COME TO CHANNING’S GROWTH CONVOCATION SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Your ideas and participation are needed to grow our church! While there are things the minister can do to help growth happen, I firmly believe growing a congregation is everyone’s work. so your ideas and support are very important. On Saturday, February 18 (new date) from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 we will have a growth idea-generating workshop at Channing.

Schedule
9:00: Breakfast refreshment
9:30: General discussion about growth issues
10:00: Discussion/idea generation/plans in small groups  
(Participants will meet in topic-specific groups and may stay in whatever group they select for the whole time or move to join discussions in other groups)
11:15: Report back to large group
11:45: Next steps planning

Think about how we can reach out to Gen-Xers and Millennials and retirees, or how we can partner with other organizations in Newport, or use social action to promote Channing, or engage in campus ministry or ministry to the military stationed in Newport, or any other topic.

Mark February 18, 9:00am to 12:30pm on your calendar!

~Rev. Bill

February Services
Sunday, February 5
A Toe in the Water: Black Pioneering Ministers
Rev. Bill Zelazny
In the early part of the 20th century two black ministers worked to establish Unitarian congregations. Unfortunately, there was limited support from the American Unitarian Association for their endeavors, but they labored on to fulfill their dream. In honor of Black History Month, Bill will look at this part of UU history and explore possible reasons why liberal white congregations have a difficult time attracting people of color.

Sunday, February 12
There’s Magic in Recognizing a Kindred Spirit
Rev. Bill Zelazny

In the United States, Valentine Day focuses on romantic love. But in Mexico it is called El Dia del Amor y la Amistad (Day of Love and Friendship). Bill thinks this expanded concept of affection is better than just thinking about romantic love on February 14. He will look at the concept of friendship as we enter into the week of heart shape candy boxes and sentimental cards.

Also, after the service we will honor the tradition of chocolate for Valentine’s Day with our first annual Chocolate Decadence Fest in the Parish Hall. (See the article on page 8 about this new mid-winter activity.)
Jefferson’s Bible: A Personally Authentic Religion

Rev. Bill Zelazny

Thomas Jefferson believed that the ethical system of Jesus was the finest the world has ever seen, but he was convinced that the authentic words of Jesus had been contaminated and muddled by early Christians. In 1819, using a razor and glue he created “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth”, known today as the Jefferson Bible. On this President’s Day Sunday, Bill will look at Jefferson’s creation and reflect on what it might mean for modern religious seekers.

FROM THE MINISTER

With the arrival of February our thoughts turn to one important event (well, maybe two if you consider President’s Day sales) -- Valentine’s Day. It is easy to show love and affection, and say nice things to family or friends when everything is going smoothly, but, at least for me, it is often difficult when someone we care about suffers a painful loss. Minds go blank, tongues get stuck and fear blossoms that we will do or say something wrong or sound awkward.

While doing some reading I came across an article by Rebecca Webber, a health and finance writer for Prevention and Psychology Today that addressed how to show care and support when someone suffers a loss. She noted that even the simplest things can show another our affection for them. She suggests:

1. Say nothing at all. That does not mean to not do anything. At a time of loss when people feel overwhelmed, maybe, the most caring things we can do is to just offer to be there when they want or need us. Perhaps saying or texting something like “If you just want to hang out and not talk, I’m here.” As Noah Galloway, author of Living with No Excuses: The Remarkable Rebirth of an American Soldier,” says, “Sometimes we need a moment that feels normal and reminds us that there are still things in life that have always made us happy, like time with friends.”

2. Open the door to conversation. On the other hand, sometimes people do want to have a conversation about what just happened to them, so listen carefully to what they say so you can pick up cues that they want to talk, and then just let them. No need to have any profound responses, other than to be there with an open ear.

3. Fall back on a heartfelt cliché. People do not expect us to come out with brilliant gems of wisdom that will fix things, because almost nothing that is said can fix a painful loss. Rather, showing up with a simple “I’m so sorry” or “I’m thinking about you” can mean so much. It’s all about not running away, but being present and witnessing.

4. Be a silent helper. Help without any expectation of a conversation. Drop off a dinner or cut the lawn. Show up, do it, and leave. (refer to #2 and #3 for further guidance)

Don’t be afraid to show love – to that romantic someone and to friends.

