



Bellringer

February 2022

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



FEBRUARY'S THEME: WIDENING THE CIRCLE

February 6: TED Talk - What You Discover When You Really Listen. "Every conversation has the potential to open up and reveal all the layers and layers within it, all those rooms within rooms," says podcaster and musician Hrishikesh Hirway. In this profoundly moving talk, he offers a guide to deep conversations and explores what you learn when you stop to listen closely. Hrishikesh Hirway is the host, creator and executive producer of Song Exploder, a podcast and Netflix series about the creative process of songwriting.

February 13: God Is No Noun. Atheist, Agnostic, Mystic, or Theist - We'll share our yearnings and direct experiences of the mystery-harmony-oneness we call God. Service led by Ann Cook-Frantz and Rev. Mary.

We'll share an update from Neighborhood Alliance / Haven Center Homeless Shelter, Oberlin's Cause of the Month for February.

February 20: Forgiveness is not condoning harmful behavior. Forgiveness is a practice for healing our relationship with our past. Zellda Zelley and Rev. Mary reflect on the spiritual practice of forgiving ourselves and each other.

February 27: 2nd Half of Life. We'll Zoom today with the Ashland and Cortland UU congregations, as their minister, Rev. Darcey Laine, & Rev. Mary explore finding meaning in the second half of life, and challenge us and our UU tradition to evolve, welcome and support the gifts of aging as awakening.

Zoomers, 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.

DUE TO THE OMICRON COVID VARIANT, OLMSTED UU SUNDAY SERVICES WILL TEMPORARILY BE OFFERED ONLY ON ZOOM. This also means that our Religious Exploration for children will be offered via Zoom at 10:30 so parents can attend the service at 11 am. Small groups may continue to meet in person, if they are vaccinated and all agree.

We will continue to monitor developments, hoping that this wave will pass soon and we can return to dual-platform services before long.



MARY'S MUSINGS: WIDENING THE CIRCLE



The Soul Matters theme for February is Widening the Circle. Traditionally, February is Black history month. To widen our circle of members and friends, our national UU movement proposes an 8th principle, committing ourselves to racial justice in our movement and congregations, and in our work for justice in the community around us.

Our congregations are diverse in spirituality, class, where you grew up, education level. Yet we've attracted few people of color.

How do we become more welcoming to racial diversity?

Adding a new principle isn't a magic spell. It won't create change by itself. To help dismantle white supremacy, we need the 8th principle to symbolize our living commitment:

- to stay aware of racism all around and within us,
- to interrupt and stop racism,
- to hold one another accountable, with grace and kindness

How do we do this?

For people of color, awareness of the reality of racism isn't optional.

For white people, not seeing racism is the ultimate privilege.

White people have to be intentional allies for racial justice.

Why is this so hard? Dismantling white supremacy requires interrupting the deep cultural norm to hide vulnerability at all costs, to put on a happy face, appearing to have it all together, and to help each other appear invulnerable. To interrupt racism, we have to go deeper with each other, becoming skillful in being present with deeper experiences, listening from the heart.

We can't overcome deep and continuing cultural conditioning all at once.

The good news is that we are all born with the potential super-power of the beautiful Heart.

My hope, prayer, and intention is to grow my heart. And to support you and our communities in deepening our compassion and awareness, so we can be trustworthy, welcoming congregations working for racial justice, for Love.

I'm excited to support Zellda Zelley in our Listening workshops, starting next month. The skills we'll learn and practice in these workshops will help us be present with one another in our vulnerability, in our beautiful hearts. Widening the circle, becoming trustworthy allies, evolving together.

Rev. Mary



Church News

OLMSTED UU IS ON THE MOVE!

There's lots happening at OUUC despite the challenges of the pandemic, and we want to share what's going on.

Getting the Word Out. Jen Biermann, Pat Krovonak, and Emily Williams attended a marketing workshop last fall that generated an Olmsted UU marketing team with Pat at the helm. The team is focused, energized, and determined to "get the word out" about our congregation and all it has to offer. Step one was making maximum use of our front sign. Check out our rotating messages designed to attract attention and invite people to visit us - in person or virtually. Step two is updating our electronic systems so newcomers can reach us easily. This is being done thanks to a generous anonymous donation. After our electronic communications are modernized and reliable, the team will be working to update our website so visitors can easily learn about our congregation and join our programs. The

marketing team is planning a presentation to introduce what they've been doing so far and their plans for the future. Date and time will be announced soon.

