



Bellringer

December 2023

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



DECEMBER'S THEME: THE GIFT OF MYSTERY

December 3: TED Talk - The God Paradox. "If you think you understand GOD, that isn't GOD!" We will watch and discuss a video about the mysticisms of antiquity.

Brian C. Muraresku is the author of "The Immortality Key: the Secret History of the Religion with No Name", a look into the origins of the world's great spiritual practices and what those might mean for how we view ourselves and the world around us.

Karen Armstrong is a British author and commentator of comparative religion. Her work focuses on commonalities of the major religions, such as the importance of compassion and the Golden Rule.
Service leader: Brian Warren

December 10: Let There Be Light – Bang!

Creationism vs Evolution. Our long-time member, Jane Semple, came out of the kitchen long enough to share her interest in metaphysics. She will reconcile some of the writings of the first 5 books of the Old Testament (Creationism) with Evolution. Let There Be Light – Bang.

December 17: Embracing the Mystery of Darkness.

As we approach winter solstice, darkest day of the year, we open ourselves to inner wisdom, the light in the darkness, the inner voice; letting go and preparing for a new cycle, yet to be born in us and around us. Service led by Rev. Mary

Before the service, join us for the next Growing OUUC brainstorm and planning meeting in the minister's office, 9:15-10:30 a.m.

After the service we will join together for a potluck lunch. Please bring something to share.

December 24, 11 am: Christmas Brunch. We'll celebrate the season with a delicious brunch prepared by Jane Semple.

December 24, 5 pm: Evolving Mystery of Christmas, Christmas Eve Service and Celebration at Olmsted UU Congregation. Sharing songs and stories, new and old, celebrating the gifts of new life and new light. Service led by Marianna Carney, Katie Cross, Lara Lillibridge, Jessica Watts and Rev. Mary.

December 31: An End-of-Year Retrospective.

Sharing lessons learned during the past year. Our discussion will be led by Brian Warren. (Please, no politics.)



REV. MARY'S MUSINGS: The Gift of Mystery



As I age, I am drawn to the mysterious beauty of the fallen leaves.

I remember their first appearance as chartreuse, pale green; maturing to emerald; growing into sedate, dependable green. Watching their transformation is watching my own (and those around me). Watching their unfettered surrender to the dimming of the light.

to bare branches and the dimming of the light
To slow down and watch the mystery.
To let go and breathe the mystery.
Celebrating all the shades, stages, perspectives.
Choosing to practice and bless letting it all go.
Can we allow ourselves to be nonresistant to life's changes?
Participating fully; letting it all go:
Learnings and lessons become soil
for potential new cycles becoming.
Feeding life in its mysterious forms.
Trembling and trusting the Mystery:
Deep within us. Here, between us. All around us.

In Fellowship & Mystery,
Rev. Mary

I feel a mysterious pull:
To trust and join them as they give way

AKRON UU OFFERS JUBILEE III ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

The UU Church of Akron is hosting a Jubilee session with Paula Cole Jones and colleagues on MLK weekend, January 12-14, 2024.

As UU's we are called to lead the way to a better, more equitable world. With books being banned in Ohio and legislation being proposed to prevent "divisive concepts" from being taught in our schools, we have our work cut out for us.

To do that work we must have a deep understanding of how race, discrimination and ethnicity play out in our institutions, congregations and our

