From The Learning Center, for February

(Koki Translation: “Life out of Balance”) 
A groundbreaking film by Godfrey Reggio 
With award-winning music by Philip Glass

“AN ASTONISHING SYMPHONY OF SOUND AND IMAGE”

Robert Kieronski of TLC presents a mid-winter film night and social, with wine, cheese, and home-baked cookies! 
Discussion to follow.

Wednesday Feb. 6 at 6:30 pm in the Parish Hall 
Suggested donation $10

In the works, by popular request:

A Program on End of Life Issues 
Featuring Dr. David Gorelick and colleagues 

To be presented in late Feb. or early March, date TBD 
Co-sponsored by Channing Elder Ministry and TLC

Watch the Channing weekly email and Parish Hall bulletin board for updates!

Worship Services

Sunday, February 3:
M. L. King Jr.’s Real Message
Rev. William Zelazny

Dr. King’s legacy has been mellowed over time. He is seen now as a gentle man with a message that we need to be color-blind. But his real message was more strident which made Northern “white folk” who had supported his southern desegregation work uncomfortable because it hit close to home. Bill’s sermon, in honor of Black History month, originally intended for MLK Sunday, will look at King’s challenge to America then and now, a half century after his death.

Sunday, February 10:
Rev. William Zelazny
Are You There for Me?

H. L. Mencken, American social observer, said “It is mutual trust, even more than mutual interest that holds human associations together.” On this Sunday before Valentine’s Day, Bill will have us consider the issue of trust, the critical building block in personal and civil relationships.

After the service we gather in the Parish Hall for our annual Chocolate Fest. Everyone is invited to bring some of their favorite chocolate candy or a chocolate-based desert to share. We will also have our chocolate fountain flowing. (See page 8 for more info)
Sunday, February 17:
Mr. Rodney Davis
My Story, Your Story, Our History

History often does not reflect our story. At times it seems to divide more than bring people together. What lessons can we learn? What can we learn from the past to reshape our future? In this sermon, Mr. Davis will explore this serious yet sometimes humorous topic.

Rodney Davis was born and raised in Newport. He served as president of Rhode Island Pride for over 20 years. He is also the past president of the R.I. Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights. He works as a marketing and special events consultant for Big Picture Learning. He lives in Western Coventry RI with his partner Brian Mills. He last preached at Channing Church in 2017.

Sunday, February 24:
Rev. Ann Fox
What Is Your Guiding Light?

What is your guiding light? We all have a conscious or unconscious guiding light, an idea or value by which we assess what is acceptable or not acceptable in human behavior. What is yours? Let us consider what could be an effective guiding light for a new age of uncertainty in our mostly democratic society.

Rev. Ann Fox, is the Minister Emerita of Unitarian Memorial Church, Fairhaven, MA

FROM REV. ZELAZNY

This month we mark two culturally significant days that on the surface seem to celebrate different things, but are existentially linked. Valentine’s Day celebrates love, affection and deep friendship. Abraham Lincoln’s birthday honors a man whose name is synonymous with freedom with his act of freeing the slaves.

What got me thinking about this connection is a blog essay by a colleague of mine, Rev. Meg Riley, who contends that friendship is a root of freedom. Through friendship we are free to undo and/or renew ourselves in new, maybe even radical ways. As the Invisible Committee (the nom de plume of a collective of radical left French authors) once wrote, “freedom isn’t the act of shedding our attachments, but the practical capacity to work on them, to move around in their space…”

If we accept the Invisible Committee’s thesis, then friendship should be seen as more than just connections with people who are already like us with whom we hang out, share hobbies, and make small talk. Perhaps we should see friendships as instruments for improving us. Caring relationships can be what allows us to face the things we fear about ourselves or find the courage to suspend or cast-off stifling habits or destructive and toxic relationship because we know there is support.

So, here’s a toast, perhaps with a chocolate bonbon held in our fingers, to the dual conditions of freedom and friendship we celebrate this month.

