



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 31, Issue 2

February 2024

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Minister's Musings



Dear Channing members and friends,

Here we are, snow blanketing the earth, fresh, white, and trodden upon. A chill fills the air as children rejoice and we find joy in the beauty. Let us welcome these glories of winter as we enter the New Year. Last month, we reflected on resolutions. I asked all of us, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with this introspection that can intentionally foster

strength, growth, and meaning?" This month I ask, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with the future of our church?"

We recently sent out a survey about our future with Epiphany Lutheran Church and received forty responses - remarkable! Know that your Board and I have been working diligently to read and reflect upon each comment. Know that not every concern can be addressed; we are not perfect, and neither is the space. The responses were quite positive. I invite all of us into a space of calm, curiosity, adventure, and introspection.

Early this month, our Lectio Divina group reflected upon a poem I find quite timely. Here is an excerpt of the poem "For a New Beginning" by John O'Donohue:

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

Our destination is not entirely clear, nor is nearly any destination. But we can enter this liminal time with faith, hope, joy, and curiosity. The promise is opening and unfolding before us - always. So let us welcome what lies ahead. May our spirits awaken to adventure; may we unfurl ourselves into a

(Continued on page 2)



**We are a Welcoming
Congregation**

Wayside Pulpit

What lies behind you and what lies before you are tiny matters compared to what lies within you.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Minister

Rev. Jane Bennett Smith
410-203-0474 (office)
minister@channingmc.org

President:

Kris Tyssowski ('24)

Vice President: Open ('24)

Treasurer:

Maureen Hayes ('25)

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Trustees:

Sheri Thomas ('24)
Chris Lynch ('25)
Open ('24)

Newsletter Editors:

Ken Grim
Chris Lynch

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newsshare@channingmc.org

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(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)

new beginning. For, as articulated in my favorite line of the poem, "your soul senses the world that awaits you." That spark within knows - the world awaits us!

Wherever our destination may lead us, we will get there together as Channing Memorial Church. We may disagree, but we are held together by the unceasing love that is inherent in our church community. So, I invite us into our covenant: We "acknowledge that different opinions and perspectives are part of the richness of our diversity. We are 'like-hearted'" people, not necessarily 'like-minded.' Even though we may disagree, we are still all equal members of the community."

What does this mean right here, right now? Each of us offered a different opinion and perspective in this survey, and each is valid. We are "like-hearted" in this sense because each and every one of us wants what is best for our beloved community. And yet, we inevitably cannot fulfill every thoughtful, heartfelt desire. However, we are always equal members. You are just as cherished no matter what your opinion. I love and appreciate each and every one of you, and all you bring to our community and all of its richness. We will never agree upon everything, but we can agree to move forward with compassion and love. "Your soul senses that the world awaits you" - that the world awaits us!

With love,
Rev. Jane

Board Bits



The Board discussed the results of the ELC Survey and next steps. The Board voted to pursue negotiating for a 5-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran.

The Board agreed to modify the masking policy to fit with the current context of most people being vaccinated. The old policy included distancing and only sharing food outside, among other restrictions. When the Covid level in Howard County is medium, people will be required to mask only while singing. Distancing is optional. A reminder too that if you are feeling sick, it is best to stay home rather than attend service in person.

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3. Channing will inform the Congregation through email, the website and Facebook when there is a change planned for the upcoming Sunday due to weather. The notice will be released as soon as possible after the decision is made.
4. ELC will make a decision about opening the building **no later than Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.** Ed of ELC will email worship@ and newsshare@. Channing will distribute that notice as soon as we can to our congregation.

President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,



The Board of Trustees extends their gratitude for your participation in our efforts to collect information about the congregation's perspective on a potential long-term lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Your presence at the Congregational Listening Session was truly valued, and we extend our appreciation for the 40 thoughtful survey responses and the comments shared through email and in conversations. Rest assured, our decisions will be anchored in our mission and vision, with a focus on the long-term health of the congregation. Your diverse perspectives have provided us with valuable insights as we do this important work.

The survey results highlighted several key themes that were also expressed during the Listening Session and in various conversations. A central theme that stood out prominently is the congregation's yearning for stability. Stability, many believe, would provide a solid foundation for channeling our resources and energy into our mission and vision rather than into a perpetual search for suitable space.

Many people emphasized that the stability offered by a long-term lease would enable us to dedicate ourselves to outreach work, aligning with our commitment to put compassion into action. Others stressed the importance of having a consistent, welcoming, and spiritually focused space to aid in inviting seekers into spiritual community. A familiar place would make it easier to manage and develop our use of technology to fully engage our online members and friends in worship, spiritual development offerings, and social activities. Still others pointed out that having a dependable location would

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(President's Column - continued from page 3)

make carrying out our mission-driven activities easier.

Further comments included the idea that a stable and appealing space would help attract new members and retain our current congregants, as frequent moves can make it challenging to grow. Staying in one place would help us build a vibrant, active community to do the work that is important to us. A long-term lease's stability would support long-term planning and allow us to prioritize our strategic plan.

While acknowledging the advantages of a long-term lease, concerns were raised about ELC's building not being ideal for developing a religious education program for children and youth—one of the ways we have long desired to live up to our mission and vision. Additionally, significant concerns revolve around accessibility issues, with a clear emphasis on the absence of an accessible bathroom. Challenges related to sound accessibility and the difficulty stairs can present were also raised. These problems were seen as impeding our ability to offer a fully inclusive environment.

A strong majority of people indicated that to truly embody our mission and vision, it is important to have an accessible bathroom as part of any space we occupy for the long term, even if this means we have to finance a renovation ourselves. There was a willingness among respondents to work collaboratively with ELC, viewing the renovations as the right thing to do for the benefit of both congregations.

