



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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Minister's Column



What a delight it is to be back at Channing and to reconnect with all of you! This summer was a busy one. I spent time visiting beloved family members and enjoyed some quality time in nature. I had the pleasure of reading a wide array of books, from church leadership to preaching to justice work, and look forward to incorporating all I learned into the year ahead. And yet, there were difficult experiences as well, experiences many of us navigated our way through.

At the beginning of the summer, I began to feel free, for the first time in months, as many folks began to get vaccinated, and the world opened up again. There was a chance to breathe easy. I began to feel safe, and I know others of you did as well. Then we learned about the Delta variant, and all the freedom I felt began to compress around me as fear crept back in. I know some among us feel confined and bored, alongside feelings of fear and dismay.

One hot summer day, this news hit my husband and me particularly hard, and we went on a walk to figure out what chord had been struck within us. We found we were lacking in hope. Over the course of our walk, sharing insights and asking questions, we began to find it again. We reflected on that sacred truth: each one of us carries within us the potential to do good in the world. If we act as a collective there is no limit to what we can do! When we found hope, we encountered possibility - the possibility to heal.

There is hope in the pandemic - individuals doing good deeds. Hope in folks getting vaccinated, or hope in parents, some of whom I know, enrolling their children in vaccine trials. There is hope in scientists all around the world who are working to save myriad people they have never and will never meet, and hope in those healthcare workers continuing to work for each ailing body. This leads to the possibility that we can overcome this. This leads to the possibility that life can continue to flourish.

In this upcoming month, I invite each of you to explore the hope that is all around you and find in that hope the
Continued on next page

We are a Welcoming Congregation!



Wayside Pulpit

Don't worry about the mule, just load the wagon.

—Anonymous and
Cathy's mom

Minister

Reverend Jane Smith

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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 October issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 26, 2021.**

Minister's Column, continued from page 1

possibility to heal and thrive. Perhaps you find hope in this church, within yourself, with those you love, or with those you will never meet. With hope, we have possibilities. Possibility to live in a world without the constant fear of illness. To live in a world not run by greed and hate. Each one of us holds within us the ability to do good. Let's get to it.

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Water Communion - September 12



As we make our way through summer, I invite us to be intentional about noticing those places that feed our souls. Perhaps this is a special destination we travel to, a gathering with those we love, or a walk to center in nature. **I invite each of you to collect water from one of these places.** When we join together again virtually in the fall, we have a special opportunity to celebrate this water and the story it holds during our annual Water Communion service, **this year on September 12.** We will bless the water and join in a ritual to share this water with that from years past, combining this year's joy with the joy of dedicated members and friends that came before us. I look forward to celebrating this beloved tradition!

—*Rev. Jane*

Stewardship Update



July 2021 Year to Date

Total Operating Income	\$ 29,947
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 11,777
Difference	\$ 18,470

President's Column

As I write this on a cloudy, not-too-hot, late summer afternoon, our neighborhood cat named Rufus, an orange tabby, has decided to sack out on the loveseat on our porch. With his six-toed forepaw draped across his nose, I find myself calmed -- and reminded that life goes on.

Beloved friends, I bear disappointing news: the prospect of renting the “unicorn” property I described last month has fallen through. As reported by the Space Team, the landlord of this property

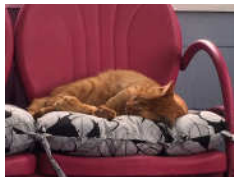
- feels that this is not a typical use of an office building;
- does not wish to do the renovations, in particular, to install recessed doors that open out, which are required by the County;
- is concerned about the cost of HVAC for times beyond normal business hours;
- fears that the music would disturb other tenants.

So, where does that leave us? We will fall back on our “two space plan”. Our first priority is to find **accessible** “everything else” space. Our lease at Park Avenue ends at the end of August, and we are currently in negotiations to extend the lease at a reduced rate in the meantime. We will continue to hold Sunday services virtually until we can find a suitable space for Sunday worship.

I hope you can forgive me for raising your expectations; I know mine were pretty high. This is a setback, but I think that sharing the process and keeping us all informed is better than not doing so, even if it is harder on our hopes. The silver lining is that it is lighter on our wallets. As always, kudos and gratitude to the Space Team.