~Rev. Bill Zelazny

February Caregivers

February 1-15: Marion Royer
February 16-28: Barbara Russell-Willett, Rachel Balaban, & John Burnham

Please call any of these individuals with any caregiving needs within our congregation.
FROM THE CO- PRESIDENT

Master Plan Update

Last year Channing Church received a generous grant for $50,000 from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation to be used to fund a Master Plan for our properties, site, and connection to our neighborhood. After submitting an RFP for the work to different firms we chose a group of architects, civil engineers, and structural engineers to do the work beginning last summer. At the beginning of January they presented their work to the Master Plan committee and the Board. All the information is now available online and we will be holding workshops to explain their findings to everyone interested. Please see the list of dates at the end of this article.

We also used $5600 from donations to our Building Fund to update the On-Site Insight report, which was originally done in 2006. It was outdated because work has been accomplished since then and we have new projects to plan. The OSI report is a comprehensive analysis of the condition of existing infrastructure - systems, buildings, and machinery. It projects expected timing and costs of the repairs and maintenance needed for the next 20 years. This comprehensive report allows us to have reference data so we can compare costs and benefits of maintaining the status quo with the options for possible new work as we explore and decide what to do going forward.

It is a complicated historic heritage we hold in trust. We also have a rental business that provides revenue to support the buildings as well as subsidizing our budget needs. The discussions we need to have involve both the technical aspects of the choices and the financial needs and benefits of each of the options.

Workshops are now scheduled to be held on the days listed below and I hope each of you can find a chance to come, see the Master Plan, ask questions, make suggestions, and work with us to prepare to make some decisions about how and when we will proceed.

- Sunday, January 29, 11:30am, Ladies’ Parlor
- Monday, January 30, 7:00pm, Parish Hall
- Wednesday, February 15, 7:00pm, Parish Hall
- Sunday, February 26, 11:30am, Ladies’ Parlor
- Thursday, March 9, 7:00pm, Parish Hall
- Monday, March 20pm, 7:00, Parish Hall

~Christine Laudon, Co-president, Board of Trustees

KEY CHANGE
Channing House Front Door

The lock for the outer front door key to Channing House is being changed on or about February 14th. If you currently have a key you will need to see our Office Administrator Michele Dubuc during Church office hours (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m - 1 p.m, phone: 401-846-0643, email: office@channingchurch.org) to replace the one you have for a new key. This key does not grant access to the office or rooms on the 1st floor of Channing House, only to the outer foyer.

If you have any questions, please contact Property Co-Chair, Abby Adams, at: property@channingchurch.org Thank you!

Channing Town Meeting:
Sunday February 19 th

The Channing Board of Trustees has been busy planning for the future and we’re excited to share some of our plans with you. Please join us immediately following the service on Sunday February 19th for a brief presentation outlining our plans for the renewal of Reverend Zelazny’s contract, and for a sneak peek at some new ideas we have for activities and programs we may try in the near future.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Religious Education classes, for students of all ages, are held on Sundays at 10:00am. Children and Youth start in the Church Sanctuary with the rest of the Congregation, and then go to the Parish Hall just after the Message for All Ages.

Our Youth Group meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. It is open to students grades 6 and up and provides socialization and friendship for Channing Youths, as well service projects chosen by the Youth.

The Coming of Age (COA) participants just completed their overnight Chalice Retreat. COA signals the beginning of a Youth’s spiritual search for truth and meaning and recognizes the transition from childhood to young adulthood. Thank you to Rex Lebeau, Jen Pearce, and Tom Beall, who will serve as mentors this year to our Coming of Age Youth. We are delighted to have them!

Plans are being made for the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for 4th - 6th graders. It will take place before the close of the church year. OWL is a comprehensive sexuality education program created by the UUA and the UCC for both boys and girls. To sign up your 4th - 6th grader, please contact Jessica Thomas at dre@channingchurch.org

Make a difference in the lives of children and Youth and the fabric of Channing Church! Attend our next RE Committee Meeting on Tuesday, February 7th at 7:00 PM in the Channing House Library to find out how.

Please join us for two special events:

Cosmos a Night of Discovery on Saturday, February 11th at 5:00pm in the Parish Hall. There will be a potluck, movie, and games. We hope that everyone can attend this event.