Along with comments of support, there were also reservations about making such an expensive investment in a building we don't own or have much say over, especially since ELC is unable to share the cost of renovations or reduce our rent in exchange for our investment because they recently had to use their reserve fund to replace the building's roof and heating system. Many people expressed the importance of having legal provisions for the reimbursement of renovation costs if the building is put up for sale or if our lease is terminated. The idea that we should not enter a long-term lease if the bathroom renovation is not possible was raised, as was the opinion that we should not invest in this renovation if our lease agreement is less than five years.

The results of the survey also indicated that there are several practical issues with our current use of the building. One of the concerns is whether ELC can ever be an "all-in-one" space to accommodate an office for Rev. Jane, a business office, and provide adequate storage space. Some respondents also pointed out concerns they are experiencing in the areas where they volunteer or are deeply engaged. Responses included that the start time of the service and the set-up time are not ideal and that we have limited access to the building during the week. Some expressed a desire for more autonomy in how the building is used and the ability to make it feel more like "home" with symbolism that reflects the diverse religious and spiritual experiences of Unitarian Universalists rather than just the Christian ones. Others would like to see improved signage outside and more of our things visible throughout the building. Additionally, people expressed concerns that the shared spaces, such as the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, and bathrooms, have cleanliness and maintenance issues.

Responses to the survey indicated a desire for a more extensive and collaborative partnership with ELC. Responses expressed the need for shared decision-making and

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ongoing discussions to ensure the space meets our evolving needs and visions and that the two congregations have a mutually beneficial relationship. The potential for shared initiatives, services, and improvements was expressed, reflecting a belief that it makes sense for two small congregations to support one another.

The survey responses raised various financial considerations essential to ensuring our long-term sustainability. The primary issues highlighted were the funding of renovations, the ongoing costs of leasing office and storage space, and the costs of maintaining an old building. Additionally, survey responses noted future risks, such as the potential impact of Epiphany's financial situation on a long-term lease, alignment of expenses with Channing's anticipated income and reserves, possible rent increases, and unforeseen expenses. Several possible solutions were suggested to mitigate these risks, and there is widespread agreement that we must incorporate legal safeguards to protect our interests in any potential long-term lease agreement.

While there were questions about whether ELC's space could fully meet our long-term needs, most responses supported pursuing a long-term lease agreement. Some respondents expressed reservations but viewed this as our best option, with many believing ELC's shortcomings could be managed, especially within a five-year lease.

With these insights and this information, the Board voted to pursue negotiating a five-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church.

Our work on this process will begin right away and will be ongoing. Numerous aspects will require careful consideration as we enter discussions with ELC to determine the nature of their interest in a relationship with us, negotiate lease terms, and address congregational concerns. We will keep you updated through regular communication. We are preparing a quantitative data analysis of the survey results and will send out a link once it is completed. We greatly value your support as we navigate this journey and work to secure a space that meets our needs and aligns with the shared vision and values of our church community. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing dedication and commitment to Channing Memorial Church.

All the best,

Kris T.

Maureen H.

Angela L.

Sheri T.

Chris L.

Combating Fascisms Without & Within: An Organized UU Response

Dear Channing members and friends,

Fascism is a current, true threat to our nation and the world. During the last General Assembly, ministers heard a presentation from Rev. Cecilia Kingman detailing this rise of fascism, how it works, and what we can do to counter it. I will offer a series of two classes to delve into this topic in greater depth.

PREREQUISITE: Read or watch the 2023 Berry Street essay, “My Little Pony Was Right: Reflections on Fascism Without & Within,” by the Rev. Cecilia Kingman.

Use this [link](#) to watch or read Rev. Cecilia’s essay.

For each session, we will watch a video together and transition into discussion. I have posted the video blurbs below:

SESSION ONE

In her 2023 Berry Street essay, the Rev. Cecilia Kingman reflects upon the rise of authoritarianism, right-wing ideology, and fascism both within Unitarian Universalism and in the wider world. In this first session, join Rev. Kingman and the Side With Love team for an interactive opportunity to engage with this essay and the kinds of faithful responses it demands on behalf of our UU faith.

Held at Park Ave on February 3rd from 9:30-11:30 am

SESSION TWO

Building upon the reflections generated in Session 1, join the Side With Love team and special guests to discuss concrete organizing responses that congregations can take to counter fascism and build democracy and liberation in their own communities and across the country.

Held at Park Ave on February 17 from 9:30-11:30 am

[Note: Side with Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association]

Please let me know if you plan to attend!

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Stewardship Month at Channing

“Weaving Our Nest” Stewardship Events Ahead

Please mark your calendar for Channing’s **Midwinter Town Hall Meeting following the Sunday service on February 11th**. We hope this session– brought to you in-person and on Zoom by the Stewardship Committee – will leave you feeling well informed, answer your questions about the state of the church, and give you a solid foundation for considering a pledge to CMC in March.

Following on the heels of the town hall meeting, Channing’s **Stewardship Month kicks off on March 3rd**. In March, members and committed friends will be invited into conversation with a member of the Stewardship Canvass Team to talk about how the church is serving you, how the church might serve you better, and any questions you might have before making a financial pledge to Channing MC for the coming year.

Our 2024 stewardship theme is “**Weaving Our Nest.**” With the vicissitudes of the pandemic and sojourns in temporary spaces behind us, and anchored by our now *very* settled minister, we’re in a good position to re-gather our energy for moving forward. In this spirit of rootedness and forward momentum, we look to build a secure and sheltering container within which to grow, and from which we can fly.

Look for the “Weaving Our Nest” stewardship campaign packet in your email the last week of February!

Stewardship update Year-to-date as of December 31, 2023

General Operating Fund

Total Operating Income	\$ 121,996.53
Total Operating Expense	- 89,931.41
Difference	\$ 32,065.12



Planned Giving: If we can do it, anyone can.

by Cathy and David F.



