



# The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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December 2022

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**We are a Welcoming  
Congregation**



## Wayside Pulpit

Unanswered questions are far less dangerous than unquestioned answers.

—*Author Unknown*

## Minister's Column



Dear Channing members and friends,

Each morning, when I leave my house, I feel the temperature slowly cooling. Last Sunday, I went on a hike, and, for the first time of the season, I was bundled up in a hat and scarf! In late afternoon, the sky is already darkening, and soon rain will transition to snow. Not only are the trees changing, now barren of leaves, things are changing at church, too.

We recently made a change to improve the quality of our worship services. Live services are now recorded and posted online. Some of us may be nervous about this - any change can be uneasy and unsettling. I have heard questions about the effects this may have on our community. Know that we still have so many ways to connect as a beloved community. I encourage folks to join me for Tuesdays After and our Saturday evening Joys and Concerns sessions. You are each loved and held within the unceasing embrace of our beloved community. We are a church that has survived so much flux and change, and we are sturdy and remarkable!

There are other changes that occur as green grass turns brown. Our nights are getting consistently longer, and this darkness can create within many of us a depression. Be gentle with yourself. If you need it, I invite you to seek help. Likewise, Thanksgiving can offer great pressure. For those who celebrate Christmas, or those who do not but who still feel the stresses and malaise in the community, we are entering a season that may be filled with anxiety and high expectations. May we all pause and breathe. May we know solace and comfort in "good enough." May we be reminded that true joy is found in generosity, conviviality, love, and connection, not the perfect gift or baked-just-right turkey and pie. Let us be kind and gentle to ourselves. Let us be kind to others - we do not know what each person is carrying.

How can we celebrate and spread joy as a church community? This month, we'll swap cookies, we'll sing around a firepit, we'll light Silent Night candles and reminisce on this past year during solstice. We have some opportunities to en-

*(continued on page 2)*

**Minister**

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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](mailto:newsshare@channingmc.org)*

Send submittals for the January 2023 issue of *The Channing Connection* to [newsshare@channingmc.org](mailto:newsshare@channingmc.org) by **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 25, 2022.**

*(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)*

gage in delight. I wonder what other things you can do in each of your days to find moments of joy! And, if you struggle for whatever reason, know that you are not alone. I encourage you to join me for the Blue Holidays gathering. You are each loved and held in prayer and sacred embrace.

This holiday season, I invite you to rest and care for yourself. To bask in "good enough." To spend time with people you love and do those simple things that bring a smile to your face. I wish you all a blessed holiday season.

Warmly,  
*Rev. Jane*

**Blue Holidays**

**Wednesday, November 30, 7-8pm**



It can be helpful to have a space to process the difficult moments of the holiday season. Some folks have lost a loved one. Some come from difficult family situations. Some are in recovery from alcohol or battle depression. For a multitude of reasons, many people struggle during this holiday season.

If this season is difficult for you, you are invited to this special program. We'll take time for prayer, meditation, ritual, and reflection. I ask you to reflect on two questions before our time together:

What's weighing on your soul this holiday season?  
How do you plan to take care of yourself and your soul this holiday season?

If you would like to attend, please send a note to [minister@channingmc.org](mailto:minister@channingmc.org) to RSVP, and to let me know if you would prefer to meet virtually or in-person.

I look forward to this time of connection.

Warmly,  
*Rev. Jane*

## Worship Services at Robinson Nature Center



This church year, we have been alternating between fully virtual worship over Zoom and multi-platform worship at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044.

Typically, we will be at the Nature Center the first and third Sundays of the month. On Sundays when we are at Robinson Nature Center, we will hold live worship as usual. However, we will record the live service instead of live-streaming it over Zoom. We will then send the recording to Channing's YouTube channel for anyone to view at a later time.

**In-person worship services** will be held at the Nature Center on **December 4** and **December 18**.

### **New Schedule Opportunities When the In-Person Service Is At Robinson Nature Center**

**Saturday evening from 4pm-4:30pm, I will host a candle-lighting Joys and Concerns session on Zoom.**

We can continue to share what is in our hearts and on our minds with all of those we love, and we can continue to receive spiritual support through life's many transitions.

Join this session through the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/98255254640?pwd=TnAvNTE0ZlRFQUEzaEs5S3FEeHlZZz09>

Meeting ID: 982 5525 4640  
Passcode: 320187

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**Tuesday evening from 5:30-6:30pm I will offer a "Tuesdays After" session on Zoom.**

After everyone has had a chance to view the worship service either on YouTube or in person, we can join together to discuss any thoughts or emotions the service may have elicited.

