

THE CHANNING CONNECTION

The Newsletter of
Channing Memorial Church

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July 2007

July 2007

Newsletter Staff

Ken Grim
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Due date for next
month's articles:

July 22

Ministerial Musings

What is your
favorite hymn?

One of the
exercises in the
book *Holy Con-
versations,
Strategic Planning as a
Spiritual Practice for Con-
gregations*, published by
the Alban Institute begins
as follows:

*Write down the name or
the first words of your fa-
vorite hymn. You may inter-
pret "hymn" as broadly as
you wish. . . anything from
the Beatles to Bach. Write
down what about the hymn
or song is powerful for you.
. . . Don't just write down
"the words" or "the music."
What about the text is
meaningful to you? What*



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about the tune do you find moving? (p. 260)

Well, how about it? How about everyone in the congregation thinking about that this summer? What hymns or songs really resonate for you as a Unitarian Universalist? Why? Are they describing the world as it is? Are they describing the world as you wish it would be? Do they offer you hope? Do they name your struggles?

Perhaps this is something that families could do together. Does everybody in the family like the

same songs? Why or why not?

This is one of the exercises we will be doing at the Congregational "Advance" scheduled for August 26th. (See information elsewhere in this newsletter.) So consider yourselves to have had plenty of "advance notice!" And even if you are unable to attend the Advance, send your thoughts and reflections along to me . . . we will work them into the conversation one way or another.

Best wishes for a safe summer. . . whether you travel afar or stay close to home, may you always feel the Spirit of Life and Love with you.

Oh . . . and don't forget to collect a little water from wherever you travel this summer. At our annual In-gathering Service on September 9th we will join the waters from near and far, just as we rejoin our lives in community.

Love, peace, and grace,
Susan

Reverend LaMar's Summer Schedule

June 11-17	Working and available; planning for next year. Can be reached at home or at Bethany Lane
June 18-24	UUA General Assembly in Portland, Oregon
June 24-27	Pilgrimage to Boston with Coming of Age class
June 27-July 6	Working and available at home and Bethany Lane
July 6 - Aug. 20	Study leave and vacation
August 21	Return to work to prepare for the coming church year.

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Music Director:

Open



William Ellery Channing

(Summer Schedule - continued from p. 1)

Some of the things I will be working on during study leave over the summer:

- A major paper for the Harper's Ferry Ministerial Study Group on the meaning of "Ordination" in Unitarian Universalism. I will deliver the paper when the group meets in November.
- Planning the Congregational "Advance" scheduled for August 26th. (Plan to attend! See information elsewhere in this Newsletter and the congregational mailing - and put it on your calendar *now!*.)
- Revising the curriculum for next year's Coming of Age class.
- Attending a three-day Sesshin with the Zen Community of Baltimore - three days of meditation and teachings. The theme of the Sesshin is the koan "Ordinary Mind is the Way," and I will be offering a teaching based on the ethical dilemma faced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a pacifist in the context of the Third Reich: how does one follow "ordinary mind" in the context of extraordinary evil?
- And for vacation: Jack and I will again be on Cape Cod during the second and third weeks of August, visiting grandchildren and other Massachusetts friends and relatives.

In the event of a pastoral emergency while I am away, please contact Rose Payer Blackburn, Caring Committee (410-744-3121) or any Board member. They will be able to reach me or the Minister-On-Call.

President's Letter



Stewardship Update: Current Successes and Future Challenges

We are about the end the current church year, and already the board is looking to the next year. On Sunday, June 17th, we had a board retreat for both the new and current board members, followed by the last board meeting of the current church year on Tuesday the 19th. We reviewed where we are and what needs to be done, as well as set priorities for the upcoming year.

In terms of our stewardship (i.e., financial responsibilities) the final results of the annual canvass are in, and the board used that information to pass a budget for next year. In terms of current successes, the annual canvass this year raised \$110,000. That's more than last year. Further, over half of the contributors raised their pledges! That is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the commitment of our congregation to Channing Memorial Church.

