



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 31, Issue 3

March 2024

Inside:

Easter Ritual	3
President's Column	3
Weaving Our Net	5
Trusting Change	6
Stewardship Update ..	6
Wisdom Tales	7
Lectio Divina	7
Church Role Signup ...	7
Board Bits	8
Special Collections	8
Introducing Ourselves	9
Spread the Word	9
Men's Group	10
Young Adult Game Night	10
Young Adult Small Group	10
Channing Book Club	11
Auction Event	12
Pi	12
March Calendar	13



**We are a Welcoming
Congregation**

Wayside Pulpit

The person who sows seeds of kindness enjoys a perpetual harvest.

- Anonymous

Minister's Musings



Dear Channing members and friends,

Often, when reflecting upon spiritual practices, we envision one paused in meditation, centered in prayer, immersed in nature, or contemplative in worship. These practices feed and sustain our hearts and souls, yes. And yet this month I invite you to a different, yet just as nourishing and crucial, spiritual practice: that of stewardship.

What is sacred about stewardship, you may ask. We feed our hearts and souls by contributing to that which in turn feeds and sustains us - we give to that which offers strength, meaning, and purpose. Through this sacred community, our hearts are offered meaning, our souls are offered nourishment, and our minds are offered intellectual stimulation. We are called to service in an often aching world. And we receive these treasures because we give. We sustain and support that which in turn offers so much.

Here is my question for you this month: What is it about Channing Memorial Church that feeds your soul, challenges you, cares for you, sustains you, and guides you in your interactions with the world? I invite you into a moment of contemplation and meditation.

In my years as a Unitarian Universalist, I have come to understand that each UU church is rather like a silo, offering a unique and special vision of our faith. And so, I wonder, what can we claim as our silo, what is it that draws you to this church in particular? We are unique in our commitment to spirituality. We use sacred language in our worship services - talking about God or the Great Mystery. Love is the center of our faith in this community, that which grounds us as we find ways to center ourselves in the world. Each time we interact, we join together with common hearts and minds. We are fed and sustained by our uniquely spiritual worship services, immersed in sermons, in silence, in prayer, in Stephen's soul touching music. We have small groups to

(Continued on page 2)

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 April 2024 issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 24, 2024.**

(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)

stimulate and nourish the mind just as we have groups to stimulate and nourish the soul. And I would be entirely remiss if not to mention the sacred, beloved community we have formed. We are unique in that we go over and beyond to care for one another. Likewise, we shine at welcoming newcomers into our midst. Spirituality, love, and care. This is our silo.

This year, we focus on Weaving Our Nest. We are transitioning out of a transient time into a place of stability, leaving behind the years of the pandemic, an extended ministerial search, and the anxiety of impermanent space. How can we join together to regather energy as we move forward? How can we create a container to thrive? We gather intentionally in body, mind, and spirit - sharing, validating, and celebrating our hopes, wishes, and desires. We gather with intention, turning our aspirations into something concrete. We commit, always, to sharing our time, talent, and treasure - interacting with that spiritual practice we began with.

We need treasure in order to thrive and in order to Weave Our Nest. So, I encourage each of you to reflect deeply upon what you can give to sustain this beloved, sacred community that feeds our hearts, souls, and minds. Please reflect: how much can I give to this church which in turn offers me so much? Pause, contemplate, speak to family members. Think of our unique silo of spirituality, love, and care, one that cannot be maintained if we do not have funds to sustain it. No matter what you can contribute, I am grateful from the bottom of my heart! You are each a blessing, and all you can give sustains your sacred and beloved church community.

With love,
Rev. Jane



Easter Ritual

Dear Beloveds,



As we slowly begin to transition into spring, I invite us into the joy of Easter. Each year, we join together in ritual and celebration. This year, I invite you to bring with you a handmade butterfly. Just as a caterpillar becomes a chrysalis becomes a butterfly, so, too, are our lives filled with profound transformations. We each encounter the changes that life, death, and love present, exemplified in the story of Easter. Whether made with paper and crayons, paperclips and tissue paper, yarn, or flower petals, I invite you to get creative as we celebrate this special holiday. Whether joining us in person or on Zoom, we have the opportunity to share our creations with others in our midst.

