



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN NEW CANAAN

Where Faith, Families & Friends Connect

Baptism of the Lord • January 11, 2026 • 10:00am
178 OENOK RIDGE, NEW CANAAN, CT 06840 • 203-966-0002 • FPCNC.ORG

Grace and peace to you, and welcome!

As you prepare for Worship, please sign the red welcome pad found at the center of each aisle so that we will know you worshipped with us. Then pass it to your neighbor. The last person to sign the pad should pass it back to the center of the aisle. We suggest you prayerfully allow the silent, sacred space of where you are, and the quiet stirrings of the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart and mind for Worship.

**PLEASE STAND IN BODY AND/OR SPIRIT.*

THE GATHERING

Prelude:

Pastorale on *The Morning Star*

Daniel Pinkham

***Call to Worship (from Psalm 148)**

The Rev. Mary Marple Thies

Leader: The voice of the Lord is powerful and full of majesty.

All: May the Lord bless us with God's peace!

Leader: The voice of the Lord proclaimed Jesus as God's beloved.

All: In our own baptisms, we are claimed as God's beloved.

Leader: Even at the edges of life but with the whole Creation,

All: We come to rest in you, O Lord, and to worship and give you praise!

***Hymn No. 393:**

O Day of Rest and Gladness

Es flog ein kleins Waldvögelein

1 O day of rest and glad - ness, O day of joy and light,
2 On you, at earth's cre - a - tion the light first had its birth;
3 On you, God's peo - ple, meet - ing, the Ho - ly Scrip-ture hear,

O balm for care and sad - ness, most beau - ti - ful, most bright;
on you, for our sal - va - tion Christ rose from depths of earth;
Christ's liv - ing pres - ence greet - ing, through bread and wine made near.

on you, the high and low - ly, through a - ges joined in tune,
on you, our Lord vic - to - rious sent Spir - it forth from heaven.
New grac - es ev - er gain - ing from this our day of rest,

sing "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly" to the great God tri - une.
And thus on you, most glo - rious, a tri - ple light was given.
we reach the rest re - main - ing to spir - its of the blest.

Welcome and Announcements

The Rev. Scott Herr

Minute for Stewardship

Jim Beall

Blessing for our Younger Disciples

Leah Saulsberry

Call to Confession

Nancy LaBadie

Leader: On this Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we remember our own baptisms, where we were claimed as children of the covenant and beloved of God... Yet we live as those who are alienated from God. We have turned away from God, one another and the earth. Let us confess our sins, trusting in God's mercy to heal and restore.

Confession of Sin (unison)

Nancy LaBadie

Merciful God, we confess that we are estranged from you and from one another. We treat others as strangers rather than as people created in your image and fellow children of God. We exploit the earth as though it were our possession rather than a gift entrusted to our care and a reflection of your image and glory. We allow technology to use us, rather than using

technology for flourishing. Forgive us our sins and transform us by your Spirit that we might live as your own beloved children...

(silence for further individual reflection and repentance...)

Leader: In Jesus' name we pray.

All: **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Nancy LaBadie

Leader: Friends, hear the good news of the gospel — and of Jesus' solidarity in his own baptism by John with all who have been immersed in baptismal waters, repenting of their brokenness and sin. In Jesus' name, God has forgiven us of our own sins and set us on new paths. Let us remember our baptism and trust in God's mercy.

All: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made righteous! Thanks be to God!**

***Gloria Patri (No. 580)**

Gloria Patri (Scottish)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.**

***Passing of the Peace**

Nancy LaBadie

Leader: Sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever, be at peace. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

Leader: Please share Christ's peace with one another.

Congregation greets one another and shares the peace of Christ

THE WORD

Prayer for illumination (unison)

Nancy LaBadie

O God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that the words we are about to hear will become Your Word for us this day. Help us to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church. Amen.

First Lesson – Exodus 8:8-11

Nancy LaBadie

⁸Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Pray to the LORD to take away the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.' ⁹Moses said to Pharaoh, 'Kindly tell me when I am to pray for you and for your officials and for your people, that the frogs may be removed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.' ¹⁰And he said, 'Tomorrow.' Moses said, 'As you say! So that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God, ¹¹the frogs shall leave you and your houses and your officials and your people; they shall be left only in the Nile.'

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem:

O God, Who by the Leading of a Star

Thomas Attwood

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we which know thee now by faith may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead, though Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FPCNC Choir

Second Lesson – Mark 2:23-28

The Rev. Dr. Greg Cootsona, PhD

²³One sabbath he was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' ²⁵And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? ²⁶He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.' ²⁷Then he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; ²⁸so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.'