In terms of future challenges, unfortunately we had approximately \$13,000 in reductions in pledges from last year. Thus, when put
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together, although we raised more than last year, we did not achieve our goal of \$120,000 to \$125,000 in annual pledges. Thus, our budget for the upcoming year is, essentially, exactly the same as last year. Specifically, our music budget for next year will be \$500, and not the increase to \$5,000 that we had hoped for.

But fear not, for there is more that we can do. We already have an austerity budget in place, so there is little else to cut, but we can continue to develop more fundraising opportunities. For example, the board has already created a committee to look into sponsoring music events. Such events would not only raise money, but at the same time address several other benefits for our church, such as getting more recognition in the community and encouraging more people to come visit our church, not to mention social events for the congregation. Furthermore, the board also passed a resolution that would set a financial top priority to direct any additional funds raised beyond our expenses toward our music program.

We have many hopes and dreams for our church, just as we do individually and for our families. In our personal lives, our hopes and dreams often far exceed financial realities. Thus, the canvass results and the budget for next year are no different. It's normal and to be expected. This upcoming year will be a year of stabilizing and planning for the future. We will need to hire a new Director of Religious Education for our child and youth program. We will also need to concentrate on making the Sunday morning experience the highest quality for all, including worship, worship music, child and youth RE, and even adult RE. I'm excited about what we hope to accomplish this year, and I hope you are, too. It continues to be an honor and a pleasure to serve you and our congregation.

Summer Services

Beginning June 24th, summer services are being held at 3230 Bethany Lane, Suite 4 in Ellicott City. They begin at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday, and include music, prayer, a brief sermon drawn from material provided by the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and some sharing and discussion time. They will be hosted by members of the Board of Trustees and the Long Range Planning Committee.

The summer schedule is as follows:

- July 1: *No Service* (The office will have been freshly painted. If it is presentable, then Reverend LaMar will hold a contemplative conversation.)
- July 8 *"Not Perfect Yet"* led by David Fu
- July 15 *"Sense of Wonder"* led by Maureen Hayes
- July 22 *"A Religious Liberal Examines his Heart"* led by Warren Letsch
- July 29 *"Quiescence"* led by Carroll Canipe
- August 5 *"A Leap of Faith"* led by Diana Mosley
- August 12 *"A Way of Walking and Acting in the World"* led by Becky Walsh
- August 19 *"Living in Mystery, Walking in Wonder"* led by Eric Aldrich
- August 26: No Service: An all-day spiritual retreat for church leaders and potential leaders at Bon Secours Retreat Center, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. All are welcome.



Warm Regards,
Eric

Religious Education



Summer is here and the rhythms of our days change to accommodate our new schedules with vacations (and then catching up from vacations!), camps, and relaxing with family and friends on our minds. The

rhythm of our religious education program changes in the summer, too, but it definitely does not slow down! We are developing workshops based on Hebrew Scriptures for the elementary-aged program, refining the middle school *Neighboring Faiths* lessons, and creating an exciting high school program focused on social responsibility. Summer is our time to evaluate what we accomplished during the past year and what we want to accomplish during the coming year. It's a time for reflection and a time for envisioning the future.

This summer is especially challenging, as the work of the RE program shifts from the capable hands of a professional Director of Religious Education to the hands of volunteers. We have a strong RE Committee and we are keeping the RE program moving forward, but we still need **your help**. In terms of recruiting for next year, we are in search of -

- Two people to lead our *Picture This* workshop. What does this mean? It means making a difference in the lives of Channing's children by assisting them in meeting their own spiritual needs and their responsibilities to others. It means being part of the team working to keep our RE program strong, effective, and moving forward during this time of transition. It means ensuring that every child will have an RE class to attend each Sunday.

As a workshop leader, you will teach about 12 times during the months of September through May. All lessons are prepared for you and materials are gathered together ready for

you to use the morning you are scheduled to teach. You will need to read the lessons ahead of time and be ready to work with the class on Sunday morning.