Join this session through the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/93121174683?pwd=QXBsRk1YUF11UWdwQmZKVmN0UHNEUT09>

Meeting ID: 931 2117 4683  
Passcode: 012795

*(continued on page 4)*

*(Opportunities - continued from page 3)*

An **online zoom spiritual discussion** may be offered Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. for those who cannot attend in person at Robinson.

Marian V. has graciously agreed to facilitate. Specific offerings will be advertised on the week it is held.

Through your feedback, we can fully understand the needs of our community. We welcome you to voice your concerns; Stephen and Rev. Jane will work to address them.

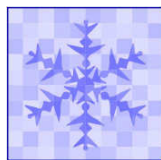
We look forward to the road ahead.

*Rev. Jane and the Worship Team*

### **A Solstice Celebration!**

*The dark time has come. The earth, in her great dance around the sun, has come inevitably to the solstice, the time of extremes, of distance, of darkness and light. In our hemisphere, we experience this time as one of cold darkness, of shortening days and lengthening nights. The earth is tipping, from our perspective, further and further away from the sun. We wait, but the moment when the darkness is greatest is not entirely predictable. The spinning dance of the earth continues, but for one brief instant, when the axis of the Earth's rotation crosses the line through the center of our orbit around the sun, the tipping stops, and for a moment, we seem to stand suspended in space, pulsing with potential movement and ongoing life. Then, like a child's top that almost fell over, we are saved by the spin and lifted up again towards the light.*

Barbara Wells ten Hove



On the evening of **Wednesday, December 21, from 7-8pm**, we join together to celebrate this great pause. I invite you each to bring a seasonal drink, perhaps egg nog or apple cider, and a treat to munch on. Together, while sharing food and drink, we will toast to the coming year and reflect on all that has passed since the last great pause. I hope you will join me. Please email me at [minister@channingmc.org](mailto:minister@channingmc.org) to RSVP and to let me know if you would like to gather in-person or virtually.

Warmly,  
*Rev. Jane*

## Christmas Eve Celebrations



On **Saturday, December 24**, we take time as a church community to honor Christmas. This year, we offer two opportunities for connection and celebration:

### **2:30-4pm: Storytelling, Caroling, and Cookies Outdoors held at 3677 Park Ave.**

Join Rev. Jane and Stephen at Park Ave. around a fire pit for cookies, cider, and caroling. We encourage our beloveds of all ages to attend! Beginning at 2:30, Bernie will share with us a Christmas story for all ages. Together, we will celebrate with festive fun!

### **7-8pm: Worship Service held via Zoom**

Later in the evening, we will offer a special Christmas Eve online service. We will join together to celebrate this special holiday with a homily, music, and a much beloved Silent Night candle ritual. Join us in celebration and reverence as we spend a meaningful evening together. I invite you to bring a candle and be ready to light it for Silent Night.

## 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, 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!**

## President's Column

*Wonder makes you feel smaller. Not insignificant but smaller, in the sense that you are a piece of a greater whole. In that way, spirituality and wonder have similar functions. Meditating, encountering the divine, or experiencing the miraculous can often make you feel smaller in that wonderful way. You realize that you're part of a greater symphony of things. You have a greater place and purpose in the world.*

~Dr. Anthony T. DeBenedet

On a recent sunny, Saturday afternoon, the Worship Team guided a group of Channing's members and friends in a brainstorming party. The purpose was to capture ideas and inspiration for the winter season's liturgy from the collective creativity of the people gathered. The event centered on Wonder, the December Soul Matters theme. With this activity was the promise of exploring how winter holiday traditions beckon us along the path of wonder.

The idea of wonder is so closely associated with the winter holidays that many of us feel called to create winter wonderlands all around us. We hang lights, decorate our homes and communities, host festive parties and serve traditional foods. We light candles, bake cookies, play games and send cards. We fill our homes with sights and sounds and smells that comfort us and allow us to make connections to our inner landscape, to others, and to our sacred.

Yet, finding the time to honor these connections isn't easy amid all the busyness and distraction that's around us. We face the demands of work and family responsibilities. We might feel the stress of high expectations or the anxiety that comes when holiday expenses strain our budgets. We may experience the low energy of depression or the exhaustion that can come with travel or hosting out-of-town guests. Yielding to an emotion like wonder, which asks us pause and look and listen can feel like an unaffordable indulgence. We ask ourselves, *How can I connect with the wonder of the season when I barely have time to brush my hair?*

Maybe part of the answer lies in engagement with people, places, and things that ground us and turn our attention toward what matters. Our faith communities are one place where this can happen. They can help us reframe the way we interact with holiday traditions by helping us see them as doorways to the sacred rather than as tasks that must be done. They can remind us that we are part of something greater than ourselves, as this is easy to forget.