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,

The funny thing about nests is that we rarely see them. We know they exist because we see the animals sheltered and raised in them all around us. Nests, typically associated with birds and mammals, are used as homes by all classes of vertebrates as well as certain invertebrates. Even some types of fish carve out burrows or depressions in sediment and rocks to build their homes.



Every time I've been fortunate enough to see a nest, I've been fascinated. Whether it was the lovely hummingbird nest in a backyard tree, the two varieties of wasp nests that seemed to appear out of nowhere, or the intricately woven homes of birds and squirrels, I marveled at the various materials and complex designs within them. I can't help but admire the resourcefulness of these animal weavers and how they successfully create safe havens in an often harsh and dangerous world.

As elusive and intriguing as nests are, they are commonplace and exist for practical reasons. Animals construct nests primarily to provide safe places to nourish, shelter, and protect their young so they can grow in strength and readiness to face the world's challenges. For this reason, I love the image of weaving a nest for this year's stewardship theme.

Like an animal's nest, the central purpose of a church is to provide nourishment, shelter, and protection to support its members and friends, as well as the wider commu-

(Continued on page 4)

(President's Column - continued from page 3)

nity, in the often challenging journey of growth. A church nourishes by weaving together opportunities for spiritual exploration, contemplation, and conversation. It offers shelter within a welcoming and inclusive environment, just as feathers and fur provide insulation and comfort for birds and mammals. And it protects with the twigs and mud and moss of work centered around love and a commitment to growing together as a community. In this way, the nest becomes a place for hopes to incubate and fledge.

If you think about it, an animal building a nest is engaged in an act of stewardship not so different from that of a church. Both are forward-thinking, concerned with resource management, and involved in preserving and enhancing their respective environments. Nest building, like stewardship, is strategic. It's an investment in securing a future for the species or organization. Many animals work collaboratively when weaving their nests. Likewise, the stewardship of a group's financial, human, and spiritual resources is not the responsibility of any one person; everyone shares it.

The idea of weaving a nest is particularly well-suited to where we are in the evolution of our church. After a time of migrating from one temporary space to another and weathering the storm of Covid 19, we are in a place of stability and sanctuary. Now, in this newfound space, we can weave our resources, talents, and efforts ever more robustly in service of our shared mission and vision.

However, like nest-building and caring for fledglings, launching ideas and initiatives requires energy and cooperation. It calls for the same kind of adaptability and creativity seen in other nest-building creatures, who sometimes use discarded materials such as paper, string, and plastic to construct their nests. These animals play essential roles in dispersing seeds, pollinating plants, aiding in decomposition, controlling predators, and generally supporting the overall health of their environments. Their "community outreach" efforts help maintain and strengthen the interdependent web of life.

March is Stewardship Month here at Channing Memorial Church. It is a time dedicated to recognizing the transformative power of collective action and committing to be a part of it. During this month, each of us is invited to reflect on and celebrate our unique talents, passions, and resources and to take pleasure in thoughts of how our combined efforts can yield outcomes greater than any single contribution could.

During Stewardship Month, we deliberately pause to think about our roles in serving one another within the congregation and extending that service to the broader community. This pause allows us to discuss ways we can improve and grow. It also enables us to highlight the importance of financial support for all our efforts toward impacting the world positively.

Fulfilling our role as stewards of the communities, landscapes, and living beings that

(Continued on page 5)

(President's Column - continued from page 4)

make up our world is both our promise and our challenge. We need our nest to be well-crafted and sturdy, weaving threads of love, empathy, and justice into a place of nourishment, shelter, and protection. We want to be seen in this world, but not in the way of church buildings and steeples. We want to be seen in the way that nest-building creatures reveal their homes: through the dreams and ambitions we have nurtured and fledged.

