

THE CHANNING CONNECTION

The Newsletter of
Channing Memorial Church

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January 2010

Newsletter Staff

Co-Editors:

Ken Grim
Lorraine Hughes

Production Crew:

Ann Iseri
Oscar Iseri

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We are a
Welcoming
Congregation



President's Letter

"The Challenges Before Us: A Recap of the Fall Stewardship Meeting"



It has been quite some time since I've written to the congregation; correspondence has never been my strong suit. However, I felt it extremely important to update the congregation in every way possible about the challenges before us. Yet, this is not message of despair, but rather good news about the many exciting things that the board, specifically, and our congregation, in general, are doing to rise to the occasion and address the needs of our church.

On Sunday, December 13th, we discussed these needs at length at the Fall Stewardship meeting. It was well attended, and the conversation was very constructive. Topics included the church finances, the work of the Space and Facilities Task force, and lastly, planning for Rev. LaMar's sabbatical (which is long overdue). In terms of the church finances, our church is like many other organizations around the country that have been dealing with the pressures of the recession. Many non-profit organizations have seen 20% drops in contributions, so it was gratifying that our Annual Campaign last year actually had some modest growth. Yet, the reality for Channing is that we are running at a deficit. Last fiscal year we closed the books with a deficit of several thousand dollars. Furthermore, this fiscal year we passed a deficit budget. At the present time, we can predict a deficit at the end of this year of as much as \$15,000. Rising health care costs, and our commitment to becoming a Fair Compensation Congregation, are the primary reasons for this deficit. However, there is also good news. Our endowment, which is heavily invested in the stock market, has recovered its value back to the pre-recession levels. At one point, we were down by almost 30%. Thus, we have a safety net to ensure that salaries are paid, rent is paid, and church operations, in general, continue smoothly. We are truly blessed to have this endowment to cover our expenses in the short term. Yet, we need to be true to our commitment to stewardship and thus start contributing to the endowment, repay the amount drawn from it, and eventually help it grow.

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Minister:

The Rev. Susan
LaMar

410-203-0474
(office)

410-772-9144
(home)

minister@
channingmc.org

President:

Eric Aldrich ('10)
443-535-0554

Vice President:

Carroll Canipe ('11)

Trustees:

Pam El-Dinary ('11)
(Secretary)

Bill Shoemaker ('10)
(Treasurer)

Lorraine Hughes ('10)

Lynne Schaefer ('11)

Erik Ekstrom ('11)

RE Director:

Erin Gallagher

(President's Letter - continued from p. 1)

So, what are the next steps for the financial health of Channing? In general, it is best for the Annual Campaign to be sufficiently successful such that it meets the financial needs of the congregation for the upcoming fiscal year. This is a characteristic of any financially healthy congregation. Additional fundraising events, such as our annual auction, should be used only for supplemental fundraising, such as adding to the Music Fund, growing the endowment, or even saving for the future. Why not have a building fund? However, we still rely on the auction to meet some of our basic expenses. We need to change. Thus, although we will have some supplemental fundraising this year to try to close our deficit gap, as a congregation we need to focus primarily on the Annual Campaign for 2010 - 2011. To be successful, to fulfill our stewardship commitment to Channing Memorial Church, the Annual Campaign will need to grow by 13% - 15%. That's a big jump for all of us, but it simply needs to be done. The Annual Campaign this year will be a traditional canvass format as we have done in the past. Planning will begin in earnest in January, training will occur in February, and the Annual Campaign itself will start on March 1st and end on March 31st. I will be looking for volunteers in January, but in reality all of us will need to "volunteer" to work on the Annual Campaign this year in terms of making sure that we meet our goal. We have to take care of our church.

