



The Channing Connection

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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December 2023

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Minister's Musings



Minister's Musings

It began with a cup of coffee. Throughout seminary, internships, and my initial time with you all, my days were saturated with to-do lists, "urgent" demands and constant productivity. I was unhappy, stressed, and burning out. And yet, in the midst of this navigating this unsustainable lifestyle, I reflected on a Soul Matters activity with our Young Adult group: find one moment for rest in each day. So, I tried. It began, simply, with an extended time, five to ten minutes, to drink my coffee in the morning. That was all. These minutes cleared my mind and calmed me. This intentional pause became a catalyst for the self-care practices I commit myself to each day - prayer and meditation. These practices have become life-giving and transformative.

We are in this midst of the holiday season, a season promoted as one of jubilation, companionship, and delight. Joyful families gathered around a feast flicker on our TV screen, and commercials for toys depict the pressures of our consumer culture. It is as if we are obligated to be happy, and yet many of us are not. I think of my own beloveds, the members of our sacred community, and those I have cared for as a chaplain. Some of us are in the midst of mourning, some are navigating complex family dynamics, some are in the throes of addiction or battle depression or other mental health challenges, some are struggling financially. Some of us are simply stressed. For a wealth of reasons, many people are struggling through this holiday season. Any of these emotions are ok. You are just right. You are good, you are whole, you are loved.

I encourage those moments of care, even if all we feel we can do in this minute is pause while we drink our morning coffee. We each need practices of self-care, not only during the holiday season, but in each of our days. What is self-care? It is intentional practices that tend to the mind, body, and spirit. It keeps us grounded, calm, connected to our sacred and to that still, small voice within. It brings peace to the day-to-day and gives us a foundation when things are hard.



**We are a Welcoming
Congregation**

(Continued on page 2)

Minister

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Kris Tyssowski ('24)

Vice President: Open ('24)

Treasurer:

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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

Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, please send submittals for the January 2024 issue of *The Channing Connection* to newsshare@channingmc.org by **7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 23, 2023.**

(Minister's Column - continued from page 1)

What can we do in the midst of pumpkin spice lattes, twinkling holiday lights, familial expectations and material demands? If nature gives us peace, we can walk through those dormant trees. If moments of calm feed our souls, we can engage in practices of meditation. If a connection to the holy is what we need, we can center in prayer. If we heal through art, we can journal, paint, or reflect on poetry. Each soul - each being - is unique.

As we are immersed in this holiday season, let us reflect on those simple things we can do to care for ourselves this time of year. We can be extra generous and loving towards our tender selves. We can know that good enough is good enough - we can know our limits. We can lessen the demands on ourselves and, for example, cook less food. We can have an exit strategy if things get hard. We can avoid those triggers that cause us undue harm or pain. We can keep close to those who bring us joy, calm, and peace.

I invite you to pause and reflect upon what you can do to care for yourself. What is your self-care practice? If this hardship resonates with you, I invite you to join our Blue Holidays gathering, where you will be held in the embrace of kindred souls. You are a beautiful spirit, and deserve rest and peace during a time that is so inherently demanding. You are loved.

With love,
Rev. Jane



December 24th-- Christmas Eve

On December 24th, we'll hold our regular, multi-platform Sunday service at 11:00 a.m. In the evening, you're invited to return for a candlelight Christmas Eve service beginning at 5:00 p.m. After the service, we'll share cookies on the lower level. The evening service will be in-person, only.

Blue Holidays

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 heart this holiday season?

How do you plan to take care of yourself?

We will meet on December 5 from 7-8pm

This event will be held both in-person at Epiphany Lutheran Church and online via Zoom.

To join via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91243859722?pwd=Y1ppM3lFe1RVNTZobWRoTDRiTXFHQT09>

Meeting ID: 912 4385 9722

Passcode: 003389

I look forward to this time of reflection and connection.

Rev. Jane

December 3rd Special Guest Minister

Hallowed Be Thy Metaphor, Rev. Bill Neely

Naming the Holy is as old as humanity, and yet each name is, at best, partial. Each understanding is incomplete, for a greater mystery always abides and eludes our full understanding. As we think about our preferences and what they mean to us, let's also look toward that which we can't know with appreciation and awe.

Rev. Bill Neely has served as Parish Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton (NJ), the first UU congregation that your Rev. Jane Bennett Smith joined, since 2011. He previously served UU congregations in Detroit and near Memphis. He lives in Hamilton, NJ with his wife, three kids, and their cat.

Epiphany Lutheran Invites Channing to Their Family Craft Night

Epiphany Lutheran Church has invited Channing members and friends to their Family Craft Night on **Saturday December 2 starting at 5 PM**. ELC will provide craft supplies and food. This is a great opportunity for our congregations to continue to get to know each other!

4th Annual Channing Cookie Swap!

