



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Volume 29, Issue 5

May 2022

Minister's Column

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Dear Channing members and friends,

Following our church Easter service, after quickly finishing what we lovingly called our "Easter cupcakes," my husband Eric and I went on a hike. We do this every Sunday, but for whatever reason, this particular stretch of dirt alongside a lush and running stream stood out to us. We paused in the chilly air, took in our surroundings, and thought, "life is good." It was one of those moments I preached about, when something simple in life hits, and brings with it unexpected tears of meaning.

Our theme for the upcoming month is Nurturing Beauty. Reflecting on this while planning for the month ahead has offered me solace, breathing room, and an awakening to hope. There is good and beauty in the emerging green leaves, in the laughter of a child, in a quiet moment to sip tea, in a particularly meaningful poem or in holding the hand of another. It is there. Also, there is our never-ceasing ability to be a cause of good in this world. I think this is particularly important to remember when it feels like the whole world is in pain. We are all interconnected in the web of life; what we do affects all. A smile to a stranger that brightens their day, a chance to listen to a story of hardship and offer compassion, helping an ailing neighbor get groceries - these not only heal those present, but the spirit of goodness and love ripples far beyond what we could imagine. It is the same with our prayers for peace. This is beautiful.

This offers me hope. Hope that through my intentional actions the world becomes a bit better. Hope that if we all work to do good, the world can heal. Hope that even when things are hard, there will ultimately be a bright blue sky above us. When we look for it, hope can be rampant. Let us not forget this. There is still good in the world. Love will always be more powerful than hate.

Hope puts love into action. If we navigate our lives through

**We are a Welcoming
Congregation!**



Wayside Pulpit

It is never too late to give up our prejudices.

-- Henry David Thoreau

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

Send submittals for the June issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m.** on **Sunday, May 22.**

(Minister's Column - continued from p. 1)

the power of love, we will find those small moments that remind us of inherent goodness and bring unexpected tears to our eyes. That, to me, is beauty. So today, and every day, I invite you to be aware of those small moments. I invite you to find little pieces of that hope and beauty that surround you.

I know we are disappointed about the loss of Sunday morning space. In this disappointment, I see the strength and resiliency of our faith community. Together, we will get there. Let us join together and anticipate the beauty in our future!

With love,
Rev. Jane

Lectio Divina

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm we join together for a practice of Lectio Divina.

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 read through, we will pause for several minutes of silent reflection, which will be followed by each person sharing their unique reflection. **I look forward to this sacred time of meditation and reflection!**

Rev. Jane

Young Adults Game Night and Virtual Potluck

The **Young Adults Game Night and virtual potluck** 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 are 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.

President's Column

As I write this on a glorious, warm, spring afternoon, I find myself looking forward to the satisfaction of cutting the grass and trimming the weeds. And just as the grass keeps growing, so does our Church keep going.

We just conducted Our 8th Principle vote, which passed with 28 yes votes, 2 no votes, and one abstention. Thank you 8th Principle team, Angela Lesperance and Toni Rosen for all your work, especially to Toni for her artful handling of the always trickier than one thinks logistics of the electronic voting process. Going forward, I believe that doing right in the face of racism is lifetime work, and I come to Church to be reminded of this.

With respect to COVID-19 the CovidActNow website we have been using to inform our policies has recalibrated their risk levels in accordance with updated CDC guidelines as the area and nation are relaxing various restrictions. Our risk level is now “low”, but cases are actually trending **upwards** in both Baltimore and Howard Counties. This puts us in a bit of a weird place. The Board decided to keep in-person worship restrictions as they are, but to relax indoor masking restrictions on groups of 5 to 7 consenting and vaccinated and boosted people. As always, those who choose to wear a mask should be respected.

Our annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, May 22, after service. One requirement of the meeting is that the Congregation elect members to vacant positions on the Board. As of this writing it is looking highly unlikely that we will have any candidates for the President and Trustee positions. The Board and LDNC have the following contingency plan:

- Instead of electing candidates at the annual meeting, the Congregation would vote to suspend the Bylaws for a year, allowing for alternate governance.
- A team of members from the Board and the LDNC will research new governance structures. Since this is a “topic of the times”, there are already numerous Central East Region (CER) resources available on this.
- In the long term, we may need to hire an administrative assistant to lighten the duties of the treasurer and other positions within the church.
- Board members will figure out what tasks and duties are **absolutely essential**, and figure out a way to share them.