In terms of the Space and Facilities Task Force, we have spent the Fall thinking "out of the box" and have embarked on an extensive fact-finding mission. Special thanks to Virginia Voigt and Stephanie Aldrich for their volunteer efforts. In general, it would be ideal for us to have a more visible location for our Sunday services as well as our church office. This is fundamental to the mission, vision, and ministries of any church. You have to be "out there" and involved in the community. In addition, the renovations currently underway at Northfield Elementary could bring sudden surprises that require us to move. So we need to prepare. The task force has been looking at other schools in several school systems, community meeting space, private organization space (e.g., Kiwanis clubs), non-profit organization space (e.g., The Howard County Conservancy), and commercial real estate, as well as other congregations that might be interested in having us share space with them. No idea is too crazy. The challenges we have encountered mean we have yet to find the perfect solution. For example, a perfect location but there is no storage space. The prospect of lugging all our stuff to set up the sanctuary and to support religious education activities every Sunday was not met with great enthusiasm. Another example is great worship and storage space, but inadequate parking, or we would have to have Sunday services at either 8:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m. Yet another example is good space, good storage, and good parking, yet too expensive.

(Continued on p. 3)



William Ellery Channing

(President's Letter—continued from p. 2)

But we are only just beginning. Stay tuned. There will be more information available at the Council of Committees meeting in February, as well as the Spring Stewardship Meeting in March.

Lastly, I wanted to spend some time talking about Sabbatical planning. Reverend LaMar, like all Unitarian Universalist ministers, accrues one month of sabbatical time for each year she serves as our minister. She has yet to use her sabbatical time, but if you take a moment to consider that she has been with us for many years, you quickly realize that she has already earned 5 months of sabbatical leave. Planning for a sabbatical is a large undertaking for a congregation. It is much more than simply arranging for Sunday services. There is so much more. This is a major project for the Board, and Lynne Schaeffer and Lorraine Hughes will be providing leadership for us as we begin the process of preparing for Rev. LaMar's sabbatical. The exact dates have not yet been determined. That comes later. The first steps involve informing the congregation that sabbatical planning has begun; addressing any questions or concerns; and, in general, assessing the emotional state of the congregation as it considers the possibility of being "on its own" while Rev. LaMar is away. At the Fall Stewardship meeting, we started that process in earnest. Like the other issues discussed in this letter, stay tuned and become involved. The Council of Committees, Spring Stewardship meeting, and the Annual Campaign/Canvass will be important opportunities to discuss these issues in greater detail.

Thus, we have many challenges, but that is typical for any church. This is all simply part of what being a church is all about. The Channing Memorial Church family will come together, like any other family, to take care of its needs and to plan for the future. I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the new year.

Warm Regards,
Eric

Ministerial Musings



Well, shucks . . . I thought I moved south to get away from the snow! I write this as a front-end loader scrapes away at our cul-de-sac and all the neighbors stand around cheering. We are pretty exhausted from moving snow out from around our cars, carrying it to the few corners where it won't be in anyone's way. But our arms are only so long, and can throw snow onto drifts only so high. Give me some *machinery* - it can build those mounds halfway to heaven! And as the sun already allows the black asphalt to show through, I am reminded that, growing up in Syracuse, this kind of weather began in November and didn't end until March. So I say a little prayer of gratitude and return to sweeping the stoop.

Such a lot of work for something that is going to melt anyway! It is another reminder of impermanence. The generations go and the generations come, but the earth remains forever. And yet there is something about the little community that forms in the snow - we help each other in ways we are too busy to do for much of the year. The children frolic, the adults work . . . and even with all the grumbling there is also a lot of smiling and laughter. We learn a name that we didn't know before; we play "musical cars" as we try to make sure there isn't even one parking space too few for our little corner of the world. The new relationships may not remain forever, but they grow a little deeper and last a little longer. The nights may be longer right now, the darkness deep, but the sun reflects gloriously off the snowdrifts and the stars shine brightly above.

Blessings to all of you as the light returns, drawing us into a new year.

Love, peace, and grace,
Susan

January Worship Services



January 3. A Tempered Life.

Temperance -- self-control -- is one of the Greek virtues. The word was used in the nineteenth century to refer specifically to control of the use of alcohol, which was rampant. We will take this opportunity to explore addiction, which touches almost every family in one way or another.

Reverend LaMar; David Fu, Worship Associate.

January 10. Promise and Covenant.

