invite will be sent out closer to the date. Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.



The Early Church – A Snapshot Beginning April 19 & 20

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians is likely the earliest written description of the Christian movement. As we move from Easter to Pentecost and the birth of the church, join us in an 8-week study of 1&2 Thessalonians, discovering what those very first communities were like. Monday mornings 7:00-8:00am and Tuesday mornings for women at 9:30-10:30am. New members are encouraged. Contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org, for a Zoom invite.



Music Ministries

Sunday, April 11

In-person worship in the Meeting House
8:00am and 10:00am services

We welcome Thomas Lezon, solo bell ringer to our services today. Thomas is a recent graduate of Lebanon Valley College in trumpet and music production. He has played bells extensively and joined Joyful Ringers upon graduation. Tom played solo bells for the Ash Wednesday virtual service.



Sunday Service Soloists:

- April 11 – Aram Tchobanian, tenor
- April 18 – Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano
- April 25 – Dimitrie Lazich, baritone



Our new Stephen Ministers
will be commissioned on
Sunday, April 11, 2021 at
the 10am worship service.

Employment Opportunity

Senior Accountant

The Congregational Church of New Canaan is seeking an experienced full-time accountant. Candidates should have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in accounting; at least five years of accounting/finance experience, preferably in a non-profit environment; knowledgeable of General Accepted Accounting Principles; and proficient in QuickBooks. The primary responsibilities of the role include: all financial management aspects of the Church and working closely with the Director of Church Operations and other Church leaders in developing and managing various financial plans and budgets, preparing monthly financial reports, completing tax and regulatory reports, and supporting the annual audit. Competitive salary and benefits. Individual would be expected to contribute to the positive and collaborative working environment of the Church.

For more information please contact Marianne Perry, Director of Operations (203) 966-2651, x822.

Fellowship

Fellowship Bunny Photos

The Fellowship Team was delighted to see all of your smiling eyes above your masks on Palm Sunday, and we are so grateful to have had an opportunity to worship together under the tent surrounded by beautiful flowers. The Children and Families Ministry Team encouraged further fellowship with a wonderful chance to linger after the service and hunt Easter eggs. Through very special connections with the Easter Bunny himself, the Fellowship Team was able to get our church family on the Bunny's calendar for a photo-op during the egg hunt! We hope you enjoy these special family memories and photos and look forward to more warm weather and warm fellowship as spring progresses.



Children's Music Ministry

Children's Music, Singing continues!

Though we are still cautious around in-person singing restrictions, I am thrilled to thank those families who participated in our Virtual Worship Services set up and recorded by Anush Avetisyan in March! Abby Deane sang a beautiful sermon response, "In the Garden," and Nathaniel Carr played a traditional Appalachian Folk prelude on the violin, "What Wondrous Love is This." Billy, Jameson, and Kayla Flynn, Nancy, Charlotte, Eloise, and Beatrice Skidmore, along with Amelia, Margot, and Ruby Lou Emson, sang "Jesus Loves Me" as an anthem accompanied by Jody Davis. Thank you for your talents and voices praising God during our Worship Services!



Children & Youth Ministries

Lent in the Tent!

Who knew so much joy could come in the form of a giant, white party tent in the front lawn of the church! Youth were thrilled to return to in-person programming in early March and participate in a plethora of fun outdoor activities. Adventure and excitement filled each weekly session with activities such as a treasure hunt through town, decorating the church entrance with joyful greetings, and learning the importance of Holy Week. While colorful masks covered happy smiles, our youth shared their appreciation for God's unwavering love and the many blessings in their lives! We look forward to continuing to meet in-person with our youth as the fun (and hopefully warm weather!) continues!



Egg Hunt Extravaganza!

The return to in-person worship for the first time since Christmas certainly did not pass by without enthusiasm and entertainment! Gratitude filled the Acre as families attended the Palm Sunday services before the search for Easter eggs began! Children ages 12 & under participated in a much-anticipated egg hunt that included over 1,500 eggs! Each of the 1500+ eggs were filled with faith-based prizes and trinkets! Sweet treats were sent home with our egg 'hunters' for mask-free enjoyment at home. A surprise visit from the (vaccinated!) Easter Bunny offered families the opportunity to capture a memory that will last for all the years to come! What an amazing way to kick off the start of the most important week of our year, Holy Week. We welcome all of our youth and families to join us on Easter Sunday for our outdoor services!



Spring Youth on God's Acre

			
MONDAYS 7th & 8th Grade 4:00pm-5:00pm	TUESDAYS K-2nd Grade 4:00pm-5:00pm	WEDNESDAYS 5th & 6th Grade 1:00pm-2:00pm	WEDNESDAYS 3rd & 4th Grade 2:30pm-3:30pm



Spring is here and we are back!

Youth Ministries is thrilled to be back operating in our youth tent for the spring! Below is a schedule of the remainder of the year for YG.