While this may sound alarming, I take some comfort in the fact that we are not alone. Many other UU congregations are facing a similar situation. We are growing older as a group, with many of us having served in multiple positions for many years, and the governance structures we established 30 years ago are not a good match for our limited volunteer energy of today, nor do they look promising for the future. While this may sound like a setback, my hope is that we take this opportunity to find a way to make our church even better.

The grass awaits.

Care,
David

Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, May 22, 2020
(After the Worship Service)

Stewardship Update
As of March 31, 2022

Total Operating Income	143,951
Total Operating Expense	<u>100,992</u>
Difference	\$ 42,959

Canvass Update

To date we have received 31 pledges totaling \$140,856 – **91% of our goal!** Only three or four more pledges to go! Thank you for your continuing support of Channing's mission and ministries.

Evelyn

TIPS & INFO for New (and Other!) Pledgers

Thank you so much for your pledge! Here are some tips to smooth the way:

Our financial year runs from July 1st to June 30th. A pledge you make in the spring applies to the year that starts July 1.

How to pledge

By check: If you're giving by check, please write "2022-23 pledge" or "annual pledge" on the memo line.

With cash: If you're giving toward your pledge with cash at church, put the cash in an envelope with your name, date and "Pledge" on the front and put it in the offering plate. Cash that's placed anonymously in the collection plate is simply recorded as "plate cash", not as money given toward a pledge.

By giving stock: This can be a great option! See the treasurer for details. Online via PayPal: This can be convenient, but be aware that PayPal takes a commission of 3-4%. You can offset this by increasing the donation amount, or consider paying your pledge a different way (check, cash or stock).

Pledge donations vs. other donations: Donations to special collections like NAMI, Ecoworks, etc. are accounted for separately from your pledge donations. When giving to a special collection for one of these causes, please note that in the memo line so the Treasurer knows how to document the donation.

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(TIPS & INFO - continued from p. 4)

If something changes: Your pledge is a commitment, but if your life situation changes, just contact the Treasurer with any adjustments that are needed.

Tracking your pledge: In January, everyone who has given to the church in the past year-- regardless of whether they've pledged-- receives a statement that shows their giving from January 1st through December 31st. This is a calendar year statement with no reference to the July-June fiscal year.

People who have made donation pledges to the church also receive quarterly statements three additional times/year. These statements will update you about how much you've pledged, and also serve as a check on what the Treasurer has in the system. If you see an error in a pledge update, please contact the Treasurer.

Thank you for supporting the mission of Channing Memorial Church!

Response to Survey – Afghan Refugee Resettlement

Twenty members and friends of Channing Memorial Church responded to our recent survey to determine the level of congregational activity and commitment to the project.

Of the fifteen opportunities presented, most respondents are willing to purchase gift cards (16), stock a pantry for two weeks (14), provide household goods (10) and school supplies (11). To a lesser extent, respondents are willing to provide rental assistance (8) and clothing (6). Some respondents were willing to provide rides to medical appointments, government agencies and school registrations. None of the respondents was willing to search for temporary or permanent housing.

You can view a chart of all the responses at:

<https://jimcal87.wixsite.com/channingjustice/afghan-refugees>

Thank you for your continued support and participation. For more information, please contact any member of the team -- Angela L., Kris T., Toni R. or Jim C.

Thanks,

Jim C.

Soul Matters May 2022



Our theme for this month is “Nurturing Beauty.” I believe there is beauty all around us, if only we remind ourselves to pay attention - budding trees, the smile of a beloved. It is when times are hard that this can slip away. Blaise Pascal reminds us, “In difficult times, carry something beautiful in your heart.” I wonder, what beauty do you hold in your heart? What goodness do you carry within? I wonder, too, of those wounds that lead to resilient scars - those beautiful scars that make us stronger, kinder, and more compassionate. In times of hardship, how can we both notice all that surrounds us, and nurture our inner self?

I invite you to come to this group with nothing but curiosity and an open mind! There will be no prep work and no need to reflect on a packet. Together, we will reflect on wise words of others and grapple with some self-reflective questions. Please sign up using the link below.

All Ages:

Friday, May 13 10:30-12pm held outdoors at Park Ave*

Wednesday, May 25 7-8:30pm *held on Zoom*

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACAF2AA1FC1-soul19>

**Our Young Adult Group will continue to follow our traditional format. If you are joining our Young Adult Group (20s, 30s, 40s), I will send you a packet to review before the Small Group. I am available or for any questions **

Young Adults (20s, 30s, 40s) *location TBD - email Rev. Jane minister@channingmc.org*

Wednesday, May 18 7:30-9pm

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACAF2AA1FC1-young24>

I hope you will join me!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Brews and Bulbs

Howard County's first ever Brews and Bulbs event is on May 1, 12-3 pm, at Manor Hill Brewing. Trade in your old Incandescent and/or CFL bulbs for LED bulbs at no cost, all while enjoying a beer!

