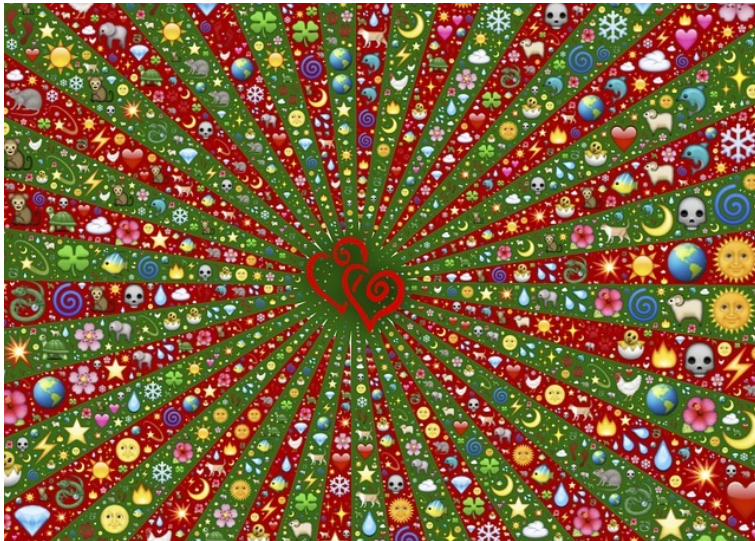




Bellringer

September 2021

Instead of telling you what to believe, we thought you might have a few ideas of your own.



SEPTEMBER'S THEME IS EMBRACING POSSIBILITY

September 5: TED Talk - "The Happy Secret to Better Work." We believe we should work hard in order to be happy, but could we be thinking about things backwards? In this fast-moving and very funny talk, psychologist Shawn Achor argues that, actually, happiness inspires us to be more productive. Our discussion will be led by Caitlin Chapman, Ann Cook-Frantz, Lara Lillibridge, Brian Warren, and Jeff Witmer. **The conversation continues during TED Talk Back** on Wednesday, September 8 at 7 pm.

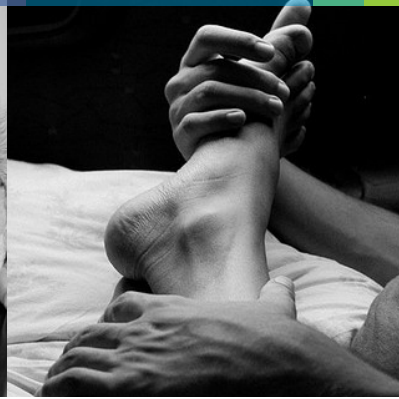
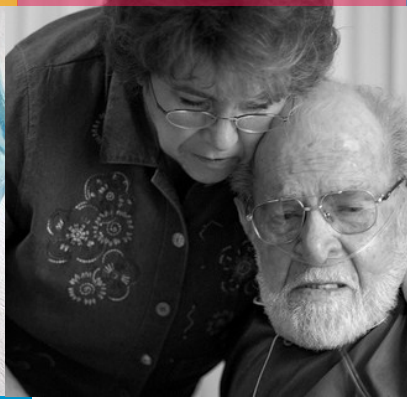
September 12: Going with the Flow, Together.

Come celebrate the Water Service. Bring water to our Zoom service, along with your responses to the questions: How are you going with the flow of pandemic uncertainty? How are we supporting one another and being supported in going with the flow? Service led by Tina Graf, Lara Lillibridge, and Rev. Mary.

September 19: Possibility of Atonement. As we start a new academic and congregational year and as the Jewish New Year dawns, we embrace the possibility of forgiveness: How might we forgive ourselves? Whom do we have to forgive? From whom do we ask forgiveness? How might we seek At-one-ment with Life itself? Service led by Rev. Mary and Ann Cook-Frantz.

September 26: Protecting Reproductive Rights is an expression of UU values: honoring a woman's right to choose and respecting the rule of law in our democracy. Explore the roots of the cynical grab for power polarizing America. Service led by Rev. Mary and members of both congregations.

Join our weekly Chalice lighting at home. Place a candle in a "Chalice" of your choice near your Zoom screen and light it as we light our main Chalice.