Churches are a fabric of overlapping covenants, a word with a deep and rich religious history. Today we will review its meaning as we engage and celebrate the covenant with our Director of Religious Education Erin Gallagher.

Reverend LaMar; Kim Metz, Worship Associate.

January 17. Walking Forward, Sliding Back.

Martin Luther King Day is a time to reflect on race relations (although I hope not the only time we do so!) We will do so today.

Reverend LaMar; Ostara Hollyoak, Worship Associate.

January 24. Humility.

So often we hear humility confused with humiliation. One is a virtue, one is fraught with pain. Done well, humility is not an exercise in "one-downmanship," but a solid grounding in reality.

Reverend LaMar; Kim Metz, Worship Associate.

January 31. Mardi Gras is the Healing Grace for Those Who Care Too Much!

In this sermon, Rev. Dr. Marie deYoung will share her experiences of serving Post-Katrina New Orleans and coastal Mississippi as these communities continue to rebuild their churches and their neighborhood institutions.

Rev. Dr. Marie deYoung served as an Army chaplain, a parish minister, and a community advocate for education, violence prevention, and an ethic of peace and justice. She is teaching in West Philadelphia, having returned from Louisiana where she helped reopen schools in the Ninth Ward and throughout the New Orleans region. She is a volunteer consultant minister for the Gulf Coast UU Fellowship, located in Gulfport, Mississippi, in the middle of 23 miles of coastal communities that were decimated by Hurricane Katrina. Ostara Hollyoak, Worship Associate.

DRE Covenanting Workshop

January 9, 2010, 9:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m.

Bethany Lane

A workshop to develop a covenant between our congregation and our Director of Religious Education (DRE), Erin Gallagher, has been scheduled on January 9, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Bethany Lane. This workshop will be facilitated by the JPD. The goal is to create a covenant that clearly spells out aspirations, expectations and responsibilities of both the congregation and our DRE. **All members of the congregation are invited to participate.** The proposed covenant will be presented during the service on January 10, 2010. This is the last required step under a LREDA grant awarded to Channing, and successful completion will result in \$3,000 being awarded to our church.

Adult Religious Education

New to UU

When: Sundays, January 10 - February 2, 2010

Where: Bethany Lane

Are you new to the Channing Memorial Church Community? Been around a while but want to learn more? Reverend LaMar and Ken Grim are prepared to offer a class in "New to UU" -- all we need are five interested people! This is a terrific way to get acquainted with a few others, learn about the deep and rich history of Unitarian Universalism, begin to articulate your own spirituality in the company of others, and prepare for membership. We have tentatively scheduled the classes for January 10 through February 2, 2010, from 12:00 -2:00 p.m. at Bethany Lane (a light lunch will be served). Please contact one or both of us if you are interested:

susgrace@verizon.net or kengrim@verizon.net .

Contemplative Conversations

When: January 6, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Where: Bethany Lane

Join Reverend LaMar for meditation and quiet conversation about your life, your spirituality, and your world. If you are hungry for spiritual deepening, this is an opportunity to move inward in a small, intimate group setting.

Board Bits



At the December 15 Board meeting, there was much activity. The Board approved a new child care policy that provides more structure that will make it easier to have child care at more Channing events. The Board approved the position description for a new music accompanist. Several highly qualified individuals have already applied, and the Music Committee is actively engaged in selecting our accompanist. The Board saw a demonstration of our new Church Windows financial system that has been brought up by our able bookkeeper, Dan Vallone, and Treasurer, Bill Shoemaker. We were all very excited that our finances will now be better organized and accessible to all of us. More frequent reports that provide much more information are in the works for us. The Board confirmed that the Director of Religious Education Covenanting event will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2010, from 9 to 3. All are invited to attend. The Board had further discussion about sabbatical planning, reviewing input received from the congregation on December 13.