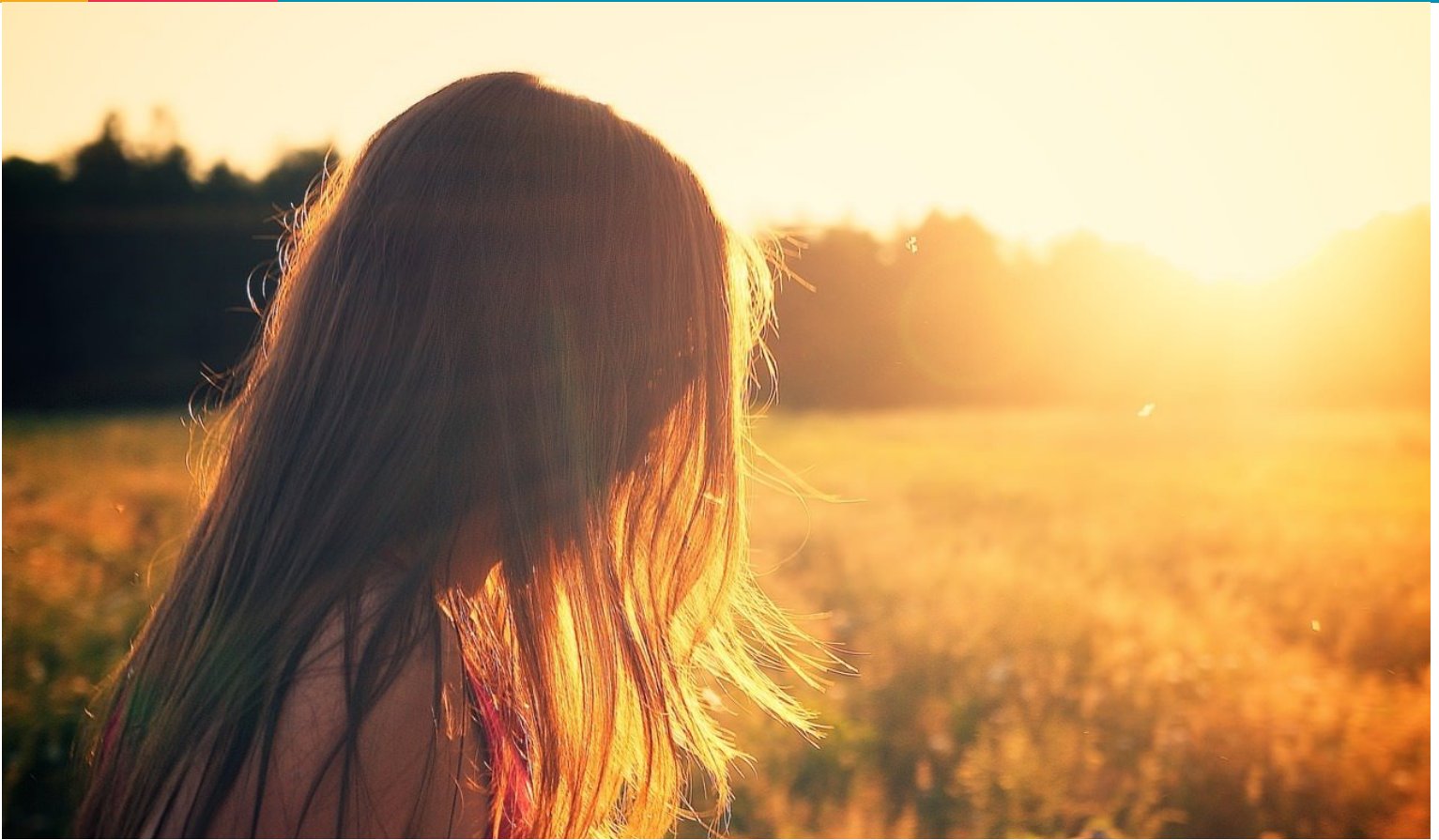
daily lives. Jubilee training provides context for such understanding.

The weekend intensive training includes presentations, discussions, videos, exercises, and small group work. This session is limited to 70 people and Akron UU is hoping our congregation is among them.

For more information and to register, go to <https://pcolejones.wufoo.com/forms/zaeawna1mvqd8c/>



Religious Education



OUR RE THEME FOR DECEMBER IS MYSTERY

December 3: We'll be delving into the impact of mystery and wonder in our lives. We'll read the story, "Another World", encouraging us to slow down and experience life, and then learn the story of "The Snowflake Man", who dedicated his life to exploring the mystery of snowflakes. We'll finish with asking and thinking about some of the "Big Questions". Marianna Carney and Sheryl Chow will lead.