Olmsted UU Board Retreat. The Board of Trustees scheduled two retreats, one in January and a second on February 5. The Board is in the process of redefining its purpose so that it sets policies for guidance rather than focusing on operational issues. A statement of purpose is being developed along with policies about gifts, staff impartiality, building use, security of IT systems, and transparency of minutes and financial reports.

2022 Annual Pledge Drive. A budget for FY23 is being developed and plans for our annual Pledge Drive are underway. We'll be announcing those plans in the near future for both the drive and how you can support our exciting plans for Olmsted UU's future.

COMING IN MARCH! EFFECTIVE LISTENING WORKSHOPS

Have you ever left a meeting asking yourself, "What did we accomplish?" or saying, "What a waste of time!"? Have you ever left a conversation thinking that you knew what the other person needed and then found out that you were mistaken? Have you thought that you had a problem solved only to have it resurface?

Missed communication often happens when good listening skills are not used. It's important that we, as a community, pay attention to how we communicate with each other—one on one, in meetings, in problem-solving groups and in important conversations.

In March we will begin a series of workshops on effective listening. The first, ***Listening with Compassion*** will be held at Olmsted UU on **Saturday, March 26th, 2022 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm**. It will be led by Zellda Zellely who has facilitated workshops for managers and executives in Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Canada, South America, Asia the UK and Europe. If you want to improve your listening skills this workshop is for you.

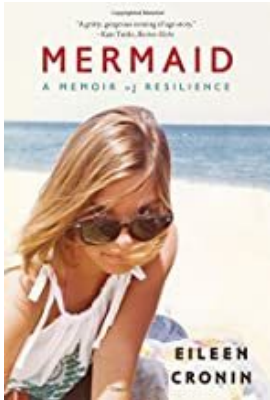
Follow-up workshops will include *Making Agreements*, *Following up on Broken Agreements* and *Giving Feedback*.

More information about registering for the workshop will be announced soon.



Church News

MEET THE AUTHOR - EILEEN CRONIN - FEBRUARY 22



The Listening to Marginalized Writers Book Group will be visited by Eileen Cronin on February 22 to discuss her book, *Mermaid: A Memoir of Resilience*, one of Oprah's Best Memoirs of 2014.

Join us at 1pm on zoom, Tuesday, February 22:

About the book:

A gorgeously crafted memoir about resilience, family, and forging your own way, by a woman born without legs.

At the age of three, Eileen Cronin first realized that only she did not have legs. Her boisterous Catholic family accepted her situation as "God's will," treating her no differently than her ten siblings, as she "squiddled" through their 1960s Cincinnati home. But starting school, even wearing prosthetics, Cronin had to brave bullying and embarrassing questions. Thanks to her older

brother's coaching, she handled a classmate's playground taunts with a smack from her lunchbox. As a teen, thrilled when boys asked her out, she was confused about what sexuality meant for her. She felt most comfortable and happiest relaxing and skinny dipping with her girlfriends, imagining herself "an elusive mermaid." The cause of her disability remained taboo, however, even as she looked toward the future and the possibility of her own family.

In later years, as her mother battled mental illness and denied having taken the drug thalidomide--known to cause birth defects--Cronin felt apart from her family. After the death of a close brother, she turned to alcohol. Eventually, however, she found the strength to set out on her own, volunteering at hospitals and earning a PhD in clinical psychology.

Reflecting with humor and grace on her youth, search for love, and quest for answers, Cronin spins a shimmering story of self-discovery and transformation.

OX CART PANTRY FEBRUARY FOOD COLLECTION

Oxcart Pantry provides food assistance to families and individuals residing in North Olmsted who are currently experiencing need. To maximize the help they are able to give, they ask for specific items each month. For the month of February, the items the Pantry is requesting are:

Canned Meats/Proteins including:

- Chicken
- Tuna

- Spam
- Ham
- Potted Meats
- Sardines
- Salmon
- Corned Beef Hash

If you are able to donate any of these items, bring them to Coe Hall, and we will deliver them to the Oxcart Pantry at the end of February.



What's Happening

Adult Programs

Sunday Services are Zoom only. Small groups may continue to meet in person if everyone is vaccinated and all agree. Meeting type - whether in person or Zoom only - is noted below. Links for Zoom meetings are included in the weekly e-Bellsound.

Sundays

Meditation with Mudras: February 27, 12:15-12:45 pm (Zoom). Hand positions to welcome intention and affirm harmony of body, mind and spirit. Facilitated by Emily W. All are welcome.

Tuesdays

Poems to Live By, Poems to Wake Us Up: February 1, 7-8 pm (Zoom). Bring a poem (or two or three) to share. Or come to listen. All are welcome. Facilitated by Rev. Mary.