More event details here: <https://livegreenhoward.com/events/brews-and-bulbs/>

Crisis in Ukraine

Eighty years ago when Europe experienced horrendous refugee and humanitarian crises, the Unitarians, through their Service Committee, responded with aid and assistance. Now, Europe and the people of Ukraine face a devastating, aggressive invasion, violence and death. Again, Unitarian Universalists can respond. The UU Service Committee recommends donations to the following organizations that will be responding directly:

- [UUSC's Emergency Response Fund](#)
- [HIAS](#)
- [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#)
- [International Rescue Committee](#)
- [Ukrainian-American Crisis Response Committee of Michigan](#)

For more information about the UU Service Committee and its role in advancing human rights worldwide and responding to humanitarian crises, contact Jim C.

Visit www.uusc.org.

Courageous Conversations

Standing together as Allies...A PICNIC IN THE PARK!

Join us May 17th as we come together to fellowship with our Allies. Our doors open at 5:00 PM - you're welcome any time. Bring your chair, a snack, your family, and your friends. Register NOW on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/standing-together-as-allies-a-picnic-in-the-park-tickets-302250177417>

Howard County 20-Minute Cleanup



Howard County is doing the Annual 20-Minute Clean Up during the month of April. To participate on behalf of Channing:

Pick up trash for 20 minutes in the spot of your choice - around your neighborhood or at a community park - and send Julie an email by April 29 with a) how many people participated in your party and b) how many bags of trash you picked up.

I realize that in 20 minutes you may only pick up a fraction of a bag- that's fine. Just tell me your best estimate of the fraction.

I will add together all the participant numbers and trash bags collected, and send Howard County the totals under the church name. We will get recognition on social media and on the Howard County website.

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(20-Minute Cleanup - continued from p. 7)

If you feel inspired, feel free to send me pictures to send to the county as well. If you happen to wear a Channing T-shirt, that would be cool.

For more information about this annual effort:

<https://livegreenhoward.com/recycling-waste/litter-cleanups/>

Julie Fitzer

Removing the Stigmas Surrounding Mental Health

Removing the stigmas surrounding mental health is this month's theme for NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

NAMI has selected this blog from member Sheri T. to educate people across the United States about the topic:

Overcoming Shame and Stigma Surrounding Physical Disabilities and Mental Health Sheri T.

“Two-Pound Baby Wins Life Fight,” was the front-page headline of the Feb. 21, 1962 edition of the Jefferson City, Missouri Post-Tribune. That baby was me, and the story celebrated my release from the hospital after spending months in an incubator struggling to survive.

At 15 months old, doctors told my parents that I had an intellectual disability. My mother questioned this diagnosis, and she fought to find another answer. Several months later, I was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. I experienced a childhood filled with leg braces, painful surgeries and bullying.

As I got older, my various physical disabilities progressed. I found myself looking for ways to advocate for people with disabilities. Beginning in 2001, I dedicated my time to breaking down barriers surrounding physical disabilities and promoting full accessibility on various disability commissions and committees in Maryland.

My journey to tackle ableism, however, would not end there. After being diagnosed with a mental health condition, I began to unpack the realities of the stigma surrounding mental illness — and discovering how much progress needs to be made.

My Experience with Mental Illness and Shame

In 2014, I was hospitalized and first diagnosed with bipolar disorder. As I struggled to accept the diagnosis, I refused to follow up with psychiatric treatment or take my medication as directed, which led to a much more serious bipolar episode in 2019 that almost cost me my life. After surviving a suicide attempt, I listened to my doctors, took my medication and, more importantly, accepted my diagnosis. Today, I take my medication as directed and continue to see my psychiatrist on a regular basis.

When I was first hospitalized in 2014, however, I was too ashamed to tell anyone that I had a mental health issue. I was afraid to talk about it because I, like so many

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(Removing Stigmas - continued from p. 8)

others, held deeply internalized negative attitudes about mental illness and seeking help. This stigma was something that all of my fellow patients wrestled with during their hospitalizations: They simply didn't know how to tell other people about their mental illness.

During group therapy we were told we shouldn't be afraid or ashamed to share our diagnosis with others. But that wisdom was hard to accept. Frankly, my initial reaction was, "It's one thing to tell people that I was hospitalized due to my cerebral palsy. It's a whole other thing to say I am bipolar, and I just got out of the hospital's Behavioral Health Unit (what many people incorrectly label the psych ward)."