Let's work together to make our church community, Channing Memorial Church, even stronger. Your active involvement, generous pledge, and dedicated commitment are essential as we weave together our gifts to craft something remarkable.

All my best,

Kris

Stewardship Month - "Weaving Our Nest"

Hello Channing Congregation! Our Stewardship Month kicks off on Sunday, March 3rd. This year the Stewardship Committee has decided to conduct our pledge drive by holding three group meetings. Everyone is welcome! The meetings will be in a "Sunday's After" discussion format, so if you enjoy those, we are pretty sure you will enjoy these. We will discuss topics such as, "how is stewardship connected to our faith values?" or "what are the ways that we take care of our church?"

As an added bonus, the Sunday, March 10th meeting will be at the new church office, starting at 12:30. There will be plenty of comfortable space for a large group discussion. The address is 3525 Ellicott Mills Drive, Suite A, Ellicott City, in the Courthouse Square Office Complex, which is not far from our current Park Avenue office.

The March 17th meeting will be at Epiphany Lutheran after the worship service. It will start at 12:15 and will be in the nursery (unless we have more than 5 attendees, in which case we will take over the fellowship hall).

The third meeting is being held on Zoom, so we can accommodate absolutely everyone. It will be held on March 20 at 6:30 pm.

These meetings will be a good time to discuss 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 Memorial Church for the coming year.

Sincerely, *Dan V.*, Stewardship Chair



Trusting Change

Trusting Change Session One: Grief
Trusting Change Session Two: Letting Go

Dear Channing Members and Friends,

I want to begin a journey with you. Together, we will explore the challenges and gifts of undergoing and embracing change. Change is inherent in each life in myriad forms, from the trivial to the monumental. Together, through a series of discussions, we will explore such topics as grief, letting go, navigating the unknown, and imagining a way forward.

We will be guided in our work by Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change: Finding Our Way Through Personal and Global Transformation*. In beautiful prose, the book offers reflections, spiritual practices, and inspiration for connecting to change and one's own inner wisdom. Please have a copy of the book for our class.

If you would like to take part in any of the sessions, I request you read the Introduction and reflect upon the first section entitled "Beginning Here." You are welcome to attend any of the sessions that speak to your heart.

If you need assistance purchasing a book, do not hesitate to reach out. *If you are going to attend either gathering, please email me by March 9.*

Our first session will be held on March 16 from 10am-12pm at Park Ave. Together we will reflect on grief. Please read the section entitled "Grieving" before attending.

Our second session will be held on March 30 from 10am -12pm at Park Ave. Together we will reflect on letting go. Please read the section entitled "Letting Go" before attending.

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Stewardship update Year-to-date as of January 2024

General Operating Fund

Total Operating Income	\$ 126,658
Total Operating Expense	- 106,836
Difference	<u>\$ 19,822</u>



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=MEhIT11KbDRIUWViT-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 **March 12**. 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.

Sunday Church Roles Signup Open through May!

It's the moment you've been waiting for: I've opened the signup for Sunday morning roles for the next three months. There's something for everyone, so please [use this link](#) to give us a hand with everything that makes the weekly worship service run.

Our dedicated prez Kris highlighted the important job of closing the building on Sunday morning. We cannot meet at Epiphany without a volunteer to close the building. There are easy-to-follow instructions and, although you'll leave church a little later than usual, it'll be with the satisfaction of providing a vital service. Can you sign up to do just one Sunday in the next three months? See the link above.

If you have any questions or need help signing up, please email me. Thank you!

-- Cathy F.

Board Bits



The Board discussed items on the current lease with Epiphany in preparation for upcoming negotiations for a 5-year lease. The Board also discussed potential storage space at Epiphany and in a storage unit for a temporary period.

Channing has signed a 3-year lease agreement with Courthouse Square for office space. The Board talked about the cost of installing a kitchenette there for church use, and then subsequently approved it. Plans for organizing church property at the Park Ave office are ongoing.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 19th.

