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## August 2026: 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.

#### August 2: "Where Have All the Folk Songs Gone? Long time

Passing" – Jimmy Merritt – Folk songs can signal a sense of nostalgia, cultural loss and the cyclical nature of history.

Decades have passed since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century folk revival and we are living witnesses to traditions that fade or transform over generations. This all too brief discussion will address this and oh, a few select folk songs also. Guest musician will be Michael Stephenson with sax and flute.

#### August 9: "Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the

Afterlife" – With Ann Malpass – This service is based on the book with the above title written by Dr. Eben Alexander, written after his near-death experience.

#### August 16: "Incarnations of Selfless Divinity, Part 2" – Reverend

Brian Clougherty – Last month I compared Paul Farmer to Jesus in the western world. That's about as much 'incarnation' as our culture will tolerate. India and the eastern world are not as limited. Let's look at Amanadamayi Ma, a woman that much of India considered a saint and even an incarnation of Divinity.

**August 23: "Little Boy Washes His Dog" – with Linda Jones –** This reading was recently used and asks questions about simplicity, reverence and service. Congregation participation is a requirement!

**August 30: "Nothing is Wasted" – Reverend Chuck Yancey –** Redemption is a common part of Christian theology. This sermon will be a Universalist reading of redemption that includes the small and overlooked.



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#### Dates to Remember

**August 9: Covered-dish lunch and Board meeting following services.**

**August 13: 1:00 p.m. AUW meeting. Meet at the church at 11:45 a.m. to go to the new Johnny's Seafood for lunch.**

**September 13: Annual meeting**

**October 3: Harvest Sale**



Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church, 4408 N NC Highway 111, Seven Springs, NC 28578, [www.outlawsbridgechurch.org](http://www.outlawsbridgechurch.org) [outlawsbridge@att.net](mailto:outlawsbridge@att.net).

A Green Sanctuary, A Welcoming Congregation, Affiliated with the Universalist Convention of North Carolina, Inc. (UCONCI), The Universalist Convocations, The Southeast District of the UUA, and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

## EXCERPTS FROM “INCARNATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF SELFLESS LOVE”

REVEREND BRIAN CLOUGHERTY

Last month, I said that if Jesus were reincarnated, he would act like Paul Farmer, because Farmer was an impressively selfless person, dedicated to relieving the suffering of the poor. Farmer’s aim was not to eliminate poverty; his aim was to restore dignity and health to the poor. His guiding light was when Jesus said in Matthew 25 “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” His empathy and compassion were phenomenal. But Farmer was not a Superman, not a God incarnate, at least not more than every other human being – not more than you and me. Since I believe the same about Jesus, I am comfortable comparing Farmer with Jesus. My Jesus is a human Jesus. Trinitarian dogma holds that Jesus was truly human as well as truly divine. This dual nature makes Jesus different from us ordinary humans, no matter how truly human he is. Comparing Jesus and Farmer helps me imagine Jesus as a human being. I like my human Jesus because he is understandable. I can empathize with a human Jesus. I can imagine conversing with my human Jesus. Farmer helps me see what Jesus might be like in our time. Totally dedicated to serving the disadvantaged, Farmer was very intense, incredibly smart and very compassionate. Farmer expected the best from those who worked with him but was compassionate and forgiving when they fell short. He was as forgiving as my ideal Universalist would be.

However, while Farmer accepted people unconditionally, he was critical of any thinking that disparaged the poor. On the other hand, if you were helpful or defensive of the poor, you were in his circle. Farmer had human passions, and this helps me imagine Jesus with human passions. A human Jesus means Jesus struggled with human limitations, as we all do. Farmer said “Look, all the great religious traditions of the world say, ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself’. My answer is I’m sorry, I can’t, but I’m gonna keep on trying...”. I think Jesus struggled like that. Like Farmer, in my opinion, he could not love everyone equally, and like Farmer, he kept on trying.

Here is a list of six qualities in Paul Farmer that I consider like my Jesus:

- \*\*The ability to make you feel that they cared about only you at that moment;
- \*\*Treating people with compassion instead of judgement;
- \*\*Accepting everyone and excluding no one;
- \*\*Total commitment to doing good for others, especially the oppressed;
- \*\*Living life with full intensity;
- \*\*A sense of the interconnectedness of all existence.

I think Jesus would think that we all could qualify for that list, and he would help us qualify.

May you find saints that inspire you.