The Catalyst
Channing Memorial Church
135 Pelham Street
Newport, Rhode Island
October 2017
Sunday Service is held at 10:00am in the Sanctuary.

THE LEARNING CENTER WELCOMES YOUR IDEAS FOR, AND HELP WITH, PROGRAMS. LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

FROM TLC FOR OCTOBER:

BUILDING YOUR OWN THEOLOGY
With Rev. Bill Zelazny
Wednesdays, Oct. 11, Oct. 25, and Nov. 8, 7 PM in the Parish Hall

Come and join Bill for this much-anticipated three-part class! Participants will explore key spiritual questions through reading, writing and discussion. What is theology? What do we think about death, and existence after death? What is the nature of evil? How do we determine what is true, and what is holy? What are the significance of sin and salvation, and of suffering? Your free-will donation at the door will help us to cover the cost of materials and refreshments – thanks.

ENERGY UPDATE:
CHANGING THE PARAMETERS OF STABILITY
A Discussion of Critical World Issues
With Engineers Mike Armenia and Bob Kieronski
Wednesday, Oct. 18, 6:30 PM, Newport Public Library

The problems we face are threshold issues that are interrelated, complex, and vitally important. They include climate change; population growth; compromised food, water, and energy supply; war and aggression; forced migration; economic instability. Many of these problems can be solved by solving the energy issue.

We will discuss an important potential solution, and hope that you will leave this program with a clearer sense of your choices, and of what you might do to help affect a positive outcome.

Free and open to the public.

October Worship Services
Sunday, October 1:
Rev. Bill Zelazny
Forming and Expressing Our Core Beliefs
We Unitarian Universalists find our religious beliefs by direct experience of mystery and wonder, words and deeds of prophetic women and men, and wisdom from the world’s religion. This Sunday Bill will explore how we develop and express our personal theology which, borrowing the title of a book of prayers by A. Powel Davies, he sees as our Language of the Heart.

Bill will be offering a three part class, Building Your Own Theology” on October 11, 25 and November 8 to explore this topic of developing and expressing our personal theology about the “Big Questions” of life such as what is holy, sin and salvation, death and immortality, how do we account for evil. Sign up for the class during coffee hour at The Learning Center Table.

Sunday, October 8:
Rev Bill Zelazny & Judith Porter
Our Pet Companions and what they Teach Us About Life

In honor of Francis of Assisi who was born on October 4th, Judy Porter and Bill will look at how our pets influence our lives and what they teach us about living and dying.

Continued on page 2
As part of our Time of Sharing on October 8, members and friends of the congregation who would like to remember or honor a family pet, living or dead, will be invited to place a photograph of the pet on our “Pet Honor Table” at the front of the church.

Sunday, October 15: A secular sermon by Robert M. Thorson
We Have Taken Up his Ideas
For many, Henry David Thoreau, was just another dead white male author who wrote about Nature and contributed to America's literary canon. For some contemporary UUs he was a prophetic voice for what we now believe. "We have taken up his ideas," preached the Reverend Howard Dana earlier this summer at First Parish Unitarian Church in Concord, Massachusetts. "Because he would not come to us, we had to come to him.

Sunday, October 22: Guest Speaker Service Theme TBD

Sunday, October 29: Rev. Bill Zelazny
A Look at God
Let's walk into some challenging territory for many Unitarian Universalists. Continuing with October’s theme of theological issues for UUs, this Sunday Bill will spend some time talking about the concept of God.

FROM THE MINISTER
The other day as I was unpacking the boxes of books I had moved to my new house one book fell out of my hands. It was a book I purchased a long time ago titled, "The Inviting Church." Coincidence or a message from the universe just as we are beginning a new church year and I have been thinking about growth initiatives. Either way, I took a break and read some of the book for a while. What I relearned, and want to share with you, is what studies have shown are important for congregations to demonstrate to guests who may be looking for a congregation if they want to attract new members.

The first is energy. A church that wants to grow is an élan, and enthusiasm about itself and what it does. But in having an enthusiasm about itself and what it does, the congregation needs to be sure that it notices the new person and helps them find a place.

