The Catalyst

November 2026

Channing Memorial Church Unitarian Universalist

A Welcoming Congregation, welcoming and affirming all people.
A Green Congregation, committed to protecting the environment.

Phone: 401-846-0643 / Email: office@channingchurch.org

135 Pelham Street, Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m. in the Church Sanctuary

November Chimers

11/1: Linda Beall
11/8: TBD
11/15: Jim Freess
11/22: Linda Beall
11/29: Jim Freess

Catalyst Contributions: Send to:office@channingchurch.org by the 20th of the month.

Sunday, Nov 1

Rev. Dr. Althea M. Smith
Worship Associate: John Prevedini
All Saints, All Souls, Hallows' Eve



Sunday, November 8

Guest Speaker: Margaret Polski
Worship Associate: Ginny Spaulding

Are AI Models Conscious and Do They Have a Soul?

While many of us are struggling to understand artificial intelligence (AI) and figure out whether and how to employ it in our lives, those who are developing AI models are struggling to understand what they are creating, how their models behave, and how they can and should be regulated. In this talk, Dr. Polski will examine emerging questions that affect how we can think about the nature of these evolving entities and our relationship with them.

Margaret Polski is a member of the Channing Board of Trustees and a Professor on the U.S. Naval War College faculty.

November Zoom link:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84924658901

Sunday, November 15

Rev. Jeannette Bessinger
Worship Associate: Judith Porter



New Rules of Grandparenting, Young and Old Stand-Up Comics, and Why Change Feels So Hard Right Now

So many of us carry baggage with us as we age: regrets, outdated identities, old habits, or roles that once helped us thrive – or just survive – but no longer fit who we, or the world, are becoming. In this time of accelerated change, we may long to dig in our heels and slow things down, so we don't get swept away. Let's meet this impulse with compassion, pausing together in ritual to honor what the old patterns gave us and offer deep gratitude for the ways they carried us. With gentleness and care, we will give ourselves permission to let go of what is ready to be released and make room for what can bring us hope and fresh joy in today's world.

Rev. Jeannette Bessinger is an ordained interfaith minister and board-certified health coach with over 25 years of experience supporting people through challenging changes in their lives. As a spiritual tender and teacher, she leans into counter-oppressive practices of sacred embodiment and building mind-body-spirit resilience.

Sunday, November 22

Rev. Dr. Althea M. Smith
Worship Associate: Priscilla Young



Sunday, November 29

"Tell Who You Are, Say What You Believe"

Please join us on Thanksgiving weekend for the next in our longtime occasional series of "Tell Who You Are" services. Channing members JoAnne Ritchie and Ben Willett will share their reflections on faith and their spiritual journeys. This service is always a great chance to learn more about our friends in the congregation!

CMCUU November Caregiving Team
Ginny Spaulding and JoAnne Ritchie
Please contact them at
caregiving@channingchurch.org

Channing Caregiving November 2026

By Linda Beall for Channing Caregiving

We wish you all a warm and happy Thanksgiving with loved ones and friends!



Thank you to Gretchen Sotomayor and Susan Kieronski for their work as Caregiving coordinators during October. It was a relatively quiet month, as far as generating news for me to report. As always, there are those in our congregation who have been coping with losses or illnesses, but who do not wish to have these mentioned in the Catalyst, and we are thinking of them.

Ruth and Sam Jernigan continue to experience various health problems and have been unable to attend church, but they do enjoy visitors when they are feeling up to it. Please call before making a visit.

We are very happy for the Loveland-Hanchett-Malise family now that they welcomed home their newest member of the family, Jane Louise Loveland! Jane had to spend a little time in NICU after she was born but is now doing well.

Please remember that the Channing Caregiving team is always available to offer support to anyone who is feeling isolated, coping with 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 other assistance, we welcome hearing from you. The November coordinators are Ginny Spaulding and JoAnne Ritchie. Please contact either of these individuals with any Caregiving news or needs.

Our Wayside Pulpit

By Lissa Fernandez



Have you ever noticed the thought-provoking messages that are in front of the church and are rotated from time to time? That's our Wayside Pulpit! Wayside Pulpits are outdoor bulletin boards that display inspirational messages.

According to the UUA website, the tradition of Wayside Pulpits was first introduced in North America in 1919 at First Parish Church (Unitarian) of Brighton, MA.

Our Wayside Pulpit has been maintained for many, many years by Sam Jernigan and we thank him for his dedication! Recently, Jim Egan has agreed to take on the task of changing the quotes. Thank you, Jim!

We are grateful that the tradition of the Wayside Pulpit will continue at Channing!

HARVEST POP UP SUPPER



Saturday November 7 5:00 pm in the Parish Hall. Please bring a favorite dish to share! Remember to BYOB

Social Action Corner

It was great to be together again at the Volunteer Fair. Thanks for stopping by our busy table. We're thankful for you and for our busy Channing year!

Upcoming Holiday Events

It's not too soon to think about the holidays. We'll have our traditional giving and buying opportunities:

First up is **the Giving Tree**, which will be posted on a bulletin board in the main hall for Channing's Thanksgiving Dinner. Choose some gifts to buy for a needy family or for Jean's Closet, which provides necessities for students in need at Rogers High.

Pick up a **list of suggested toiletries and necessities** for guests at the Channing Community Meal and the McKinney Shelter. The dollar stores are a great resource for those items.

Finally, our annual **Fair Trade/ green products/regifting sale** will help fill your gift list, after the service on the first three Sundays in December. As always incalculable thanks to Sally Hanchett for making all these events happen every year.