MARY'S MUSINGS

BECOMING TRUSTWORTHY: HEART BROKEN OPEN TO POSSIBILITY

Our September theme is *Embracing Possibility*. What is possible for us in these uncharted times? What's possible for our families, for our congregations? Where do we begin to look? Buddhists say: Start where you are, where we are.

Where are we? What are we noticing, feeling? In those around me, I'm noticing deepening reluctance to put oneself 'out there,' and at the same time throwing caution to the wind. I'm seeing people worn down. Bone tired. Depleted if not depressed. Snapping, irritable, blaming. Withdrawing even further.

Where do we find possibility amidst depletion, anxiety? Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron's response is to *start with a broken heart*.

Since the early months of pandemic, I've been walking in the darkness in my home, round and round, feeling grief, anxiety, reactivity. At first I was afraid it would drown me. I thought it was mine, asking: *What had I failed to notice, to feel, during the daylight hours?* It wasn't (just) mine. It asked me just to feel it: All the feelings we don't know how to hold in this collective sea of pandemic. It wasn't mine to fix. It isn't yours to fix. It is ours to feel, so we may open to one another, with the enormous power of the heart broken open:

- Not fighting the sadness. Not identifying with the sadness
- Not fighting the not-knowing, the confusion
- Not identifying with or controlled by the urge to blame, to lash out:

Allowing our beautiful hearts to open in wide and deep compassion.

Possibility comes from open-heartedness, which we feel as compassion: The willingness and courage to

feel it all with one another (from the Latin, *com*=with and *passio*=to feel).

From the fertile soil of compassion - for oneself and others - we start to cultivate resilience. When I don't expect myself to fix it or have the answer, when I stop denying the feelings and allow myself to feel them, to let them in, my heart breaks open in spacious compassion. What needed to be felt has been felt. What needed to be seen has been seen. Life's spacious possibilities may arise.

Our NY son, daughter-in-law and grandsons came for their first visit since pandemic (Dec 2019). He'd been working from home, she and the boys had done Zoom school. They seemed in shock. By the end of their visit, shock revealed exhaustion. No drama covering it over. Depletion. Opening into the spaciousness of being seen. Hearts broken-open. Open to new possibility.

It is hard not to run away from big feelings. What do we have to do, to feel it all, so that our hearts break open in compassion?

This is the on-going, deepening practice of cultivating resilience: Trusting the beautiful heart. Trusting the interdependent web of life holding us all. Trusting our deepest wisest self/selves. Trusting one another. Becoming trustworthy.

How are you embracing possibility in response to pandemic surge?

How are you allowing your heart to break open to compassion and new possibility?

PS: In Thursday Morning Meditation, starting Sep 9 (10:30-11:30), we draw on Pema Chodron's teachings. (You are always welcome to Zoom in.)



Church News

IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - SEPT. 26



At our Annual meeting in June, Olmsted UU members approved an interim three-month budget and agreed to meet again to hear the results of the audit and to vote on a final 2021-2022 budget.

That congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, September 26 immediately after the service. It will be available on Zoom and in person at the church following COVID-19 protocols.

A quorum is required to approve the budget, so it is very important for Olmsted UU members to attend. Please mark your calendars.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In August, our board met with a UUA Staff to help us work more effectively as a board. We developed a covenant and practiced good listening and healing communication. Now before the congregation meeting, which is necessary to approve a working budget and approve the new bookkeeper, we are tasked with appointing a Treasurer that will work in conjunction with the bookkeeper to keep our finances recorded properly and to be fiscally responsible. We are also still in need of a scribe and/ or secretary and a finance chair. We are a small

church, we wear many hats. Please consider stepping forward to assist the church with these roles. We look forward to being back together in person and are anticipating a staggered start. Feel free to come to the church (masks on) to watch the Zoom service. As soon as it is safe, hybrid services will be started. Stay safe, enjoy the sunshine.

Yours in faith and light,
Evelyn Sobczak

OX CART PANTRY - SPECIAL COLLECTION IN SEPTEMBER

Like so many organizations affected by COVID, the Oxcart Pantry in North Olmsted is short staffed. To make sorting and shelving donated food easier on staff, the Pantry is collecting just a few items each month.

Items requested for the month of September are:

- Peanut Butter & Jelly
- Mac & Cheese
- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Individual snack bags

The Pantry accepts the donations on Thursdays, from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.