The second is a belief in inclusion. What is important, almost more than any formal welcoming programs, though that is good to have, is the message given in and through all that goes on that “we want you, we would like you to be part of our fellowship.”

The third element is identity. Identity needs to be at the congregation core. A congregation needs to know who it is and for what it stands, and then tell people about it. This identity is the “we” that endures through the shifting circumstances of the congregation. This “we” establishes the boundaries of congregational life – what it will do and what it will not do. When a congregation knows who it is and why they are here they are better able to attract and integrate people into the community.

In the weeks and months ahead, we shall work hard to show the world the energy we have within our walls, show the people who come here that we want them, and let, the larger community know clearly what we are about.

—Rev. Bill Zelazny

Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change
Transforming Prayers into Passionate Action
Monday, October 16, 2017
5:30-9:00
Providence College
251 Huxley Ave.,
Providence RI 02908
General Admission $30, Students $10
Featuring
Tim DeChristopher, a prominent leader in the Climate Justice movement with the music of Bryan Cahall

Enjoy a delicious dinner, network with climate change enthusiasts, and take local climate action all in one evening! Our educational conference will inspire immediate climate action and a group of RI based environmental companies will be available to assist you.
One of the new initiatives of our Youth and Family Ministry program will be Family Sunday. It is important for families to share the Sunday church experience, and for children to see and be involved in the regular Sunday service so they grow up knowing what our religious services are like.

On Family Sunday -- the 2nd Sunday of each month, starting in October -- we are inviting, in fact, encouraging, children and youth to come to Channing with their family and attend the whole service. There will be no religious education classes, though child care will continue to be offered.

We are still working on all the operational details, but in general we plan to set up a quiet craft’s area in the back of the sanctuary for children who may find sitting in the pew for an hour to be a bit of a challenge, and recognizing the culture of the young, we’ll let our young attendees play games (silently) on their I-phones/Androids and DS’s as they absorb what is going on around them.

~Rev. Bill Zelazny
REligious Education & Family Ministry

Our multi-aged religious education program is off to a wonderful start with a class covenant that includes “having fun,” baking for the community meal, and also cooking and baking for our class to enjoy. We look forward to learning about spiritual traditions that are near and dear to our members and friends this year. If you have a spiritual path or tradition (celebration, food, songs, practice) that enriches your life, please consider sharing it with the children and youth on the 4th Sunday of the month of your choice.

Youth Group for those in grades 6-12 meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 6:00 PM. We invite members and friends of all ages to attend the “Haunted Happenings” party on Sunday, October 29th from 6:00-8:30 in the Sanctuary and the Parish Hall.

You will notice that children and youth will be attending the Sunday service on the second Sunday of each month. It is our hope that this practice will deepen the bonds between the generations at Channing. Please take the opportunity to greet and welcome the children and youth of our community.

Fall Frolic

At the time of this writing, we anticipate having a fabulous time at our Fall Frolic (Sunday, October 1 after the Worship Service). Many thanks to Lauren Drain for coordinating loads of games for kids of all ages, yummy treats, and community building activities. Thank you also to Jessica Thomas for creating the Pickle, Pie, and Flower Arranging Contest.

This year, we will offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a developmentally appropriate class on sexuality for 4-6th graders. Please see Jessica Thomas or any member of the RE Committee (Kathy Takata, Sally Hanchett, Barbara Russell-Willet) if you are interested in signing your child up or for more information.

We are also seeking adult facilitators to lead this highly regarded class. Professional training will be provided in November. This is a wonderful opportunity to have a positive impact in the lives of our children and future adults.