Special Collections at Channing

The Congregation has established a Special Collections Team -- *Ostara H., Cindy W., and Jim C.* -- that will organize monthly special collections every second Sunday. Organizations that share UU values -- locally, nationally, internationally -- can be nominated by members and friends of Channing. Collections may be cash (check/debit/credit) or in-kind (e.g. non-perishable food items) depending on the organization. Nominations may be made using our Special Collections nominating form. Nominations may come from any member or friend of the congregation or the minister.

Nominations may be made at any time. The Special Collections Team will keep a running prioritized list of proposed collection recipients and will let nominators (sponsors) know if the nominee has been selected.

Send nominations using the form linked below to the Special Collections Team.

If the nominee is selected, the nominator (sponsor)

- must notify the organization and provide a brief message about the organization that can be distributed via email and newsletter to the congregation;
- may arrange for the organization to have someone speak to the congregation during the worship service for no longer than three minutes;
- may speak during the worship service for no longer than three minutes;
- may have the organization bring brochures or other printed matter;
- may remain after the service to answer questions, or participate in a discussion.

Click the following link to get the nominations form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MJvMSi1f853sheTnOYsZf1fUG9ZZXgZ6Fr4kYXldcAc/edit>

Introducing Ourselves to Our Neighbors



We wish to make ourselves known to residents of the neighborhood around our church meeting place. *Bernie N.* has prepared flyers with essential information. Now is the time for volunteers, preferably male-female pairs, to visit homes (only 6-7 homes after church), and deliver a personal invitation, (with or without an “elevator talk”).

If you are willing to or interested in participating in this service please see Bernie. He will provide further information, fliers, and assignments to particular homes. This is an effort that will be ongoing for the spring months.

Help Spread the Word About Channing

We all know how wonderful Channing Memorial Church is, with our dynamic minister, spiritual and inspiring worship services, the many spiritual exploration programs and classes, our expanding social justice work, and the warm, friendly and supportive members and friends of this congregation, Channing is a special and unique place. If you would like the world to know more about Channing and what we offer, below is an easy way to help spread the word about Channing. There are several websites that encourage people to leave comments or reviews specifically about Channing Memorial Church:

- Our own **Channing Facebook page** (<https://www.facebook.com/ChanningMemorialChurch/>) allows comments and likes. We can definitely use more.
- **Channing’s Google page** appears when you google “Channing Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist.” It permits reviews. Unfortunately, most of the Channing written reviews are several years old. Let’s update them.
- **Yelp** is a business-oriented site that includes basic information about businesses, but also includes churches. It encourages reviews. So far, there is only one review for Channing. The Channing site can be reached by googling Channing Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist and searching through the listings, or by searching <https://www.yelp.com/channing-memorial-church-unitarian-universalistellicott-city>

Outreach Team (Marian V., Kathleen R., Evelyn G., Ken G.)

Men's Group

Thursday, March 7 at 10 a.m. on Zoom and In-person March 21



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 **March 21** 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.

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

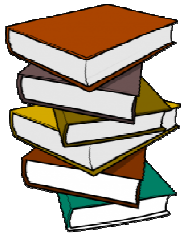
Each month, our conversations range from imagination to courage to vulnerability. Before each gathering, we engage in individual reflection guided by a monthly Soul Matters packet. Delving deep into our reflections each month leads to meaningful conversation, and the prep work offers thoughts to reflect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



William Ellery Channing

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. 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.

March 9 – Desert Solitaire by Edward Abbey (336 pages). This is not primarily a book about the desert,” writes Edward Abbey in his introduction. “In recording my impressions of the natural scene I have striven above all for accuracy, since I believe that there is a kind of poetry, even a kind of truth, in simple fact...But the desert is a vast world, an oceanic world, as deep in its way. Since you cannot get the desert into a book any more than a fisherman can haul up the sea with his nets, I have tried to create a world of words in which the desert figures more as medium than as material. Not imitation but evocation has been the goal.”