Leader: Holy wisdom, holy word.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon: Real Life in an Age of Artificial Intelligence

The Rev. Dr. Greg Cootsona, PhD

RESPONDING TO THE WORD***Affirmation of Faith – Hymn No. 315: In the Midst of New Dimensions***New Dimensions*

1 In the midst of new di - men - sions, in the face of
 2 Through the flood of starv - ing peo - ple, war - ring fac - tions,
 3 As we stand, a world di - vid - ed by our own self -
 4 We are man and we are wom - an, all per - sua - sions,
 5 Should the threats of dire pre - dic - tions cause us to with -

chang - ing ways, who will lead the pil - grim peo - ples
 and de - spair, who will lift the ol - ive branch - es?
 seek - ing schemes, grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage,
 old and young, each a gift in your cre - a - tion,
 draw in pain, may your blaz - ing phoe - nix spir - it

Refrain

wan - dering in their sep - arate ways?
 Who will light the flame of care?
 might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams. God of rain-bow, fi - ery pil - lar,
 each a love song to be sung.
 res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

lead - ing where the ea - gles soar, we your peo - ple, ours the jour - ney

now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

Prayers of the People

The Rev. Scott Herr

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Call for the Offering

The Rev. Scott Herr

Leader: On the Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we celebrate the great gift of Baptism and the life of promise therein. God has given us life and resources for it, so let us give in return.

Offertory Anthem:

Cantate Domino

Giuseppi Ottavio Pitoni

*Cantate Domino,
canticum novum:
laus eius in ecclesia sanctorum.
Laetetur Israel in eo,
qui fecit eum:
et filiae Sion,
exultant in rege suo.*

Come ye with joyfulness,
sing a new song to your Maker,
O praise him with the saintly congregation,
Israel be joyful and glad in him
who made Israel,
and children of Sion
be joyful and be glad in your King.

FPCNC Choir

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

Nancy LaBadie

O God, in our baptisms we have been named and claimed as your covenant people, connected deeply with you, with one another, and with the earth. May our gifts be used as a witness to your love, peace and justice at work in the world, renewing the face of the earth.

SENDING

***Hymn No. 313:**

Lord, Make Us More Holy

Lord, Make Us More Holy

1 Lord, make us more ho - ly; Lord, make us more ho - ly;
2 Lord, make us more lov - ing; Lord, make us more lov - ing;
3 Lord, make us more pa - tient; Lord, make us more pa - tient;
4 Lord, make us more faith - ful; Lord, make us more faith - ful;

Lord, make us more ho - ly, un - til we meet a - gain:
Lord, make us more lov - ing, un - til we meet a - gain:
Lord, make us more pa - tient, un - til we meet a - gain:
Lord, make us more faith - ful, un - til we meet a - gain:

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, un - til we meet a - gain.
lov - ing, lov - ing, lov - ing, un - til we meet a - gain.
pa - tient, pa - tient, pa - tient, un - til we meet a - gain.
faith - ful, faith - ful, faith - ful, un - til we meet a - gain.

***Benediction**

The Rev. Dr. Greg Cootsona, PhD

***Choral Amen:**

***Ringing of the Church Bell**

***Postlude:**

In dir ist Freude, BWV 615
(In Thee is Gladness)

Johann Sebastian Bach

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Join us in the Common Room after worship for a time of fellowship, coffee/tea and light lunch for our first Adult Forum of 2026.

Don't forget to stop by the Welcome Table to see what's happening in our community.

TODAY IN WORSHIP

Welcome to worship on this First Sunday after the Epiphany when we welcome the Rev. Dr. Greg Cootsona, PhD, as our guest preacher. Learning from Jesus's words in Mark 2:27 that "The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath," we will reflect on how technology must serve genuine human flourishing rather than reduce us to optimized outputs. In an age of tireless AI and the relentless cult of productivity, the Sabbath becomes a prophetic practice that reorients us toward our true identity as beloved, embodied creatures made for relationship with God and neighbor. We are glad you are joining us for worship, and pray you'll be spiritually renewed and socially reoriented as we move through the season of Epiphany!

Sunday School! Join us as we explore Bible stories and all our questions about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the world around us. We will explore these themes through discussion, crafts, music, and other visual media. Children begin worship in the Sanctuary with their families then following the Blessing for Young Disciples, we move to our Sunday School classes upstairs in the Bliss House and then return to the Sanctuary towards the end of worship.

If your child is participating in Sunday School, please fill out this very short form so that we have up-to-date family contact numbers, and you can provide us with any information about your child that will help us minister to them: <https://fpcnc.breezechms.com/form/2024SundaySchoolStudents>

Adults or older teens who want to come be part of the fun of Sunday School, we need you! Join us and bring your own sense of wonder and joy as we learn together what it means to be part of God's big family. Let us know of your interest by filling out this form: <https://fpcnc.breezechms.com/form/Teachers2024-25>, or reach out to Leah Saulsberry at leahs@fpcnc.org.

TODAY IN WORSHIP (Cont'd)

Children are warmly welcome to stay in Worship! For children who stay during worship, the **Pray-Ground** can be found in the area in front of the back pew bench. The Pray-Ground is a designated place in the Sanctuary where young children can experience worship through age-appropriate worship materials and tools that will help keep them engaged in what is happening. We will continue to rotate books and coloring materials on an ongoing basis. Although it can seem counter-intuitive to adults, children are often able to process what they hear more effectively when they have something to do with their hands.