April

- Sunday, Apr. 4 - Easter Sunday Sunrise Service - 6:30am
- Sunday, Apr. 11 - NO YG - NCPS BREAK
- Sunday, Apr. 18 - YG Fish Commissioning 10:00am - Noon**
- Sunday, Apr. 25 - Team Night 7:00-8:30pm

May

- Sunday, May 2 - Games at Wavney
- Sunday, May 9 - NO YG - Mother's day
- Sunday, May 16 - Climbing in the trees! The Adventure Park at the Discovery Museum 5:00-9:00pm
- Saturday, May 22 - Filling in the Blanks 1:00pm**
- Sunday, May 23 - S'more & Vespers
- Sunday, May 30 - NO YG Memorial Day

June

- Thursday, June 3 - Beacon of Light
- Sunday, June 6 - Picnic and Movie Outdoor
- Tuesday, June 8 - Filling in the Blanks - 3:00pm**
- Sunday, June 13 - YG Pilgrimage Prep - 7:00pm**
- Sunday, June 20-27 - YG Mission Trip

Covenant Events for Mission Trip Travel in Bold

YG Commissioning Sunday – April 18 10:00am Service

With much excitement and anticipation, we are thrilled to be preparing our youth for a mission trip! YG will be partnering with Next Steps Ministries this year in Wakefield, Massachusetts, this June. Our mission fish will be commissioned at the 10:00am service Sunday, April 18. Come to worship with our young people and hear more about the trip, the incredible work, and faith-building that will happen in June.

Become a Mission Sponsor this Year!

We are sending 40 mission fish, advisors, and staff right outside of Boston this June. We will help the Boys and Girls Club of Wakefield renovate a newly acquired space for their youth offerings! What an amazing mission this will be to help empower other youth! Our mission fish are beyond excited to serve in Christ's name and with the prayers of our church.

However, every monetary donation helps to make the trip possible. When you donate at any level and become a Mission Sponsor, you will receive two letters from our YG Fish while on their trip! Thank you in advance for your support. To donate, visit our website and click on the give heart – please be sure to designate your gift as YG Mission Sponsors!



MSYG

This March saw MSYG return to in-person programming. From The Amazing Race to Sacred Practices, our 7th and 8th graders engaged in teambuilding activities geared towards building community. As the weather gets warmer and the crocuses begin to peek through the ground, we are gearing up for an April full of fun.



April MSYG schedule

All times are 4:00-5:00 pm unless noted otherwise.

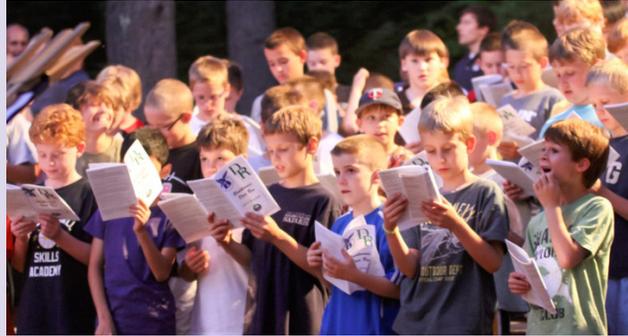
- **Sun., Apr. 4** (No MSYG) – Easter Sunrise Service (6:30 am)
- **Mon., Apr. 12** – Games in the Park
- **Mon., Apr. 19** – Every day is Earth Day
- **Mon., Apr. 26** – Choices



Get The Scoop on Christian Camps

The spring chill may still be in the air, but summer is right around the corner! Spots at Christian Camps: Brookwoods, Deer Run, and Moose River Outpost are still available.

An information session is being planned for our church family in mid-April. If you would like to learn more or sign up to attend, please contact Laurel Carr, laurel@godsacre.org.



How can I describe camp to my child?

Christian Camp is a place that feels like home, you're comfortable in your own skin, you get to do things you've dreamed about, you accomplished things you didn't think you could, and most importantly, our staff care about you and like to have fun!

Camp is not only a break from your academic and extracurricular activities; it's a break from social media, devices, and video games. You'll find us playing tetherball, gaga, and talking about Jesus. We'll sing loud, crazy songs and cook steaks over a campfire. We'll take a hike to a mountain and tell our friends about the view. We'll have slushies and Krazy Carnivals. Camp is a place where you will have fun, make lifelong friends, and learn a lot about yourself and the God who created you.

We have several church families who have sent their children to these fabulous Christian Camps even Chapin's kids went there. This unique experience offers your child the opportunity to break away from their routine, explore their faith, learn from mentors, and build friendships outside of their New Canaan community. It is a gift that they will treasure for years to come.

Ready to learn more?

Check out the camp websites today!

Brookwoods: Summer Camp for Boys

<https://www.campbrookwoods.net/>

Deer Run: Summer Camp for Girls

<https://www.campdeerrun.net/>

Moose River Outpost: Summer Camp for Teens

<https://www.moosriveroutpost.net/>

Our Church Community

Ministers

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

The Rev. Kathryn Kibbie Laird, x2
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

Hoyt Davidson
Chair, Board of Deacons

Barbara Clayton
Chair, Nominating and Governance

Lonnie deMarco
Chair, Personnel



The Congregational Church
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We are a Stephen Minister Church

Newsletter Submissions

If you are planning on contributing to the May newsletter, please submit by April 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