

# The Catalyst

Channing Memorial Church Monthly Newsletter  
May 2023

Channing Memorial Church

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135 Pelham Street, Newport, Rhode Island

## Notice to Members of Channing Memorial Church The 2023 Annual Meeting will be held

**Wednesday, May 24, 2023, 7:00pm in the Parish Hall**

**The meeting will begin with a Dessert Potluck at 6:30pm**

**Potluck begins at 6:30pm, meeting begins promptly at 7:00pm**

### AGENDA

- Welcome & call to order, verify quorum
- Approval of minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting
  - Wheel of Life
  - Vision 2025 Update
- Reports from Minister, Officers & Committee Chairs
- Presentation & approval of the FY 2023-2024 budget
- Presentation & approval of revisions to the Church by-laws
- Election of Officers & Members of the Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs & Committee Members
  - Recognitions & Appreciation
  - Presentation of the Unsung UU Award

### Items to be Voted on:

- Approval of the FY 2023-2024 budget
- Approval of the church by-laws as revised by the By-law Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees
- Election of Officers & Members of the Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs & Committee Members

**The proposed revision to the Church By-laws with notes regarding input from the two By-Laws Forums held last Fall, and Board consideration of these inputs:**

### [Revised By Laws with Notes](#)

**The Annual Report will be sent to the congregation by email on Monday, May 22.**

**Printed copies of the Revised By-laws and Annual Meeting Report will be available at the Annual Meeting**

**Committee Chairs are reminded to submit (via email) their Annual Report to the church office by**

**EMAIL to: [office@channingchurch.org](mailto:office@channingchurch.org) by**

**Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at the latest!**

## SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:00AM IN THE SANCTUARY

Services are live streamed on the

[CHANNING YOU TUBE CHANNEL](#) and available for viewing afterwards.

**Sunday, May 7**

### To Be Kind, Be Curious

**Rev. Bill Zelazny**

There are all kinds of ways to be kind – help someone, say something nice, send a sympathy card, open a door for someone and so forth. But there is one way we rarely thinking about as an act of kinds – being curious. Not nosy, but genuinely curious about another person. Curiosity can also help us heal from pain. This Sunday let's explore the idea that curiosity is more than just learning something.

*This Sunday we will also welcome new members during the service with a membership book signing immediately following the service in the Sanctuary. (see page 4 for more info about becoming a member.*



**Sunday, May 14**

### Mothers and More

**Rev. Bill Zelazny**

Our culture has instilled in us an idea of the “perfect” mother. The perfect mother, is warm and welcoming; always dressed in an attractive manner; dispenses cookies or treats to our friends at the drop of the proverbial hat; and she also dispenses kind and heartfelt wisdom whenever you need it. I guess some mothers do all of that. But real mothers rarely correspond to this “perfect” model. So, come by the church before going off on your mother's day activities and join Bill in a reflection on what mothering means.



to select the music and hymns, schedule the Sunday vocalist, and coordinate guest musicians.

In the next few weeks the Board will appoint a search committee to find and hire the new music staff. The Board will decide if we will have two staff people – a program director to handle all non-playing tasks and a pianist – or one person – a Music Director, as we have had in the past. The Search Committee will develop the job description, identify possible candidates and interview the finalists with a planned start date in early 2024.

The Board and Search Committee will keep the congregation informed about the process.

## **Sunday, May 21** **Reclaiming the Lost Art of** **Deep Listening**

**Rev. Jeannette Bessinger**

In these times of increasing social, cultural, and political division, deep listening is becoming a lost art. Taken for granted as a basic human skill, listening well is rarely taught or even encouraged. Improving our listening skills and receiving the simple medicine of being heard can bridge many divides – in ourselves, between one another, and even between humans and the more-than-human world.

## **Sunday, May 28** **Memorial Day Reflection**

**Rev. Bill Zelazny**



Memorial Day's roots are in honoring soldiers who fought in Civil War battles, both Confederate and Union. In 1868 the Grand Army of the Republic established Decoration Day to be held at the end of May, because flowers would be in bloom which could be used to decorate graves. Today it is a day to recognize all the men and women who died in the service in all wars and conflicts – a visible sign of patriotism. Bill has a few thoughts about what all of this means today.