Lynne Schaefer

Stewardship

Scrip/Gift/Debit Cards

Purchase Giant, Safeway, AMC, Borders, Home Depot, Lowes, Sears, Panera Bread, Jiffy Lube, Bob Evans, Staples, Jo-Ann, L.L. Bean, Michaels, Macys, and Old Navy. Other cards can be ordered within a week. 5 % (or more) of every dollar goes to Channing Memorial Church! This is an easy way to contribute to Channing. Purchase the cards from Warren Letsch (find him at the finance and administration table) by writing a check to Channing Memorial Church, with "debit card" on the memo line. Cards come in a variety of denominations.

Communications

Website Update



If you are a committee chair who has special events or information that you would like to appear on the Channing webpage, or if you want to change or delete something that is currently on the webpage for your activity or program area, please contact our webmaster, John Metz (johnmetz@gmail.com).

If you have events, meetings, or other activities that you would like listed on the web calendar, please contact Lorraine Hughes (lhughes102@comcast.net). (Don't forget to also contact Ken Grim (kengrim@verizon.net) to place the event on the newsletter Activities Calendar.)

Order of Service Announcements

Lauren Hilliard is coordinator for the announcements in the Sunday order of service. Please email your announcements to her by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays (laurentravel@yahoo.com).

Sermon Copies

Copies of each Sunday's sermon are on the Congregational Life table at the back of the sanctuary. If you are a Sunday school teacher who misses the sermon, or if you would simply like a copy, please take one. Also, Reverend LaMar is always willing to email you a copy, so please don't hesitate to ask for one.

Green Committee



There are SO many things each of us can do to help the interdependent web of which we are all part (our 7th principle). The Green Committee will be giving you one suggestion each month in this newsletter. Please feel free to also give us ideas or ask questions. Committee members are Dot and Jay Rockstroh, Ron and Rose Marie Meservey, Anne Kyle, and Becky Walsh.

Tip for the Month: Pay attention to your gas and electric bill. Compare the last month's usage (kilowatt hours and therms) to the same month of the previous year (all these figures are on your bill each month). Strive to reduce your usage over time.

Social Responsibility

The Social Responsibility Committee has been hard at work and our congregation has been up to the challenge. We collected money for the Domestic Violence Center and delivered a van full of gifts to two families in need. Not even a blizzard stopped our congregation from coming through for our neighbors. Congratulations for a job well done.

- Cindy Williams

Flower Committee!

Claire Kim, Lorraine Hughes, Dot Rockstroh, and Peg Carter would like to add to the beauty of our altar table.

If you would like to acknowledge a happy event or to memorialize a loved one through a floral arrangement or plant for the altar, please contact Peg Carter (410-465-8192). A minimum of two weeks notice would be appreciated.

How to Become Involved at Channing

Following are just a few examples of ongoing ways to become more involved at Channing:

Covenant Circles

Led by trained facilitators, these small groups meet twice each month. (Contact Reverend LaMar for further information.)

Chomp, Munch, and Chat (CMC) Dinners

These informal, small-group dinners or other activities are great ways to get to know others.

(Contact Jennifer McCaw

(Jennifer.mcca@verizon.net) for additional information.)

Women's' Spirituality Circle

The Women's Circle explores various spiritual paths and practices. (Contact Donna Letzsch, 410-461-9904, dletzsch3@comcast.net.)

Channing Men's Group

This is a service and social group of and for Channing men. (Contact Eric Aldrich at 443-535-0554, ealdrich@jhmi.edu.)

UU Singles

UUs from Channing Memorial Church and the UU Congregation of Columbia have organized a singles group. (Contact Lindsay Stroh, 410-744-1288, strohlin@verizon.net with UU Singles in the subject line.)

Worship Associates

Participate in worship and learn to lead it! Writers, artists, and poets are particularly needed. (Contact Reverend LaMar.)

Musicians and Music Lovers

Join the choir. (Contact Margot Vincent, 410-730-8206, muvincent@yahoo.com.) Play an instrument. Or help the minister select appropriate recorded music.

