



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 28, Issue 3

March 2021

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March Minister's Column



We have been together as minister and church for about a year and a half! What a blessing it has been to serve this sacred community. In this time, we have experienced more than any of us expected. We have laughed together and mourned together. We have also navigated a pandemic, responded to a racial uprising, and come together after an insurrection at the Capitol. Throughout all of this, I have come to know and love a committed, compassionate, beloved community. Amidst the myriad of unexpected events of the past year, this community has continued to thrive.

This weekend, we celebrate my Installation as settled minister. Through this special service, we will enter into shared covenant together, formally affirming our connection and our shared ministry. I look forward to celebrating the bond we have established, and the commitment we will make to each other for years to come. I am truly honored to be here.

And now it is time to move "Into the Future...Together!" March is our canvass kick off. I invite you to pause and reflect. What about this community feeds your soul? What sustains you? Worship? Small groups? Is it, perhaps, the bonds you have formed in this special church? What can you, in turn, do to sustain this community? So many of you offer your time and talent. I wonder, if you are able, what treasure you can contribute as well? In order to maintain and strengthen all of the unique gifts this church has to offer, we need to sustain it financially.

As we move into the future, we need to acknowledge the space search we are currently in. What an adventure! We may not find our next home right away; we may still have some transition time ahead of us. But we are on an exciting journey together as we look for the next place to call "home." And as we navigate this journey, I invite us to remember that the Channing community is not contingent on a building. Instead, we are held together as a church by that sacred thread of our interdependent web that connects us all, a connecting bond based on the strength of the community we

Continued on next page

**We are a Welcoming
Congregation!**



Wayside Pulpit

Your success and
happiness lie in you.

Helen Keller

Minister

Reverend Jane Smith

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President:

David Fu ('22)

Vice President: Vacant

Treasurer:

Evelyn Grim ('21)

Secretary:

Kathleen Razmus ('21)

Trustees:

Patrick Beben('21)

Mel Currie ('22)

Colleen Rathbun ('21)

Newsletter Editors:

Cathy Fu

Ken Grim

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

Send submittals for the April issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 21, 2021.**

Minister's Column, continued from page 1

have created together. Remember, no matter where we worship or store our belongings, we are this special Channing community. This day, and every day.

Warmly,
Rev. Jane



Lectio Divina

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month we will have the opportunity to join together for a practice of Lectio Divina. This ancient practice allows us the opportunity to delve deep into a chosen text. This text may be a poem or a sacred religious text. Each gathering we will focus on one text. We will read through the selected text several times, with a different focus on every read-through. We will then pause for several minutes of silent meditation, which will be followed by each person sharing their unique reflection. **I look forward to this sacred time of meditation and reflection!** I will host these sessions the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 7-8pm. There is no prep work for these gatherings.

The following Zoom link works for either session:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/93324550758?pwd=VFVLZkdES21odTnhK1pWZ1pZb114UT09>
Meeting ID: 933 2455 0758
Passcode: 250704

Dial by your location
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 933 2455 0758
Passcode: 250704

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Soul Matters for March: Commitment



Dear Channing members and friends,

There is so much out there we can commit ourselves to! Much of it enriches lives, such as a commitment to a fulfilling relationship, family, a favorite hobby, a self-care practice or a satisfying career. Other times, we may find we have committed much of our time to an unhealthy practice and need to re-adjust our lifestyles. Some of us may want to commit to so many things we get overwhelmed and fall into the trap of committing to none! Whichever of these scenarios speaks to you, this month we delve deep into adjusting our commitments to best fulfill our lives and replenish our souls. As Unitarian Universalists, we can explore our commitment to our faith. Rev. Galen Guengerich writes, “Faith is a commitment to live as if certain things are true, and thereby help to make them so. Faith is a commitment to live as if life is a wondrous mystery, as if life is good, as if love is divine, as if we are responsible for the well-being of those around us.” Through our faith, let us commit to a life of truth, mystery, goodness, holiness, and a shared responsibility to care for each other. Let us commit to our Principles.

Commitment is our worship theme for March, and the theme for our small groups. These small groups are special because they allow each member to deeply engage with the topic in multiple ways. In preparation for each month’s Small Group, I will send each group member a packet. You are invited to select from this packet one spiritual exercise and one question to reflect on before our meeting together. **While reviewing the packet ahead of time is a great way to prepare for group, please do not let a busy schedule deter you from participating.** Whatever amount of time you are able to dedicate to preparation is just the right amount of time!

I ask that you sign up ahead of time. Please use the link below. Please provide me your email address so that I can send you the packet for you to review. I will also provide all attendees a Zoom link the day of the Small Group. If the slot that you can attend is full, just let me know. We have opened our small groups to the public to share our gifts with the community. Feel free to invite friends. I am excited to explore the topic of Commitment with you!

Young Adults (20s, 30s, 40s):

Wednesday, March 17 7:30-9pm

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACAF2AA1FC1-young11>

All ages:

Friday, March 19 1-2:30pm

Saturday, March 27 10-11:30am

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACAF2AA1FC1-soul7>

I hope to see you there!