Any child worshipping in the Pray-Ground should bring their grown-up with them to the Pray-Ground. Including young children in worship can sometimes feel a little daunting, especially on days when they're feeling a little extra fidgety, but we don't need to be discouraged from keeping children in the Sanctuary. There are many important things that children learn while in worship, even when we're not sure if they're paying attention. Young children learn by observing the adults around them. Children acquire the "language" of worship by listening to and observing the words the adults around them say, much like how they learn their native tongue. Quite simply, children learn to worship by regularly being in Worship. **So families with little ones should feel free to worship together in the Pray-Ground!**

FPCNC also offers childcare during our Sunday Service provided by Saturnina Greaves and Lizz Reyes from Wee Care Nanny Agency. Our Nursery is located just off our Common Room vestibule down the long hall from the Sanctuary and is available between the hours of 8:45–11:30am. **Parental and guardian sign-in is required and we do ask that you pick up your child promptly after the Service.**

Have a prayer request? Prayer Cards are located in the back of the church adjacent to the Sanctuary entrance. Before worship, please give the completed Prayer Card to either Scott, Mary or one of the Ushers. These requests will be included in our Prayers of the People for that Sunday. You will have the option to exclude your prayer from the communal prayer if you prefer. All prayers will be held and prayed over in confidence. Any questions or concerns, please contact Mary (marythies75@gmail.com).

Cents-Ability – The Cents-ability jar is in the hallway on the way to the Common Room. Please drop your spare change into the jar either on the way to Coffee Hour or whenever you're at church. You can also take home a small cents-ability bank to collect change. All change collected will be donated to the New Canaan Food Pantry. Thank you for your continued support to the New Canaan Food Pantry as we collected an additional **\$29** in change this past week.



SIGN UP to Read, Usher or Greet here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4aaaad2aa31-sunday>

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram:



DONATE:



ABOUT TODAY'S MUSIC

This Sunday's organ prelude is by **Daniel Rogers Pinkham Jr.** (1923-2006), an American composer, organist, and harpsichordist. Daniel studied organ performance and music theory at Phillips Academy with Carl F. Pfatteicher. At Harvard University, he studied with Walter Piston; Aaron Copland, Archibald T. Davison, and Arthur Tillman Merritt were also among his teachers. There he completed a bachelor's degree in 1942 and a master's in 1944. He also studied harpsichord with Putnam Aldrich and Wanda Landowska, and organ with E. Power Biggs. At Tanglewood, he studied composition with Samuel Barber and Arthur Honegger, and subsequently with Nadia Boulanger. Pinkham taught at the Boston Conservatory beginning in 1946, and at the New England Conservatory of Music from 1959 until his death in 2006; while there, he created and chaired the program on early music performance. He also taught at various times at Simmons University (1953–1954), Boston University (1953–1954), and Harvard University (1957–1958). For forty-two years (1958–2000), Pinkham was the Organist of King's Chapel in Boston, a position which gave him much exposure to and opportunity to write church-related music; the Sunday evening concert series he created there celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007. He was also a frequent guest on the E. Power Biggs program on the CBS Radio Network.

Our FPCNC Choir sings music by **Thomas Attwood** (1765-1838), an English composer and organist. Attwood studied under Mozart and he was friendly with Felix Mendelssohn. The son of a musician in the royal band, Attwood was born in London, probably in Pimlico. At the age of nine he became a Chorister in the Chapel Royal, where he received training in music from James Nares and Edmund Ayrton. In 1783 he was sent to study abroad at the expense of the Prince of Wales (afterwards King George IV), who had been favourably impressed by his skill at the harpsichord. After two years in Naples, Attwood proceeded to Vienna, where he became a favourite pupil of Mozart. On his return to London in 1787 he held for a short time an appointment as one of the chamber musicians to the Prince of Wales. In 1796 he was chosen as the Organist of St Paul's Cathedral, and in the same year he was made Composer of the Chapel Royal. His court connection was further confirmed by his appointment as Musical Instructor to the Duchess of York, and afterwards to the Princess of Wales. In 1821 the King appointed him Organist to his private chapel at Brighton. Soon after the institution of the Royal Academy of Music in 1823, Attwood was chosen to be one of the professors.

Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni (1657-1743), an Italian organist and composer. He became one of the leading musicians in Rome during the late Baroque era, the first half of the 18th century. Taken to Rome as an infant, he began vocal study with Pompeo Natali at the age of five and sang in the choir of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini from age eight. At Santi Apostoli he sang and studied counterpoint with Francesco Foggia, where his early compositions were performed. By age sixteen he was Maestro di Cappella at Santa Maria Maggiore, Monterotondo, a historic church near Rome. In 1673 as Maestro for the cathedral at Assisi he began intensive study of the works of Palestrina, and in 1676 moved to the cathedral at Rieti. In 1677 he returned to Rome for a lifelong appointment as Maestro di Cappella at the Basilica of San Marco. In addition he held a series of prestigious positions as Maestro for Basilica dei Santi Apostoli, Rome (from 1686), at St. John Lateran (from 1708, where Palestrina had served from 1555 to 1560), and for the Cappella Giulia at St. Peter's (from 1719, immediately following Domenico Scarlatti), and Maestro di Cappella at the Collegium Germanicum in Rome.