Sunday morning

Help set up our worship space (contact Mike Hill, 301-854-1289, Joan.marie.hill@census.gov); usher (contact Carroll Canipe, 410-750-7843, cscanipe@verizon.net); greet (contact Evelyn or Ken Grim (410-997-9135, evgrim@verizon.net or

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(How to Become Involved - continued from p. 7)

kengrim@verizon.net); host coffee hour after the service (contact Diana Mosley, 410-977-0533, dwmobrr@comcast.net); provide flowers for the chancel table (contact Peg Carter, 410-465-8192, punchjudy@comcast.net).

Children's Religious Education

Enroll your children in Sunday school. Or, you may wish to teach Sunday school, or be part of the Religious Education Committee. Contact Lynn Schaefer (410-465-4310, lschaefer@umbc.edu) or Donna Letzsch (410-461-9904, dletzsch3@comcast.net).

Adult Religious Education

A variety of classes and courses are offered each year. Book groups, study groups, classes, pastoral issues, meditation ... we attempt to respond to requests. Or you might like to lead an adult class, or be part of the Adult Religious Education Committee to plan and offer programs. Help organize the church library. Contact Lorraine Hughes (410-747-5902, lhughes102@comcast.net).

Caring Committee

Send cards, give rides, cook meals; whatever someone needs in illness or crisis. Or, if you are the one in need, ask for help. Contact Cheryl Gwynn-Haymes (410-465-1247, csggh.928@gmail.com).

Membership Committee

Help newcomers become oriented. Help think of activities or needs that will help others become assimilated into the church community. Coordinate greeters, making sure that people are welcomed and that their questions are answered. Contact Evelyn or Ken Grim (410-997-9135, evgrim@verizon.net or kengrim@verizon.net).

Communications

Newsletter, website, publicity, Listserve/Yahoo Group. Contact Rebecca Birnie (410-730-6454, rebeccabirnie@verizon.net) for help in connecting with the right person to get involved.

Social Responsibility

Help organize or raise money for the good of the wider community. Provide meals once a month for the Westside Shelter in Catonsville. Contact Cindy Williams (410-480-4660, familywilliams1@verizon.net).

Green Committee

Help us learn to live, as individuals and as a congregation, in a more environmentally-aware manner. Contact Dot Rockstroh (DotRockstroh@verizon.net).

Inclement Weather



Winter is upon us, and occasionally Howard County closes school property due to inclement weather.

Here are three ways to find out if church is cancelled:

1. Check your email. Reverend LaMar will send out a notice as soon as she finds out from the Howard County Community Service Office if the schools will be closed.
2. Call the church office (410-203-0474). Reverend LaMar will put a message on the answering machine.
3. Call the Howard County Inclement Weather Hotline directly (410-313-6827).

- Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals
- Learn about hosting people in your home to earn extra money

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) offers a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel to different cities and stay in reasonably priced accommodations or become a host and enjoy meeting new friends.



www.UUreHome.com
43 Vermont Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-281-3253

For more information, visit
www.UUreHome.com
or write to
info@uurehome.com

January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI 1	SAT 2
3 Worship Service at Northfield, 10-11 a.m.	4	5 Board Planning Meeting at Bethany Lane, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.	6 Contemplative Conversations at Bethany Lane, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	7	New Year's Day	9 DRE Covenanting Workshop at Bethany Lane, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
10 Children's Chapel 10:00—11:00 a.m. Worship Service at Northfield, 10-11 a.m. New to UU class at Bethany Lane, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	11	12 Leadership Development and Nominating Comm. Meeting at Bethany Lane, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Religious Education Committee Meeting at Bethany Lane, 7:30 p.m.	13	14	15	16
17 Worship Service at Northfield, 10-11 a.m. New to UU class at Bethany Lane, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	18 Martin Luther King Day	19 Board Meeting at Bethany Lane, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.	20 Worship Team Meeting at Bethany Lane, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.	21	22	23
24 Worship Service at Northfield, 10-11 a.m. New to UU class at Bethany Lane, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. Newsletter Deadline, 7:00 p.m.	25	26 Music Committee Meeting at Bethany Lane, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	27	28	29	30
31 Worship Service at Northfield, 10-11 a.m. New to UU class at Bethany Lane, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.						

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 / 410-772-9144 - home

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). Office is on left, Suite 4 on left 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.