*Congregation members will be invited during the service to share a memory about their or their family's military experience.*

## **CHANNING MUSIC** **PROGRAM** **UPDATE**

On March 26 we celebrated over three decades of service by Janet Grant to Channing Church as our Music Director. I have been asked by several people what is happening now.

To begin with, we are moving forward with volunteer vocalists, several guest musicians and our new Pianist, Conor Kennedy.

Conor Kennedy is a local Rhode Islander, living in Jamestown. He was a student at the Hart School of Music and has a training in classical and jazz piano. Conor has a degree in philosophy from Boston College and is currently taking courses in economics at Salve Regina in preparation for future doctoral studies in that field. He continues to work as a musician and music educator, as well as with local musicians in Newport and Rhode Island,

It's planned for Conor to be our Pianist (not Music Director) until at least December 31, 2023.

In the meantime, Rev. Zelazny is overseeing the music program, working with Conor and others



## **SUNDAY CHIMING**

**May 7** Jim Freess

**May 14:** Linda Beall

**May 21:** Jim Freess

**May 28:** Janna Pederson

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## **ELKS' PARKING FOR** **SUNDAY MORNING** **WORSHIP**

Channing Members may park in the Elks' parking lot from **9:00am-12:00pm on Sunday mornings** while attending Sunday Services. **Please place the bright orange parking permit on your dashboard where it is clearly visible.** Permits are located on the table to the right as you enter the church.



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Welcome to May! As promised, I will share some thoughts about Love! In my April message I shared a different kind of definition about responsibility from Jaggi Vasudev-Sadhguru's book "inner Engineering: A Yogi's guide to Joy." Being responsible, or in his words, response-able, is the basic foundation for developing the capacity to becoming a loving person. This is an important idea for the UUA is revamping Article 2 of its bylaws and rules and has "Love" at the center of its values. I hope you read the report as it will help in understanding the changes being made.

The seven principles, which we covenant to affirm and promote, and the living tradition statement which draws from many sources, are being reworked. In the proposed revision to Article 2 the UUA states that a major part of its purpose is to "actively engage it's members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love." In the next section on Values and Covenant, the UUA states that "Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love." The shared values, which they state

are inseparable from one another are: Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity. In the description of these values, it becomes clear that the UUA has not done away with the 7 principles but has just reworked them into a new framework with "Love" as the uniting core.

This caused me some pause as I was not completely sure how this concept of "Love" would be interpreted and used. Many a well-intentioned idea has been used for the inclusion and exclusion of others from a group. In the name of religion, wars have been fought! In the name of love of Country those not espousing our "shared doctrine" have been slain. How easy is it to "love thy neighbor" or anyone different from the group to which I belong? How can we develop this Love as the center of our values if we don't have a clear concept of what it is! Enter the wisdom of Sadhguru's teachings on Love. I hope that you find his words as helpful as I did in understanding the meaning of love. I will share one quote which is indeed central to a much larger discussion.

*"To be loving is simply this: a willingness to respond freely and openly.*

*Right now, it may be limited to one or two people in your lives.*

*But it is possible to extend this ability to embrace the entire world.*

*Does it mean going into the streets and hugging everyone? No.*

*That would be crazy – not to mention irresponsible.*

*As we have said, responsibility is not about action, but a way of being. Love is not something you do; it is just the way you are....*

*Love has nothing to do with someone else.*

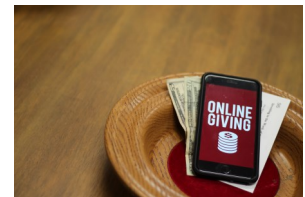
*It is all about you. It is a way of being.*

*It essentially means you have brought sweetness into your emotion....*

*It is just your own quality. You are only using the other person as a key to open up what is already within you."*

May we work to develop this quality, this sweetness in our lives and as always may you be safe, happy, healthy, and live with as much ease as is possible!

~Ginny



## ONLINE GIVING

It's quick and easy, and you can do it from anywhere! Just go to the church website: [www.channingchurch.org](http://www.channingchurch.org) and click on the "Give" tile, then select one of the four options: Sunday Offering, Share the Plate, General Fund, or The Learning Center at Channing. Follow the instructions and a receipt will be mailed to you after you are done. Thank you for your generosity and support!



## CAREGIVING UPDATE

Happy spring to all! Sincere thanks go to Marian Royer and Beth Jepson, who did a great job staying in touch with congregation members while serving as the April Caregiving coordinators.