Our postlude music is composed by **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750). The most exceptional member of a wide-spread German family of musicians active from the late 16th through the early 19th centuries, Johann Sebastian Bach is a pivotal figure in the history of music. He drew together the achievements of his predecessors and led on to new musical perspectives that influenced later generations. His genius combined outstanding performing musicianship with supreme creative powers in which original imagination, technical mastery, and intellectual control were perfectly balanced. Many of his works—such as the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and other keyboard works, most of his organ music, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the unaccompanied solos for violin and cello, the cantatas, Passions, and oratorios, the *Art of Fugue*, and the *Mass in B minor*—became exemplary samples of their kind and have preserved their influence and legacy through the present day.

TODAY



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN

GREG COOTSONA

SCIENCE & FAITH SPEAKER AND AUTHOR

JANUARY 11, 2026

178 OENOKE RIDGE, NEW CANAAN CT

10 AM WORSHIP GUEST PREACHER

11:30 AM ADULT FORUM

DISCUSSING: AN AI MADE FOR US

An AI Made for Us is a faith-informed approach to AI that engages with theological seriousness—neither embracing techno-utopianism nor retreating into fear. It insists we ask not only what AI can do, but who we're becoming in an AI-saturated world.

It argues AI must be designed around embodied dignity and authentic community—strengthening what philosopher Albert Borgmann called "focal practices" like shared meals, Sabbath rest, and gathered worship—because technology exists to serve human flourishing, not the reverse. It also calls to adopt a posture of Christian hope: realistic about dangers, like algorithmic bias, a surveillance marketplace, and concentrated power, yet committed to directing AI toward justice, compassion, and the fullness of life God intends for us and all creation.

Lunch and Childcare provided.



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ALL ARE WELCOME!

THIS WEEK @ FPC

Wednesday Weekly Bible Studies, led by Darlene Harmon, is starting back this week on Wednesday, January 14. It meets **every Wednesday from 10:00am-11:30am**. We are currently studying King Solomon and Proverbs. Please come at 9:45am to share a cup of tea/coffee and snack in the Parlor/Library. We hope you can come join us! Everyone is invited!



Calling all ladies!

Please join us – and feel free to bring a friend – for brunch and good vibes in the Common Room this **Wednesday, January 14 from 11:30am–1:00pm** for coffee, tea, light bites and community. Please call the church office to RSVP. Organized by Congregational Life!

If you would like to come but need a ride, let Nancy LaBadie (nancydllabadie@gmail.com/917-412-4658), Patty von Jena (Pvonjena@gmail.com/203-524-2902) or the office know. We will try to match you with someone who is driving.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2026

2026 Stewardship Challenge

The 2026 Stewardship Campaign is still underway, and we are still striving to achieve our pledge goal of \$920,000. Right now, we are just above 80 percent of our target. To help us achieve 100 percent, a very generous donor has offered to Match any new pledges or pledge increases received between now and the first week of February (up to \$100,000). Therefore, if you have not yet pledged for 2026, please do so now and your pledge will be matched. There are pledge cards at the back of the Sanctuary, and you can also pledge online at <https://fpcnc.org/pledges/>. Or you can contact the office and give Wendy your pledge directly. If you have already pledged but would like to increase your pledge to take advantage of this challenge match opportunity, please call the office as well. Thank you in advance and Happy New Year.

Blessings from the Stewardship Team

Year-End 2025 Contribution Statements

Coming soon are your 2025 Year-End Contribution Statements. These will be sent via USPS in the next couple of weeks. If you don't receive them by January 30, please call the office.

SAVE THE DATE



The Interfaith Council of New Canaan is proud to host its 24th Annual Celebration of the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Monday, January 19, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

The United Methodist Church of New Canaan, 165 South Avenue

The Service will include inspiring music and speakers from the ABC House, New Canaan, and special keynote speaker, Rev. Richard Williams, the Executive Director of Pivot Ministries

A reception will follow the Service.

Donation Proceeds will benefit the New Canaan Food Bank and Non-perishable Food Donations will also be gratefully accepted.





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN

GEORGETTE BENNETT

AUTHOR OF HALF-JEW – FULL LIFE A HOLOCAUST STORY THAT
SPEAKS TO TODAY

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

178 OENOKE RIDGE, NEW CANAAN CT

10 AM WORSHIP SERVICE

11:30 AM ADULT FORUM

DISCUSSING: MORAL COURAGE IN DARK TIMES: IDENTITY, VIOLENCE, AND THE WILL TO SURVIVE

In this talk, Dr. Georgette Bennett shares the extraordinary story at the heart of her new book, *Half-Jew – Full Life*, about her third cousin-in-law Gary “Pips” Phillips. Born in inter-war Berlin to an Aryan mother and a Jewish father, Pips could have been spared the worst of the Nazi war on Jews. But the very week that the Nuremberg laws were enacted, he chose to become a bar mitzvah.