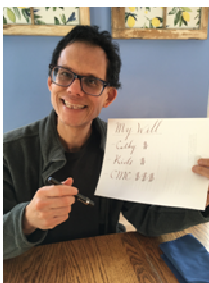
One day, David realized that, despite his love for Channing, his will made no bequest to the church. Cathy's will made no bequest, either. Oh no!



With Cathy busy at work, David immediately called their attorney (who recently moved her offices all the way to Hunt Valley, but nevertheless).



David was delighted to learn that leaving a bequest to Channing in his will was easy!



With a few signatures and a fraction of a billable hour, David lived his values and wrote his beloved Channing Memorial Church into his will. Hooray!

For more information about planned giving for Channing, please see the article in January's newsletter, or talk to anyone on the Stewardship Committee. Planned giving for Channing-- give until it feels good.

Stewardship Committee: *Dan V., chair; Cathy F., Evelyn G., Ken H., Ostara H. and Lynne S.*

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=MEhIT1IKbDRIUWViT-m9WeTFDTERrdz09>

Meeting ID: 940 0752 2019

Passcode: 665527

Lectio Divina

Our normal schedule is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. The next Meeting is **February 13**. 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.

Men's Group

Thursday, February 1st 10 a.m. on Zoom and In-person February 15

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.



The **February 15** gathering will be at **Roggenart** on Rt. 40 east of Bethany Lane at 10:00 am. **Please email Ken H. if you intend to attend.** We need enough responses to make this happen. We have also changed the length of this gathering to 90 minutes.

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 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.

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**

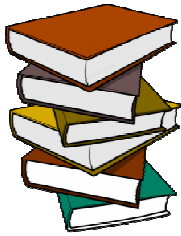
from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We'll have games and conversation. Anyone in their 20's, 30's and 40's is welcome. This event is open to the public and folks are encouraged to share this event with anyone who may be interested. Contact *Patrick B.* for information.

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!

Channing Book Club



We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting, on the second Saturday of the month. 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.

Please let Ken H. know at least three days in advance, or more, if you would like to participate by Zoom session.

Next read for February 10 – **Small Things Like These** by Claire Keegan. A short read, there are a number of copies at the Howard Country Public Library, used book-sellers and elsewhere.

“Keegan’s prose is the kind you want to savor, and this story brings to light, particularly for non-Irish readers, a harrowing social history. Moreover, Furlong’s empathy, emotional scars, and redemptive morality are utterly absorbing.” Harvard Review Online – June 28, 2022

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 H. 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.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>2</i> Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00 - 7:00 pm Groundhog Day 	<i>3</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 1 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>4</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<i>7</i> Space Search Team 5:00 - 6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Worship Team 1:30 - 3:00 pm	<i>10</i> Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
<i>11</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Town Hall Meeting after the service	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm LDNC Meeting 5:30 - 7:30 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm	<i>14</i> Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm Valentines Day 	<i>15</i> Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 2 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>18</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>19</i> President's Day 	<i>20</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>21</i> Young Adult Small Group 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</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.



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Congregation**

Wayside Pulpit

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—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,



The Board of Trustees extends their gratitude for your participation in our efforts to collect information about the congregation's perspective on a potential long-term lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Your presence at the Congregational Listening Session was truly valued, and we extend our appreciation for the 40 thoughtful survey responses and the comments shared through email and in conversations. Rest assured, our decisions will be anchored in our mission and vision, with a focus on the long-term health of the congregation. Your diverse perspectives have provided us with valuable insights as we do this important work.

The survey results highlighted several key themes that were also expressed during the Listening Session and in various conversations. A central theme that stood out prominently is the congregation's yearning for stability. Stability, many believe, would provide a solid foundation for channeling our resources and energy into our mission and vision rather than into a perpetual search for suitable space.

Many people emphasized that the stability offered by a long-term lease would enable us to dedicate ourselves to outreach work, aligning with our commitment to put compassion into action. Others stressed the importance of having a consistent, welcoming, and spiritually focused space to aid in inviting seekers into spiritual community. A familiar place would make it easier to manage and develop our use of technology to fully engage our online members and friends in worship, spiritual development offerings, and social activities. Still others pointed out that having a dependable location would

(Continued on page 4)

(President's Column - continued from page 3)

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Further comments included the idea that a stable and appealing space would help attract new members and retain our current congregants, as frequent moves can make it challenging to grow. Staying in one place would help us build a vibrant, active community to do the work that is important to us. A long-term lease's stability would support long-term planning and allow us to prioritize our strategic plan.

While acknowledging the advantages of a long-term lease, concerns were raised about ELC's building not being ideal for developing a religious education program for children and youth—one of the ways we have long desired to live up to our mission and vision. Additionally, significant concerns revolve around accessibility issues, with a clear emphasis on the absence of an accessible bathroom. Challenges related to sound accessibility and the difficulty stairs can present were also raised. These problems were seen as impeding our ability to offer a fully inclusive environment.

A strong majority of people indicated that to truly embody our mission and vision, it is important to have an accessible bathroom as part of any space we occupy for the long term, even if this means we have to finance a renovation ourselves. There was a willingness among respondents to work collaboratively with ELC, viewing the renovations as the right thing to do for the benefit of both congregations.

Along with comments of support, there were also reservations about making such an expensive investment in a building we don't own or have much say over, especially since ELC is unable to share the cost of renovations or reduce our rent in exchange for our investment because they recently had to use their reserve fund to replace the building's roof and heating system. Many people expressed the importance of having legal provisions for the reimbursement of renovation costs if the building is put up for sale or if our lease is terminated. The idea that we should not enter a long-term lease if the bathroom renovation is not possible was raised, as was the opinion that we should not invest in this renovation if our lease agreement is less than five years.

