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To: Channing Church Transition Team:

Tom Beal, Barbara Nowicki, Marsha Francis, Maryellen Doherty,
Bill Peresta, Holly Grosvenor & Chris Laudon

CC. Rev Amy Bowden Freedman

Warm Greetings to everyone on the Channing Church Transition Team!

We have been watching and reading about the thoughtful and inclusive process the Transition Team has been guiding at Channing Church. And although we have not been able to make most of the meetings, we appreciate all the work that is going into this process.

In this Year of Decision we would like to offer an idea up for consideration to enhance the functionality of the Channing sanctuary.

It is the idea of **'Moveable Pews'** for the main sanctuary at Channing.

By 'Moveable Pews' we mean pews that are not permanently placed, but rather would be on locking casters (wheels). With 'Moveable Pews' the sanctuary could be re-configured easily, quickly and safely to accommodate a variety of events and worship activities. At the same time, by keeping the pews the sanctuary would retain a church feeling, more so than if the pews were completely removed and replaced with folding chairs. For example, even if the first 10 rows in front of the chancel were 'Moveable Pews' that would create a flexible open space.

The Sanctuary of Channing is already wonderful in so many ways and we feel in the long term a conversion to 'Moveable Pews' would serve to expand how the sanctuary could be utilized. There are many types of 'non-traditional' spiritual services, rituals or events that call for having open and flexible space. For example: Soulful Sundown could incorporate some of the following activities - Labyrinth Walks, Dances of Universal Peace, Drumming Circles, Movement Meditations, and Ritual Theater. Any of these activities could even be there own full events. With 'Moveable Pews' the sanctuary could be used for a variety of performances; music, dance, plays, etc. Perhaps the space could even be opened up for weekday workshops, retreats or conferences.

Inspiration for the idea of 'Moveable Pews' has come from our interactions and visits to a number of other churches over the years. These churches all have some sort of arrangement to easily move their pews or a wide-open space in the sanctuary setting.

In NYC, St Mark's Church on the Bowery & Washington Square Church (until it was sold in 2005)

Both of these churches have strong commitments to the role of the Arts in Spirituality and Social Service. They have frequently hosted performances, music, dance, plays and other community events.

Quaker Meeting House, Cambridge - The space is used for Dances of Universal Peace at least several evenings a month and occasionally for longer all day retreat events. These circle dances are drawn from many world spiritual traditions and engender a deep sense of spirituality and rich community connections.

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco - While Grace Cathedral does not have 'Moveable Pews', they do have a large empty floor space in the sanctuary where they set up a Labyrinth made of carpet. The sanctuary is opened regularly for people to come and walk the Labyrinth. When we visited Grace Cathedral, the Labyrinth walking time was dedicated to the ideals of Peace and World Harmony.

We feel the arts are a vital part of being in spiritual community. It's one reason why we enjoy being part of the Soulful Sundown Team. With a shift to 'Moveable Pews' Channing could create an environment that welcomes an even more diverse array of spiritual worship and community events. Non-traditional spiritual events may reach and serve new audiences, appeal to various age groups and expand Channing's role in the community.

With gratitude and appreciation for all the work you have already been doing, we would like to offer up the idea of '**Moveable Pews**' for consideration and discussion by the Transition Team and the Members of Channing.

Creatively & Spiritually yours,

Christopher & Katherine Carbone