Warmly,

Rev. Jane



President's Column

As I write this on a cold and icy February day, I take solace in the lengthening days, and I take heart in the inevitability of Spring. The rollout for the COVID-19 vaccines is bumping along, and I hope you are all staying safe and sound.

Last month we had a Town Meeting to discuss space and Stewardship. I thank the Space and Stewardship teams for their concise, clear, and insightful presentations, and I thank all those who participated (Zoom participant count of 37!). I feel the meeting did an excellent job of setting the stage for March's upcoming person to person canvass to raise money for the 2021-2022 church year. Soon, you should be receiving a packet of materials, lovingly and finely prepared by the Stewardship Team.

Last month I also began to make my case for why we should increase our pledge amounts in order to balance our budget. I'll continue to do so now. When Channing Memorial Church moved to the space at Corporate Court in 2014, we knew that it was a financial stretch. So we conducted a capital campaign and raised roughly \$100,000 for our Vision and Growth fund. The plan was that by the end of the 5-year lease, membership, and hence pledges would increase to balance the budget, and in the meantime, the Vision and Growth fund could be tapped to cover any budget shortfalls.

This plan met with mixed success. The Vision and Growth fund has paid for yearly budget shortfalls since 2014, and, thanks to good luck in the stock market, even now has almost \$27,000 left in it. But the budget gap between our pledges and our costs has failed to significantly shrink. The "Golden Goose" that is the Vision and Growth fund, (which **we** paid for), is running out of eggs, and the time has come to decide what to do next. We could again raise money for the Vision and Growth fund, i.e., we could "refill the goose", or we could simply raise our pledge amounts. Here are my reasons for preferring the latter:

- 1) "Refilling the goose" requires a larger cash outlay than raising pledge amounts.
- 2) "Refilling the goose" obscures the true costs of running our Church.
- 3) "Refilling the goose" does not help us raise money for our "dream space".

So let's raise our pledges. I know that for some, this may be a tall order, especially during the pandemic, but I think that on average, we can do this. And whatever your level of generosity, I know that it comes from your heart, and on behalf of the Church it is my honor and my pleasure to thank you, as we move into the future ... together.

—David



Stewardship Corner Into the Future...Together!

This certainly has been an unusual year for Channing Memorial Church. We never could have anticipated a year ago that all of our worship services, meetings and classes would be virtual. But, once again, we have demonstrated our resilience and flexibility as Rev. Jane, Stephen and the Worship Associates quickly adapted to provide a meaningful worship experience via Zoom. We have been able to expand our reach to new and returning faces by adding new classes, discussion groups and study of the proposed 8th Principle on Zoom.

We face many challenges as we search for meeting space amid the uncertainty of how long we will be meeting virtually. Our search for space has confirmed what we already know: space in Howard County is expensive. We are fortunate that we have been able to balance our budget this year and we are currently in a healthy cash position, largely because we are not paying for meeting space on Sunday mornings. However, if it were not for the pandemic, we would be facing a significant operating deficit and relying on withdrawals from our Vision and Growth fund for operating expenses. In her Virtual Next Step Weekend report to the congregation, Liz Coit of Stewardship for Us recommended very strongly that we aim to balance our operating budget next year without tapping our Vision and Growth Fund or reserves to improve our positioning for a search for a permanent church home.

Our annual pledge campaign will kick off on Sunday, March 7, 2021, as we honor our past and look forward to the time when we can actually meet together. An informational packet will be emailed to the congregation during the first week in March. This year, we will conduct a person-to-person canvass to check in with our members and friends in addition to explaining the need for pledges. You will be contacted by another Channing member to schedule a meeting by Zoom or telephone. This will be a good opportunity to check in, let us know how you have coped during the past year and ask questions about Channing Memorial Church.

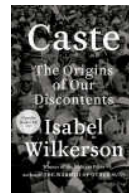
Based on the success of prior years' matching pledge challenges, several donors once again have offered to match either pledge increases or new pledges, thereby doubling the impact of those increases, up to a limit which will be determined by the total amount that is donated to the match fund.

We look forward to meeting with you. Please welcome your Channing canvasser when they call.

With appreciation,

—*Evelyn G.* for the Stewardship Team: *Julie F., Cathy F., Evelyn G., Ken H., Ostara H., Diana M., Lynne S. and Dan V.*

Follow-up Discussion on “Caste” Relationship to Channing Mission and the 8th Principle



Saturday, March 6 from 1—3 pm

The book club has had two meetings on “Caste” by Isabel Wilkerson with good discussions at both. There's interest in doing a follow-up session focusing on the relationship of the ideas in the book to the mission of the church and on what this means for our 8th Principle discussions.

Sheri will facilitate the discussion. Rev. Jane will attend and we'll have the benefit of her perspective, as well. Angela and Kathleen from the 8th Principle Committee will be there too. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 6 from 1—3 pm.