The results of the survey also indicated that there are several practical issues with our current use of the building. One of the concerns is whether ELC can ever be an "all-in-one" space to accommodate an office for Rev. Jane, a business office, and provide adequate storage space. Some respondents also pointed out concerns they are experiencing in the areas where they volunteer or are deeply engaged. Responses included that the start time of the service and the set-up time are not ideal and that we have limited access to the building during the week. Some expressed a desire for more autonomy in how the building is used and the ability to make it feel more like "home" with symbolism that reflects the diverse religious and spiritual experiences of Unitarian Universalists rather than just the Christian ones. Others would like to see improved signage outside and more of our things visible throughout the building. Additionally, people expressed concerns that the shared spaces, such as the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, and bathrooms, have cleanliness and maintenance issues.

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With these insights and this information, the Board voted to pursue negotiating a five-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church.

Our work on this process will begin right away and will be ongoing. Numerous aspects will require careful consideration as we enter discussions with ELC to determine the nature of their interest in a relationship with us, negotiate lease terms, and address congregational concerns. We will keep you updated through regular communication. We are preparing a quantitative data analysis of the survey results and will send out a link once it is completed. We greatly value your support as we navigate this journey and work to secure a space that meets our needs and aligns with the shared vision and values of our church community. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing dedication and commitment to Channing Memorial Church.

All the best,

Kris T.

Maureen H.

Angela L.

Sheri T.

Chris L.

Combating Fascisms Without & Within: An Organized UU Response

Dear Channing members and friends,

Fascism is a current, true threat to our nation and the world. During the last General Assembly, ministers heard a presentation from Rev. Cecilia Kingman detailing this rise of fascism, how it works, and what we can do to counter it. I will offer a series of two classes to delve into this topic in greater depth.

PREREQUISITE: Read or watch the 2023 Berry Street essay, “My Little Pony Was Right: Reflections on Fascism Without & Within,” by the Rev. Cecilia Kingman.

Use this [link](#) to watch or read Rev. Cecilia’s essay.

For each session, we will watch a video together and transition into discussion. I have posted the video blurbs below:

SESSION ONE

In her 2023 Berry Street essay, the Rev. Cecilia Kingman reflects upon the rise of authoritarianism, right-wing ideology, and fascism both within Unitarian Universalism and in the wider world. In this first session, join Rev. Kingman and the Side With Love team for an interactive opportunity to engage with this essay and the kinds of faithful responses it demands on behalf of our UU faith.

Held at Park Ave on February 3rd from 9:30-11:30 am

SESSION TWO

Building upon the reflections generated in Session 1, join the Side With Love team and special guests to discuss concrete organizing responses that congregations can take to counter fascism and build democracy and liberation in their own communities and across the country.

Held at Park Ave on February 17 from 9:30-11:30 am

[Note: Side with Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association]

Please let me know if you plan to attend!

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Stewardship Month at Channing

“Weaving Our Nest” Stewardship Events Ahead

Please mark your calendar for Channing’s **Midwinter Town Hall Meeting following the Sunday service on February 11th**. We hope this session– brought to you in-person and on Zoom by the Stewardship Committee – will leave you feeling well informed, answer your questions about the state of the church, and give you a solid foundation for considering a pledge to CMC in March.

Following on the heels of the town hall meeting, Channing’s **Stewardship Month kicks off on March 3rd**. In March, members and committed friends will be invited into conversation with a member of the Stewardship Canvass Team to talk about how the church is serving you, how the church might serve you better, and any questions you might have before making a financial pledge to Channing MC for the coming year.

Our 2024 stewardship theme is “**Weaving Our Nest.**” With the vicissitudes of the pandemic and sojourns in temporary spaces behind us, and anchored by our now *very* settled minister, we’re in a good position to re-gather our energy for moving forward. In this spirit of rootedness and forward momentum, we look to build a secure and sheltering container within which to grow, and from which we can fly.

Look for the “Weaving Our Nest” stewardship campaign packet in your email the last week of February!

Stewardship update Year-to-date as of December 31, 2023

General Operating Fund

Total Operating Income	\$ 121,996.53
Total Operating Expense	- 89,931.41
Difference	\$ 32,065.12



Planned Giving: If we can do it, anyone can.

by Cathy and David F.



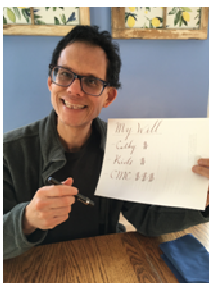
One day, David realized that, despite his love for Channing, his will made no bequest to the church. Cathy's will made no bequest, either. Oh no!



With Cathy busy at work, David immediately called their attorney (who recently moved her offices all the way to Hunt Valley, but nevertheless).



David was delighted to learn that leaving a bequest to Channing in his will was easy!



With a few signatures and a fraction of a billable hour, David lived his values and wrote his beloved Channing Memorial Church into his will. Hooray!

For more information about planned giving for Channing, please see the article in January's newsletter, or talk to anyone on the Stewardship Committee. Planned giving for Channing-- give until it feels good.

Stewardship Committee: *Dan V., chair; Cathy F., Evelyn G., Ken H., Ostara H. and Lynne S.*

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=MEhIT1IKbDRIUWViT-m9WeTFDTERrdz09>

Meeting ID: 940 0752 2019

Passcode: 665527

Lectio Divina

Our normal schedule is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. The next Meeting is **February 13**. 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.

Men's Group

Thursday, February 1st 10 a.m. on Zoom and In-person February 15

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.



The **February 15** gathering will be at **Roggenart** on Rt. 40 east of Bethany Lane at 10:00 am. **Please email Ken H. if you intend to attend.** We need enough responses to make this happen. We have also changed the length of this gathering to 90 minutes.