Our Spiritual Parenting Group, meets on Wednesday, February 22, at 7:00pm, Channing House Library

-Kathy Takata
Religious Education Committee

RE CALENDAR

Sunday, Feb. 5: RE Class
Saturday, Feb. 11, 5pm, COSMOS/POTLUCK/GAME NIGHT in the Parish Hall
Sunday, Feb. 12: RE Class
Sunday, Feb. 19: NO RE CLASS (Winter Break for Schools)
February 22nd (Wednesday) 7:00 PM Spiritual Parenting Group
February 26th is Stewardship Sunday, intergenerational service
• 6:00 PM Youth Group
CAREGIVING UPDATE

Thanks very much to Chris Laudon, Marcia Mallory, and Barbara Richter, who kept us updated during January as the caregiving coordinators!

Our sympathies go to the Pedrick family on the death of Laura’s father, Dr. Gerald Freedman, at his home in Michigan in December. Dr. Freedman was a World War II veteran who was honored with a military funeral.

We were happy to have had three children in our congregation who were honored with Child Dedications on December 18th. Two were siblings, Madeleine and Julian Drain, whose parents Patrick and Lauren have just become Channing members! The third was Adeline Loveland, the daughter of Johanna (Malise) and Joel Loveland.

Thank you to all who provided and helped install the lovely holiday decorations in the sanctuary for the Christmas holidays, especially the always-dedicated Barbara Richter! Also, the efforts of those who helped put back the pew cushions in time for a New Year’s Eve wedding are much appreciated: George and Nickie Kates, Betsy and Neil Leerssen, Bill Hawkins, Barbara Richter, and Ron Heroux.

Our Caregiving coordinators for February are Marion Royer. From Feb. 1-15, and Barbara Russell-Willett, Rachel Balaban, and John Burnham. from Feb. 16-28. Please call any of these individuals with any caregiving needs within our congregation.

~Linda Beall, for Channing Caregiving

COMMUNITY MEAL

Monday, February 20
3:30-6:15pm, in the Parish Hall

Thanks for everyone who helped at our January community meal. Especially to Jessica Thomas and Channing youth who made wonderful and much appreciated pies. We served about 50 meals thanks to our chef Joan Dermody. Our next Community Meal will be on Monday, February 20. If you would like to help please call Joy Benson (835-3131) to see what you can do.

FEBRUARY GREETERS

February 5: Calvin Pierce
February 12: Susan VanDerhoof
February 19: Marian Royer
February 26: Mary Benson

FEBRUARY CHIMERS

February 5: Janna Pederson
February 12: Linda Beall
February 19: Jim Freess
February 26: Cynthia Skelton

are long-time valued members of our congregation. These include Alicia Spinner at Blenheim, and Charlie Beckers.

FEBRUARY

SHARE THE PLATE

This month half of our cash offerings and checks with the memo “Share the Plate” will be donated to “The Teen Center”. The Teen Center is a program that Channing member Wendy Bowen is working on. The Teen Center is conducted by the East Greenwich Academy Foundation (501C). Last year Wendy trained youth in leadership and specifically in Non-violence and Restorative Practice.

Currently Wendy is training the Youth to Youth Program and teen center adult leaders. In January, she will begin to work directly with the teens at the center using the tools of restorative practice and nonviolence. Our donations will go to cover supplies and refreshments at EGAF youth trainings and/or a scholarship for youth to go to the Eastern States Conference for Youth to Youth. You can learn more about the Academy and miracle worker Bob Houghtaling, its President who created its teen center at www.egacademyfoundation.org with links to Bob’s weekly social justice podcasts.

~Joanne Armenia for CMC Social Action Committee socialaction@channingchurch.org
The beat goes on...
The Burrillville Power Plant saga continues into 2017. Invenergy, the Chicago company proposing the euphemistically named Clear River Energy Center, was unable to find a source of cooling water by the Energy Facilities Sitting Board’s deadline, but the board suspended the application for 90 days instead of rejecting it. In early January, Woonsocket became the third municipality to reject Invenergy’s offer. However, the Johnston Town Council held a special meeting that coincided with Woonsocket’s (divide and conquer?) with minimal legal advance notice, in a hall seating only 87 people. At least an hour before the meeting, the hall was filled with RI Building and Construction Trades Council members. Johnston residents were relegated to the corridor outside. In less than five minutes, and with no input from voters, the council voted unanimously to sign on with Invenergy.

Johnston’s Mayor Polesina said the decision was a “no-brainer,” made entirely for financial reasons, with no consideration for environmental or public health concerns. He called the vote a “transparent process,” in complete compliance with Open Meetings Law. Johnston buys Scituate Reservoir water wholesale from Providence, and says it can resell to anyone without restrictions.