- Another person to join our middle school teaching team; we're using the *Neighboring Faiths Year 1* curriculum and will explore Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.
- People to work with our high school youth in developing a high school program that better meets the needs of these fabulous teenagers.

You do not need to have a child in the religious education program to volunteer. It is very difficult to fully staff our program by relying solely on members and friends who have children or youth attending Channing. Religious Education is part of the whole ministry of Channing Memorial Church. Come join us and be a part of the future.

Chalice Lighters

Is there a special day that your child wants to light the chalice? On (or near) their birthday, perhaps? Near an important family anniversary? By signing up early, you are (almost) guaranteed your date and it also helps the RE Committee in their planning and running of the program.

Happy Birthday

Kent (3rd)

Abby (3rd)

Asha (4th)

Gabriel (4th)

Steven (7th)

Heather (8th)

Erin (19th)

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Religious Education - continued from p. 4)

Hill (23rd)

Strickland (26th)

Looking Ahead in RE

Remember - ALL children and youth must be registered to participate in religious education classes. Please turn in your bright orange registration form PRIOR to the start of RE classes in September.

In September, we will have a Teacher Orientation and a Parent Meeting. Keep watching this column for these important dates.

Please contact me to volunteer in the RE program and/or if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours,

Kris Tyssowski

Religious Education Committee, Chair

DRE@channingmc.org

Update on the Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Process

Hello All. Not much has happened since I spoke at the annual meeting at the end of May. The DRE position has been advertised in a number of no-cost venues. There was one "nibble", but nothing came of it. Steve Williams, the search committee chair, has recently obtained contact information for about 10 of the area UU Congregations, and will coordinate the posting of our ad in their newsletters. Finally, the committee will be meeting again soon to decide on how to make initial use of their advertising budget. That's all for now.

Care,

David Fu

Adult Religious Education

The Adult Religious Education Committee met on June 12th to evaluate this year's program and to begin preliminary planning for the coming church year. We are excited about the possibilities of beginning a movie/book discussion group and of conducting an online course on Unitarian Universalist theology, among other offerings.

Ken Grim, Chair

Long Range Planning Process: Continuing the Conversations

In our June newsletter article on the long range planning process, we noted that we felt we needed more input (back and forth discussion, or conversations) from, and among, Channing members, friends, and leaders to better discern the direction the church wants to go in the future.

To help get this input, the Long Range Planning (LRP) committee's first recommendation after the March worship service discussions was that congregation leaders (current and potential future leaders), including the LRP committee, work on improving leadership skills, especially communication skills.

Specifically, the committee felt that everyone with a leadership role in the congregation, however small the task, should facilitate conversation, talking *with* members, and *listening* – and, by demonstration, share those skills with the rest of the congregation. A goal is that congregation members, friends, and leaders--by talking *together* about their everyday hopes, concerns, dreams, and needs, and *listening* to each other--will reveal (to themselves and church leadership) where Channing should head in the next years. In this way, we'll

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(Long Range Planning - continued from p. 5)

ALL be involved in planning the future of Channing Memorial Church.

The Board Retreat June 17th was a first step in this learning/improvement process. Members of the LRP committee and the Board will continue building conversation skills through the summer by each leading a Summer Sunday Worship Service on a particular theme or topic (see list of Summer Worship Services held at Bethany Lane on page 3 in this newsletter). As an integral part of each of these summer worship services, the leader will facilitate conversation among the worship service attendees on the worship service theme or topic.

In August (the 26th), a second retreat (this time it will be called an 'Advance') will occur at the Bon Secours Retreat Center in Marriottsville, and is open to anyone interested in the future of the congregation. The Advance will include activities that will further help everyone be, talk, listen, and work together.