December 10: Today we'll be reading "American Christmasism"

and looking at what Christmas means to us and those around us. Is it about peace, love and giving? Or do we witness stress and high expectations? Led by Emily Williams and Sheryl Chow

December 17: We'll be getting ready to welcome the return of longer days and "help shine the light" with "gifts of hope that all creatures have enough to eat." The Story for All Ages is "Winter, a Solstice Story". Led by Marianna Carney and Sheryl Chow.

December 17: Please bring a dish to share and join us for a Winter Solstice Potluck lunch at 12:15, followed by a bonfire (weather permitting) and drumming circle.

December 24, 11 am. Christmas brunch. No RE.

December 24, 5 pm. Christmas Eve service. "The Evolving Mystery of Christmas".

December 31. No RE.



FINAL VERSION OF ARTICLE II REVISION AVAILABLE

The following announcement is from an email sent by the Central East Region.

The final draft of the Article II revision is now available as is an updated version of the flower graphic. To read the final text, go to:
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii?vgoe=GmiKVE%2B0bpXtMFiBkTITThUSExWTbkFxTCTJoYGioUA4FnJ1%3A9MrceQwe6LnCDvQL3m2%2Frc6KlovSwzu>

Next steps:

- Read this new version. Absorb it. See how it resonates with you.
- You may want to amend it. If so:
- We have created a submission form:
<https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/proposed-amendment-to-article-ii/>
 Please remember:
 - All amendments need to be endorsed by at least 15 certified congregations (including the proposing congregation).
 - Endorsement is by an action of the governing board or a vote of the congregation.

- The deadline for submitting an amendment is 11:59 p.m. Eastern on February 1, 2024.
- Specific details for submitting amendments are described in the form. All qualified amendments will be considered at General Assembly 2024. Article II amendments require a 3/4 approval vote to be incorporated. Once any amendments have been resolved, a 2/3 approval vote is required to adopt a new version of Article II.

Thank you for your engagement in this process. This is one of the ways that Unitarian Universalism is alive in this world.



GROWING OUUC BRAINSTORM & PLANNING MEETING

Join us for a conversation/brainstorm on growth: getting the word out to the greater community about who we are and what we have to offer, so people can recognize what

they're looking for and know they're welcome. We're meeting in the minister's office on **Sunday, December 17 at 9:15 am.**



Programs/Meetings

Adult Programs

Meeting type - whether in person, Zoom only, or both - is noted below. Active links for Zoom meetings are published in the weekly e-Bellsound.

Tuesdays

December 12, 2-3 p.m. in the Fitness Center at Kendal (in person). All are welcome. A new monthly program to cultivate resilience. In this time of deepening darkness, high holiday expectation, and political reactivity, we need songs, stories and poems that lift our spirits and open our hearts, so we may be fully present in our lives. Bring a poem/song/story to share. Or come to listen. Facilitated by Rev. Mary

UU Resilience Conversations. Monthly in-person conversation at Kendal is on vacation in December, returning **Tuesday, January 23, 2-3 p.m.** (4th Tuesdays).

UUSOS Discussion Zoom (Update yoUr Spiritual Operating System): **December 19, 7-8 p.m.** Exploring themes and questions from the December 10th service - Late to the Manger: Why Christianity created the Christmas story - looking through the lens of non-dual spirituality.

Wednesdays

Pastoral Counseling / Check-In: December 6 & 20, 11-12 noon; note change in times. Phone in: 216-402-3438. Or email Rev. Mary for an appointment at a different time - mary@marygrigolia.com). All are welcome.

Monthly UU Poetry Group Zoom: NOTE NEW DATE (2nd Wed.) December 13, 2-3 pm (Zoom). Poems to Live By, Poems to Wake Us Up: December's theme is the Gift of Mystery. Bring a poem or two or three reflecting Mystery to you. Or another poem that speaks to your heart or our times. Come to listen. All are welcome.