On January 19, the Providence City Council considered a resolution to oppose the Burrillville plant, and to examine whether Johnston can resell water for the plant. It voted to send the measure to its Municipal Operations Committee, which promised to rule in time for the next Council meeting. Sixteen municipalities have already voted to stand with Burrillville opposing the plant, Middletown being the first. At a meeting shortly before the election, Newport decided not to consider the resolution.

The governor favors the Invenergy proposal but claims she’ll honor the Sitting Board’s decision, and asks us to “trust the process.” With actions like Johnston’s, however, the process strains our trust. Stay tuned!

~Beth Milham, Chair, Green Cong. Committee

On this coming April 29th (Saturday), The People’s Climate Movement, to be held on the Mall in Washington DC, will be a follow up to the last Climate Rally held in New York City and drawing an estimated 400,000 people. I think the goal is one million with plans for possible civil disobedience. Local and lead-up actions in our region are planned if you cannot make it to DC where I also have family.

~Craig Gaspard, for the Green Cong. Committee
SOCIAL ACTION

BEHIND THE SCENES
BLACK HISTORY
ASSEMBLY

Friday, Feb. 17, 10am
Rogers High School

Did you know that Channing Memorial Church started an assembly at Rogers High School forty-six years ago to honor the contributions of African Americans in the Newport Community? The minister at that time (Rev Phil Larson) and a few church members met with a Rogers guidance counselor to discuss what could be done to help improve racial relations for the city and what evolved was an assembly that would honor both an outstanding student and community leader. Community Baptist Church joined with Channing and the guidance department soon after the first assembly and the event became an annual event. Channing’s ministers and a couple of members have continued to work on this committee to present the annual assembly and awards. This is one of Channing’s longest social action events and one of the few high school assemblies like it in the country.

So on Friday, February 17, 2017, the 46th Annual Robert L. Williams National Black History Assembly will be held in the auditorium at Rogers High School at 10am. There will be a brunch immediately following the assembly at the Colonial Dining Room for any of the adult attendees. It’s a delightful event and includes some music and dance presentations.

If you are interested in attending the assembly and brunch, you are welcome. If you want more details, you can contact any member of the committee.

The George T. Downing Award is presented to an adult of color for service and the spirit of integration in the Newport community. This award will be presented by the Rev. Vincent Thompson of Community Baptist Church.

The second award is in honor of Dr. Marcus Wheatland and is awarded to an outstanding senior of color at Roger’s High School. Rev. Bill Zelazny will be presenting both the certificate and the scholarship to the selected student. Channing Church and Community Baptist both donate money toward the scholarship for the student recipient.

Current Channing members on the committee are Judith Porter, Sally Hanchett, and Rev. Zelazny. Sam Jernigan also assists the committee by contributing the award certificates.

And who are the honored George T. Downing and Marcus Wheatland? George T. Downing was born in 1819 and was a local entrepreneur and businessman. His name is on the plaque in Touro Park as one of the founders of the public park. Dr. Marcus Wheatland, born in 1899, was a well respected physician and radiologist here in Newport. He is credited with early pioneering work in radiology.

UU LEGISLATIVE
MINISTRY OF RHODE
ISLAND

The UU Legislative Ministry Rhode Island (UULMRI) steering committee met on December 20 and agreed to go back to our congregations to identify legislative social justice issues of interest and congregants wanting to participate in this year’s actions. We want to avoid stove pipes on issues before the UULMRI annual meeting in May. Knowing the interests of our congregants helps UULMRI update and track our existing matrix of bills being heard in committees in the Rhode Island State legislature. These bills are the focal points of RI UUs’ collective actions at the State House. This matrix will be published periodically in the Channing Catalyst and is available on line at the Channing Website and the UULMRI website.

The UULMRI steering committee works with congregants through UU social action committees or established ongoing programs to organize and focus on UULMRI legislative actions items deemed important by UUs in Rhode Island. The steering committee works with existing church channels such as social action committees or established programs. These groups encourage new ideas for social actions and will be reaching out via announcements and coffee hours.

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Clearly in 2017 there is an increased desire to speak out on issues at the national as well as the state level. UULMRI encourages conversation across the several hundred local UUs at the district level. If you have ideas or want to participate in this year’s legislative process contact Channing’s Social Action Committee via email at socialactioncommittee@ChanningChurch.org or reach out to the SAC members at coffee hours after Sunday services.