We are all sending our love and best wishes to Betsy Dees, who at the time of this writing is in Newport Hospital after undergoing gallbladder surgery.

Judi Tisdall has had a slow recovery from her ankle surgery, with some ongoing complications. However, she is in good spirits and appreciates the contacts from Channing friends. We wish her good progress and a full recovery.

Please keep JoAnn Rosemont and her family in your thoughts as her oldest daughter, Kathy, undergoes heart-related surgeries during the last week of April at Washington Hospital Center.

Holly Grosvenor's mother died in February at age 93, and there will be a celebration of life service on May 12 at 11am at St Columba's Chapel.

Sally Hanchett received a late report that Tom Howard had fallen and was in ER, stating he broke his other leg (i.e. not the one broken last year).

On a happier note, Ginny Spaulding and Betsy Leerssen are

on a cruise along the coast of Japan as this is written, and undoubtedly having a wonderful time!

Please remember that the Channing Caregiving team is always available to offer support to anyone who is feeling isolated, coping with an illness, or just needs a bit of cheer. If you know of anyone who could use a friendly phone call, a meal offering, a ride to an appointment, or some other assistance, we welcome hearing from you.



**The May coordinators are JoAnne Ritchie and Anna Smith.**

Please contact either of these individuals, or Caregiving co-leaders Sally Hanchett and JoAnn Rosemont, with any Caregiving news or needs this month.

~Linda Beall,  
for Channing Caregiving



## BECOME A MEMBER OF CHANNING CHURCH

Thinking about joining Channing Church? **You can do that on Sunday, May 7 in new member recognition ceremony.** A person may become a member if they are fourteen years old, have been involved in the activities of the church, and accept the principles of Unitarian Universalism by signing the Membership Book. The book will be open for signing immediately after the service. **Contact Rev. Bill ([minister@channingchurch.org](mailto:minister@channingchurch.org)) by Friday, May 5 to discuss participating in the signing ceremony.** If you are unable to come to the May 7 service another time can be arranged.

## COMMUNITY MEAL

**The Third Monday of the Month, 5:00pm, Parish Hall**



The Channing Community Meal is served from 5:00-5:45pm in the Parish Hall. Joan Dermody provides a delicious hot dinner for our guests. **We are currently in need of Volunteers.** Contact Meal Manager, Joy Benson, at [communitymeal@channingchurch.org](mailto:communitymeal@channingchurch.org) with any questions or if you would like to help out.

**Office Hours**

**Church Office Hours**

**Tuesday, Thursday & Friday  
10:00am-3:30pm**

**Special Hours the Week of the Annual Meeting!**

**Mon., May 22: 10am-2pm**

**Tues., May 23: 10am-2pm**

**Wed., May 24: 2pm-6:30pm**

**Thurs., May 25: 10am-1pm**

**CLOSED FRIDAY MAY 26**



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## TLC PRESENTS: "I'M NOT DEAD YET, BUT....."



With Kurt Edenbach and Kim Shute

Wed., May 10, at 2 PM

In the Parish Hall

**Chances are you've made out a will and a health care directive, but have you made decisions about the things that must happen shortly after your death?**

Do you want your body to be laid in a casket, embalmed or not; or might you prefer a green burial, cremation, or donation of your body for anatomy lessons by medical students? Would you want a religious ceremony in a sacred space for your memorial, or a less formal gathering of family and friends, or no memorial service at all; a published obituary that represents you as you would like to be remembered, or an obit cobbled together by someone else? Maybe you have out-of-the-ordinary ideas of your own and need guidance, or perhaps you have no interest in what happens after your death but would like to unburden your heirs of decision-making. Please join us for a presentation by experts in this field, who will provide us with plenty of food for thought.

**Speaking of food, we'll serve coffee, tea, and rich pastries.  
(You only live once!)**

**No need to preregister, but we would be grateful for a \$5 suggested donation to help cover TLC programming expenses.**



**Kurt Edenbach** is a lifelong resident of Aquidneck Island. He grew up in Middletown, and graduated from Portsmouth Abbey School and Franklin and Marshall College. Kurt has worked full time as a licensed funeral director since 1997 and holds an R.I. insurance license to assist with providing a broad spectrum of preplanning options for the community. He lives in Newport with his wife and two children.