The Oxcart Pantry provides food assistance to families and individuals who reside in North Olmsted and are experiencing need. As a long-time member of the community, it would be a welcome service for Olmsted UU members to help out by donating the requested food items as you are able.

If you are in need of food assistance and a resident of North Olmsted, the Pantry can help. Services are by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 am to 4 pm and Wednesday 8:30 am to 6 pm. Call 440-716-4165.

The Pantry is located at: 26272 Butternut Ridge Road, North Olmsted OH 44070



Church News

LISTENING TO MARGINALIZED WRITERS - SEPTEMBER

***Blind Man's Bluff* by James Tate Hill** **Tuesday, September 28, 1-2:30 pm**

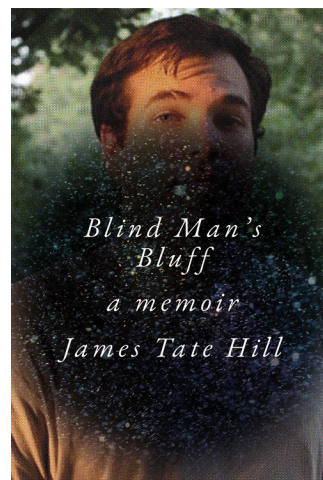
At age sixteen, James Tate Hill was diagnosed with Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy, a condition that left him legally blind. When high-school friends stopped calling and a disability counselor advised him to aim for C's in his classes, he tried to escape the stigma by pretending he could still see.

In this unfailingly candid yet humorous memoir, Hill discloses the tricks he employed to pass for sighted, from displaying shelves of paperbacks he read on tape to arriving early on first dates so women would have to find him. He risked his life every time he crossed a street, doing his best to listen for approaching cars. A good memory and pop culture obsessions like Tom Cruise, Prince, and all things 1980s allowed him to steer conversations toward common experiences.

For fifteen years, Hill hid his blindness from friends, colleagues, and lovers, even convincing himself

that if he stared long enough, his blurry peripheral vision would bring the world into focus. At thirty, faced with a stalled writing career, a crumbling marriage, and a growing fear of leaving his apartment, he began to wonder if there was a better way.

JT Hill will join us on Zoom at 1:30.



4 EASY WAYS TO DONATE TO OUUC

- 1) Mail or drop off a check or money order
- 2) Zelle using your online bank's "send, pay, or transfer".
--Automatic payments can be set up
--Send payments to office@olmsteduu.org - for FREE!
- 3) www.Givelify.com to send to office@olmsteduu.org
--This costs the church 2.9%

- 4) www.PayPal.com to send to office@olmsteduu.org
--Automatic payments can be set up
--This costs the church 2.9%

Use AmazonSmile when you shop online

It's so easy. Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-0922799> to go directly to OUUC's unique charity list with the Amazon Smile program. Shop as you normally would and Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase to our congregation.



What's Happening

Adult Programs

Masks or face shields must be worn by everyone while in the building and when outside, to inform others present of their vaccination status. In-person meetings are noted below; all other meetings are via Zoom. Zoom links are included in the weekly e-Bellsound.

Sundays

Meditation with Mudras. No meeting in Sept.

Tuesdays

Poetry Group: September 7, 7-8 pm. Bring a poem (or two or three) to share. Or come to listen. All are welcome.

Pagan Studies: September 14, 21, 28, 7 pm, in person. Exploring Earth-Centered spirituality, taking turns teaching and learning. Email paganstudiesgroup@gmail.com for information.

Listening to Marginalized Writers Book Group: September 28, 1-2:30 pm - See page 4 for info.

Care-Givers Support Group: September 28, 4 pm. Monthly drop-in support group for those caring for a loved one. All are welcome.

Wednesdays

Democracy Deep Dive canceled for September.

TED Talk Back: September 8, 7 pm. Do you love the Sunday TED Talk? Join us to delve deeper into the subject.

Cultivating Resilience: UU Kendal Gathering. September 15, 4-5p.m. How are you weathering the continuing political attacks on democracy and the manipulation of mass anxiety? We'll share strategies for cultivating resilience: emotionally, physically, and spiritually. And we'll explore actual good news from around the city, the country, and the world, to remind us that life is vibrant and adaptable. And so are we. All welcome.