S.A.M. BROWN BAG LUNCH
Tuesday, February 12, Noon, in the Parish Hall

The second Tuesday of the month Brown Bag Lunch sponsored by Channing’s Senior Adult Ministry (S.A.M.) program is continuing. If you have not come before, please bring a lunch and join the group for informal conversations – sometimes on a specific topic and other time just general discussion. Coffee and tea is provided. We meet from noon-1:30pm, in the Parish Hall.

GREAT GUYS GROUP
Saturday, February 16, 8:30am, Parish Hall

Successful and fulfilled men have guys – coaches, mentors, friends - supporting them with their lives. That is what the Great Guys Group is here for – to provide companionship and support for the men of Channing Church. It’s done over breakfast and conversation on the third Saturday of the month in the Parish Hall from 8:30–10:00am. The men take turns putting together a light breakfast. No political talk, but a lot of other territory explored from interesting books to travel to life experiences. Men of all ages are cordially invited to check out the GGG – no registration or reservation – just come.
**CO-PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGE**

*A Six Year Plan to Make Channing Greater — VISION 2025*

My memory of a visit to the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Sarasota has stayed with me over the years, no doubt because the church’s facilities left me pea-green with envy.

The sanctuary is not majestic like ours, but it is spacious and light-filled, situated at one end of an open courtyard that’s framed along one side by rooms that might be for classes, meetings, and offices, including one I thought might be a yoga studio. Along a second side is a large event space with a kitchen and restrooms. The courtyard itself, paved with flagstones and covered with a vine-draped pergola, is a welcoming space for people hawking event sign-ups or enjoying the sweets and coffee laid out for fellowship. And, I thought, what a rental for rehearsal dinners!

This church seemed to have a special space for every need, even your very last. Along the far side of the sanctuary I discovered a sunken garden packed with bromeliads and fertilized with the ashes of deceased members, their names engraved on a plaque mounted to the sanctuary wall.

At Channing, could we possibly do anything other than dream about having such commodious facilities? Most of us assume that the cost of maintaining what we have makes any new construction impossible.

Doubters will argue that our sanctuary is historic, and beautiful, but it also needs a new roof, and repairs to its stained glass. The original ceiling deserves restoring, and the building has no restrooms, or any plumbing for that matter. Channing House needs a new porch and a paint job, but we’re still paying off the loan for the last one. Our Parish Hall floorboards groan if 50 people show up for an event. Cold air floods the Ladies Parlor in winter and, in the classroom wing, no matter how thoroughly cleaned, a whiff of mold awaits. And the exterior siding? Well, just ask the neighborhood squirrels!

But wait! At an all-congregation event on January 19, our Facilities and Financial Planning Task Force presented a vision of how our main building, the sanctuary, could provide all the activity space we need and how we might actually pay for it. The Task Force, co-chaired by Julie Herrick [Board, Finance] and Mary Alice Smith [Endowment and Finance] also includes Terry Gavin [Endowment], Dave Banister [Finance], Chris Laudon [Property and Finance], Candy Martin [Property], as well as our minister Rev. Bill, and co-Presidents Eleanor Doumato and Tom Howard.

**TAKE A LOOK AT JOAN’S NEW KITCHEN!**

The Parish Hall kitchen has a new look, with two new refrigerators, two new dishwashers, two new stoves with ovens we can actually use, fresh paint on the walls, and open shelving high off the floor to put air-tight food containers. The funds were raised by our Christmas Appeal ($5,500) a grant from BankNewport ($1,000) and a donation from the Margit Baum fund ($3,000). Our thanks to Joan Dermody for choosing the appliances, painting the walls and being supervisor-in-chief of the kitchen. Thanks also to Chris Laudon, Abby Adams, Russ Milham, Pat Padillia, Joy Benson, Al Benson, the Fellowship team, and all those who saw the project through to the finish.
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Co-Presidents’ Message
It was created by vote of the Board over a year ago for the purpose of moving forward a long-dormant master plan feasibility study for building out the sanctuary undercroft [née basement] and the Onsite-Insight engineering report detailing preliminary steps to be taken before construction could begin.

At the Saturday gathering, Rev. Bill spoke about the reasons why adequate physical space is important to the church, explaining how the many programs of our committees are integral to carrying out our mission as a UU congregation. And yet, he pointed out, the work we are committed to is at risk because the facilities that support them are inadequate and deteriorating.