Then, each month from autumn into spring, the LRP committee will facilitate conversations, similar to the ones in the summer, on a variety of topics and questions. Some will be as part of Sunday services, some will be after Sunday services, and some in evenings at Bethany Lane or at someone's home. We hope you will all be able to participate in some or all of the activities and conversations during the upcoming months that will help discern the future of Channing Memorial Church.

Maureen Hayes and Lorraine Hughes
Long Range Planning Committee

Pastoral Concerns

Lucas Freyer was in a car accident several days ago night and received bad sprains in the neck and a badly broken arm. He is home now.

We wish Lucas a speedy recovery.

Stewardship

Treasurer's Message

Many of you will be enjoying your summer and will start attending church again in September. Please remember that we still have bills in the summer (Susan's salary, rent, etc), so could you please send a check for your pledge payments to the church office. The address at the office is Channing Memorial Church, 3230 Bethany Lane, Suite 4, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Cash flow is always an issue. Thank you.

Giant Scrip

If you purchase Giant Supermarket debit cards from Channing Memorial Church, the church receives 4% of every dollar. This is an easy way to contribute to your church. Just purchase the cards from Warren Letsch by writing a check to Channing Memorial Church, and writing "debit card" on the memo line. Cards come in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$25, and \$10. Mail those requests to the church office also, Attn: W. Letsch.

Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

UU Camps and Conferences

SUUSI 2007: To Live Fully

Date: July 15-21, 2007

Place: Blacksburg, VA

SUUSI (Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute), a diverse, intergenerational community of about 1,000 people, gathers in July, on the Virginia Tech campus, to explore our interconnections, learn new ways of seeing our world and each other, delight in the joys of meeting old friends and making new ones, share outdoor adventures, dance and sing.

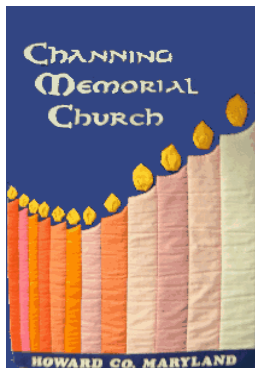
Registration and a promotional video are available online at www.suusi.org.

UUMAC

Date: July 22-28, 2007

Place: Center Valley, PA

UUMAC (Unitarian Universalist Mid-Atlantic Community), a diverse community of about 200 people, meets each year at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA, about five miles southeast of Allentown, to learn, grow, retreat, and recreate together. Come alone or bring the whole family. More information is available on their website at www.uumac.org.



Summer Study Group on "The Left Hand of God"

First Meeting: Tuesday evening, July 10, 2007, at 7:30PM

Summer Study Group--Join members of the Baltimore Network of Spiritual Progressives Chapter and friends for a 4-week study group about Rabbi Michael Lerner's book *The Left Hand of God*. We will read and discuss this book in a private home. This is the book that outlines the Covenant with America and the spiritual progressive movement. All are welcome.

Contact Roberta Van Meter at 410-235-3811 or msvee10@yahoo.com for further information.

Open Position

Part-Time Office Assistant at UCC

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia is looking for a permanent person to replace our temporary Office Assistant beginning July 2nd.

The position will remain 9 hours per week, supplemented by office volunteers as we have been doing. The job requirements are experience in office practices, use of a PC workstation, organizing an office environment, and time management. The candidate must be able to prioritize effectively, take initiative, and communicate effectively. This is a year-round position, working Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for 3 hours each.

For a complete job description and/or an employment application, email doac@uucolumbia.net or call 410-381-0097 and leave a message for Paula Linn.

Opportunities for Participation At Channing Memorial Church

Are you looking for ways to become more deeply involved at Channing? Are you looking for fun, opportunities for greater spiritual growth, intellectual enrichment, or just a way to get better acquainted with other members and friends?

Following are a few examples of ways to get involved:

Covenant Circles

Led by trained facilitators, these small groups meet twice each month. Members deepen their relationships with one another by sharing their stories and spiritual journeys through facilitated conversation. Contact the Rev. LaMar for further information.