Elections First up – Please **VOTE!** It was great to see lots of folks at the October No Kings Indivisible Vote Early Rally at City Hall. If you did not vote early, make a plan to vote on Tuesday, November 3! This election could not be more important!
Our deepest thanks to all our **Channing Postcarders!** Since March, we've sent out 2300 Get-Out-the-Vote cards to five states.

Green Congregation

We hope you enjoyed Craig Gaspard's presentation about the new **Green Sanctuary 2030** initiative on October 25. Talk to Craig anytime about what you'd like to do or contact him through socialaction@channingchurch.org. Craig's talk was the first joint venture of TLC and Social Action.



A reminder to look at the Common Read book selection, *Love at the Center*. We have four copies of the book for you to browse through, and if it interests you, we can set up a time to meet.

Helping our Neighbors

Our **Share the Plate** for November will go



to four local agencies to provide RIPTA tickets for unhoused people in our community. All loose contributions collected on the fourth Sunday, and all checks designated for STP throughout the month will go to Share the Plate.

We'll supplement those donations with proceeds from our annual **Brunch for the Bus**, after the service on November 15. Bring your appetite! It's quite a feast!



The **Sharing Locker** will welcome your donations of rolls of toilet paper this month. The donation bin is in the new Social Action Center in the parish hall.

Interweave:

Submitted by Nancy Peresta



November dates for the LGBTQ+ Community

November 14 – Newport Pride Velvet Ball 2026 – Tickets still available!
November 20– Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)
November 22 - Annual TDOR Service at Channing Church
For more info contact
Interweave@channingchurch.org

Elections and the Fate of Our Planet

By Craig Gaspard

By the time you read this, we will have voted, either early or on Election Day, which really should be a national holiday. We will also have a good idea of the makeup of Congress, including the Senate, and our local representation. The choices in these midterm elections are stark. If Democrats win nationally and locally, how will they use their majority? Can they restore a balance between affordability, fairness, and the rule of law while elevating environmental responsibility and justice?

Locally, a small contingent of Channing members traveled to East Greenwich for the fall UU Legislative Ministry meeting on the first Sunday of October. In my breakout session, representatives of five congregations shared their current work and plans for the coming year. We also heard from a representative of the Environmental Council of Rhode Island (ECRI), who outlined legislative priorities for 2027.

1. Protect renewable energy and efficiency programs. Prevent cuts to Rhode Island Energy Office programs while preserving the timeline for achieving carbon neutrality in the early 2030s. This spring, advocates opposed Governor McKee's efforts to scale back these programs in the name of short-term savings for residents.

2. Establish building decarbonization and benchmarking guidelines. New construction and major renovations should meet clear standards. Buildings account for more than 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. Without guidelines, energy efficiency measures could be eliminated through 'value engineering' to save relatively modest sums--a shortsighted approach.

3. Fully fund RIPTA. Adequate funding is essential to preserve bus routes. Rhode Island plans to replace Kennedy Plaza with a bus hub near Providence's Amtrak station at Station Park. Is this the best use of funds, or should restoring routes and purchasing more efficient equipment take priority?

4. Preserve open space, conservation land, and farmland. Support quality land purchases and tax breaks for farms under five acres. These investments strengthen local agriculture, which already faces disadvantages from federal subsidies favoring agribusiness.

UU congregations generally support this agenda. Learn more at **environmentalcouncilri.gov**.



Save the Date!

Sunday November 22, Channing Memorial Thanksgiving Dinner 4-6 p.m. in the Parish Hall~ details in the upcoming weekly eNews!

Sunday, November 8

RHODE ISLAND SLAVE HISTORY MEDALLIONS

Newport Black History Walking Tour
A PowerPoint Presentation
11:30am -12:30pm in the Parish Hall
Q&A & Refreshments

Presented by Channing Member and Public Historian Margaret Baker

The Rhode Island Slave History Medallion's mission is to highlight the overlooked histories of Rhode Island's free and enslaved African American and Indigenous communities and the significant role that RI played in the transatlantic slave trade. They produce a very popular Black History Walking Tour which has been well received including attendance by US Reps Jim Clyburn and Gabe Amo as well as global journalist, Amy Goodman from "Democracy Now" seen on YouTube.

Join Margaret Baker, the tour director, in this engaging event, which brings the walking tour to you in the Parish Hall. Margaret Baker has been part of Channing and the Newport community for more than four decades, and her involvement and dedication to Rhode Island Slave History Medallions and it's continuing research has led to her role as a public historian. Come, hear the personal narratives of the enslaved, not just dates and figures for a public acknowledgement of our hard history leading to a greater understanding of slavery and its legacy in our society today

Calling All Singers!!



Jan Navarro is looking for new and returning choir members to join us as we begin preparing for our Christmas Eve service.

Everyone is welcome! Whether you have sung with the choir before or have never joined us, we hope you'll consider stepping forward and becoming part of our choir as we prepare for this special holiday service.

We practice on **Wednesdays from 6:30–7:45 p.m. in the Parish Hall** and again on **Sunday mornings from 9:00–9:45 a.m. in the church.** If you can only attend one rehearsal each week, that's okay! Please come whenever you can. Every voice adds something special to our group. We hope you'll consider joining us. We have a great group of people and would love to welcome some new faces—and some familiar ones—into the choir! **Come sing with us!**



October Channing Tours a Success!!

Congratulations to the CMCUU Tour Guides who welcomed many a passersby on Pelham Street into the Sanctuary. Thank you Sondra Gold, Russ & Beth Milham, Jim Egan, Margaret Baker, and Sue Beckers! Well done!