Chris Laudon then offered encouraging remarks by reminding everyone that we have faced what seemed impossible challenges with our property in the past, and have repeatedly managed to raise sufficient funds to get the work done. She mentioned, for examples, restoration of the steeple, bells, stained glass windows and sanctuary floor, all with help from local foundations. She also mentioned the long-opposed renovation of rental apartments in Channing House and the Parish Hall, apartments that are now paying for themselves and providing an important revenue stream for our operations.

On display were architectural drawings showing external elevator and stairway access to the sanctuary and the undercroft, where restrooms, meeting spaces, classrooms, and a kitchen will be located. In addition, the drawings show possible landscaping of the area between Channing House and the church once the water, sewer, electrical, phone and cable lines have been rerouted and buried. Instead of an eyesore, the area could be an inviting place for outdoor receptions, provide convenient access to the church, and integrate the church visually with Touro Park and the statue of Channing.

The highlight of the program was a tour of the undercroft. With 11 foot high ceilings and some 5,000 square feet of space, it was easy to imagine a sprawling space for potlucks, lectures, fellowship, music events, and for little kids to run around. An added benefit: the likelihood of increasing our income from weddings and rental of space to community groups. In fact it’s possible that the sanctuary, our biggest property expense, may well start to contribute to its own support.

One persistent question that came up at the meeting was, “Why not fix up the Parish Hall so that it meets our needs and won’t fall down on us?” A tour of the basement under the Parish Hall answered the question. For starters, the building has no proper foundation. It sits on pillars atop outcroppings of rolling granite, while floor joists that have been cut through over the years by various plumbers are held up by jack-posts. The building is too small for our needs. The classroom wing and the ladies parlor are add-ons that can’t be salvaged, and the ladies parlor must be removed in any case because it interferes with required access and egress to the undercroft. Finally, if we were to decide to restore the Parish House instead of building out the undercroft, we would have no alternative space for our programs, kitchen, and restrooms while the restoration was taking place.

The last part of the program addressed the elephant in the room. So how would we pay for it? Mary Alice Smith was prepared with the answers. In short, grants, loans, our endowment, bequests, and a capital fund drive.

Given our success at fundraising in the past, it seems to me that all we need to get started is a commitment to do it. Can we do it, in six years, from conception to completion? And why not, especially if we’re all in it together, going for VISION 2025!!

~Eleanor Doumato & Tom Howard, Channing Co-Presidents

VISION 2025!
The Channing Chalice Children Programming for February

Ellen Harcum, the Chalice Children and I will continue our Intro to the 7 Principles journey this month. See the February RE calendar to the right for details.

Friday Family Nights

Friday Family Night is under reconstruction. Please talk to Sondra Gold (846-5603 or sondrahgo@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Mystery Friends

The Mystery Friends tradition is happening now! Each young person in our congregation has been paired up with a caring adult who is secretly bestowing small gifts and acts of kindness on the children. After the service on February 17, the friends will be revealed!!!

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

At this time, we have 2 OWL programs going on. Jim Frees and Sally Hanchett are leading the teenage group and Rex LeBeau and Kathy Takata are leading the K-1 group. If you want to know more about OWL, please contact one of the facilitators.

~JoAnne Ritchie
Family Life Coordinator

Pajama/Movie Night

Saturday, February 9, 6:00pm, Parish Hall

All ages are invited to a PJ Movie Party in the Parish Hall! We will be collecting PJ’s for students at Pell Elementary School. Please bring donations of new PJ’s and wear your own PJ’s (optional—street clothes are okay...) to lounge around while watching the original Mary Poppins!!! Bring your pillow, your blanket and a snack to share.

FEBRUARY CHANNING CHALICE CHILDREN (CCC) CALENDAR

Sunday, February 3
Children come to the worship service with their families, and leave for CCC class in the Parish Hall with JoAnne after the Message for All Ages.

Sunday, February 10
Children come to the worship service with their families, and leave for CCC class in the Parish Hall with JoAnne after the Message for All Ages.

Sunday, February 17
Baking for the Community Meal. Children go to the Parish Hall immediately upon arrival at 10:00am.