~Al Benson (CMC and UULMRI President) and Mike Armenia (CMC and UULMRI VP)

INTERWEAVE POTLUCK & PROGRAM

TRANSGENDER 101

How much do you know about being transgender? Maybe a friend or family member just came out as trans. Maybe you’re curious about the recent news stories on bathroom bills. Maybe you want to be a better trans ally. Join us on Sunday, Feb 19 for a presentation by Valerie and Rex who will give you the basics of being transgender, share personal stories, and address current events. All are welcome. Free. The presentation will begin at 7PM and will be preceded by a potluck dinner at 5:30PM. The event is sponsored by Interweave, a group for LGBTQ people and allies, and is located in the Parish Hall. Contact Rex at:interweave@channingchurch.org for more information.

100 QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

A Discussion for People New to Channing Church
Sunday, February 5, 11:30am, Ladies’ Parlor in the Parish Hall

This is an informal introductory class designed for people new to Channing to get their questions answered about Unitarian Universalism and an orientation to Channing Church with members of Membership Committee and Rev. Bill. All questions are encouraged. This class will lay the groundwork for the new member class which will be held in spring. Grab a cup of coffee and join the conversation in the Ladies’ Parlor, (the room with the large wood table off the main Parish Hall room)

LOVE SONGS AT CHANNING’S COFFEE HOUSE

Saturday, Feb. 18, 7:00pm, Parish Hall

Bring your Valentine and join us for coffee, dessert, and a relaxed evening of love songs by Channing musicians and friends of Channing: 7-9:00pm, Feb. 18, Parish Hall. Suggested donation $5 to support the church. Musicians: Format is open mic, 2 songs per act (bring 3 just in case). Please contact John Burnham: coffeehouse@channingchurch.org in advance. Next coffeehouse date is Irish Music, March 11.

THE FIRST ANNUAL DECADENT CHOCOLATE FEST!!

During Fellowship on Sunday, February 12

On the Sunday just before Valentine’s Day, you are invited to bring your favorite chocolate dessert/decadent offering to share at Fellowship. Homemade or Store Bought, we hope you will join in the fun of sharing your favorite super chocolaty dessert or treats. No need to pressure yourself signing up...just show up with your surprise chocolate offering! Who doesn’t like love chocolate!!!

JOIN THE PURLY GIRLS!

The Purly Girls is a new group here at Channing that has met twice so far. Our mission is to knit comfort shawls for those in the congregation who are facing an illness, a loss or other difficult times. We presented our first comfort shawl to Sherrill Warch at the Jan. 22nd service. Anyone is welcome to join us and all skill levels are welcome as well. We have easy patterns to knit. We meet the first Saturday of every month in the Channing House Library at 10:00 a.m. So grab your coffee and some knitting needles and join the Purly Girls. Contact Susan VanDerhoof for more information.
February Programs Sponsored and Co-Sponsored by The Learning Center

THE FOURTH “COSMOS” INTERGENERATIONAL POTLUCK SUPPER
Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017, 5 PM
Channing Church Parish Hall

By popular demand, here’s the much-awaited return of the intergenerational Cosmos program, brought to you by RE and TLC! This should be a great opportunity for young families and other adults in the congregation to get to know each other, learn a little something, and have fun too. Join us for a delicious potluck supper and the screening of a "Cosmos" episode. Science games and lively discussion will follow. Watch for the registration and food signup on the Parish Hall Bulletin Board. Please bring something yummy!

CLIMATE-PROOF YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES
a talk and book signing by local author David W. Stookey.
Co-sponsored by Emmanuel Church and Channing Church’s TLC and Green Congregation
Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 PM, Emmanuel Church Parish Hall
Registration fee TBD – watch weekly emails for further details.
Books will be available for purchase.

Author David Stookey will give a talk on how to climate-proof your personal finances. The talk will be followed by a discussion and refreshments. The event will be held at Emmanuel Church, 42 Dearborn St, Newport, and is jointly sponsored by Emmanuel Church and the Learning Center of Channing Memorial Church. Early parking is available in the Emmanuel lot.

... more: Climate change is happening. Author Stookey has investigated and analyzed measures you can take to protect your assets against the primary and secondary effects of this change. His book is filled with practical advice and reference material that you can use during these times of turbulent change. Come and hear him speak.