

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.



Endings and New Beginnings

Dear Church Family,

I am always surprised by how busy May is. Celebrations of every kind fill every weekend. End-of-year school picnics, parties for sports teams, ballet recitals, drama and clubs, end-of-year celebrations at school all mark the end of one school year and “graduation” to the next. And the church is no different. We have confirmation coming up and have just finished Celebration Week with the youth groups. YG’s Beacon of Light is on the horizon, and so we celebrate, celebrate, and celebrate!

Last night our staff celebrated (while laughing a lot and crying some, too) the retirement of our dear Marie-Ange Masters, after 25 years here as our Director of Accounting and Purchasing. MAM, as most of us are apt to call her, is an institution at God’s Acre with her vast knowledge of our church and the proper way we get things done. In addition to her keeping us in line, she has been a dear friend, confidante, and bright shining star among our staff. She will be dearly missed in our day-to-day lives. Very dearly missed. As some of you know, Marie-Ange was supposed to retire last year but put it off so she could help us get through Covid. And now, as she transitions to a new chapter in her life to spend more time with family and especially her grandchildren,

From
the Pastor's
Study



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Pastoral Care

Join the Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry has been in existence since 2006 and has knitted and given out hundreds of shawls: 345 shawls to date! Currently, we need more hands and are hoping to find more members to participate in this ministry. If you have always wanted to learn how to knit, now is your chance! We will teach you.



Please consider joining us for a single visit, to learn how to knit or to become a regular. If you prefer to knit at home and send in a shawl – that is great too. Crocheting is also welcome. To know that we can offer this comfort to people makes our efforts a joy. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, at 10:00am. During the summer, the schedule may vary and will be communicated to the team by email and the church calendar.

Those of us who make prayer shawls enjoy the knitting, and are rewarded by bringing comfort to many others through our ministry. Stories of those receiving the shawls tell about building strength in struggles with chemotherapy, gaining courage in facing surgery, and accepting God's grace at the time of profound loss when they put the shawl around their shoulders.



Opening Prayer

*Jesus spoke to them, saying,
"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness
but will have the light of life."*

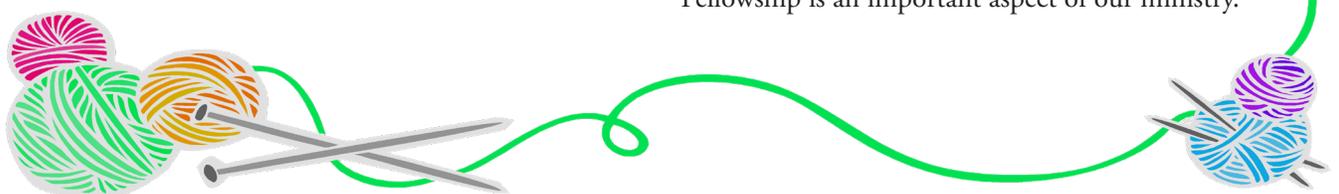
*Gracious and loving God, as we light our candle we remember
Your Light which shines into darkness,
Your Son whose life, death and resurrection gives us hope,
Your Spirit which permeates every corner of our lives.*

*Be present here as we knit these shawls
and enjoy each other's company.*

*We remember all those for whom we knit these shawls:
Those who are lonely and need to know they are loved,
Those who are ill and yearn for healing of body, mind and spirit,
Those who face challenging decisions and search for guidance,
Those who are grieving and welcome comforting words and actions,
Those who are celebrating newness of life and
rejoice in the warmth and richness surrounding them.
Bind us together in one community of love,
founded on the faith that
Your love and grace are everlasting.*

Every shawl yields a response and a story. One member had been so touched by the shawl presented to him that he asked to be buried with his shawl around him. A grieving widow told of wrapping her new shawl around her and being able to sleep through the night for the first time since her husband died three months earlier. A senior "woman of wisdom" shared the feeling of love from her church that enveloped her whenever she used her shawl. A church member who moved away sees her shawl as a treasured memory. It is the stories, and the grateful thank you's that keep our Prayer Shawl knitters busy, working for God, one shawl at a time.

When we gather, the yarn is initially blessed, the yarn worker is blessed, and on completion, the shawl is blessed. The entire time the shawls are pieced together, hour by hour, they're drenched in prayer for the recipient going through a tough time. During our time together, one of us will light our candle, and one will read our prayer as we pass around the completed shawls from hand to hand for additional prayers. We knit, share secrets of the craft, and do a lot of chatting. Each time we meet, we are also rewarded as a small group caring for each other. Fellowship is an important aspect of our ministry.