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 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.

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**

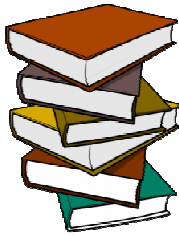
from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We'll have games and conversation. Anyone in their 20's, 30's and 40's is welcome. This event is open to the public and folks are encouraged to share this event with anyone who may be interested. Contact *Patrick B.* for information.

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!

Channing Book Club



We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting, on the second Saturday of the month. 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.

Please let Ken H. know at least three days in advance, or more, if you would like to participate by Zoom session.

Next read for February 10 – **Small Things Like These** by Claire Keegan. A short read, there are a number of copies at the Howard Country Public Library, used book-sellers and elsewhere.

“Keegan’s prose is the kind you want to savor, and this story brings to light, particularly for non-Irish readers, a harrowing social history. Moreover, Furlong’s empathy, emotional scars, and redemptive morality are utterly absorbing.” Harvard Review Online – June 28, 2022

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 H. 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.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<p><i>1</i> Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 - 11:30 am</p>	<p><i>2</i> Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00 - 7:00 pm Groundhog Day </p>	<p><i>3</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 1 9:30 - 11:30 am</p>
<p><i>4</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>	<p><i>5</i></p>	<p><i>6</i> Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm</p>	<p><i>7</i> Space Search Team 5:00 - 6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm</p>	<p><i>8</i></p>	<p><i>9</i> Worship Team 1:30 - 3:00 pm</p>	<p><i>10</i> Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>
<p><i>11</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Town Hall Meeting after the service</p>	<p><i>12</i></p>	<p><i>13</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm LDNC Meeting 5:30 - 7:30 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm</p>	<p><i>14</i> Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm Valentines Day </p>	<p><i>15</i> Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 - 11:30 am</p>	<p><i>16</i></p>	<p><i>17</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 2 9:30 - 11:30 am</p>
<p><i>18</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>	<p><i>19</i> President's Day </p>	<p><i>20</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm</p>	<p><i>21</i> Young Adult Small Group 7:00 - 9:00 pm</p>	<p><i>22</i></p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i></p>
<p><i>25</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>	<p><i>26</i></p>	<p><i>27</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm</p>	<p><i>28</i></p>	<p><i>29</i></p>		

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.



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 31, Issue 2

February 2024

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Minister's Musings



Dear Channing members and friends,

Here we are, snow blanketing the earth, fresh, white, and trodden upon. A chill fills the air as children rejoice and we find joy in the beauty. Let us welcome these glories of winter as we enter the New Year. Last month, we reflected on resolutions. I asked all of us, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with this introspection that can intentionally foster

strength, growth, and meaning?" This month I ask, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with the future of our church?"

We recently sent out a survey about our future with Epiphany Lutheran Church and received forty responses - remarkable! Know that your Board and I have been working diligently to read and reflect upon each comment. Know that not every concern can be addressed; we are not perfect, and neither is the space. The responses were quite positive. I invite all of us into a space of calm, curiosity, adventure, and introspection.

Early this month, our Lectio Divina group reflected upon a poem I find quite timely. Here is an excerpt of the poem "For a New Beginning" by John O'Donohue:

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

Our destination is not entirely clear, nor is nearly any destination. But we can enter this liminal time with faith, hope, joy, and curiosity. The promise is opening and unfolding before us - always. So let us welcome what lies ahead. May our spirits awaken to adventure; may we unfurl ourselves into a

(Continued on page 2)



**We are a Welcoming
Congregation**

Wayside Pulpit

What lies behind you and what lies before you are tiny matters compared to what lies within you.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Minister

Rev. Jane Bennett Smith
410-203-0474 (office)
minister@channingmc.org

President:

Kris Tyssowski ('24)

Vice President: Open ('24)

Treasurer:

Maureen Hayes ('25)

Secretary:

Angela Lesperance ('25)

Trustees:

Sheri Thomas ('24)
Chris Lynch ('25)
Open ('24)

Newsletter Editors:

Ken Grim
Chris Lynch

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

Please send submittals for the March 2024 issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 25, 2024.**

(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)

new beginning. For, as articulated in my favorite line of the poem, "your soul senses the world that awaits you." That spark within knows - the world awaits us!

Wherever our destination may lead us, we will get there together as Channing Memorial Church. We may disagree, but we are held together by the unceasing love that is inherent in our church community. So, I invite us into our covenant: We "acknowledge that different opinions and perspectives are part of the richness of our diversity. We are 'like-hearted' people, not necessarily 'like-minded.' Even though we may disagree, we are still all equal members of the community."

What does this mean right here, right now? Each of us offered a different opinion and perspective in this survey, and each is valid. We are "like-hearted" in this sense because each and every one of us wants what is best for our beloved community. And yet, we inevitably cannot fulfill every thoughtful, heartfelt desire. However, we are always equal members. You are just as cherished no matter what your opinion. I love and appreciate each and every one of you, and all you bring to our community and all of its richness. We will never agree upon everything, but we can agree to move forward with compassion and love. "Your soul senses that the world awaits you" - that the world awaits us!

With love,
Rev. Jane

Board Bits



The Board discussed the results of the ELC Survey and next steps. The Board voted to pursue negotiating for a 5-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran.

The Board agreed to modify the masking policy to fit with the current context of most people being vaccinated. The old policy included distancing and only sharing food outside, among other restrictions. When the Covid level in Howard County is medium, people will be required to mask only while singing. Distancing is optional. A reminder too that if you are feeling sick, it is best to stay home rather than attend service in person.

Channing Inclement Weather Plan

For a weekend where difficult weather is anticipated for Sunday:

1. Channing hopes to make a decision **by Friday noon** to allow time to pivot to Zoom for the Sunday Service.
2. If a decision cannot be made by Friday noon, we will follow the guidance of ELC.