This story meshes with Dr. Bennett’s own story. A child of the Holocaust, born into a bombed-out apartment building in Budapest. Although her parents miraculously survived, they went through all the horrors of the Nazi machine. That background inspired the work to which she has devoted the last 33 years of her life: interreligious relations, human rights, and conflict resolution. Prior to that, she had a groundbreaking career as a sociologist/criminologist who always had an interest in the links between religion and violence.

Lunch and Childcare provided.



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ALL ARE WELCOME!

EDITOR'S NOTES

Thank you. Wow! We must be doing something right here at FPCNC: over 250 in person and online worshippers for the 5:00pm Christmas Eve service and a nice gain in attendance for the 10:00pm Lessons and Carols Communion service; 22 people of all ages helped tell the story of Jesus' birth in costume and dialogue at the 5:00pm service; and 18 people stayed after last Sunday's service to help put away the Advent/Christmas decor. Thank you to all who participated in these events!

Jan Lucie, Chair WMA

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS:

If you attended the Christmas Party at the Manse on Friday, December 19, did you happen to take home the wrong jacket? The jacket in the photo to the right might be yours.... Land's End, Green/Gray, XL? **You might have an Eddie Bauer two-toned blue jacket, XL in your closet.** Please call or email Wendy in the office so we can get both jackets to their rightful owner!



Right Glove only (ECHO brand) – found at church around Christmas week. Does this glove belong to you?

If these items are not picked up by January 14, they will be donated.

INCLEMENT WEATHER 2025/26 SEASON

It's that time of year when we need to be cautious about driving in bad weather. The Church Office will follow the NC Public Schools regarding any delays or closures. We will try to update our website in a timely manner to notify everyone of office closures or you can view the NCPS website at: <https://www.ncps-k12.org/page/school-closings-delays-and-early-dismissals>

If bad weather is occurring on a Sunday, please watch for an email from the church with details or check out our website www.fpcnc.org. REMINDER: Please refer to the [Emergency Preparedness Guidelines](#) document and if you haven't already, please sign up with the town for alert messages [here](#).

Update from the Worship, Music and Fine Arts Committee

As we enter Epiphany and beyond, please consider helping with our worship. We need ushers, greeters and readers to lead us in joyful celebration. Please consider logging into the **Sign-Up Genius** found on the church website (www.fpcnc.org) to find a Sunday that works for you. To find out more about how you can help, please speak with Jan Lucie, Linda Martin or Armin Thies of the Worship Committee or call Wendy in the church office. Or **SIGN UP to Read, Usher or Greet here:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4aaaad2aa31-sunday>
We are grateful for all your participation.


EDITOR'S NOTES (Cont'd)

Tax Considerations for Year-End Charitable Giving


Recent changes to the tax code have impacted the tax treatment of charitable deductions for certain higher income donors. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA) passed in July 2025 placed certain limits on amounts that can be deducted on individual's tax returns starting in 2026. The changes, which include a change in the deductibility of amounts below a certain income level, and a reduction in the maximum tax rate that can be used by the charitable deduction, impacts charitable donations made in tax years 2026 and beyond. The changes may increase the attractiveness of accelerating charitable deductions into 2025. If the changes impact you, it may be worth considering making your 2026 pledge payments before 12/31/2025.

Additionally, the changes to the deductibility of charitable donations in 2026 and beyond may make the use of a donor-advised fund even more attractive, as donations made in 2025 can be used to make charitable contributions in future years. The use of a donor-advised fund is also an attractive tool for using appreciated stock as a source of funds to make charitable donations, as the appreciated value of donated shares can be donated without incurring capital gains taxes, making appreciated stock an excellent source of funds for charitable contributions now and in future years.


These tax strategies are not for everyone, and a discussion with your tax advisor is warranted if you believe these strategies may be attractive to you. I am happy to discuss the tax implications of the above strategies in greater detail if you have any questions or if you would like additional information. Feel free to reach out to me at isely3rd@yahoo.com or call me at 917-579-6858. Jim Ely, Stewardship Committee




Community, Generosity and Joy. Accompanied by Beautiful Music.




Andy Armstrong and New Canaan Chamber Music
performed a beautiful and inspiring concert for our safe house residents
and families just before Christmas. It was a night to remember!



**20 Adults.
32 Children.**
All enjoyed a
magical evening.





Thank you!

With much gratitude to:

- Andy Armstrong & Friends
- First Presbyterian Church New Canaan.
- Community members who organized dinner and gifts.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Mission & Outreach Update

Season's greetings! Mission & Outreach ('Mission') has wrapped up a great year of giving for 2025 but we have even bigger aspirations for 2026. Please read on for a brief look forward and a quick peek back on our Mission journey.