~Kathy Takata, Chair, RE Committee

October RE Calendar

Sunday, October 1, 10:00am: RE Class will set up for Fall Frolic Event
  • 11:00am Fall Frolic
  • 6:00pm Youth Group

Sunday, October 8 10:00am: Family Sunday Service

Sunday, October 15, 10:00am:
  • 11:30am - 1:00pm Spiritual Parenting Discussion Group meets in the Ladies’ Parlor (childcare provided)
  • 6:00pm Youth Group

Baking for the Community Meal

Sunday, October 22, 10:00am:
  • RE Class

Sunday, October 29, 10:00am:
  • NO RE Class
  • 6:00-8:30pm: Haunted Happenings Party
CAREGIVING UPDATE

Happy fall, everyone! Enjoy the crisper days and autumn foliage as this month passes. The beauties of autumn pass so quickly.

We have heard from former Channing members Jake and Anna Smith, who passed along their address if you'd like to drop them a note: 15700 Scotts Valley Drive, Haymarket, VA 20169. Jake is beginning his third round of chemotherapy, but Anna reports that he is in good spirits and currently is back to pursuing some of his usual activities.

Our sympathies go out to Jan Rogers, whose husband Arthur died at the Royal Middletown nursing home during Labor Day weekend. Jan expressed gratitude for the wonderful care he received from the nursing home staff for several years, as well as for the messages of support she received from Channing friends. Arthur did not wish to have a funeral service, so it is likely that the family will hold a private memorial at a later date.

We are also so sorry to hear of the death of Barbara Nowicki’s mother, Mary Betty Nowicki, who passed away peacefully Sept. 10 at Kent County Hospital at age 91. Many of us had met her on several occasions when she attended Channing services and enjoyed chatting with her. Our thoughts are with Barbara, Sarah, and the rest of their family at this sad time.

Many of us were on hand to celebrate Fred Caswell’s life here at Channing on Sept. 16. Our former minister, the Rev. Amy Freedman, came from her home in Massachusetts to officiate. It was a service that Fred had largely planned along with wife Nancy prior to his death, and the service and reception afterwards were just what we would have expected – full of music, stories, affirming words, humor, and many hugs! His family and a few friends were present earlier that morning in Jamestown as his ashes were gifted to the sea.

This column is being written prior to the celebration of life service for Henry Rosemont, to be held on Sept. 23. I will write more about this in the next Catalyst.

During October, please contact either Ruth Jernigan or Pam Goff with any Caregiving concerns among our congregation members and friends. And please remember that we are always looking for more volunteers to serve as monthly caregiving coordinators (for whatever length of time you can give, from a week up to the whole month!) or for other one-time needs that may arise. You may contact either Nickie Kates or Barbara Russell-Willett if you’d like to volunteer. Thank you!

~Linda Beall, for Channing Caregiving

SMALL GROUPS BEGIN SOON!

Channing’s highly popular Small Group Ministry program is beginning soon. The fall “semester” will run for 5 sessions, beginning the week of October 17 with meetings occurring every other week. There will be at least one group meeting on Tuesdays and another group possible one Wednesday if there is sufficient interest. To sign up contact Millie Jessen (smallgroups@channingchurch.org)

Small Groups provide Channing participants an opportunity to reflect on and share their life’s journey, while examining important questions in a relaxed, comfortable setting. It’s a great way to meet new people, renew old acquaintances, and connect with some of the most unique, diverse, and thoughtful minds in our congregation. And … it’s just a whole lot of fun!

So mark the dates and plan to join us for Channing Small Groups!
S O C I A L  A C T I O N

G R E E N  C O R N E R

Come hear a UU environmental hero!

Rev. Tim DeChristopher will be the featured speaker at the 10th Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change, sponsored by RI Interfaith Power and Light. The theme this year is "Transforming Prayers into Passionate Action."

Tim DeChristopher is very special to us UUs. This young man had already been an environmental activist and co-founder of Peaceful Uprising when, in 2008, he became Bidder 70 in a Bureau of Land Management auction of oil and gas drilling rights on thousands of acres of pristine Utah wilderness. He placed the winning bid of $1.7 million on 22,000 acres, but he had no intention of drilling on the land, and he also had no money! His action canceled that auction, and the Department of the Interior later withdrew several parcels, citing insufficient environmental review, but Tim was tried and found guilty on two felonies, and served 21 months of a two-year sentence. After his release, he moved to RI and graduated from Harvard Divinity as a UU minister this past spring.

