

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

The Reverend Amy Bowden Freedman, *Minister*



May 1st, 2007

Dear Member or Friend of Channing,

Last September, our Governing Board established a goal for our "Year of Decision":

By June 2007, Channing Church has reached a consensus on a common vision for our ministry and our property that empowers the Congregation and its leadership to move in specific directions.

We have come a long way toward meeting this goal. After three focus discussions, meetings of committees, and much hard work, we have learned much. We have learned that we value being part of a loving, caring community that embraces diversity and promotes the freedom of belief. We have learned that we value the programs offered at Channing and would like to see them expanded. We have learned that we want Channing's presence and activity in the wider world (outreach) to grow. We have also learned that we are committed to remain at our current site in Newport, RI and to restore and preserve our Sanctuary as our spiritual home.

These are important goals and commitments. They are the building blocks of the consensus vision that we have been seeking. With them we can now craft our vision. We can now state with clarity where we want to go and what we want the Channing of the future to be. We can now empower ourselves and our leaders to begin moving us toward realizing our vision. We invite you to join us in the Parish Hall for our fourth and final Focus Discussion on Thursday, May 10th, 6:30-9:00 PM, at which we will craft that vision. This will be a dessert potluck (so bring something sweet to enjoy). Child care will be provided.

Enclosed you will find guidance to help you frame in your own mind a vision statement for Channing. Part I provides the commonly accepted components of a successful vision statement. Part II includes statements of what we value and those commitments we believe we have made this year as a result of our ongoing "Year of Decision" discussion. It is these values and commitments that will help us form our vision statement. Each value or commitment includes links to references on our "Year of Decision" web page from which we have inferred the value has been stated or the commitment has been made. We urge you to check out the web page at www.channingchurch.org, review the references, and decide for yourself what we value and to what we have committed.

We are excited about finally crafting our common vision of the future. We look forward to your joining us on May 10th. Please sign up to attend on the sheet posted in the Parish Hall or RSVP with Krista in the Church Office at 846-0643 or office@channingchurch.org.

For the Channing Transition Team,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Amy B. Freedman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Amy B. Freedman
Minister

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas R. Beall", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas R. Beall
President

Enclosure





Channing Memorial Church Crafting Our Vision



Part I: Our Vision of Who We Are and Who We Will Be:

We will craft this statement at the Focus Discussion on May 10th. This statement must be:

- **Values-focused:** Our vision must come from our hearts and represent our strongest values and commitments.
- **Imaginable:** It must clearly show where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish. It must be focused on meeting needs.
- **Desirable:** It must excite and be agreed upon by as many people within (and even outside of) the Congregation as possible.
- **Feasible but Lofty:** The vision is not just a fantasy. It must be realistic yet it must also set a high standard and a challenging target. It must be rooted in our Congregation's culture and fit its personality.
- **Focused:** It must be specific enough that it contains "...the backdrop against which all choices and decisions can be measured and assessed."
- **Flexible:** It must allow all of us to develop our own goals and strategies within the overall vision. This brings out excitement, challenge, and the ultimate value in each person within the Congregation.
- **Communicable:** If we cannot communicate the vision to someone in five minutes or less and get a reaction that signifies both understanding and interest, we are not done.

Part II: Who We Are and To What We Are Committed:

To help us craft the statement we will be guided by what we have discussed this year and to what we have committed. These commitments will be ratified by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting and will be appended to the vision statement:

1. We are a loving, caring, spiritual community that embraces diversity and promotes the freedom of belief.

Source: www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Details.html.

2. We value the spiritual inspiration we derive from our sacred space, filled with fellowship, music, and our voices together.

Source: http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Details.html.



Channing Memorial Church Crafting Our Vision



3. We are committed to creating and sustaining a foundation for our children which fosters their spiritual growth, guides their search for truth and empowers them to work for justice.

Source: Religious Education Mission Statement, www.channingchurch.org/RE/index.htm.

4. We are committed to the exploration of spirituality by each individual.

Sources:

- (1) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Summary_Slides.html,
- (2) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/RE/talking_points.html.

5. We are committed to promoting greater love and understanding among ourselves, in our community, in our country, and in the world.

Sources:

- (1) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1015_sermon.html,
- (2) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Summary_Slides.html,
- (3) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/RE/talking_points.html,
- (4) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Social_Justice/talking_points.html.

6. We are committed to reaching out to and serving others in our community, our country, and the world.

Sources:

- (1) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1015_sermon.html,
- (2) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Summary_Slides.html,
- (3) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Social_Justice/talking_points.html.

7. We are committed to shared ministry among our Minister, Staff, and Congregation to facilitate individual ministry and realize ministry together.

Sources:

- (1) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Summary_Slides.html,
- (2) www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Worship/talking_points.html.

8. We are committed to maintaining and perpetuating this church as a memorial to the life and teachings of the Reverend Doctor William Ellery Channing, the founder of American Unitarianism, in Newport, Rhode Island, the town of his birth.

Sources: www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Focus_3_Common_Themes.pdf.



Channing Memorial Church **Crafting Our Vision**



9. We are committed to providing welcoming space to support and promote our church's ministry and programs for those within the congregation and beyond.

Sources:

- (1) http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/2006_1109_Discuss_1_Summary_Slides.html.
- (2) http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Fellowship/talking_points.html.
- (3) http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Membership/talking_points.pdf.
- (4) http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/RE/talking_points.html.
- (5) http://www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Worship/talking_points.html.

10. We are committed to finding and providing the resources necessary to realize our vision.

Sources: www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Focus_3_Common_Themes.pdf.

11. We are committed to practicing Congregational polity; coming together in a spirit of friendship to forge consensus on important decisions and then empowering our Minister, our Staff, and our Lay Leaders to take action to implement those decisions and realize our vision.

Sources: www.channingchurch.org/YOD/Focus_3_Common_Themes.pdf.