I need to be reminded that sharing symbolic gestures like lighting candles and hanging lights can be expressions of hope and rebirth. That making Great Grandma's Pecan Snowball cookies is more than rolling the nut-filled shortbread balls in powdered sugar. It is an act that honors past generations, and passing on this tradition to children and grandchildren creates lasting memories and connects us to our roots.

I'd like to be reminded that everything on the holiday dinner table doesn't have to be homemade. But including Aunt Edna's special stuffing on the menu (despite all the cel-

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*(President's Column - continued from page 6)*

ery and onions that had to be chopped to make it) can lead to treasured memories being shared and comfort given to those who loved her and miss her.

I want to be reminded that I can quiet my mind and shift to a more spiritual perspective, and that both spirituality and traditions allow us to create space for meaningful reflection.

And, I really should be reminded that time spent in relaxation and play will certainly hold moments of connection and wonder. Binge-watching classic Christmas movies is nothing to roll one's eyes at.

I am looking forward to the reminders that our seasonal activities here at Channing will provide. I am looking forward to the worship services with their stories and sermons and songs that will help me connect more deeply with the holiday traditions I value. I'm excited about participating in our Third Annual Cookie Exchange and the time I'll get to spend in the company of people I care about. I'm grateful for our Blue Holidays tradition and the way it creates a space of comfort and support for people struggling this holiday season. I value the holiday traditions that are part of our church community and enjoy thinking about ways to reintroduce traditions from our past and invent new ones for our future.

This holiday season, I hope to heed the reminders found here at Channing to pause and look and listen more often, and to be open to the beautiful and the unexpected that is around me and within me. I hope to feel small and connected and in community. I hope my winter holiday traditions lead me down a path of wonder. And I hope yours do, too.

All my best,  
*Kris*

### **Board Bits**



Given the difficulty of holding hybrid services, when the congregation does not have its own facility that allows for storage and maintaining equipment in place from week to week, the hybrid option has been suspended. For the foreseeable future, the Worship Team, with approval from the Board, has opted to record in-person services and make the recording available for viewing soon after the service has been completed. This will

have the benefit of relieving what had become onerous technical burdens for the Worship Team.

An obvious downside is that a virtual community does not exist when watching a recording. Rev. Jane is addressing this by offering a virtual community (Tuesdays After) for those who would like to discuss the sermon, whether they watched the recording or were in attendance. Come one, come all, to Tuesdays After. It's an opportunity for community growth.

*Mel*

### Young Adult Small Group

Each month, our Channing Young Adult group meets to share insights, stories, reflections, and questions. Our conversations are based upon the same monthly themes as our worship services, ranging 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 Memorial Church 2022 Auction Wrap-up



On November 11-13 the momentous and wonderful event that is the Channing Auction took place. Thanks to all of you for organizing and running the events, for donating items and events, for providing entertainment, for eating together, and for bidding and buying donations. We raised \$7054 for the Church! Amazing! We are a generous people, and may our generosity spill forth out of the Church and into the world.

With Love,

*The Channing Auction Planning Team Extraordinaire (Cathy F., David F., Eric S.)*

### Stewardship update Year-to-date as of October 31, 2022

#### General Operating Fund

Total Operating Income	\$ 61,789
Total Operating Expense	<u>-57,078</u>
Difference	<u>\$4,711</u>





## 3rd Annual Channing Cookie Swap!



The elves are back in town! It's almost time for our 3rd Annual Cookie Swap. This fun activity allows you to sample cookies from some of the best bakers in the UUniverse. Ready to bake and swap? Here's what to do:

1. Sign up and let us know what you'll be baking. The deadline to sign up is **Saturday, December 3.**
2. Bake three dozen of your holiday cookies (homemade only, please) and put them in small bags (details to follow).
3. Come to Park Avenue on **Saturday, December 10 at 2 pm** to swap your cookies for other cookies! Weather permitting, we'll have the fire pit and hot cider for those who want to hang out for awhile. Or just swap and run.

Interested? Here's the link.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084fa4ad2ba46-3rdannual>

Access code: baker

(Fine print: If you can't come to the swap at Park Avenue or if you have any other concerns, please contact one of the elves for assistance. Because of the nature of the cookie swap, we cannot cater to special diets or allergies. Thank you.)