Mystery Friends will be revealed today!

Sunday, February 24
Children come to the worship service with their families, and leave for CCC class in the Parish Hall with Ellen after the Message for All Ages.

Child Care with Ms. Amy and Ms. Morgan is available in the Parish Hall every Sunday during the worship service (9:45am–11:30am) for children 5 years of age and under.
CAREGIVING UPDATE
Nickie Kates asked me to pass the word that the Channing Caregiving program greatly needs more monthly coordinators and volunteers! If you have some time and compassion to offer those who need it, please call Barbara Russell-Willett (225-8531) and she’ll be happy to sign you up. Please know that any expense you may incur (such as cards, stamps, etc.) as a volunteer will be fully reimbursed. Thank you so much!

Lila Neidich, a former Channing member of many years along with her late husband Richard, died on Dec. 26 in Kalispell, MT at age 89. Many current congregation members will remember Lila and Richard. Lila was a long-time teacher in the Middletown schools, and she and Richard were both active in our church community.


Abby Adams recently celebrated her 60th birthday. We wish you many joys and adventures in your next decade, Abby!

Christine Ariel is tentatively scheduled for her final hip surgery early this month. She has been recovering from a systemic infection which complicated her initial recovery, and has been able to return to work on a limited schedule during the past couple of months. Chris has deeply appreciated all the support, visits, and notes from Channing friends.

Many thanks to Ruth Jernigan and Susan Kieronski for serving as Caregiving coordinators during January! Our February coordinators are Rachel Balaban, John Burnham, and Barbara Russell-Willett from Feb. 1-15, and Mary Alice Smith and Nancy Caswell from Feb. 16-28. Please contact any of these individuals with any caregiving needs among our congregation members or friends.

~Linda Beall, for Channing Caregiving

COMMUNITY MEAL
Monday, February 18
3:30-6:15pm, in the Parish Hall
Many thanks to the Friday night AA group who donated a turkey and all the fixings for a holiday meal! And to Joan Dermody for cooking her wonderful meals and to our RE kids for making desserts. If you would like to help in February please call Joy Benson at communitymeal@channingchurch.org

FEbRUARY SHARE THE PLATE
Since 1978, through actions of volunteers and the generosity of donors, Annunciation House of El Paso, Texas, has served the poorest of the poor in its border community. The most vulnerable are people from south of the border who can’t receive services from most established social agencies. They are often undocumented migrants and refugees. Annunciation House is struggling to meet the increased demands for its services in recent months. It is in desperate need of financial donations to meet the diverse needs of its guests. It uses donations to pay for the motel rooms it rents to provide overflow shelter; to buy extra food, cleaning supplies, gas for its vehicles, and prescriptions for its guests; and to meet the innumerable needs of individuals and families fleeing danger and abuse in their home countries and struggling to comply with the immigration system of our country.

The efforts of Annunciation House are aligned with the UUSC’s 2018-19 theme of “Justice Across Borders”. The UUSC states that all people have the rights to safety, human dignity, and a process to seek asylum.

Monies donated during our Sunday services for the month of February will be shared with

Continued on page 7
Share the Plate continued:
Annunciation House. For more information, visit https://annunciationhouse.org and to see the items Annunciation House will use our donation to purchase see https://annunciationhouse.org/support/house-needs/.

And please stop the SAC table during Fellowship this month to buy Beautiful Day Granola, which is hand-crafted in Providence by refugees from countries like Burundi, Iraq, and the DR Congo. Just think, a delicious granola-filled breakfast can help our local refugee community survive.

Please be generous, as you always are.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila McEntee, for the Social Action Committee

ECO-BITS & TIPS

Sustainability:
Scaling up from us

Sustainability holds different meanings depending on the audience. I want to start by looking at how various stakeholders define it.

International development agencies and non-governmental organizations such as Global Footprints (based in London) define a sustainable community as being: healthy and safe for its residents; and supports a diverse wild ecosystem at the same time as minimizing waste and pollution. Oxfam and Fair Trade, the latter of which we as a congregation support throughout purchasing decisions for the holidays, closely follow Global Footprints. After all, it is hard to disagree with these goals. But, they remain overly broad. This definition defines sustainability in terms of social and economic equality as well as long-term environmentally sustaining.