A **New Mission Committee** is formed for 2026! We have formed a new, expanded Mission committee to augment our mission reach and impact. The committee will seek to generate additional ideas for volunteering, refine and increase our total charitable donations, explore mission trip opportunities, and expand congregational involvement in Mission & Outreach. The Committee members are Jim Beall, Betsy Carter, Mark Chmiel, Tom Emmons, Cindy Graziano, Scott Herr, Julie Nixon, and Steve Van de Graaf.

We have renewed our commitment to **New Covenant Center** to purchase, prepare and serve dinner six times in 2026 at their Stamford facility. These are scheduled for the 1st Saturday of March, April, May, Sept, Oct and Nov in 2026. Mark your calendars and reserve your spot now for shopping, cooking and/or serving!



The **Dove Program** is one of Mission's most popular and successful programs thanks to all of you who participated and your fantastic generosity. ***We collected an amazing \$32,260 this year to support Person-to-Person, up from a very impressive \$23,320 last year!*** Also, a big 'thank you' to Julie Fowler who so ably assumed leadership of this program this year from Janet Lanaway.

Mitten Tree – In the season of giving, we collected 21 pairs of mittens and gloves for children and adults. They've been brought to Person to Person (P2P) for that organization to distribute.

A new event this year benefiting the **Tiny Miracles Foundation** was organized by Kristie Godina. The event demonstrated our congregations' initiative (thanks again, Kristie) and our hands-on volunteering (thanks to all knot tyers). During this coffee hour event, we helped construct baby blankets for preemie isolettes.



This year's **Mission Month** was also great success, and we will plan on continuing this tradition in October '26. The four consecutive weekly donation drives in October provided 356 undergarments to The Undie Project, 365 pairs of socks to New Covenant Center, 1550 diapers (plus bottles of Similac and baby wipes) to The Diaper Bank of CT, and many shopping bags of toiletries and personal care products to Bridgeport Rescue Mission. We significantly expanded our donations year-over-year and hope to do so again in '26!

MISSION & OUTREACH (Cont'd)

The following is a recap of Mission's **Monetary Donations for 2025**. The below numbers do not include physical donations such as those from Mission Month nor 'pass-through' donations such as the Dove Program. We have begun discussions with Session, and will be brainstorming in the Mission committee, on how we can increase our available donation funds for 2026. Stay tuned!

A Better Chance	\$850.00
Americares	\$2,000.00
Back to School	\$1,000.00
Bridgeport Rescue Mission	\$2,000.00
Building One Community	\$1,000.00
Domestic Violence Crisis Center	\$2,000.00
Filling in the Blanks	\$1,000.00
Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County	\$1,269.00
Future 5	\$1,000.00
Get About (NC)	\$1,000.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$1,500.00
Meals on Wheels (NC)	\$1,000.00
MLK Church- completing our \$25,000 donation commitment	\$12,500.00
New Canaan Food Pantry	\$500.00
New Covenant Center-Six Monthly Dinners	\$3,077.56
Pacific House	\$2,000.00
Presbyterian Church USA - One Great Hour of Sharing	\$3,587.00
Presbyterian Church - California (Wild Fires)	\$5,000.00
RAM Council	\$1,200.00
Rotary Club	\$750.00
Save the Sound	\$2,000.00
SNUI (Immigrant Assistance Food Donations)	\$2,425.73
Stand Together Against Racism (STAR)	\$500.00
United Way of Greater St. Louis-Storm/Tornado Donation	\$500.00
Voices Center for Resilience (Voices of 911)	\$1,000.00
Total:	\$51,659.29

Thank you again for serving others through your time, talents and donations in 2025! We look forward to presenting expanded opportunities for Mission in 2026; and welcome your input and help in furthering First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan's positive impact in our community and beyond through our acts of grace and compassion. If you have any questions, please reach out.

Steve Van de Graaf, Mission & Outreach Elder

YL younglife

NC YL



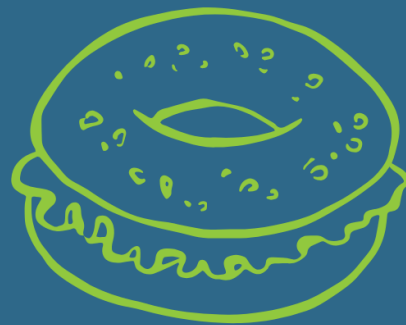
All are invited to join us
as we grab a cup of coffee,
walk & pray for students!

