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## August 2023: Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church

*Welcoming Congregation*

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# The Bridge

You are encouraged to join us for 11:00 a.m. church services.

We continue to socially/physically distance, wear face coverings, and wash our hands as necessary.

Please stay health and safe!

**August 6: "When Men Were Gods"** – Jimmy Merritt – The deification of human beings into months of the year.

**August 13: "Giving Thanks for the Wheat Harvest"** – Facilitator Rachel Lapoint

**August 20: "Jesus' Identical Twin?"** – Reverend Brian Clougherty – Elaine Pagels wrote that in the gospel of Thomas, "You and Jesus at a deep level are identical twins...that you are the child of God just as he is." Let's look at ideas about Jesus that his early followers seemed to have.

**August 27: Service on our Seventh Principle – Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are a Part** – Facilitator Ann Malpass



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### Dates to Remember

**Friday, August 4 at 3:00 p.m.:**  
**Memorial Service for Carol Simmons: Life of Temple Israel, Kinston NC**

**August 10: AUW Meeting**

**August 13: Covered-dish lunch and Board Meeting following services.**

**August 26: Game Day 12:00 noon-6:00 p.m. at Ron's Chapel Community Building**

**September 10: Covered-dish lunch and Annual Meeting**

**Get Ready! The Harvest Sale is Approaching Fast! Saturday October 7**



## EXCERPTS FROM "FAITH, HOPE AND...HARRY POTTER"

REVEREND BRIAN CLOUGHERTY

OCTOBER 9, 2022

I like the Lord of the Rings stories because their heroes have the slimmest chance of success and this feels more honest than fairy tales where you know that good will triumph. This story also makes a case that how you fight evil matters. Frodo's respect for the scrap of humanity in Gollum matters; it is key to the triumph of good.

The story also makes a case that little people and little things matter. The hobbits are insignificant in a world of wizards, elves, kings and monsters. Their insignificance is how the evil lord fails to find them. And a miserable, twisted person like Gollum matters. He deserves respect and fairness, despite his evil intent and his twisted personality.

The story shows the humanity in a person, despite their being twisted by evil. I like that this story paints a person who is twisted by evil as still a person, still having a sliver of humanity, still deserving respect, still desperately needing respect. That is key. The more you find a person distasteful, the more you need to see and respect the person underneath all the ugly behavior. It is there. Act like it is there even when you cannot see it. Otherwise, you are caught by the same negative energy that you hate in them.

But life does not always have happy endings.

Sometimes evil triumphs, even out of good intentions. Evil, however, cannot endure forever because evil is not a thing. Evil is a lack of something. Evil is an emptiness. It is an emptiness that lures us to destroy connectedness. Evil kills the soul by destroying our capacity to love and care for each other. Evil can lure us to destroy the fullness of life.

Evil can destroy everything but love. And even if evil destroys everything, love will emerge anew and create life and beauty and joy again. Evil cannot create; it can only destroy. Only love can create. Evil uses power to control and destroy. Love does not control; love invites. Love, that is, selfless love, does not coerce. Love is vulnerable. It is ever open and inviting to join with it to create beauty and joy.

Because only love can create, only love can rise from the ashes that evil leaves behind. Selfless love, generous, nurturing love that sees the other and celebrates their growth and flowering.

There is the saying "Hope springs eternal." Well, I offer a similar saying: "Love springs eternal" because no matter what evil may do, love will eventually reemerge and bring forth life, nurture life and offer life the chance to build more love.

This is my faith, in the face of evil, that "Love springs eternal."