Flower Ministry

The Flower Ministry Team wants You!

Long-time church member and beloved member of the floral ministry Kris Johnson creates a spectacular arrangement entirely from the spring bounty in her garden. One of the most wonderful things about the floral ministry is that you don't already need to be a pro to join. Generous members like Kris teach new members if they'd like. Wherever you are on your journey, we are so happy to travel with you. Contact Juliet Howe, juliet@eehowe.com, to learn more about joining this fabulous team!



From the Pastor's Study

Continued from page one

we wish her the best of luck, abundant blessings, and Godspeed!

We hope everyone will come to worship on Sunday, June 6, as we celebrate our confirmands and Marie-Ange's retirement.

Dear Lord, as we prepare for the summer season, help us not take a vacation from our faith. Rather, help us slow down and remember that you have called us to enjoy your beautiful creation. May this be a season of barbecues, picnics, vacation, and swimming in pools, lakes, and floating down rivers. May it be a time to relax, renew, and refresh. Let us stop and smell the flowers and the fresh-cut grass and tend to our friendships that may have gone forgotten over the winter months, even as we tend our gardens. May every day be a chance to glorify you from the cool and quiet mornings to the sunsets and the fireflies and beyond. Thank you for endings and new beginnings. Thank you for the fellowship of this church and your Holy Spirit, which binds us together. Amen.

Blessings,
Kibbie



Vacation Bible School is Back!



Register for Vacation Bible School today!

VBS will take place Wednesday, August 25 - Friday, August 27 from 9:00am-11:30am. We welcome rising 1st-5th graders to join us in-person at the church for an experience filled with fellowship, faith development, and excitement; all around! Rising 6th Graders & up are welcome to participate as counselors assisting with our daily activities. Counselors will be required to attend a training session on Tuesday, August 24, from 3:00pm-4:00pm.

Click the link to register now:
www.godsacre.org/vacation-bible-school/



Mission and Outreach

Please Help Us Reach Our Goal!

Thanks to all who've contributed to the Maasai Project! Our fundraising continues through June and benefits two projects.

The first is an upgrade to the borehole, or well, that serves the area. For years, water has been brought to the surface by a pump powered by a diesel generator. That pump and the generator are past their design lives and require increasingly expensive maintenance. When they fail, there is no water. Our partners would like to replace them with a solar power array and a new submersible pump, a green, lower maintenance, and more reliable solution. The cost of this project is \$18,600.

The second project would take advantage of the more reliable source of water. It would fund a 3½ mile pipeline to the Ole Sokorte village, which currently has no clean, fresh water source. The cost of this project is \$7,000.

The Maasai Ministry Team has been overwhelmed by your generosity in the past; you have changed lives. We ask for your consideration of these two important projects supporting our sisters and brothers in Kenya.

To participate, use the GIVE button on our website and select "Maasai Donation" as the gift designation or contact Marianna Kilbride, marianna@godsacre.org.

mayim chain (flowing water)

MAASAI SOLAR PUMP & PIPELINE PROJECT

\$25,600 GOAL

\$15,278

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God... Revelation 22:1

Summer Monthly Missions

June

- **Maasai Mayim Chain Project**
Plate Offering & Online Donations
- **Pivot House Meal Train**
Deliver and Serve (optional)

July

- **Open Door Shelter**
Plate Offering & Food Drive 7/11/21

August

- **Filling in the Blanks**
Plate Offering & Backpack Drive

Watch your email or check our website throughout the summer to learn how you can serve.

Filling in The Blanks Backpack Collection

During the month of August we will be collecting new backpacks for Filling in the Blanks, a charity that provides weekend meals to over 2,800 local children in need who are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. Please bring a new full-size empty backpack to church services or Smith Hall anytime from August 1-31, 2021.



Adult Formation

Meditation in the Garden

Join us among the birds and flowers to contemplate the word of God in the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. No experience or preparation is necessary for this guided mediation. In the event of inclement weather, we will meet in the parlor.



Art and Faith

Save the Date - August 22, 5:00pm

In April, we had a wonderful conversation around Art and Faith and how they inform and inspire each other. We agreed to reconvene after a time of reflection and we welcome new voices. We'll do some further brainstorming on ways to engage more deeply with this relationship in our church. Some suggested reading for those interested: *Angelic Mistakes: The Art of Thomas Merton*, Roger Lipsey; *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*, Makoto Fujimura; *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetic*, Josef Sorett; *Out of Many One*, George Bush.