Also from the department of sobering and not so uplifting news is the Delta variant of the COVID19 virus. I'm sure that you are all keeping informed on this, and I hope you won't find it surprising that Reverend Jane and the Board are feeling quite cautious with respect to in person meetings within our Church community. At our August Board Meeting the Board decided to stick with the previous UUA guidance, while asking people to follow it conservatively. However, since the meeting, the **UUA has come out with new guidance** specific to the delta variant (<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/delta-guidance>). And while the Board has not yet made an official decision to follow it, I would urge you to read it and strongly consider following it as well.

I just went back to the porch and found Rufus still hanging out. As I've found with many cats, his head was itchy and he appreciated a good scratch. Here's a picture of him:



Care,
David



Soul Matters: Possibility

This month, we have the opportunity to delve deep into the theme of possibility. Possibility is held within ourselves, held within our world, and, to some, held within the holy and the sacred. It offers us the chance to create something new from the old, to bend and shape and mold until we find beauty within us and around us. Adrienne Maree Brown writes, “I think it is a healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it.” What do you engage with that is broken? What within that broken thing contains possibility and wholeness? This month, in our small groups, we are offered the chance to engage with the possibilities of the pandemic, to unlock the potential within us, and to explore possibilities found when we decide to let go.

“Possibility” is our worship theme for June, 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. For the virtual offering, I will 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 Possibility with you!

I will continue to hold these sessions via Zoom in September.

Saturday, September 25 11am-1pm *held outdoors at 3677 Park Ave.*

Wednesday, September 29 6:30pm-8:30pm *held virtually in a Zoom room*
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACAF2AA1FC1-soul11>

Young Adult TBD - check upcoming emails!

I hope to see you soon!

Warmly,
Rev. Jane

Channing Book Club-Upcoming Discussions



Saturday, September 11

Just Before Too Late by church member Mel C., rescheduled for discussion on September 11. Mel will be our first guest author! Available at the Baltimore County Public Library (five copies) and Enoch Pratt (one copy) as well. Have you started reading it yet?

Due to group interest, we will hold the Sept. 11 outdoors at Park Avenue. Bring your own chair, or use a folding chair available from inside. The group will decide on masks when it meets but anyone who wishes to mask is welcome to do so. Future meeting location subject to group decision or based on weather/pandemic. All at 10 am.

Saturday, October 9

How to Balance Hard Work and Pleasure for Happiness (article by Arthur Brooks for *The Atlantic*) contact me for a copy.

I have found that most of the serious approaches to happiness can be mapped onto two ancient traditions, promoted by the Greek philosophers Epicurus and Epictetus. In a nutshell, they focus on enjoyment and virtue, respectively. Individuals typically gravitate toward one style or the other, and many major philosophies have followed one path or the other for about two millennia. Understanding where you sit between the two can tell you a lot about yourself-including your happiness weak points-and help you create strategies for a more balanced approach to life.

Saturday, November 13

One Long River of Song by Brian Doyle

David James Duncan sums up Doyle's sensibilities best in his introduction to the collection: "Brian Doyle lived the pleasure of bearing daily witness to quiet glories hidden in people, places and creatures of little or no size, renown, or commercial value, and he brought inimitably playful or soaring or aching or heartfelt language to his tellings." A life's work, *One Long River of Song* invites readers to experience joy and wonder in ordinary moments that become, under Doyle's rapturous and exuberant gaze." Two copies available at Howard County Library and four at Baltimore County.

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? Contact me with any suggestions.

—Ken H.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Channingites out and about during this still-unusual time



Daughter of the year Diana M.'s beautiful sunset from her mom's house in Florida



The H.s visit "Split Rocker" outdoor sculpture at the Glenstone Museum in Potomac.



Beloved Prez. at the St. Louis Arch



The C.s reunite with daughter and son-in-law, visiting from Paris

Board Bits



From the August 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting:

The Board discussed the lack of an RE Committee. David Fu reported that he and Rev. Jane have discussed perhaps sharing a part-time DRE with another congregation.

The Board received an update from the Channing Strategic Planning Team. They are hard at work with consultant Liz Coit developing a plan to give the various church teams and committees a road map for their activities. Their work builds on the cottage meetings from 2019 and the Stewardship work the church did with Liz Coit last year. The members of this team are Patrick B., Pam E. and Angela L.

The Board decided unanimously to continue with the current in-person meeting guidelines.

The Board reviewed the Space Team report.