***If building is closed by ELC, there will be no service that Sunday.

3. Channing will inform the Congregation through email, the website and Facebook when there is a change planned for the upcoming Sunday due to weather. The notice will be released as soon as possible after the decision is made.
4. ELC will make a decision about opening the building **no later than Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.** Ed of ELC will email worship@ and newsshare@. Channing will distribute that notice as soon as we can to our congregation.

President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,



The Board of Trustees extends their gratitude for your participation in our efforts to collect information about the congregation's perspective on a potential long-term lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Your presence at the Congregational Listening Session was truly valued, and we extend our appreciation for the 40 thoughtful survey responses and the comments shared through email and in conversations. Rest assured, our decisions will be anchored in our mission and vision,

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Many people emphasized that the stability offered by a long-term lease would enable us to dedicate ourselves to outreach work, aligning with our commitment to put compassion into action. Others stressed the importance of having a consistent, welcoming, and spiritually focused space to aid in inviting seekers into spiritual community. A familiar place would make it easier to manage and develop our use of technology to fully engage our online members and friends in worship, spiritual development offerings, and social activities. Still others pointed out that having a dependable location would

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(President's Column - continued from page 3)

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Further comments included the idea that a stable and appealing space would help attract new members and retain our current congregants, as frequent moves can make it challenging to grow. Staying in one place would help us build a vibrant, active community to do the work that is important to us. A long-term lease's stability would support long-term planning and allow us to prioritize our strategic plan.

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Along with comments of support, there were also reservations about making such an expensive investment in a building we don't own or have much say over, especially since ELC is unable to share the cost of renovations or reduce our rent in exchange for our investment because they recently had to use their reserve fund to replace the building's roof and heating system. Many people expressed the importance of having legal provisions for the reimbursement of renovation costs if the building is put up for sale or if our lease is terminated. The idea that we should not enter a long-term lease if the bathroom renovation is not possible was raised, as was the opinion that we should not invest in this renovation if our lease agreement is less than five years.

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All the best,

Kris T.

Maureen H.

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Combating Fascisms Without & Within: An Organized UU Response

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Fascism is a current, true threat to our nation and the world. During the last General Assembly, ministers heard a presentation from Rev. Cecilia Kingman detailing this rise of fascism, how it works, and what we can do to counter it. I will offer a series of two classes to delve into this topic in greater depth.

PREREQUISITE: Read or watch the 2023 Berry Street essay, “My Little Pony Was Right: Reflections on Fascism Without & Within,” by the Rev. Cecilia Kingman.

Use this [link](#) to watch or read Rev. Cecilia’s essay.

For each session, we will watch a video together and transition into discussion. I have posted the video blurbs below:

SESSION ONE

In her 2023 Berry Street essay, the Rev. Cecilia Kingman reflects upon the rise of authoritarianism, right-wing ideology, and fascism both within Unitarian Universalism and in the wider world. In this first session, join Rev. Kingman and the Side With Love team for an interactive opportunity to engage with this essay and the kinds of faithful responses it demands on behalf of our UU faith.

Held at Park Ave on February 3rd from 9:30-11:30 am

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Building upon the reflections generated in Session 1, join the Side With Love team and special guests to discuss concrete organizing responses that congregations can take to counter fascism and build democracy and liberation in their own communities and across the country.

Held at Park Ave on February 17 from 9:30-11:30 am

[Note: Side with Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association]

Please let me know if you plan to attend!

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Stewardship Month at Channing

“Weaving Our Nest” Stewardship Events Ahead

Please mark your calendar for Channing’s **Midwinter Town Hall Meeting following the Sunday service on February 11th**. We hope this session– brought to you in-person and on Zoom by the Stewardship Committee – will leave you feeling well informed, answer your questions about the state of the church, and give you a solid foundation for considering a pledge to CMC in March.

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Planned Giving: If we can do it, anyone can.

by Cathy and David F.



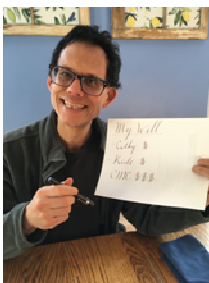
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Meeting ID: 933 2455 0758

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Thursday, February 1st 10 a.m. on Zoom and In-person February 15

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.



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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 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.

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**

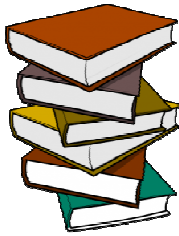
from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We'll have games and conversation. Anyone in their 20's, 30's and 40's is welcome. This event is open to the public and folks are encouraged to share this event with anyone who may be interested. Contact *Patrick B.* for information.

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!

Channing Book Club



We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting, on the second Saturday of the month. 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.

Please let Ken H. know at least three days in advance, or more, if you would like to participate by Zoom session.

Next read for February 10 – Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan. A short read, there are a number of copies at the Howard Country Public Library, used book-sellers and elsewhere.

“Keegan’s prose is the kind you want to savor, and this story brings to light, particularly for non-Irish readers, a harrowing social history. Moreover, Furlong’s empathy, emotional scars, and redemptive morality are utterly absorbing.” Harvard Review Online – June 28, 2022

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 H. 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.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>2</i> Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00 - 7:00 pm Groundhog Day 	<i>3</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 1 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>4</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<i>7</i> Space Search Team 5:00 - 6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Worship Team 1:30 - 3:00 pm	<i>10</i> Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
<i>11</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Town Hall Meeting after the service	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm LDNC Meeting 5:30 - 7:30 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm	<i>14</i> Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm Valentines Day 	<i>15</i> Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 2 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>18</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>19</i> President's Day 	<i>20</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>21</i> Young Adult Small Group 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</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.