Prayer

- Coffee
- Bagels
- Prayer

WALK

FRIDAY, 1/23
6:30 - 7 AM
NEW CANAAN HIGH SCHOOL
TRACK



COMMUNITY (Cont'd)



Waveny Lifecare Network's

NAVIGATOR

Alzheimer's and Dementia at Home for New Canaan

Providing support and guidance
to those impacted by Alzheimer's
and dementia in New Canaan

All Communications Confidential

- 24/7 access to dedicated Alzheimer's and dementia specialists
- Complimentary grant-based program
- Exclusive respite apartment
- Exclusive social model adult day programming
- Expedited access to Waveny's continuum
- Access to trusted resources outside of Waveny
- Wellness checks and safety assessments
- Education on disease progression and healthcare resources available
- Assistance with insurance and public benefits
- Coordination of care, advance care planning, discharge planning
- Emotional support
- Alzheimer's and dementia caregiver support group
- Dedicated mobile app

Contact us for a consultation
Phone: 203-594-5289
Email: Navigators@waveny.org

In collaboration with



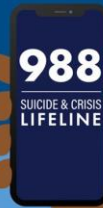
NEW CANAAN
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

**Domestic violence doesn't take a break
for the holidays.**



**If you or someone you know needs help, call DVCC's
24-hour hotline at 203.588.9097 or visit the website
at DVCCCT.org for more information.**

**SAVE THE NUMBER
SAVE A LIFE
CALL OR TEXT 988**



Add this number to your phone now.
It could save a life later.



nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

Save the number, save a life. Add the
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) to
your phone now—it could save a life
later. Trained crisis counselors are
available to talk 24/7/365.

NEW CANAAN

Behavioral Health

ALLIANCE

Finding the right behavioral health support for yourself, family member or a friend can feel overwhelming. The New Canaan Behavioral Health Alliance (NCBHA) is excited to announce the launch of its website. New Canaan Human Services, NCCF and Silver Hill Hospital have partnered with over 30 local agencies and organizations to encourage, develop and support a greater community awareness of behavioral health issues and resources in our area. To talk directly to someone that can help navigate available resources, or just to see what behavioral health events are happening around the area, visit www.newcanaanhba.org.

PRAYERS AND CONCERNS

Please keep the following people in your hearts.


New prayers and concerns: For the family of Robert Kahler (Allison Gurley's father) who died the end of December.

Continued prayers and concerns: For the family of Sharon Baum who died December 8; Kevin Bedford (Mark Magnusen's friend); Judy Bentley; Mary Dillon (Barbara Wentzel's sister) who had a stroke; Betty Drew (Sue Dishart's mother); Amy Granato (Julie Fowler's sister); Chris Harris (Dede Trefts' lifelong and beloved friend) is in the last stage of a very long battle with cancer; Dan Hodges; Sue Hoffman (Peg and Sherm Bull's friend) diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer; David Johnson (Elsbeth Johnson's son); for the family and friends of Sue Klein (Maxine's friend) who died December 8; healing prayers for Denise Lynch; Layla Magnusen, recovering from knee surgery; Sarah, James and Rowan Marcotte (Jen Van de Graaf's sister and family); Josephine Markell (Jim Riehl's 106-year-old aunt); Matthew (Terry's nephew) and his family as they deal with his recent diagnosis; Missy (Sarah Robinson's sister-in-law) and her two daughters, Lexi and Maggie. Missy has been diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer; Sandy Nissley; for the family and friends of Viv Palmer (Maxine's cousin) who is in hospice care; Mickie Richards (friend of Jen & Steve Van de Graaf); John Robinson (Darlene Harmon's brother) who has lung cancer; Nancy Russell (Linda Martin's sister); Mindy Starr-Pfahler (Wendy Starr's cousin); Ken Stringfellow (Kate Stringfellow-Ziance's brother); J. Stuart Stringfellow (Kate Stringfellow-Ziance's father); Homero Villareal; and the Abo Noktah family (the Syrian family FPCNC sponsored): father Khaldoun, mother Khawla Alzob, daughters Hanin, Zain and Hayat, and sons Yaman and Ahmed, and Khaldoun's mother, Nam Abo Noktah.

We continue to pray for the families and friends of the victims who have been affected by gun violence.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is our presence around the world when disasters happen. Through them we are on the ground around the world, responding to the enormous needs following wildfires, hurricanes and earthquakes and during war. PDA Giving: <https://pcusa.org/giving/stewardship-funds-development/ways-give>

GROW IN FAITH

 **SILVER HILL HOSPITAL** If you know of someone in urgent need of mental health support, please remember the resource that our town has in the New Canaan Urgent Assessment Program. The town, in partnership with Silver Hill Hospital, is prepared to offer psychiatric assessment and tailored referral for ongoing care. The Program serves children, teens and adults who are New Canaan residents free of charge. To schedule an intake call, email NCUA@silverhillhospital.org or call Silver Hill Hospital admissions at 1-866-542-4455 and indicate that you are asking about the New Canaan Urgent Assessment Program. For more details use this link: <https://silverhillhospital.org/new-canaan-urgent-assessment-program/>

Pastoral Care Team:

This can be a tender time of year for those who have lost a loved one recently or who are unable to be with family. Do you know of someone who might appreciate a phone call or a visit? Our congregation has a team of people who are ready to reach out to church members who are facing a life crisis. They may be in declining health, shut-ins, living in a care facility, grieving, or struggling with a significant change in their circumstances. Our Pastoral Care Team, made up of Ferial Aldag, Peg Bull, Debera Prosek, Ellen Sisson, Barbara Wentzel and The Rev. Mary Thies, is ready to provide pastoral care to church members who are dealing with such a situation. If you know of someone who could benefit from this ministry or if you have questions about the work of the team, please call the church office 203-966-0002 (ext 1).