- Per the request of the Space Team, we identified Joe T. as a member of the congregation who could review and advise us on any lease documents.
- The Space Team indicated that we should not expect to have a new space under lease until at least December 1st. After discussing this, the Board decided to give David the authority to negotiate a six month extension of the Park Avenue lease, ideally at a reduced rent. Currently, the Park Ave. lease expires at the end of August.

—*Kathleen Razmus*

Canadian Historical Drama Worth A Look



Alias Grace is a compelling historical drama by the CBC. Based on the novel by Margaret Atwood, this 2017 mini-series focuses on the travails of Grace Marks, an Irish émigré who arrives in Canada a few years after the Canadian uprisings of 1837-38.

Grace has been convicted of abetting the murder of the owner and head servant where she herself had worked as a domestic. A group sympathetic to her plight arranges for an American psychiatrist (Dr. Simon Jordan) to visit and possibly assist in finding out what really happened and aid in her release.

Much of the series consists of Grace and Dr. Jordan sitting and talking, Dr. Jordan patiently asking questions while Grace recounts the troubling life events that led to her conviction. There is a cat-and-mouse aspect to this simple setting, as we learn through Grace's interior monologue that she is not quite the victimized naif that Dr. Jordan had been led to expect.

Through the use of these deceptively quiet exchanges and Grace's occasionally vivid flashbacks, the series creates a compelling slice of history. Sarah Gadon and Edward Holcroft deliver brilliant performances as the lead characters, and the pacing and production are flawless. For most of the series, I was mesmerized.

The gender constraints Grace labored under are a clear focus of the tale. True, there appeared to be some bias in the series' treatment of men, who come across as rather disproportionately villainous (even for the era). This could be written off as the unsurprising perspective of the possibly unreliable narrator who has suffered greatly at their hands. There were, after all, a handful of male characters who came across as genuinely good-hearted.

Unfortunately — and here there be some vaguely spoiler-ish commentary, so you might want to skip this paragraph if you want to watch the series 'untainted' — we find in the last episode that, nope, all of the men are in fact pretty scummy. It is not Grace but Atwood herself who sees them this way. It's a disappointingly ham-fisted conclusion to what had been an absorbing and subtle story.

Despite that rather large caveat, I nevertheless think *Alias Grace* is a worthwhile drama. I watched the DVDs through inter-library loan, but I understand it's available on Netflix as well.

—Bert M.

Lectio Divina



Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm 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. 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. 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!** There is no prep work for these gatherings.

—Rev. Jane

To be of use By Marge Piercy

The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls.



I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine and oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
But you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries out for water to carry
And a person for work that is real.

To be of use from **Circles on the Water**
Copyright 1982 by Marge Piercy
Thanks to Kris T. for introducing this poem to us!

Help Needed for Haiti

Are you looking for a way to help pursuant the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on August 14th? The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is working with long-term grassroots partners in Haiti to respond to the most pressing needs. You may help UUSC get resources to these grassroots groups by donating to the Emergency Response Fund [here](#).



—Ostara H.



September 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>All events *online* unless otherwise noted</i></p>			<p><i>1</i> Space Search Meeting</p> <p>Young Adult Game Night</p>	<p><i>2</i> Men's Group 10 am</p>	<p><i>3</i> Outreach Mtg</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>
<p><i>5</i> 10 am Sunday Service</p>	<p><i>6</i> LABOR DAY </p>	<p><i>7</i> Rosh Hashanah 1-4 pm Rev. Jane's Office Hours</p>	<p><i>8</i></p>	<p><i>9</i></p>	<p><i>10</i> Covenant Circle Worship Team</p>	<p><i>11</i> Channing Book Club 10 am</p>
<p><i>12</i> 9 am LH# Meeting 10 am Sunday Service</p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i> 1-4 pm Rev. Jane's Office Hours LDNC Meeting 7 pm Lectio Divina</p>	<p><i>15</i></p>	<p><i>16</i> </p>	<p><i>17</i></p>	<p><i>18</i> Men's Group 10 am</p>
<p><i>19</i> 10 am Sunday Service</p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i> 1-4 pm Rev. Jane's Office Hours 7 pm Board of Trustees</p>	<p><i>22</i></p>	<p><i>23</i>  No groceries to Westside— we are donating money instead!</p>	<p><i>24</i> Covenant Circle</p>	<p><i>25</i></p>
<p><i>26</i> 10 am Sunday Service</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i> 1-4 pm Rev. Jane's Office Hours</p>	<p><i>29</i></p>	<p><i>30</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.