The elves are back in town! It's almost time for our 4th 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 **Sunday, December 3**.
2. Bake 3 dozen of your holiday cookies (homemade only, please) and put them in small bags (details to follow).
3. Come to Park Avenue on **Sunday, December 10 at 1:30 pm** to swap your cookies for other cookies! We'll meet inside for hot chocolate if you want to hang out for awhile. Or just swap and run.

Interested? Here's the link.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F084FA4AD2BA46-46332619-4thannual>

(Fine print: If you can't come to the swap at Park Avenue or have any other concerns, please contact one of the elves for assistance. Thank you.)

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



Charitable Special Collections Team -- Want to Join?



I recently spoke with Rev. Jane about re-establishing the practice of regular special collections, for charitable purposes, at Channing. I'm interested in getting together a small group of volunteers to "take point" on this effort, and would like to hear from anyone else who's willing to take part. To be clear, I'm not offering to *lead* the effort, but, rather, to be part of a team that works together on this. I'm committed to working on the team if we can get at least three people to work together. There are no other, particular, expectations at this point, which is to say there's fairly wide latitude to make this effort what the group wants it to be. If you're a willing to join in, please contact me (Ostara). Thank you!

Ostara

The Channing Care Team is Here For You

As Reverend Jane mentioned in her Minister's Column last month, "We journey together through all of life's ills, helping one another through death, illness, and mourning in a unique and special way. We tend to one another with great compassion and care not often found in the world at large."

One way we do that is through the work of Channing's Care Team, which includes Reverend Jane, Marian V., Sheri T. and our newest member, Gail S.

Our small but mighty Care Team supports Channing's members and friends in need in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Cards and calls of support
- Home visits
- Meals
- Occasional rides to church and or local appointments upon request, subject to availability of volunteers.

Are you looking for an easy, occasional, and meaningful way to volunteer without joining a committee? If so, send an email to careteam@channingmc.org and let us know if you're available in any capacity to help the Care Team with one or more of the tasks listed above.

Our Care Team is here for you. Please reach out to us with any needs or concerns at careteam@channingmc.org.

When you come to church on Sunday mornings, check out our new BLESSINGS Jar on the Welcome Table, where you can also drop off a confidential message of Joy or Concern for the Care Team.

I look forward to connecting with you.

-Sheri T.

Music Director Search Team -- Update



Accomplishments Since Last Report

We have received no applicants or inquiries since our last report.

We sent requests to 10 neighboring UU congregations asking them to put our announcement in their next newsletter. The congregations are: First Unitarian Baltimore, Cedar Lane, River Road, Davies UU Congregation, UCC, Cedarhurst, Paint Branch, Towson, Rockville, and Silver Spring. We have already advertised through the Central East Region and the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries (AUUMM)

Next Steps

- Pursue additional outlets for advertising the position.
 - Continue attempts to post a paid ad on Singer Source -- (\$60 for 3 months of posting)
- Review resumes as they come in.
 - Contact references.
 - Schedule auditions/interviews.
- Coordinate with the substitute musician when Stephen requests days off.
- Get Stephen's input on exit interview notes.
 - Share with board and worship associates
 - Possibly share with the congregation, if it seems appropriate to do so (Stephen has given permission.)

We will keep you posted with any significant progress, as we continue to explore advertising options. As always, your ideas are most welcome!

The Music Director Search Team

Pam E.

Ken G.

Jim V.

(with Rev. Jane)

Healthcare for Immigrant Families – March of the Uninsured

The 2023 session of the Maryland General Assembly required the MD Department of Health to produce a report that explored options for providing access to health care for immigrants, regardless of citizenship status. The report is expected to be delivered to the legislature in December. Also during the last session, health care and immigration advocates were instrumental in the introduction of a bill that would extend access to the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and Medicaid to undocumented immigrants. The bill did not get out of committee; however, it will be reintroduced in the upcoming 2024 session. The bill would take advantage of a provision in the ACA that allows states to seek a Section 1332 waiver enabling the state to extend access.



To highlight the need for healthcare access for all, immigration and healthcare advocates have organized a “March of the Uninsured” that will begin January 5 in Baltimore, Howard County on January 6 and continue to Annapolis on January 10.

There are several opportunities to participate. Visit <https://wearecasa.org/march-of-the-uninsured/>

SignUp Genius schedule open through February 2024!

The signup for Sunday church roles is now open through the end of February. Please help us make things happen on Sunday by volunteering. Here's the link, now with no access code! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F084FA4AD2BA46-sunday1#/> (When you sign up for a slot, remember to scroll all the way down and press the Save button.)

Contact *Cathy F.* with any questions.



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 on the **first Tuesday** of the month, **11am-12pm**, held on Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94007522019?pwd=MEhIT11KbDRIUWViTm9WeTFDTERrdz09>

Meeting ID: 940 0752 2019

Passcode: 665527

Lectio Divina



Our normal schedule is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. 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.

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.

[Note: No session scheduled for Dec. 26]

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93324550758?pwd=VFVLZkdES21odTNHK1pWZ1pZb114UT09>

Meeting ID: 933 2455 0758

Passcode: 250704

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 Beben* for information.