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 31, Issue 2

February 2024

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Minister's Musings



Dear Channing members and friends,

Here we are, snow blanketing the earth, fresh, white, and trodden upon. A chill fills the air as children rejoice and we find joy in the beauty. Let us welcome these glories of winter as we enter the New Year. Last month, we reflected on resolutions. I asked all of us, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with this introspection that can intentionally foster

strength, growth, and meaning?" This month I ask, "How can we each, in our own way, engage with the future of our church?"

We recently sent out a survey about our future with Epiphany Lutheran Church and received forty responses - remarkable! Know that your Board and I have been working diligently to read and reflect upon each comment. Know that not every concern can be addressed; we are not perfect, and neither is the space. The responses were quite positive. I invite all of us into a space of calm, curiosity, adventure, and introspection.

Early this month, our Lectio Divina group reflected upon a poem I find quite timely. Here is an excerpt of the poem "For a New Beginning" by John O'Donohue:

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

Our destination is not entirely clear, nor is nearly any destination. But we can enter this liminal time with faith, hope, joy, and curiosity. The promise is opening and unfolding before us - always. So let us welcome what lies ahead. May our spirits awaken to adventure; may we unfurl ourselves into a

(Continued on page 2)



**We are a Welcoming
Congregation**

Wayside Pulpit

What lies behind you and what lies before you are tiny matters compared to what lies within you.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Minister

Rev. Jane Bennett Smith
410-203-0474 (office)
minister@channingmc.org

President:

Kris Tyssowski ('24)

Vice President: Open ('24)

Treasurer:

Maureen Hayes ('25)

Secretary:

Angela Lesperance ('25)

Trustees:

Sheri Thomas ('24)
Chris Lynch ('25)
Open ('24)

Newsletter Editors:

Ken Grim
Chris Lynch

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

Please send submittals for the March 2024 issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 25, 2024.**

(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)

new beginning. For, as articulated in my favorite line of the poem, "your soul senses the world that awaits you." That spark within knows - the world awaits us!

Wherever our destination may lead us, we will get there together as Channing Memorial Church. We may disagree, but we are held together by the unceasing love that is inherent in our church community. So, I invite us into our covenant: We "acknowledge that different opinions and perspectives are part of the richness of our diversity. We are 'like-hearted' people, not necessarily 'like-minded.' Even though we may disagree, we are still all equal members of the community."

What does this mean right here, right now? Each of us offered a different opinion and perspective in this survey, and each is valid. We are "like-hearted" in this sense because each and every one of us wants what is best for our beloved community. And yet, we inevitably cannot fulfill every thoughtful, heartfelt desire. However, we are always equal members. You are just as cherished no matter what your opinion. I love and appreciate each and every one of you, and all you bring to our community and all of its richness. We will never agree upon everything, but we can agree to move forward with compassion and love. "Your soul senses that the world awaits you" - that the world awaits us!

With love,
Rev. Jane

Board Bits



The Board discussed the results of the ELC Survey and next steps. The Board voted to pursue negotiating for a 5-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran.

The Board agreed to modify the masking policy to fit with the current context of most people being vaccinated. The old policy included distancing and only sharing food outside, among other restrictions. When the Covid level in Howard County is medium, people will be required to mask only while singing. Distancing is optional. A reminder too that if you are feeling sick, it is best to stay home rather than attend service in person.

Channing Inclement Weather Plan

For a weekend where difficult weather is anticipated for Sunday:

1. Channing hopes to make a decision **by Friday noon** to allow time to pivot to Zoom for the Sunday Service.
2. If a decision cannot be made by Friday noon, we will follow the guidance of ELC.



***If building is closed by ELC, there will be no service that Sunday.

3. Channing will inform the Congregation through email, the website and Facebook when there is a change planned for the upcoming Sunday due to weather. The notice will be released as soon as possible after the decision is made.
4. ELC will make a decision about opening the building **no later than Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.** Ed of ELC will email worship@ and newsshare@. Channing will distribute that notice as soon as we can to our congregation.

President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,



The Board of Trustees extends their gratitude for your participation in our efforts to collect information about the congregation's perspective on a potential long-term lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Your presence at the Congregational Listening Session was truly valued, and we extend our appreciation for the 40 thoughtful survey responses and the comments shared through email and in conversations. Rest assured, our decisions will be anchored in our mission and vision, with a focus on the long-term health of the congregation. Your diverse perspectives have provided us with valuable insights as we do this important work.

The survey results highlighted several key themes that were also expressed during the Listening Session and in various conversations. A central theme that stood out prominently is the congregation's yearning for stability. Stability, many believe, would provide a solid foundation for channeling our resources and energy into our mission and vision rather than into a perpetual search for suitable space.

Many people emphasized that the stability offered by a long-term lease would enable us to dedicate ourselves to outreach work, aligning with our commitment to put compassion into action. Others stressed the importance of having a consistent, welcoming, and spiritually focused space to aid in inviting seekers into spiritual community. A familiar place would make it easier to manage and develop our use of technology to fully engage our online members and friends in worship, spiritual development offerings, and social activities. Still others pointed out that having a dependable location would

(Continued on page 4)

(President's Column - continued from page 3)

make carrying out our mission-driven activities easier.

Further comments included the idea that a stable and appealing space would help attract new members and retain our current congregants, as frequent moves can make it challenging to grow. Staying in one place would help us build a vibrant, active community to do the work that is important to us. A long-term lease's stability would support long-term planning and allow us to prioritize our strategic plan.

While acknowledging the advantages of a long-term lease, concerns were raised about ELC's building not being ideal for developing a religious education program for children and youth—one of the ways we have long desired to live up to our mission and vision. Additionally, significant concerns revolve around accessibility issues, with a clear emphasis on the absence of an accessible bathroom. Challenges related to sound accessibility and the difficulty stairs can present were also raised. These problems were seen as impeding our ability to offer a fully inclusive environment.