Don't miss this excellent opportunity to hear this articulate young activist! This always excellent conference is on Monday, October 16, 5:30 to 9 PM, at Providence College. The $30 cost includes dinner. Make reservations at www.ri-ipl.org.

For carpooling arrangements, contact Beth Milham at: greencongregation@channingchurch.org.

~Beth Milham, Chair, Green Cong. Committee

E C O - B I T S  &  T I P S

Global Warming Causes What?

Much of the recent debate about human influence on the planet’s climate has focused, understandably, on severe weather, namely hurricanes. While some conservatives and “deniers” have termed as preposterous that Hurricanes Harvey and Irma were caused (solely – my interpretation) by human-influenced global warming, many in the scientific community have identified hundreds of distinctive changes brought by recent and significant climatic changes, both on land and in the ocean. Below are some of the most significant and scary ones.

Droughts in Alaska, reduced snowpack in the southwestern Sierra Mountains and rainfall extremes throughout much of the US have lead to stressed and weakened tree species, putting many at risk for pest infestations such as the Spruce Beetle. Weakened trees lead to widespread tree death, a main driver of increases in forest fires.

Rising ocean temperatures are leading to rapid and possibly irreversible changes in the commercial fish species in the Gulf of Maine, stretching from Cape Cod to the southern tip of Nova Scotia. American lobsters and cold-loving fish like cod, flounder and herring are in full retreat further north. Rhode island is experiencing many of these changes.

And lastly, some gardeners may consider it a blessing that the USDA Climatic Zone map has been updated to reflect a warming climate. This has resulted in a longer growing season, changing Aquidneck Island from Zone 6B to zone 7A, meaning that winter minimum temperatures won't go below 0 Fahrenheit. However, insect pest survival and northward migration during milder winters can negate the benefits of warming.

My point is that global warming affects our ocean and terrestrial environments, from Alaska to the tropics. And the effects are much more complicated than a degree or two. Society’s response must attempt to match and offset the damaging effects and not be limited to “adaptation,” which would be folly.

~Craig Gaspard, Green Congregation Committee
OCTOBER
SHARE THE PLATE
It is October. Think Fall-Harvest-Food and you will understand why we will share the cash offerings and checks with the memo “Share the Plate” donated during this month’s Sunday services with the new island organization Aquidneck Community Table (ACT). ACT focuses on good food, sustainability, local agriculture, and developing community. It works to grow our local food economy and make healthy food accessible to all.

ACT is responsible for the Aquidneck Growers Market (Wednesdays during the summer on Newport’s Memorial Blvd and Saturdays at the Newport Vineyards year-round), the Community Gardens at the Florence Gray Center and the Great Friends Meeting House, the Island Community Farm in Middletown, a composting program, and regional collaboration around nutrition. It also hosts a Food Map on www.aquidneckcommunitytable.org which plots our islands food resources. During the last week of September, ACT sponsored the Aquidneck Food Challenge that dared people living here to eat only food grown, raised, or caught locally. The purpose of the Challenge is to educate the community about what foods our island is currently producing and what is needed to support a thriving local food ecosystem.

ACT just started in 2016 and can use our financial support as it works to create the systems and communications necessary to grow and improve this island’s health, environment, agriculture, aquaculture, and economy. It’s a big job!

Please be generous like you always are.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila McEntee

PURLY GIRLS UPDATE
It’s been just 9 months since the Purly Girls first met to begin knitting comfort and friendship shawls. In that short amount of time the “Girls” have knitted and presented 8 comfort shawls. We don’t always make a public presentation to those in need in order to protect people’s privacy and when we do make a public presentation we always ask the person first. Our latest recipient was Joanne Rosemont at the Sept. 17th service for the loss of her husband, Henry this past summer. Another recipient last winter was Alicia Spinner (pictured here). She loved her turquoise shawl made by Mary Benson.

Some members of the group have knitted several shawls since we started and some are still working on finishing their first (including yours truly). At our September meeting Cynthia Skelton was excited to complete her first shawl (pictured above) and has enjoyed being part of the group.