**Kim Shute** is a former member of Channing, and has experienced loss first-hand after her husband of 19 years died suddenly of leukemia at the age of 48. Since Rick's death, she has dedicated herself to helping fellow grievers through bereavement, both professionally and personally. Kim lives in central Massachusetts with her fiancé, two young men she calls sons, and a cat with seven lives left.



## SONG FEST 2023

**Saturday, May 20, 3:00pm  
In the Church Sanctuary**

*Presented by the Choral  
Collective of Newport County*

You are invited to the Choral Collective of Newport County's annual "Song Fest" featuring many of the CCNC programs!

Newport County Youth Chorus Prep Chorus will perform songs from the "We SING!" session. Aquidneck Singers, a teen and adult women's chorus, will perform "Nature Songs," including works by female composers Andrea Ramsey, Gwyneth Walker, Sarah Quartel, and Donna Rhodenizer plus familiar tunes such as Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" and the Simon & Garfunkel fave "Bridge over troubled water." And CCNC is excited to present QUORUS, Newport's first LGBTQIA+ chorus, at their first public performance!

**Plenty of seating - no  
advanced tickets required;  
suggested donation to  
support CCNC programs  
(\$20/person; \$40/family)  
taken at the door.**

## ECO BITS & TIPS

### *Fighting Climate Change Around the World*



Since the year began, I have written about everything from conventional farming's contribution to global warming to the economic challenges of a just and equitable transition. Business and government can help support through use Environmental, Social and Governance (SG) guidelines to lead society toward sustainability and a truly circular economy. Individuals and families can make modest lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon footprint, This is not an imposition on freedom but rather choices with honest pricing considering "externalities", an easy economics term that assigns costs to all forms of pollution that do not allow these costs to be borne by others including the planet.

One example of how countries can fight global warming is exemplified by the European Union (EU). Two years ago, this collaborative of member countries agreed in principle to the most ambitious union-wide climate policy ever. The EU is a bloc of 27 European, Baltic, and Eurasian countries, primarily lead by parliamentary Democracies and organized around unifying values including freedom and economic prosperity while supporting regional identity. With a population of about 450 million,

it is roughly 10% below what is traditionally thought of as North America: Canada, Mexico, and the United States. In terms of income and development, if you take the regions as a whole, they are comparable.

Beyond an economic trading bloc of countries, the EU has taken a significant step toward carbon neutrality, with a transitional goal of 55% reduction (from 2005) in carbon emissions by 2030 and total carbon neutrality 2050. Yes, the EU has fallen short of past carbon reduction targets since the Kyoto Protocol first set pollution reduction goals starting in 1987. But with climate impacts already being felt around the planet, the Union decided as a group that more ambitious goals were required and attainable with proper investment. These include:

- New Spending on a European Climate Fund totally 30% of all common funding from 2021-2027, with the funding to prioritize regions most dependent on fossil fuels for electricity and manufacturing – mostly in the old eastern European countries;

- Using a plan "Fit for 55" to streamline and synchronize climate policies with member country laws on energy use, conservation, and production mix, as the EU desires to be seen as a leader in the just and equitable transition to reduced greenhouse gas emissions;

- Expand a related Emissions Trading System (ETS) that since 2005 HAS reduced carbon emissions 41%;

- Extending mandatory reduction targets to marine diesel emissions, phasing out transport sectors left out until now including air transport;

- A separate ETS for upgrading building efficiency and private and public road transportation to be implemented;

- Setting aside a separate pool of funding to use in emergency situations, much like banks setting aside reserves in case of market fluctuations or a run on capital;

- Lastly, there is to be an import levy carbon called the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism that will tax goods being imported into the EU from elsewhere, where offshoring of carbon intensive industries like steel and cement manufacturing will be disincentivized.

Sounds complicated, and this is just a partial overview of the highlights. But it is what nearly every European country besides England has agreed to and is implementing. Perhaps not the absolute best agreement, but through negotiation, it is an agreement that will reduce carbon intensity and improve the environment. Perhaps we in North America, with conservative buy-in, could achieve a similar result.

Lastly, the Climate Ride Green Fondo ride the Gaspard family is attending will raise approximately \$3500, \$1000 above our goal. Thanks to all Channing members who made a contribution to this, my third year.

~Craig Gaspard, for SAC