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of NEW CANAAN

CALENDAR – UPCOMING WEEK

SUNDAY, January 11

9 am Music Rehearsals
10 am Worship Service
11:15 am Coffee Hour
11:30 am Adult Forum – Greg Cootsona “An AI made for us”

MONDAY, January 12

3:30, 4:30 Jumpin’ Jams (Tate Barn)
2-9 pm Wilton Studios–Music Lessons
5 pm NCCM Board Meeting
7 pm Deacon Meeting (Zoom)
7 pm Purple Heather Dancers

TUESDAY, January 13

9:30, 10:30, 11:30 Jumpin’ Jams (Tate Barn)
10:30 am Staff Leadership Weekly Meeting
12:30 pm Staying Put’s 18th Birthday Luncheon
7 pm Session Meeting (6:30pm Dinner)
8 pm Men’s A.A. Group (closed)

WEDNESDAY, January 14

10:00 am Weekly Bible Study
11:30 am Women’s Brunch
2-9 pm Wilton Studios–Music Lessons
4:30 pm FPC English Handbells Rehearsal

THURSDAY, January 15

3:30 pm Special Church
6 pm South Avenue Cottage Board Meeting
7 pm FPC Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

FRIDAY, January 16

9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 3:30, 4:30 Jumpin’ Jams (Tate Barn)
2-9 pm Wilton Studios–Music Lessons

SATURDAY, January 17

9:15 am A.A. Group (closed)
10:30 am A.A. Group (open)
1-5 pm Wilton Studios–Music Lessons

SUNDAY, January 18

9 am Music Rehearsals
10 am Worship Service
11:15 am Coffee Hour

CALENDAR – JANUARY thru MARCH

Monday, Jan 19, 10:00am	MLK Service @ United Methodist Church of New Canaan
Tuesday, Jan 27	Holocaust Remembrance Day
Thursday, Jan 29, 7:00pm	Open Mic Night
Sunday, Feb 1, 11:30am	Adult Forum – Georgette Bennett (Moral Courage in Dark Times: Identity, Violence, and the Will to Survive)
Thursday, Feb 5, 3:00pm	New Canaan Chamber Music Concert
Friday, Feb 6, 7:00pm	New Canaan Chamber Music Concert
Sunday, Feb 8, 11:30am	Souper Bowl of Caring
Sunday, Feb 22, 11:30am	First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan – Annual Meeting & Lunch
Sunday, Feb 22, 4:00pm	Orchestra Lumos Concert
Thursday, Feb 26, 7:00pm	Open Mic Night
Saturday, Feb 28, 4:00pm	New England Chamber Orchestra Concert
Sunday, Mar 8, 11:30am	New Member Orientation Class
Sunday, Mar 22, 10:00am	New Member Reception
Thursday, Mar 26, 7:00pm	Open Mic Night
Sunday, Mar 29, 10:00am	Palm Sunday Service

THOSE PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE:

The First Presbyterian Church Choir

with:

Lisa Flanagan – soprano, Jamie Ratcliffe – alto, Nikolas Brannan – tenor, Devon Mitchell – bass

Greeters: Charlie and Sarah Robinson

Lay Reader: Nancy LaBadie

Ushers: Bob Spangler and Jen Van de Graaf

Cross Bearer: Nancy LaBadie

MINISTERS

The Entire Congregation

OUR PASTORS

The Reverend Dr. R. Scott Herr, Senior Pastor • The Reverend Mary Marple Thies, Parish Associate

2025-2026 SESSION ELDERS AND DEACONS

SESSION ELDERS

Bob Spangler and Jennifer Van de Graaf (Co-Clerks) • Barb Achenbaum • Tom Butterworth • Jim Ely
Angela Johnson • Nancy LaBadie • Janet Lanaway • Jan Lucie • Mark Magnusen • Bonnie Peterson
Mike Peterson • Charlie Sulkowski (Youth) • Steve Van de Graaf • Patty von Jena • Stephan von Jena

DEACONS

Dan Mason and Kathy Edwards (Co-Moderators) • Ferial Aldag • Sue Benko • Carole Clarkson • Chris Cluett
Sue Dishart • Lisa Flanagan • Terence D. Flanagan (Youth) • Julie Fowler • Jo Ann Nerenburg • Debera Prosek

OUR STAFF

Terence J. Flanagan, Director of Music and Fine Arts • Jim Riehl, Business Administrator
Leah Saulsberry, Sunday School Director • Wendy Starr, Office Manager
Emily Johnson, Communications Assistant • Kate and Matt Ziance, Operations Managers
Terence D. Flanagan, Sunday Audio Technician

SIGN UP to Read, Usher or Greet <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4aaaad2aa31-sunday>

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram:



DONATE:

