



# The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 31, Issue 1

January 2024

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## Minister's Musings



Dear Channing members and friends,

Each time I venture into the outside world, I pause and take note of the cold – can I see my breath in this crisp, cool air? This December, I have embraced the night sky and the cycles of nature. After the recent winter solstice, as the days slowly become longer and nights grow shorter, we enter, together, into a new year. Surrounded by brown foliage and frost covered grass, I invite us to pause and reflect on this cultural tradition: What resolutions can we make to carry into this New Year? Let us take an open and honest inventory of ourselves and see what attributes we want to grow and strengthen and note those which we would rather let go of. This becomes a reflection of our own inner workings, our faith, and on those inevitable transgressions. Together may we enter this year with faith, love, and compassion abundant.

I offer questions for each of us to reflect on, questions we will each have our own, unique and personal responses to: How can we foster more love in ourselves and share more love with the world? How can we be intentional in crafting lives of compassion? How can we speak words of love and not anger? How can we do our best in each moment, each day, whatever that may mean at the time? These questions all lead to one fundamental inquiry: How can we each, in our own way, engage with this introspection that can intentionally foster strength, growth, and meaning?

What does this mean as a people of faith? These wouldn't be the musings of your minister if I didn't invite you to engage with your own spirituality. Our spiritual journeys never end. We are called and challenged to grow as a people of faith, each on our own unique and beautiful journey. What can we intentionally bring to the year ahead? We can connect with the sacred – both within us and beyond. Both with that spark of the eternal found in our hearts, spirits, and souls as well as with that grand essence or mystery we encounter each time we engage with awe and wonder. We can commune with the beautiful. We can thank a sunset; we can openly offer delight for a mid-winter snowfall. Particularly as Unitar-



**We are a Welcoming  
Congregation**

## Wayside Pulpit

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.

—Confucius

(Continued on page 2)

**Minister**

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*To place an event on the calendar, in the Order of Service announcements, in the newsletter or in an allchanning email, send an email to:*  
[newsshare@channingmc.org](mailto:newsshare@channingmc.org)

Please send submittals for the February 2024 issue of *The Channing Connection* to [newsshare@channingmc.org](mailto:newsshare@channingmc.org) by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 21, 2023.**

*(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)*

ian Universalists, we can see the inner, innate goodness in each person – which is not always easy. We can engage with the holy, pausing in prayer or breathing in meditation. We can intentionally connect, in each of our days, with all that brings us life, joy, purpose, and meaning.

And yet, we must know that we are all imperfect beings in this intimate and messy world. During our Hanukkah service, we talked about connecting with that still, small voice within – that light of love or compassion kindled in our hearts. I bring this sentiment to this reflection because all of us, to one degree or another, need that kindled light within to guide us back home. We are innately good, worthy, and loving, yes. And yet, simply through living in an imperfect world, we gather assumptions, prejudice, anger, and hate. We engage with the sin of individualism, focusing on self and not our patchwork of siblings. We get lost, but we can find our way back home – back to love, and that innate goodness. This year, may we find our way back home, over and over and over again, offering a new resolution every time we wander.

So may we carry this with us as we enter the New Year. May we feed that which fosters the good, the loving, and the beautiful. May we relinquish that which is harmful as we find our way home. May we delve deep into introspection as we each connect with our own unique, beautiful, imperfect selves. May this new year be one of love, compassion, faith, and awe.

With love,  
*Rev. Jane*

Please complete the SURVEY regarding church life at Epiphany Lutheran Church and our ongoing relationship with them.

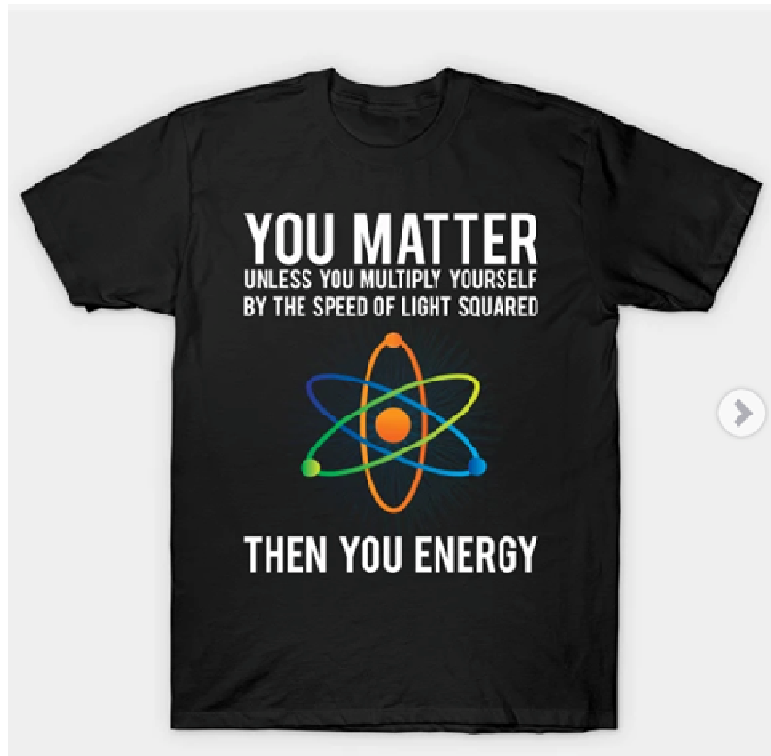
Follow this link: <https://forms.gle/1maH5eX8qWm2GCsPA>

The deadline to complete the survey is **January 10!**

(See page 5 for more details.)

Thank you!

## President's Column



This is a picture of the T-shirt I didn't get for Christmas.

Which is too bad because I love this T-shirt! I'm a big fan of wordplay. The more "dad" in a dad joke, the happier I am. In fact, a couple of friends and I swap funny and punny jokes via text regularly. I've been known to lean out the car window (Joe's driving) just to capture a snapshot when one appears on the sign at Clark's Ace Hardware on Route 40.

As much as this T-shirt tickles my funny bone, I also appreciate it for the insightful observations wrapped in its humor.

YOU MATTER. It's such a positive, affirming, and empowering message. One that's deeply resonant with the beliefs and values of our Unitarian Universalist faith. While "You matter" is not one of our principles, this statement undergirds them all.

Telling someone, "You matter," is the essence of our belief that every person is inherently worthy and has a right to live with dignity, love, and compassion. When individuals matter to us, we recognize the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for personal and spiritual growth. Our faith's "You matter" ethos reminds us to work toward a vision of Beloved Community worldwide.

YOU MATTER is a great message on its own, but another profound insight is hidden in the T-shirt's punchline. The joke reminds us that when we combine our energy and

*(continued on page 4)*

*(President's Column - continued from page 3)*

enthusiasm with that of others, our efforts multiply. Individually, our contributions are valuable, but when combined with the energy of others, they hold the power of transformation.

I love moments of shared energy! In October, our Outreach Team sparked a wonderful moment of shared energy when they signed us up as an exhibitor at the HoCo Pride 2023 Festival. One small committee reached out to fellow Channingites (and their minister!), inviting them to contribute time and enthusiasm to make our presence at the event meaningful. Our church's energy merged with that of other exhibitors, sponsors, and participants, creating a celebratory afternoon in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

And while I'm no Einstein, in this example, I see the collective strength that emerges when we honor and combine our diverse gifts.

These moments of shared energy are more than just activities, and herein lies the final insight I see in our T-shirt.

Our T-shirt states that mass can be converted into energy and energy back into mass. In this interplay between individual and collective energy, the energy of each individual contributes to the collective energy of the group, and, in turn, this collective energy fuels the enthusiasm and energy of the individuals within the group. Energy is contagious! We felt this at our annual auction, and we feel it at coffee hour. We feel it when we greet new friends and welcome new members. It was present at our Listening Session, where we quietly and deliberately considered differing perspectives born from individual experiences. And I can say definitively that Rev. Jane's positive energy reenergizes me!

Each step we take has the potential to propel us forward because, in those steps, we energize each other and ourselves. The interdependent web is at work in our community in so many ways, and our influence ripples out into the world.

So, here I am at the beginning of the new year without the coveted T-shirt but with the inspiration of its messages. We, Channing Memorial Church, matter in this world because YOU MATTER. In the months ahead, let's look for opportunities to generate more energy. Let's think of ourselves as light bulbs, inherently bright and luminous. Then we'll be ready to ask this very important question: What did the light bulb say to the electric generator? And deeply feel the answer: I really get a charge out of you!

All my best,

*Kris*

## Church Life at Epiphany Lutheran Church Survey



The Board of Trustees invites you to participate in a survey regarding church life at Epiphany Lutheran Church and our ongoing relationship with them. Your input is vital in shaping the future of our congregation, so please take a moment to share your thoughts and add your voice to the conversation. If you haven't already done so, the link to the survey is below. Thank you!

The survey consists of 10 open-ended questions designed to gather insights across various aspects of church life. Please take a moment to review all the questions before sharing your thoughts. Feel free to share your thoughts on as many questions as you find relevant. There's no expectation to answer every question if it doesn't resonate with you.

Thank you for completing this survey and for your commitment to this process. Your perspective matters!

Link to the survey: <https://forms.gle/1maH5eX8qWm2GCsPA>

## Recording of Congregational Listening Session Available



On November 29, a congregational listening session was held via Zoom. The gathering allowed members and friends to come together to express their thoughts and feelings, share successes and concerns, and give their input and perspectives about church life at Epiphany.

The session was recorded and a link to the video file can be found at: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GMg\\_cDV1vWWLJ3Xhog3MFmnJfRDZNHxh](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GMg_cDV1vWWLJ3Xhog3MFmnJfRDZNHxh)

The file, *video1744834013.mp4*, can be downloaded or viewed online.

## Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speech



Dear Channing members and friends,

It's not an uncommon question: How do I explain what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist? Many Unitarian Universalists are enthusiastic about their faith and congregation but can find it difficult to articulate exactly what their faith is. It can be hard to be concise! And yet, it is important to share who we are. This workshop aims to give attendees a starting point for talking about Unitarian Universalism in a way that feels genuine and meaningful. The hope is that by being prepared to speak about Unitarian Universalism, you will feel more comfortable sharing about our faith more often. What we have to offer is a blessing!

This will be held as a "Sundays After" session on January 14 from 12:00 - 1:30pm.

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,  
*Rev. Jane*

## ***The Four Agreements*** by Don Miguel Ruiz

Dear Channing members and friends,

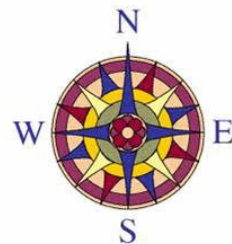
I invite you to a discussion about a book that helped change my outlook on life. Based on Toltec wisdom, Don Miguel Ruiz invites us to commit ourselves to concrete practices that help guide us towards living our best lives in this finite realm. Ruiz invites us into four agreements: being impeccable with our words, not taking anything personal, not making assumptions, and always doing our best. Through reflecting on quotes and themes of this helpful and inspiring book, we will reconfigure our relationships with one another and with ourselves. Be prepared to share from the heart in this small group discussion; you are held in love and compassion.

We will meet January 27 from 10-12pm at Park Ave.

Please RSVP to:  
[minister@channingmc.org](mailto:minister@channingmc.org) by January 20. Reading the book is necessary for this discussion. If you need financial help purchasing a book, please let me know.

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,  
*Rev. Jane*



### Wisdom Tales

Many faith traditions and cultures throughout millennia have shared wisdom, knowledge, and insights through fictional tales and parables. Each month, we'll explore a different story, allowing these ancient narratives to spark conversation and reflection. Join Rev. Jane to engage with these ancient tales.

Our standing meeting is the first Tuesday of the month, 11am-12pm, held on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/94007522019?pwd=MEhT1lKbDRIUWVtTm9WeTFDTERrdz09>

Meeting ID: 940 0752 2019

Passcode: 665527

### Lectio Divina

Our normal schedule is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. Next Meeting is **Jan. 9**. On zoom; Rev. Jane will send out the link and the poem, the link is also immediately below. Please let her know if you would like to be added to the list.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93324550758?pwd=VFLZkdES21odTNHK1pWZ1pZb114UT09>

Meeting ID: 933 2455 0758

Passcode: 250704

This ancient practice allows us the opportunity to delve deep into a chosen text. Each gathering we will focus on one poem. We will read through the selected text several times, with a different focus on every read-through. After each, we will pause for several minutes of silent reflection, which will be followed by each person sharing their unique reflection.

### Board Bits



The Board agreed to support a group of congregations that are submitting an amendment to Article II. The amendment proposes a change to the Equity section. This will be submitted to the UUA before the deadline of February 1st.

The Board discussed the logistics for the upcoming Governance Retreat and Stewardship meetings.

The Board discussed the importance of getting a good response to the survey about our future at Epiphany Lutheran Church. They also set a deadline for completing it as January 10th. Please submit your responses by then.

*Angela Lesperance, Secretary*

## The Channing Care Team is Here For You

As Reverend Jane mentioned in her Minister's Column last month, "We journey together through all of life's ills, helping one another through death, illness, and mourning in a unique and special way. We tend to one another with great compassion and care not often found in the world at large."

One way we do that is through the work of Channing's Care Team, which includes Reverend Jane, Marian V., Sheri T. and our newest member, Gail S.

Our small but mighty Care Team supports Channing's members and friends in need in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Cards and calls of support
- Home visits
- Meals
- Occasional rides to church and or local appointments upon request, subject to availability of volunteers.

Are you looking for an easy, occasional, and meaningful way to volunteer without joining a committee? If so, send an email to [careteam@channingmc.org](mailto:careteam@channingmc.org) and let us know if you're available in any capacity to help the Care Team with one or more of the tasks listed above.

Our Care Team is here for you.

Please reach out to us with any needs or concerns at [careteam@channingmc.org](mailto:careteam@channingmc.org).

When you come to church on Sunday mornings, check out our new BLESSINGS Jar on the Welcome Table, where you can also drop off a confidential message of Joy or Concern for the Care Team.

I look forward to connecting with you.

-Sheri T.

### Young Adults Game Night



The Young Adults Game Night meets every **first Wednesday of the month**

**from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.** We'll have games and conversation. Anyone in their 20's, 30's and 40's is welcome. This event is open to the public and folks are encouraged to share this event with anyone who may be interested. Contact *Patrick B.* for information.

### Young Adult Small Group

Each month, our conversations range from imagination to courage to vulnerability. Before each gathering, we engage in individual reflection guided by a monthly Soul Matters packet. Delving deep into our reflections each month leads to meaningful conversation, and the prep work offers thoughts to reflect on between our gatherings.

We gather the **third Wednesday of every month from 7-9pm** for dinner and conversation. Young Adults include anyone in their 20s, 30s or 40s. It is always a good time, and we would love for you to join us!



## Planned Giving at Channing

### Let's Consider Planned Giving

If you are like others in your church, you hold in your heart a desire to assure the future of Channing Memorial Church -- a community and a place where we invite seekers, connect souls, and ignite compassion-- for future generations. Planned giving gives us a path to reflect on that commitment.

Planned giving is a term used to describe a gift outside the annual pledge, at an amount generally larger than we might give out of our day-to-day income. The most traditional method is to include a specific bequest in our wills. Some members have already done that, and it is not difficult to do.

“We give to Unitarian Universalism because we value the hope of our denomination in these perilous times. We UUs are called to stand in love and justice, to be present and accounted for, to be a safe place for vulnerable people, to be a source of strength and love, to stand up to hate and bigotry and fear. This is why we come together, this is why we give generously – to pool our resources to bring about the world we seek.”  
Whose quote???

### Types of Giving You Might Consider

When daily worries about the economy, the political environment, and the cost of living make giving more out of ordinary income problematic, it is sometimes easier to think about including a more sizable bequest as part of our estate planning.

We encourage everyone to give it some thought and discuss the possibilities with your estate and/or tax advisor. A specific bequest can be included in your will. Please feel free to talk with any member of the Stewardship Committee if you have questions or thoughts about the idea. Year-end financial and tax planning is a normal exercise. Note however, we do not offer tax or financial planning advice and we do urge you to consult with your advisors.

You can contribute to the operating fund or the Vision and Growth fund.

- The operating fund contains the resources Channing uses for normal everyday expenses - building, heat, salaries, administrative and program expenses.
- The Vision and Growth Fund is a special fund Channing has to support significant church initiatives which are not part of the normal operating fund budget - such as the move to Corporate Court.

Additional options for giving before the end of the year or for planned giving at any time:

- Life insurance policies
- Charitable remainder trusts.
- People who need to complete their giving plans to meet their charitable contribution targets might want to give before the end of the year for the tax benefits to apply to the current tax year.
- Those age 70½ and older who must take Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)

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*(Planned Giving - continued from page 9)*

from their retirement accounts can transfer their RMDs directly to Channing, which for many can have tax benefits, even with the 2018 tax changes.

- Contributions can be made as a prepaid pledge for your future commitment to Channing. By doing so, you may be able to maximize your deductions in a particular tax year.
- Donating appreciated securities, such as publicly traded stocks or mutual funds, enables you to avoid paying tax on any gains while deducting the full value of the donated assets. Channing has a brokerage account that will accept securities. Please contact the Treasurer for details.
- Grants from Donor Advised funds are welcome, and of course members can replenish those funds with contributions in the current year or in future years. Qualified Charitable Distributions - from most IRAs directly to a charitable institution - can yield tax advantages to the donor. Click on this [IRS site](#) for details.

*Stewardship Committee:*

*Dan V., chair  
Cathy F.  
Evelyn G.  
Ken H.  
Maureen H.  
Ostara H.  
Lynne S.*

### **Stewardship update Year-to-date as of November 30, 2023**

#### **General Operating Fund**

Total Operating Income	\$ 73,369
Total Operating Expense	<u>- 71,144</u>
Difference	\$ 2,225



### **Men's Group**

**Thursday January 4 at 10 a.m. on Zoom and in-person January 18**



Everyone is welcome to join the men at either or both of these events. For the zoom meeting, a link will be sent out via the distribution list for the group. If you are not on that list and are interested, check with Ken H. via email.

**NOTE: January 18** will be at **Roggenart** on Rt. 40 east of Bethany Lane. Advance indications of interest will be asked. We hope to have enough interest to meet.

## Channing Book Club

**We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting,** on the second Saturday of the month. See below. We'll fall back to zoom **if** the weather is not friendly or perhaps meet inside. Notice will be sent out if we make this change.

1. **Jan. 13- Nobody's Fool** by Richard Russo First in a trilogy  
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/159152/nobodys-fool-by-richard-russo/9780679753339/readers-guide/> 549 pages.

Also as a movie with Paul Newman (worth watching, now on Kanopy and elsewhere)  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110684/> Contact Ken for a DVD version of the movie available from him for loan. Comes with an extra bonus, the *Hustler* (an early Newman film success).

*"Remarkable.... A revelation of the human heart."* —**The Washington Post**

You will find it readily available on used sites (Amazon, Thriftbooks, Alibris, abe-books, etc., and at some libraries.

2. Next read – back to nonfiction: **Feb. 10 - Upswing** by Robert Putnam  
[https://www.amazon.com/dp/198212914X/ref=pe\\_386300\\_440135490\\_TE\\_simp\\_it\\_em\\_image](https://www.amazon.com/dp/198212914X/ref=pe_386300_440135490_TE_simp_it_em_image)

What's on your book list? Would you like to make it a selection for the book club so you can have good conversation about it? Let *Ken Hart* know what you are thinking about, and contact Ken with any questions.

## SignUp Genius schedule open through February 2024!



The signup for Sunday church roles is now open through the end of February. Please help us make things happen on Sunday by volunteering. Here's the link, now with no access code! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F084FA4AD2BA46-sunday1#/>

(When you sign up for a slot, remember to scroll all the way down and press the Save button.)

Contact *Cathy F.* with any questions.

UULM-MD

2024 Legislative Kick Off

# UU Faith Forward: Building a New Way Together



Saturday, January 20th  
9:00am to 1:00pm  
UU Church of Annapolis  
333 Dubois Rd.  
Annapolis, MD 21401



## UU Legislative Ministry of MD Annual Kickoff Meeting, Jan. 20

Register now for the annual UU Legislative Ministry of MD's annual kickoff meeting, Saturday, January 20, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the UU Congregation of Annapolis. Keynote speaker is Sen. Will Smith, chair of the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

For more details and to register visit: <https://www.uulmmd.org/>

For more information, contact Jim C.



# January 2024

Sun      Mon      Tues      Wed      Thur      Fri      Sat

	<i>1</i> New Year's Day	<i>2</i> Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<i>3</i> Space Search Team 5:00 - 6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>4</i> Men's Group (on Zoom) 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>5</i> Membership Team 2:00 pm (on Zoom) Outreach Team 6:00 - 7:00 pm	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i> Worship Service 11:00-12:00 pm	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm LDNC Mtg. 5:30-7:30 pm Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00 pm	<i>10</i> Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00-8:00 pm Deadline for completing Church Life Survey	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> Worship Team Meeting 1:30 - 3:00 pm	<i>13</i> Channing Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
<i>14</i> Worship Service 11:00-12:00 pm Sundays After "UU Elevator Speech" 12:00-1:30 pm	<i>15</i> Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	<i>16</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>17</i> Young Adult's Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>18</i> Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i> UULMM Legislative Kick-off at UU Church of Annapolis 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
<i>21</i> Worship Service 11:00-12:00 pm Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00 pm	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> The Four Agreements Discussion 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Holocaust Remembrance Day
<i>28</i> Worship Service 11:00-12:00 pm	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<i>31</i>			

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**Channing Memorial Church**  
**Unitarian Universalist**  
**3677 Park Avenue**  
**Ellicott City, MD 21043**



## **Channing Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist**

Our mission is to invite seekers into spiritual community, connect souls in mystery and wonder, and ignite compassion into action.

We are a church of liberal religious worship that inspires its members on their spiritual journeys. We derive a common spiritual center from Jewish and Christian roots while drawing inspiration from other world religions; promote religious education for all ages; create a welcoming, supporting, and caring community; and work together to build a better world.

We meet at Epiphany Lutheran Church, 9122 Sybert Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Our Sunday worship service begins at 11:00 am.

**Directions to Epiphany from the North on Route 29:** Take Route 29 to Route 100 East, take first Exit Long Gate Parkway to stop sign (keep left at split). When traffic is clear, go straight across to Meadowbrook Lane, past the Park and Ride to the stop sign, turn right onto Sybert Drive; Epiphany will be on your right.

**Directions to Epiphany from the South on Route 29:** Take Route 29 to Route 108, head East on Route 108 to first traffic light (Bendix Road), turn left onto Edgar Road; at stop sign turn right, then in two blocks turn left onto Parkvale Road. Continue to stop sign, then turn left onto Sybert Drive. Epiphany will be on your right.