Get Help Isn't Shameful or Scary

Since my time in treatment, I have noticed that we seem to have no trouble talking endlessly about our physical health when we get together with family and friends: "I just went to see a new orthopedist." "I just completed a new round of physical therapy." etc. Our health comes up naturally in both serious conversations and small talk. But we don't open up about our mental health in a similar, casual way.

You rarely hear someone mentioning that they were just diagnosed with borderline personality disorder or that they're running late to a therapy appointment. This needs to change; if we continue to hide the reality of our mental health, we perpetuate a cycle of stigma and shame. If you don't speak up, someone else will continue to suffer in silence.

To do my part in dismantling a culture of stigma and silence, I will confidently tell others that I have bipolar disorder or mention that I have an appointment with my psychiatrist. By normalizing my experience, I hope to play a part in removing the stigma and fear surrounding mental health, because I realize that I can successfully live with both a physical disability *and* a mental health issue. Now, I'm comfortable saying, "I have cerebral palsy, and I'm bipolar, and I'm not alone. Many of us have physical disabilities *and* mental health issues." I not only pay attention when people use the wrong words to describe people with physical disabilities (handicapped, crippled, for example), but I also notice when people use negative words like "crazy" to describe those of us with mental health issues. I don't hesitate to let people know that, "I have a disability. I am not disabled, crippled or handicapped." And I say, "I am not crazy. I have a mental health condition."

I was fortunate to get the help I needed, and I hope anyone else struggling will do the same. If I can encourage one person to get help in an emergency by reaching out to a family member, friend, general practitioner, psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist, my story will have made a difference.

If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or thoughts of suicide, help is available. Call the NAMI HelpLine at 1-800-950-6264, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., ET. Or in a crisis text "NAMI" to 741741 for 24/7, confidential, free crisis counseling. Or call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255.

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(Removing Stigmas - continued from p. 9)

Sheri T. spent decades breaking down barriers and stigmas and promoting full accessibility as part of local and state commissions and committees in Maryland. She is the author of a newly-published disability memoir, "IMBALANCED," a poignant, humorous account about living with cerebral palsy and bipolar disorder. For a free copy of her "10 Mental Health Tips I Learned the Hard Way," email imbalanced.book@gmail.com

Channing Book Club

Due to conflicts with a scheduled Theology class for Ken, Sheri will lead the discussion on **Saturday May 14**. We will discuss the two very interesting articles below. Well, we'll start with the first one and see how far we get!

["The Revenge of the Yankees: How Social Gospel Became Social Justice," by Michael Lind](#) (*Tablet*, Nov. 15, 2020). This is a historical look at divisions in the U.S. I don't necessarily 100% agree with the perspective, but I found this very thought provoking.

["The True Meaning of Happiness: What's the Haps on the Ultimate Pursuit? Ask the Vikings," by Caleb Madison](#) (*The Atlantic*). I'm not sure if everyone can access this via the link. (Let me know if you can't, and would like to see it.) This is another *Atlantic* piece about happiness, delving into the word's etymology and what it means for us. Short and sweet.

Do you have a poem or an essay you'd like to talk about in the future? Let us know. 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.



Maggie's Beautiful Quilted Pulpit Cloth

May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 Worship Service 10:00-11:00am</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00pm</p>	<p>4 Space Search Team Meet- ing 5:00-6:00 pm Young Adult Game Night 7:00-9:00 pm</p>	<p>5 Men's Group 10 am-12:00 pm</p>	<p>6 Covenant Circle 9:30am- 12:00pm Membership Team 2:00pm Outreach Team 6:00- 7:00pm</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 Worship Ser- vice 10:00- 11:00am  MOTHERS DAY</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00pm LDNC Meet- ing 5:30- 7:30pm Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00pm</p>	<p>11 Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 -8:00pm</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 Soul Matters 10:30am- 12:00pm</p>	<p>14 Channing Book Club 10:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>
<p>15 Worship Service 10-11am</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm Board Meet- ing 7:00-9:00 pm</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 Covenant Circle 9:30am- 12:00pm</p>	<p>21 Men's Group 10 am-12:00 pm</p>
<p>22 Worship Service 10:00-11:00am Annual Con- gregational Meeting (after worship service)</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00pm</p>	<p>25 Soul Matters - Young Adults 7:00 - 8:30 pm</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Worship Service 10:00-11:00am</p>	<p>30 MEMORIAL DAY  Memorial Day</p>	<p>31 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm</p>				

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

On the web:
www.ChanningMC.org

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.

NURTURE Your Spirit.
Help HEAL The World.



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Unitarian Universalist
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