Channing Book Club

We usually meet outside at Park Avenue at 10:00 am, weather permitting, on the second Saturday of the month. See below. We'll fall back to zoom **if** the weather is not friendly or perhaps meet inside. Notice will be sent out if we make this change.



1. Dec. 9- The Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold
<https://store.aldoleopold.org/products/a-sand-county-almanac>
240 pages, but an easy read.

A well known conservation classic. In some respects, a segue from Ishmael.

"All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively the land."

Should be readily available in libraries and through resellers of used books.

2. Jan. 13- Nobody's Fool by Richard Russo First in a trilogy
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/159152/nobodys-fool-by-richard-russo/9780679753339/readers-guide/> 549 pages. Also as a movie with Paul Newman (worth watching, now on Kanopy)
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110684/>

"Remarkable.... A revelation of the human heart." —***The Washington Post***

"Russo is a master craftsman....*Nobody's Fool* is a big, rambunctious novel with endless riffs and unstoppable human hopefulness."—***The Boston Globe***

"Simple as family love, yet nearly as complicated, Richard Russo's confident, assured novel sweeps the reader up in the daily life of its characters." —***San Francisco Chronicle***

You will find it readily available on used sites (Amazon, Thriftbooks, Alibris, abebooks, etc.), and at some libraries.

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.

Young Adult Small Group

Each month, our Channing Young Adult group meets to share insights, stories, reflections, and questions. 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. The next meeting will be on December 20. 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!

Men's Group

Thursday December 7 at 10 a.m. on Zoom and at in person, January 18

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.



There will be no December meeting at the Bagel Bin due to proximity of the holidays.

January 18 will be at Roggenart on Rt. 40 and advance indications of interest will be asked. We hope to have enough interest to meet.

All are welcome to these events. Email Ken H. if any questions.

Stewardship update Year-to-date as of October 2023

General Operating Fund

Total Operating Income	\$ 48,949
Total Operating Expense	<u>56,392</u>
Difference	\$ (7,443)



Board Bits

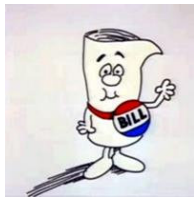
Attendance at the Annual Auction on November 11th and at the Bread Communion service was great! The Board may consider more events with food to draw more interest.

The Board planned the outline of the Listening Session that was held November 29th. They also discussed again the **Church Governance and Structure Retreat**, which will be on January 6th from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM at Epiphany. If you would like to lend your voice, experience, and insights to this conversation, please let a board member know.

Angela Lesperance, Secretary

Statewide Action on Health, Housing and Climate

December 5, 7:00-8:30 pm
Good Hope United Methodist Church
14680 Good Hope Rd., Silver Spring, MD



Join PATH (People Acting Together in Howard) and sister community organizing groups from Montgomery and Anne Arundel counties, for a fun and energizing action on health, housing and climate. The event is also being supported by the Sierra Club and Interfaith Power & Light. This event aims to champion crucial green infrastructure initiatives in Maryland. Join residents, landlords, legislators, and Maryland Executive

Branch administrators to help direct the Inflation Reduction Act funds equitably and ensure that the EmPower legislation is passed. Senator Brian Feldman, Chair of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee, as well as Delegates Foley, Stewart and Queen are confirmed to attend.

This event promises a mix of education, discovery, and action. You'll have the chance to engage in conversations with the coalition members and hear from local elected officials.

Wayside Pulpit


We are each of us responsible for the evil
we might have prevented.

-- *James Martineau*



December 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Membership Team 2:00 pm Outreach Team 6:00-7:00 pm	2 Epiphany Lutheran's Family Craft Night beginning at 5:00 pm
3 Worship Service with Guest Minister Rev. Bill Neely 11:00 am-12:00 pm	4	5 Wisdom Tales 11:00 am-12:00 pm on Zoom Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm Blue Holidays 7:00-8:00 pm	6 Space Search Team 5:00-6:00 pm Young Adults Game Night 7:00-9:00 pm	7 Men's Group on Zoom 10:00 am-12:00 pm First night of HANUKKAH	8 Worship Team Meeting 1:30-3:00 pm	9 Channing Book Club 10:00 am
10 Worship Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm Cookie Swap 1:30 pm	11	12 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm LDNC Meeting 5:30-7:30 pm Lectio Divina 7:00 pm	13 Stewardship Committee 7:00-8:00 pm	14	15	16
17 Worship Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm	18	19 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm Board Meeting 7:00-9:00 pm	20 Young Adult Small Group 7:00-9:00 pm	21  WINTER SOLSTICE	22	23 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm (moved up due to holidays)
24 Worship Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm	25  CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Minister's Office Hours 1:00-4:00 pm	27	28	29	30
31 Worship Service 11:00 am-12:00 pm NEW YEAR'S EVE						

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.