The Cookie Elves: *Cathy F., Nancy H. and Kris T.*

### Soul Collage

Each month the SoulCollage® group spends an afternoon letting our intuition and imagination guide us to select images from magazines, creating collage cards with those images, and then reflecting on what spiritual and life lessons our created cards have to give us. SoulCollage® is a creative but not artistic activity that is accessible to everyone!

If you're curious to try out SoulCollage®, contact Kris T. We would love to have you join us! The date, online, of our next SoulCollage® workshop is **December 3, 1:30 to 4:30. On Zoom.**

### Young Adult 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 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.

### **Men's Group: Thursday December 1 at 10 a.m.**



Everyone is welcome to join the men on the first Thursday of the month. We are on Zoom at this time. All are welcome. Email *Ken H.*

Please note in December the group will only meet on the first Thursday. Starting in January, our plan to meet once a month on the first Thursday. In December, we will do a congregational survey to gain interest and ideas to make sure this change serves the community.

### **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/Channing-MemorialChurch/>) 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 reviews are 4-8 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., Evelyn G., Ken G.)*

## Nourishing Garden at Owen Brown Interfaith Center



The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia has sent the following invitation:

All in the larger UU community are invited to celebrate the launch of the new nourishing garden at the Owen Brown Interfaith Center in Columbia, MD on **Friday, December 2, 2022 at 3:30pm**. Join us for family activities and treats at the new garden site.

In 2013, the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gina McCarthy, declared that the two most pressing environmental issues are: 1) climate change, and 2) the growing divide between people and nature. While climate change is increasingly obvious, the growing divide is significant because those who are personally connected to nature make more conscientious decisions regarding the environment.

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, initiated a collaboration with Cradlerock Children's Center, Community Ecology Institute at Freetown Farm, and UPCYCLED to establish a nourishing garden at OBIC.

Our motto is "growing minds, loving hearts and helping hands", says Amanda Morton, Executive Director of Cradlerock Children's Center. "Children working together with community members to cultivate the nourishing garden will grow the minds of our children, fill their hearts with a sense of purpose and fulfillment as they use their hands to make a literal contribution to the garden, the community, and the planet."



# December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<p><u>November 30</u> Blue Holi- days 7:00-8:00 pm</p>	<p><i>1</i> Men's Group 10:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>	<p><i>2</i> Membership Team Meet- ing 2:00 pm  Outreach Committee 6:00-7:00 pm</p>	<p><i>3</i> SoulCollage 1:30-4:30 pm  Candle Lighting for Joys &amp; Con- cerns 4:00- 4:30 pm</p>
<p><i>4</i> Worship Service at Robinson Na- ture Center 10:30-11:30am</p>	<p><i>5</i></p>	<p><i>6</i> Minister's Of- fice Hours 1:00-4:00pm  "Tuesdays After" 5:30- 6:30 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 Mtg. 1:30-3:00 pm</p>	<p><i>10</i> Cookie Swap 10:00 am - 12:00 pm</p>
<p><i>11</i> Worship Service on Zoom 10:30- 11:30am</p>	<p><i>12</i></p>	<p><i>13</i> Minis- ter's Office Hours 1:00- 4:00 pm  Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00 pm</p>	<p><i>14</i></p>	<p><i>15</i></p>	<p><i>16</i></p>	<p><i>17</i> Candle Lighting for Joys &amp; Con- cerns 4:00- 4:30 pm</p>
<p><i>18</i>Worship Service at Robin- son Nature Cen- ter 10:30- 11:30am   Hanuk- kah begins at sun- down</p>	<p><i>19</i></p>	<p><i>20</i> Minis- ter's Office Hours 1:00- 4:00 pm  "Tuesdays After" 5:30- 6:30 pm Board Meeting 7:00-9:00 pm</p>	<p><i>21</i>  Solstice Cele- bration 7:00- 8:00 pm  First Day of Winter</p>	<p><i>22</i></p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i>  Christmas Eve  </p>
<p><i>25</i> Worship Service on Zoom 10:30- 11:30am  Christmas Day  </p>	<p><i>26</i>  Kwanzaa begins  </p>	<p><i>27</i> Minister's Of- fice Hours 1:00-4:00 pm  Lectio Divina 7:00-8:00 pm</p>	<p><i>28</i></p>	<p><i>29</i></p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i> New Year's Eve  </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.