Meet the Author: February 22, 1-2:30 pm (Zoom). See page 4 for information.

Wednesdays

Care-Givers Check-In: 2nd & 4th Weds, February 9 & 23, 10-11 am (Zoom). Drop-in for support/conversation, for those caring for a family member or friend. Bring a cup of tea or coffee. Facilitated by Rev. Mary.

UU Gathering at Kendal (Zoom): February 23, 4-5 pm (Zoom). How do we open to and cultivate joy? We'll invite you to recall and share moments of joy, and to explore the fun and powerful practice of "joy-spotting." Facilitated by Rev. Mary

Thursdays

Deepening Circles Meditation: February 3, 10, 17, 24, 10:30-11:30 am (Zoom). A weekly drop-in meditation group, open to all, drawing from many practices - Buddhism, yoga and beyond; practicing four circles of awareness: body, mind, heart, and boundless awareness. We reflect on Pema

Chodron's, *Welcoming the Unwelcome*, Feb 3 & 10, chapter 10, "How You Label It Is How It Appears;" and Feb 17 & 24, chapter 11, "The Practice of Open Awareness." Led by Rev. Mary.

Wisdom Dreams: February 3, 2-3:30 pm (Zoom). Bring a dream (or dream image) to share. Explore together the lessons and meanings, metaphors, wisdom, and humor. All welcome. Facilitated by Rev. Mary.

WISE Women: February 17, 1-2:30 pm (Zoom and in person) - wearing masks if unvaccinated. Welcome to Women-in-Spirit Evolving - a monthly group to listen and support each other and celebrate what is emerging in our lives and our spiritual exploration. This month's theme is Widening the Circle. Facilitated by Lynda Garvin, Betsy Geist, Carol Shultheis, & Zellda Zellely.

Committees & Teams

Board of Trustees, Wednesday, February 9, 6:30 pm (Zoom). All are welcome.

Sunday Services / Worship Teams: Wednesday, February 16, 6:30-8 pm (Zoom) to reflect on past services and plan upcoming services. Facilitated by Rev. Mary. All are welcome!

OUUC & OUUF Adult Program Teams, Thursday, February 17, 4-5:15 pm (Zoom). To assess past programs and plan up-coming programs. Facilitated by Rev. Mary,

Oberlin Programs

Men's Group: Mondays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 at 7 pm (Zoom & in person). Contact Don for information at donleake087@gmail.com.

What Would Jesus Do? Wednesday, February 23, 7 pm (Zoom). This covenant group focuses on returning to the heart of Jesus consciousness and Christian renewal within Unitarian Universalism.



February Calendar

Sunday Services and are offered on Zoom. Meeting method - whether in person or Zoom only - is noted below. Links for Zoom meetings are included in the weekly e-Bellsound.

Tuesday, February 1

7:00 UU Poetry Group (Zoom)

Thursday, February 3

10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (Zoom)
2:00 Wisdom Dreams (Zoom)

Sunday, February 6

10:30 Religious Exploration (IZoom)
11:00 TED Talk: What You Discover When You Really Listen (Zoom)

Monday, February 7

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(In person & Zoom)

Wednesday, February 9

10:00 Care-Givers Check-In (Zoom)
6:30 OUUC Board Meeting (Zoom)

Thursday, February 10

10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (Zoom)

Sunday, February 13

10:30 Religious Exploration (IZoom)
11:00 Sunday Service: God Is No Noun (Zoom)

Monday, February 14

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(In person & Zoom)

Wednesday, February 16

6:30 OUUC & OUUF Worship Teams (Zoom)

Thursday, February 17

10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (Zoom)
1:00 WISE Women (In-person & Zoom)
4:00 OUUC & OUUF Adult Program Teams (Zoom)

Sunday, February 20

10:30 Religious Exploration (IZoom)
11:00 Sunday Service: Forgiveness (Zoom)

Monday, February 21

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Group
(In person & Zoom)

Tuesday, February 22

1:00 Meet the Author (Zoom)

Wednesday, February 23

10:00 Care-Givers Check-In (Zoom)
4:00 UU at Kendal (Zoom)
7:00 What Would Jesus Do? (Zoom)

Thursday, February 24

10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (Zoom)

Saturday, February 26

1:00 Effective Listening Workshop

Sunday, February 27

10:30 Religious Exploration (IZoom)
11:00 Sunday Service: 2nd Half of Life (Zoom)
12:15 Meditation with Mudras (Zoom)

Monday, February 28

7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(In person & Zoom)

Deadline for the March issue of the Bellringer is Monday, February 21.

OLMSTED UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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