Thursdays

Deepening Circles Meditation (DCM): Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 am (Zoom). Reading Pema Chodron's,

When Things Fall Apart - December 7 (chap 18, Secret Oral Instructions); December 14 (chap 19, Methods for Working with Chaos); December 21 (chap 20, The Trick of Choicelessness). Led by Rev. Mary. NOTE: We are not meeting on December 28

Wisdom Dreams: December 7, 1:30-2:30 pm (Zoom). Bring a dream (or dream image) to share. Explore the messages, meanings and metaphors, wisdom and humor of dreams. All are welcome.

WISE Women Women-in-Spirit-Evolving: December 21, in-person and on Zoom, 1:00-2:30 pm. Listen, share, support and celebrate what's emerging in our lives. On the Winter Solstice, we'll delve into The Gift of Mystery. All women are welcome. In-person at Olmsted UU and online:

Committees & Teams

Sunday Services Committee: Tuesday, December 5, 4-5 pm (Zoom) to reflect on past services and plan upcoming services. All are welcome.

Board of Trustees: Wednesday, December 13, 6:30 pm (Zoom). All are welcome.

OUUC & OUUF Adult Program Teams: Thursday, December 21, 4-5 pm (Zoom). Update current programs, envision and plan new ones. All are welcome.

Oberlin Programs

Men's Covenant Group: Mondays, December 4, 11, 18 at 7 pm (not meeting on December 25). In person at Oberlin UU & Zoom. Contact donleake087@gmail.com for information.

What Would Jesus Do? Wednesday, December 27, 7 pm (In person at Oberlin UU & Zoom). This covenant group focuses on returning to the heart of Jesus consciousness and Christian renewal within Unitarian Universalism.



December Calendar

Meeting type - whether in person, Zoom only, or both - is noted below. Active links for Zoom meetings are published in the weekly e-Bellsound.

Sunday, December 3

- 11:00 TED Talk: The God Paradox (*In person*)
- 10:10 Religious Education (*In person*)
- 12:00 Coffee Hour (*In person*)

Monday, December 4

- 7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(*In person at Oberlin UU & Zoom*)

Tuesday, December 5

- 4:00 Sunday Services Committee (*Zoom*)

Wednesday, December 6

- 11:00 Pastoral Counseling/Check-In (*Phone-In*)

Thursday, December 7

- 10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (*Zoom*)
- 1:30 Wisdom Dream (*Zoom*)

Sunday, December 10

- 11:00 Sunday Service: Let There Be Light - Creationism vs. Evolution (*In person*)
- 11:00 Religious Education (*In person*)
- 12:00 Coffee Hour (*In person*)

Monday, December 11

- 7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(*In person at Oberlin UU & Zoom*)

Tuesday, December 12

- 2:00 Lift Your Spirit at Kendal (*In person*)

Wednesday, December 13

- 2:00 Poems to Live By (*Zoom*)
- 6:30 Board of Trustees (*Zoom*)

Thursday, December 14

- 10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (*Zoom*)

Sunday, December 17

- 9:15 Growing OUUC Brainstorm
- 11:00 Sunday Service: Embracing the Mystery of Darkness (*In person*)
- 11:00 Religious Education (*In person*)
- 12:00 Potluck Lunch (*In person*)

Monday, December 18

- 7:00 OUUC & OUUF Men's Covenant Group
(*In person at Oberlin UU & Zoom*)

Tuesday, December 19

- 7:00 UUSOS Discussion - Update YoUr Spiritual Operating System (*Zoom*)

Wednesday, December 20

- 11:00 Pastoral Counseling/Check-In (*Phone-In*)

Thursday, December 21

- 10:30 Deepening Circles Meditation (*Zoom*)
- 1:00 WISE Women (*In person at OUUC & Zoom*)
- 4:00 Adult Programs Team (*Zoom*)

Sunday, December 24

- 11:00 Sunday Brunch (*In person*)
- 5:00 Embracing the Mystery of Darkness (*In person*)

Sunday, December 31

- 11:00 An End-of-Year Retrospective (*In person*)
- 12:00 Coffee Hour (*In person*)

Deadline for the January issue of the Bellringer is Friday, December 22

OLMSTED UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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