Please let me know if you plan to attend. This will give us a sense of who is coming and how many to expect.

Haven't read the book but interested in just listening or contributing to the discussion? Everyone is welcome to attend. As folks with an interest in Unitarian Universalist teachings, we all have a part in explorations of social outreach and justice as this connects to the Channing community.

Hope to see you there.

—Ken H.

Here's the link to participate
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95235862055?pwd=d3JKZEFRTG9nbHoyeVkrCHpsUzkzdz09>

Meeting ID: 952 3586 2055

Passcode: 344155

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 952 3586 2055

Passcode: 344155



Soulful Homes: Commitment

Looking for ways to weave spiritual exploration into your routines with little ones and youth? In partnership with First Church in Salem, UU, we are offering the Soul Matters program “Soulful Home.” **This is a small group ministry that welcomes families with children.** We will gather each month for a check-in, an interactive story, an intergenerational activity, and special time for guided discussion among caregivers. Each month, we join to reflect on a theme. March’s theme is Commitment.

We will hold our gatherings the third Friday of the month in a Zoom room. Our next session will be held Friday, March 19 from 6-7:30pm.

If you are interested, please register using the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe0nAi2xuiQKzYO_VSqKXedSpjOn5KwAXWgzpHBID4kwljh3g/viewform

We will also offer a monthly [discovery packet](#) for those who wish to explore our themes and practices as a family.

In order to make certain programming sustainable for small churches, it’s helpful to partner with another small church. Working together with the First Church in Salem allows us to do just that! We are blessed to have another small congregation with an active RE program to work with. We are creating some exciting programming together!

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out! Send me a note at minister@channingmc.org

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Coffee with the Minister



Dear Channing members and friends,

There is so much occurring in our country and our world. Many of us may need a time to simply pause, reflect, and share what is weighing on our souls. Others may want to share about that sacred joy and beauty that is surrounding us as well! **If you would like time to share and reflect about anything that is on your soul, I am hosting weekly drop-in coffee hours.** Anyone is invited to stop by and check-in.

If you have any questions, please send me a note at minister@channingmc.org.

I hope to see you there.

Warmly,
Rev. Jane



Board Bits

This month, the Board of Channing Memorial Church

- *Voted to approve updated newsletter policy,
- *Voted to approve proposed updates consisting of clarifications, corrections, and the use of gender-neutral language to the Church Bylaws,
- *Voted to temporarily waive a cash collection policy in order to facilitate the conducting of a plant sale fundraiser during the pandemic, and
- *Continued to discuss issues of space, including formulating guidance to give to the Space Team.

As always, Reverend Jane welcomed us, gave us her monthly report, and “took us home” at the end of the meeting, which, much to the delight of everyone, was earlier than scheduled.

—David Fu, President

Stewardship Update



January 2021 Year to Date

Total Operating Income	\$ 94,095
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 83,707
Difference	\$ 10,388



Plant Sale Coming This Spring!

Spring is in the air ... maybe? Regardless, it's time to start planning your spring garden and our Channing Plant Sale is here to help!

What: 1st Annual CMC Spring Plant Sale (although the youth group has used this nursery for fundraising in the past, with great success)

Why: The plants are beautiful, hearty, reasonably-priced and will arrive in time for Mother's Day! Plus, half of each purchase price goes to Channing.

When: Order plants by Thursday, April 1 and pick them up at the church office on Saturday, May 1.

Where: Pickup will be outside and socially distanced at the Park Avenue church office parking lot, 3677 Park Avenue, Ellicott City, Maryland.

How: Look for emails this month for more information and the order form.

—Mike L. and Colleen R.

March 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> 1—4 pm Minister's Office Hours Online Committee on Ministry	<i>3</i> 5 pm Space Search Mtg 7 pm Young Adult Game Night	<i>4</i> Men's Group 10 am Clearing as Spiritual Practice 1pm	<i>5</i> Outreach, Connections, and Membership Meetings	<i>6</i> 10 am Stewardship Committee 1 pm Follow up discussion on <i>Caste</i>
<i>7</i> 10 am Sunday Service	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> 1—4 pm Minister's Office Hours LDNC 7 pm Lectio Divina	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Channing Book Club 10 am	<i>12</i> Covenant Circle, Connections, Worship Team Meetings	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i> Daylight Saving Begins  9 am LH3 Meeting 10 am Sunday Service	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> 1—4 pm Minister's Office Hours 7 pm Board of Trustees	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> Clearing as Spiritual Practice 1pm	<i>19</i> Connections Mtg Soulful Home 6 pm	<i>20</i> Spring Begins  Men's Group 10 am
<i>21</i> 10 am Sunday Service	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> 1—4 pm Minister's Office Hours 7 pm Lectio Divina	<i>24</i> Youth RE	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i> Connections Meeting, Covenant Circle	<i>27</i> 
<i>28</i> 10 am Sunday Service	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> 1—4 pm Minister's Office Hours	<i>31</i>	<i>All events *online* unless otherwise noted</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.