The Institute for Sustainable Communities based in the US supports cities and regional governments in developed and developing countries as they address adaptation to climate change, environmental sustainability and even economic parity through business opportunity and racial equality. The member communities in the US and around the world, as this is a global initiative, work to engage residents and identify opportunities for positive change. Here, the process is critical to success, but it is a deliberative and necessary slow, possibly losing stakeholders along the way.

Both of these sustainability strategies attempt a broad based approach, balancing economic and environmental needs. In a world with over six billion people, that has increased nearly threefold in my lifetime, economic opportunities and dealing with inequality through access to educational opportunities, especially for women in the developing world, is crucial in protecting resources, reducing pollution, decreasing family size and advancing democracy.

Traditional environmental sustainability, advanced mainly by the middle class in North America and Western Europe, looks at our “environmental footprint”. This includes the size and energy efficiency of our housing, use of public transportation and our diet in terms of meat versus plant based and where our “foodshed” is. Protection and preservation of land from unsustainable development, including wildlands and farmland preservation is key to environmental sustainability. Clustered development, smaller families and even supporting intergenerational social relations can help tremendously.

Perhaps I (or we) can see where these can coexist. In a developing region where sanitation systems can prevent river and lake pollution, more hard infrastructure and investment can make for a better quality of life. Whereas in developed countries like our own, green infrastructure can support plants and open land as a way to clean runoff and reduce pollution, especially from cars and roads.

My point is sustainability does not happen in a vacuum, and can also be a step toward something more sustainable. As we progress through the year, I want to focus on both traditional environmental sustainability here and how to incorporate this as an evolutionary process.

~Craig Gaspard, Green Congregation Committee
ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEAUTIFUL DAY GRANOLA!!
During the month of February, the Social Action Committee will be selling Beautiful Day Granola during Fellowship. Beautiful Day is a non-profit business in Providence that employs refugees and produces delicious, socially conscious granola. It helps refugees become economically self-sufficient and learn the skills and confidence necessary to build a life in their new country. Check out its website at https://www.beautifuldayri.org – you can learn more about the granola and the people who make it.

Stop by the SAC table and develop a taste for this outstanding product!

BLACK HISTORY ASSEMBLY
Friday, February 15, 9:30am
Rogers High School
The Forty-eighth annual Rev. Robert L. Williams National Black History Month Assembly will be held at Roger’s High School auditorium on Friday February 15th at 9:30 am. This assembly is co-sponsored by Channing Memorial Church and Community Baptist Church. There will be a breakfast reception following the assembly in the Colonial Dining Room.

“GREEN CONGREGATION REBOOT” SALAD BAR
Sunday, February 17, 12:00pm, In the Parish Hall
The number one issue in a recent survey of Channing members was climate change! Here’s your chance to eat “greens” and learn about how to get onboard with the Green Congregation at Channing. We will be handing out “green” surprises and serving delicious salads with all the toppings you can pile on! So join us, eat healthy and sign on to make our planet healthier!

THIRD ANNUAL DECADENT CHOCOLATE FEST
During Fellowship on Sunday, February 10 we will hold our annual Chocolate Fest to celebrate Valentine’s Day. Bring a homemade or store-bought favorite chocolate dessert, candy or other decadent offering to share at Fellowship. We will also have the chocolate waterfall running as we did last year. No need to sign up...just come with your surprise chocolate offering and join in the fun. There will also be some non-chocolate refreshments along with our coffee and tea for those of us who cannot eat chocolate.

ORIGINALS ONLY AT CHANNING COFFEE HOUSE
Saturday, February 16, 7:00pm, Parish Hall
Join us for an originals only coffeehouse that includes both special guests and long-time favorites. Coffee and tea are served, and you’re invited to bring a dessert to share or a donation ($5 or more suggested) to support the church. Musicians interested in performing, contact John Burnham at coffeehouse@channingchurch.org in advance.

FEBRUARY CHIMERS
Feb. 3: Janna Pederson
Feb. 10: Linda Beall
Feb. 17: Cynthia Skelton
Feb. 24: Jim Freess