Chomp, Munch, and Chat (CMC) Dinners

These informal, small-group dinners are great ways to get to know other Channing members and friends. Some groups meet in homes for potluck dinners, some meet for dinner in restaurants, some are for adults only, while others are family-oriented.

Women's' Spirituality Circle

The Women's Spirituality Circle explores various spiritual paths and practices, sometimes in a knowledge-based way, but usually combined with an experiential component. If you are interested in attending or have questions, call Donna Letszch at 410-461-9904.

New to Unitarian Universalism

Winter sessions are held on Sunday afternoons from 12:00 noon-2:00 pm.

Place: 3230 Bethany Lane,
Suite 4, Ellicott City

Contact: Rev. Susan LaMar

Classes are led by the Rev. LaMar and a lay leader. This six-session orientation program is invaluable for those wishing to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and Channing Memorial Church.

Adult Religious Education Classes

Dates, times, places, and course offerings: see Adult Religious Education Brochure and the *Channing Connection* notices.

Committees

If you would like to add your talents and energy to a committee that ministers to Channing members and friends or to the community at large, you are welcome and encouraged to join. Current committees include the Worship Committee/Worship Associates, Children's Religious Education Committee, Adult Religious Education Committee, Membership Committee, Music Committee, Caring Committee, Social Responsibility Committee, and Welcoming Congregation Team. Contact the appropriate committee chair, Reverend LaMar, or any Board member if you are interested in any of these committees.

ESCAPE TO VERMONT

September 21-23, 2007

Thirteenth Annual B&B Weekend offered by the UU Church of Rutland, VT.

Enjoy the beauty of Vermont, UU hospitality, and a choice of guided activities: hiking, kayaking, visiting the studios of local artists, soaring tour, touring historic sites and quaint towns, and much more.

Registration is required by August 1, \$250 (single) and \$450 (double); after August 1, \$275 (single) and \$475 (double).

For more information contact uufoliagevermont@yahoo.com or (802) 353-7969.

July 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 No Service	2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7
8 Worship Service at Bethany Lane, 10:00-11:00am	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Worship Service at Bethany Lane, 10:00-11:00am	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Worship Service at Bethany Lane, 10:00-11:00am	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Worship Service at Bethany Lane, 10:00-11:00am	30					

Channing Memorial Church
Unitarian Universalist
3230 Bethany Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042

On the web:
www.ChanningMC.org

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH'S:

Mission

To build a church of liberal religious worship that assists its members in meeting their own spiritual needs and their responsibilities to others.

Vision

Derive a common spiritual center from Jewish and Christian roots, drawing inspiration from other world religions. Promote religious education for all ages. Provide a welcoming, supporting and caring community. Identify and respond to needs in the larger community

Office (Bethany Lane): 3230 Bethany Lane, Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-203-0474

Services: Northfield Elementary School, Ellicott City

Minister: Reverend Susan LaMar (minister@channingmc.org)
410-203-0474 - office

Minister's office hours: Tues, Wed, Fri. 3-5 p.m.
Sat. mornings and other times by appointment.

Directions to Office: Rt. 40 West. Turn right on Bethany Lane (after Enchanted Forest Shopping Center). Turn left into small office building parking lot driveway (just beyond trees); Suite 4 is on left side of building.

Directions to Northfield ES: *From the south:* Rt. US-29 to Rt. 100E. Exit at first exit (Long Gate Parkway). At second light, turn left (Rt. 103-Montgomery Road, which becomes St. Johns Lane). Go through 3 traffic lights and turn left at "T" intersection, which is Columbia Road. Turn right at next "T" intersection onto Northfield Road and go to Northfield Elementary School at end of street. *From the North:* Rt. US-29 S to Rt. 103 (exit 23), toward St. Johns Lane. Turn right onto St. Johns Lane. After .1 mile, turn left onto Columbia Road. Turn right onto Northfield Road and go to Northfield Elementary School at end of street.