Fellowship

Men's Fellowship

The Annual MG BBQ at Waveny is Back!

We missed it last year but plan to forge ahead with some great MG fellowship combined with a fantastic BBQ at Waveny again this year. The exact date in late-June is yet to be determined, but we are looking to book a Thursday evening – stay tuned for more information on this fan-favorite MG event!

Invite to follow soon, be sure to check your inbox. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Don Moyle with any questions at donmoyle@gmail.com.



Sabbath All-Church Picnic Dinner

Save the Date: Sunday, August 29

Join us on Sunday, August 29 from 5:30pm-7:00pm for an evening of food, fun, and fellowship! Come and gather with your church family back on the acre for this late summer picnic. Chapin will offer a blessing for children of all ages before they embark on a new school year.

Food trucks will be in the front circle serving dinner and dessert. Please bring blankets and lawn chairs and find a spot on the acre to enjoy dinner.

Don't forget to get a new backpack to donate to Filling in the Blanks - that is your "admission" to the event. But if you run out of time, not to worry, we will also accept donations towards the purchase of backpacks.

Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 25, and indicate the number attending to Caroline Leather, caroline@godsacre.org.



Music Ministries

Best Wishes

Diana Benton, soprano

We send best wishes to Diana Benton, our Chancel Choir soprano section leader for the past five years. Diana's smile and lovely personality, combined with her beautiful voice, have been a joy and a blessing to the choir and to the congregation.



A Summer Sing for the Entire Family!

All are invited to a church "Sing-a-long." Join Judy on Sundays, July 4 and August 15, 9:00am – 9:30am on the patio. RSVP to Jody for requests, music@godsacre.org or (203) 966-2651 x827.

Sunday, July 4

Sing patriotic music; Anne Maguire will lead us.

Sunday, August 15

We will sing the great hymns of the church; Hans Tashjian will lead us.

Plan Ahead for Fall, 2021

Please mark your calendars for choirs this fall!

Mondays

Grace Notes: Ages 2 – 4 with a parent/guardian

4:00pm – 4:30pm

Cherubs: Ages 4 – Kindergarten

4:30pm – 5:00pm

Wednesdays

Spirit Singers: Ages 6-10 – Grades 1-4

4:00pm – 5:00pm

Joyful Noise: Ages 11 and up – Grades 5-8

5:00pm – 6:00pm

Thursdays

Chancel Choir: 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Joyful Ringers: TBA



Sunday Singers this Summer



Anush Avetisyan, soprano



EmmaRae Carroll, soprano



Jenny D'Alba, soprano



Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano



Hans Tashjian, bass

June 6:

Anush Avetisyan, Anne Maguire, Aram Tchobanian, Hans Tashjian

June 13:

Aram Tchobanian, tenor

June 20:

Anush Avetisyan, soprano

June 27:

EmmaRae Carroll, soprano

July 4:

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano

July 11:

Aram Tchobanian, tenor

July 18:

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano

July 25:

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano

August 1:

Hans Tashjian, bass

August 8:

Anne Maguire, mezzo soprano

August 15:

Hans Tashjian, bass

August 22:

Nancy Upton, soprano

August 29:

Jenny D'Alba, soprano

September 5:

EmmaRae Carroll, soprano



Aram Tchobanian, tenor



Nancy Upton, soprano

Children & Youth Ministries

Youth Ministries this Summer

In May we were able to gather for our first-ever Middle School, Late Night. The evening was filled with pizza, classic church games, laser tag, and vespers. It was the perfect end to our year in the youth tent and got us very excited for the fall.



Save the Date: Church School Returns!

We are thrilled to announce we will be returning to our regularly scheduled Church School programming on

Sunday, September 12.

We look forward to welcoming our kids & teachers back into the classrooms on Kick Off Sunday! See you there!

Youth Celebration Week!

What a blast it was to celebrate a successful program year with our youth! Bouncy house, ice cream, pizza, and karaoke were some of the highlights of this year's Youth Celebration Week! After a year of great uncertainty and ever-changing circumstances, our youth were resilient in adapting to their new home in our tent and continuing the development of their faith and relationships with

one another. Rain, cold, snow, or sunshine each week kids grades K-8 attended weekday programming with mask-covered smiles and open minds! Our celebration was a perfect ending to this unique year!

We look forward to continued programming in the fall and hope to see all of our youth at worship services throughout the summer!



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

Shean-Mei Sheu, x823
Director of Finance

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
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
September newsletter, please submit by August 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