Thursdays

Thursday Morning Meditation - NEW TIME 10:30-11:30 am: September 9, 16, 23, 30 (no

meeting Sep 2). Reflecting on Pema Chodron's book, *Welcoming the Unwelcome*, chapter 1, "Start with a Broken Heart" (Sep 9 & 16) and chapter 2, "Does It Matter" (Sept 23 & 30). All are welcome. Led by Rev. Mary.

Dream Group: No September meeting. Next meeting October 7, 2-3:30 pm. Stay tuned for in-person/Zoom info.

WISE Women: September 16, 2-3:30 pm on Zoom and at Olmsted UU. We welcome new and returning WISE Women to a ceremony and celebration exploring our emerging dreams and needs, which will shape our monthly meetings in this new year. All are welcome!

Saturdays

Getting the Word Out: Saturday, September 11, 10-11:30 am at Oberlin UU and on Zoom. After WHY comes HOW: Learning the 7 functions of marketing. Contact office@olmsteduu.org to register. \$25 per person. All are welcome.

Committees & Teams

Sunday Services / Worship Teams meet twice in September on Wednesday, September 8, 5:30-7 pm and Wednesday, September 22, 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome!

Board of Trustees, Sunday, September 19, 9:30 am. In person and via Zoom. Bring your own coffee or breakfast. All are welcome.

OUUC & OUUF Adult Program Teams, Thursday, September 16, 3:45-5 pm. Meeting together on Zoom and at Olmsted UU. All welcome!

Oberlin Programs

Men's Group: Mondays, September 13, 20, 27 at 7 pm. Contact Don for information at donleake087@gmail.com.

What Would Jesus Do? Wednesday, September 22, 7 pm. This covenant group focuses on returning to the heart of Jesus consciousness and Christian renewal within Unitarian Universalism.



September Calendar

Wednesday, September 1

6:30 Alcoholics Anonymous (in person)

Sunday, September 5

11:00 TED Talk: Happy Secret to Better Work

Tuesday, September 7

6:30 The Mankind Project (in person)

7:00 Poetry Group

Wednesday, September 8

5:30 OUUC & OUUF Worship Teams

6:30 Alcoholics Anonymous (in person)

7:00 TED Talk-Back

Thursday, September 9

10:30 Thursday Meditation

Friday, September 10

5:00 Wedding Rehearsal

Saturday, September 11

10:00 Getting the Word Out

12:00 Wedding

Sunday, September 12

11:00 Sunday Service: Going with the Flow

Monday, September 13

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Group

Tuesday, September 14

7:00 Pagan Studies Group (in person)

Wednesday, September 15

4:00 UU at Kendal: Cultivating Resilience

6:30 Alcoholics Anonymous (in person)

Thursday, September 16

10:30 Thursday Meditation

2:00 WISE Women

3:45 OUUC & OUUF Adult Program Teams

Sunday, September 19

9:30 Board of Trustees (in person & Zoom)

11:00 Sunday Service: Possibility of Atonement

Monday, September 20

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Group

Tuesday, September 21

6:30 The Mankind Project (in person)

7:00 Pagan Studies Group (in person)

Wednesday, September 22

6:30 OUUC & OUUF Worship Teams

6:30 Alcoholics Anonymous (in person)

7:00 What Would Jesus Do?

Thursday, September 23

10:30 Thursday Meditation

Sunday, September 26

11:00 Sunday Service: Where Are We Going?

12:00 Congregational Meeting

Monday, September 27

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Group

Tuesday, September 28

1:00 Listening to Marginalized Writers

4:00 Care-Givers Support Group

7:00 Pagan Studies Group (in person)

Wednesday, September 29

6:30 Alcoholics Anonymous (in person)

Thursday, September 30

10:30 Thursday Meditation

Unless otherwise noted, all services, meetings and programs take place using Zoom.

Deadline for the October issue of 'The Bellringer' is Monday, September 27.

OLMSTED UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

5050 Porter Road, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

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Director of Religious Exploration: Caitlin Chapman (on summer leave) - caitlin.c.chapman@gmail.com

Office Manager: Cathy Ross - office@olmsteduu.org

Board

Evelyn Sobczak - President Brian Warren - Vice President Emily Williams - Past President

Jen Biermann, Jim Carney & Linda Rich - Trustees