We meet the first Saturday of every month from 10:00 ~ Noon in the Channing House Library. We welcome all levels. We have a very simple pattern that is easy for true beginners. You don’t have to attend every month and you don’t have to stay the entire two hours each month. So, please join us!

~Susan VanDerhoof

Fellowship Hour Hosts Needed
Thanks to everyone who signed up to help with fellowship. We still have some openings in our calendar. If you’ve never done it before, we can pair you up with someone more experienced. For more information contact any of the fellowship chair people (Joy Benson, Jo Freedman, Marcia Mallory, Mary Benson, and Pam Rainey) or look for a signup sheet in the parish hall after Sunday services.

Missing Something???
There have been many dishes, pans, and serving utensils left behind at our various functions in the Parish Hall. For the next two Sundays, we would like to put them out so people can find anything that they might be missing. After that, we will take them to the Salvation Army for recycling. So if you’re missing anything important, please come and check out our collection.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCTOBER GREETERS
Oct. 1: Sally Hanchett
Oct. 8: Ruth Jernigan
Oct. 15: Nancy Peresta
Oct. 22: TBD
Oct. 29: Susan VanDerhoof

OCTOBER CHIMERS
Oct. 1: Christine Ariel
Oct. 8: Janna Pederson
Oct. 15: Linda Beall
Oct. 22: Cynthia Skelton
Oct. 29: Jim Freess

Merciful Conversations on Race: Let's Talk White Privilege
A series of 5 two hour sessions based on material developed by the United Church of Christ Tuesdays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, at 7:00pm, Emmanuel Church, 42 Dearborn Street, Newport, RI 02840

The Rhode Island State Council of Churches developed a facilitator guide and has trained our first group of facilitators. This is a difficult and sensitive topic, but we are confident that these committed and trained individuals are prepared to shepherd people through this process. This series is for people who are serious about looking into their own souls and ask themselves hard questions. There is a 117 page manual that will be required reading for the series. The number of participants is limited to 20 and you MUST register in order to participate. It is assumed that participants will attend all 5 sessions. When you register online you will be asked for $10 (except for the Lincoln Series). This fee only covers the cost of copying the materials. Please plan to provide your own 3 ring binder to hold the manual. Email: Greencongregation@channingchurch.org for the link to register online.

COMMUNITY MEAL
Monday, October 16, 3:30-6:15pm, in the Parish Hall
Thanks to everyone who helped at September community meal. We served about 50 dinners, cooked by Joan Dermody. If you would like to help in October please contact Joy Benson. We always meet on the third Monday of the month.

100 QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM
A Discussion for People New to Channing Church
Sunday, October 1, 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. Grab a cup of coffee and join the conversation in the Parish Hall.

INTERWEAVE AT CHANNING
Interweave is Channing's Group for LGBTQ people and allies. For more information, contact Rex LeBeau at interweave@channingchurch.org or 401 595 9068.

Has that fall breeze chilled you yet? Come warm up with Interweave at our meeting on Oct 15th at 7PM in the Parish Hall. It will feature the documentary Positively Naked, a film about the creation of an anniversary cover of POZ magazine. The cover is an installation by Spencer Tunick of nude, HIV positive people. 37min, not rated. The film will be preceded by a potluck dinner at 5:30PM. Bring a dish to share if you want to come to the potluck. All are welcome.

On Sunday, Nov 12th at 11:30AM, following the regular Sunday worship service, Interweave will host a Transgender Day of Remembrance service in the Sanctuary. Please come for a moving service of readings, music, and the reading of the names of the 2017 transgender murder victims.

What's cuter than an little kid? Maybe a kitten, but how about cute little trans kids? Yes, gender is something many people understand at a very young age. Come learn more about what it means to be transgender under the age of 18 as we watch the film Growing Up Trans on Nov 12th. Documentary, TV-PG, 1h 24min. The film will begin at 7PM in the Parish Hall and will be preceded by a potluck dinner at 5:30PM. Bring a dish to share if you want to come to the potluck. All are welcome.