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## October 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.

No Sunday School programs and no childcare.

The playroom is clean and open for parents who wish to use it.

**October 1:** "The Uniqueness of October" – Jimmy Merritt

**October 8:** "A New Mission for Universalism" – Reverend Justin Lapoint

**October 15:** "What the Blind Boy Sees" – Reverend Brian Clougherty – Jacques Lusseyran became blind after an accident at 8 years old. But he found another way of seeing. At age 17, he became the leader of a French Resistance squad of boys during WWII, was betrayed and was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp. Yet an "inner light" guided him through all this. Let's look at this "inner light".

**October 22:** "Music Feeds the Soul" – Michael Stephenson and Jimmy Merritt share their musical journey and their music.

**October 29:** "Ordinary People Doing Exceptional Things" – A Sharing Service – Facilitator: Lisa Stolar



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#### Dates to Remember

**It's Time! Harvest Sale is set for Saturday, October 7. Sale begins at 3:00 pm; Supper is at 6:00 pm**



**October 8: Board Meeting Following Services and Lunch**

**October 19: A UW Meeting at Church at 1:00 p.m. Meet at the Church at 11:45 a.m. for Lunch at Johnny's Seafood.**

**October 28: Annual Meeting of the Universalist Convention of NC, Inc. 11:00 a.m.: Temple Israel, Kinston, NC**

## **“FINDING JOY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES”**

**BY: STEPHANIE MIHALAS, PH.D, ABPP**

Now more than ever, finding joy in your day-to-day experiences can improve your quality of life and enhance and protect your mental health. As many of us are mired in intense and heavy information from the news and social media, financial instability, and political and civil unrest, it's become more and more difficult to find peace – both internally and externally. How can we, both individually and as a collective, “spark joy” to lift our own and each other's spirits to get through difficult times?

***LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC.*** It can help you recall positive memories, providing an escape from the day-to-day difficulties you may be facing. Recalling these memories by listening to music is an easy and passive way to boost your mood while you're working, cleaning or just hanging out at home. Research has shown that listening to your favorite jams can reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality and enhance mood, too.

***DEVELOP A DAILY GRATITUDE PRACTICE.*** It doesn't have to be a big ordeal; just think of one to three simple statements a day such as, “I am grateful for the sun that rises each morning that I feel on my skin”. At the end of each day, write in a journal or say aloud the things you are grateful for, as simple as they may be. By doing this, even during the most difficult or distressing times, your gratitude practice will help bring your circumstances into perspective, indirectly create joy and keep you grounded.

***SPEND TIME IN A VISION PRACTICE.*** Close your eyes and focus on your very favorite place, person, mantra, prayer or even vacation. Breathe into the moment and envision yourself in this space or situation. Consider the colors, tastes, textures and conversations. Try to spend a dedicated five minutes soaking in the moment, slowing down your breathing and relaxing your body. Meditating regularly in this way can help remind you that aspects of whatever difficult situation you're dealing with are temporary.

***FIND THE “AWE” MOMENT EVERY DAY.*** “Awe” is the concept of experiencing wonder and amazement. Researchers are finding that if we take the time to notice small, pleasurable moments every day, we can reap benefits. Take the time to notice things around you that you may have taken for granted. By relishing them and their place in the world (and yours), you can derive more meaning from your life, feel more connected to the world at large, and experience more joy in the day to day.

***TIPS FOR HELPING OTHERS EXPERIENCE JOY:*** Sending letters, poems or drawings to first responders, essential workers or elderly people on their own. You are bringing a sense of comfort and joy to others and yourself. Start collecting change or small amounts of money every day with the intention of donating it to a charity of your choice. Let the charity know the reason and meaning behind the donation. When we voice our positivity instead of keeping it inside, we can further our joy. Run an errand for a friend or order food for them. Helping others can be a big stress reducer right now.

***“LET YOUR JOY BE IN YOUR JOURNEY – NOT IN SOME DISTANT GOAL” – TIM COOK***