A strong majority of people indicated that to truly embody our mission and vision, it is important to have an accessible bathroom as part of any space we occupy for the long term, even if this means we have to finance a renovation ourselves. There was a willingness among respondents to work collaboratively with ELC, viewing the renovations as the right thing to do for the benefit of both congregations.

Along with comments of support, there were also reservations about making such an expensive investment in a building we don't own or have much say over, especially since ELC is unable to share the cost of renovations or reduce our rent in exchange for our investment because they recently had to use their reserve fund to replace the building's roof and heating system. Many people expressed the importance of having legal provisions for the reimbursement of renovation costs if the building is put up for sale or if our lease is terminated. The idea that we should not enter a long-term lease if the bathroom renovation is not possible was raised, as was the opinion that we should not invest in this renovation if our lease agreement is less than five years.

The results of the survey also indicated that there are several practical issues with our current use of the building. One of the concerns is whether ELC can ever be an "all-in-one" space to accommodate an office for Rev. Jane, a business office, and provide adequate storage space. Some respondents also pointed out concerns they are experiencing in the areas where they volunteer or are deeply engaged. Responses included that the start time of the service and the set-up time are not ideal and that we have limited access to the building during the week. Some expressed a desire for more autonomy in how the building is used and the ability to make it feel more like "home" with symbolism that reflects the diverse religious and spiritual experiences of Unitarian Universalists rather than just the Christian ones. Others would like to see improved signage outside and more of our things visible throughout the building. Additionally, people expressed concerns that the shared spaces, such as the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, and bathrooms, have cleanliness and maintenance issues.

Responses to the survey indicated a desire for a more extensive and collaborative partnership with ELC. Responses expressed the need for shared decision-making and

(Continued on page 5)

(President's Column - continued from page 4)

ongoing discussions to ensure the space meets our evolving needs and visions and that the two congregations have a mutually beneficial relationship. The potential for shared initiatives, services, and improvements was expressed, reflecting a belief that it makes sense for two small congregations to support one another.

The survey responses raised various financial considerations essential to ensuring our long-term sustainability. The primary issues highlighted were the funding of renovations, the ongoing costs of leasing office and storage space, and the costs of maintaining an old building. Additionally, survey responses noted future risks, such as the potential impact of Epiphany's financial situation on a long-term lease, alignment of expenses with Channing's anticipated income and reserves, possible rent increases, and unforeseen expenses. Several possible solutions were suggested to mitigate these risks, and there is widespread agreement that we must incorporate legal safeguards to protect our interests in any potential long-term lease agreement.

While there were questions about whether ELC's space could fully meet our long-term needs, most responses supported pursuing a long-term lease agreement. Some respondents expressed reservations but viewed this as our best option, with many believing ELC's shortcomings could be managed, especially within a five-year lease.

With these insights and this information, the Board voted to pursue negotiating a five-year lease with Epiphany Lutheran Church.

Our work on this process will begin right away and will be ongoing. Numerous aspects will require careful consideration as we enter discussions with ELC to determine the nature of their interest in a relationship with us, negotiate lease terms, and address congregational concerns. We will keep you updated through regular communication. We are preparing a quantitative data analysis of the survey results and will send out a link once it is completed. We greatly value your support as we navigate this journey and work to secure a space that meets our needs and aligns with the shared vision and values of our church community. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing dedication and commitment to Channing Memorial Church.

All the best,

Kris T.

Maureen H.

Angela L.

Sheri T.

Chris L.

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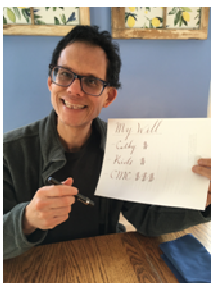
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The **February 15** gathering will be at **Roggenart** on Rt. 40 east of Bethany Lane at 10:00 am. **Please email Ken H. if you intend to attend.** We need enough responses to make this happen. We have also changed the length of this gathering to 90 minutes.

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 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.

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**

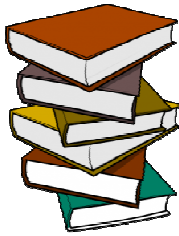
from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We'll have games and conversation. Anyone in their 20's, 30's and 40's is welcome. This event is open to the public and folks are encouraged to share this event with anyone who may be interested. Contact *Patrick B.* for information.

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!

Channing Book Club



We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting, on the second Saturday of the month. 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.

Please let Ken H. know at least three days in advance, or more, if you would like to participate by Zoom session.

Next read for February 10 – **Small Things Like These** by Claire Keegan. A short read, there are a number of copies at the Howard Country Public Library, used book-sellers and elsewhere.

“Keegan’s prose is the kind you want to savor, and this story brings to light, particularly for non-Irish readers, a harrowing social history. Moreover, Furlong’s empathy, emotional scars, and redemptive morality are utterly absorbing.” Harvard Review Online – June 28, 2022

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 H. 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.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>2</i> Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00 - 7:00 pm Groundhog Day 	<i>3</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 1 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>4</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<i>7</i> Space Search Team 5:00 - 6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Worship Team 1:30 - 3:00 pm	<i>10</i> Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
<i>11</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Town Hall Meeting after the service	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm LDNC Meeting 5:30 - 7:30 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm	<i>14</i> Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm Valentines Day 	<i>15</i> Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 - 11:30 am	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Combating Fascisms Ses- sion 2 9:30 - 11:30 am
<i>18</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>19</i> President's Day 	<i>20</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>21</i> Young Adult Small Group 7:00 - 9:00 pm	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>25</i> Worship Ser- vice 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> Minister's Office Hours 1:00 - 4:00 pm Lectio Divina on Zoom 7:00 - 8:00 pm	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>		

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.