Where to Obtain?

https://www.amazon.com/Desert-Solitaire-Edward-Abbey-ebook/dp/B07XB49J92/ref=sr_1_1?crid=H73EBMC2M2IX&keywords=desert+solitaire+by+edward+abbey&qid=1707682602&srefix=desert+solitaire%2Caps%2C91&sr=8-1

Amazon used book list paperbacks- \$5-7\$

Abebooks – used paperbacks - \$5-7\$

HCPLS - Limited copies

Libby (ebooks) – Limited copies

For April - “David Brooks on Staying Humane in Inhumane Times”

The ancient wisdom of Athens and Jerusalem can help us survive these cruel and challenging times.

NYTimes <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/23/opinion/brutalizing-humanity-modernity.html?showTranscript=1>

If you do not have access to a NYT article, let Ken know and he will send you a copy.

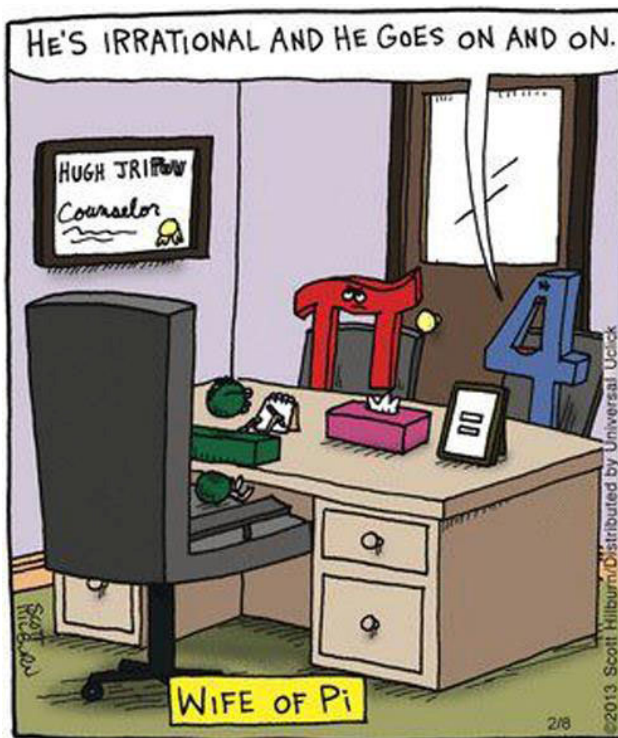
For May – Horse by Gwendolyn Brooks (416 pages) (may be changed-input welcome

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.




A lot of fun at the auction event hosted by David F. - "Pens! Paper! Ink!"

March 14 - Happy Pi-Day!



March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00-7:00 pm	2
3 Worship Service 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	4	5 Wisdom Tales 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Minister's Office Hours 1-4 pm	6 Space Search Team 5:00-6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00 - 9:00 pm	7 Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	8 Worship Team 1:30 - 3:00 pm	9 Channing Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
10 Worship Service 11:00 a.m - 12:00 pm Stewardship Group Mtg. 12:30 pm at new office Daylight Saving Time begins	11 Ramadan begins	12 Minister's Office Hours 1-4 pm LDNC meeting 5:30 - 7:30 pm Lectio Divina 7:00 - 8:00 pm	13 Stewardship Committee 7:00-8:00 pm	14 Pi Day 	15	16 Trusting Change - Session One 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
17 Worship Service 11:00 a.m - 12:00 pm Stewardship Group Mtg. 12:15 pm at Epiphany ST. PATRICK'S DAY	18	19 Minister's Office Hours 1-4 pm Board Meeting 7:00-9:00 pm SPRING BEGINS	20 Stewardship Group Mtg. 6:30 pm on Zoom Young Adult Small Group 7:00 - 9:00 pm	21 Men's Group at Roggenart 10:00 - 11:30 am	22	23
24 Worship Service 11:00 a.m - 12:00 pm	25	26 Minister's Office Hours 1-4 pm Lectio Divina 7:00 - 8:00 pm	27	28	29	30 Trusting Change - Session Two 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
31 Worship Service 11:00 a.m - 12:00 pm Easter						

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.