
December 2020: Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church

Welcoming Congregation

The Bridge

**No Sunday School Programs and no Childcare during Phase 3.
The playroom is clean and open for parents who wish to use it.**

December 6, 2020: "Christmas Music with Jimmy" – If you have a favorite Christmas song that you would like to sing, please contact Jimmy or Ann so they can be certain to have the music.

December 13, 2020: "Believe in the Work of Christmas" – Reverend Claudia Frost – For those who have difficulty seeing beyond the historical inaccuracies of virgin birth and angels on high or imagining a return to life before Corona fears ruled daily life, how will you access this season of love and hope? Is a deficit of awe and wonder preventing you from experiencing the joy and peace of the Christmas season? Truly there is sacred power in the Christmas story when we listen to our hearts and do the work of Christmas in the days ahead.

December 20, 2020: "Feast for the Soul: Love, Hope, Joy and Peace" – Reverend Claudia Frost – This fourth Sunday of Advent we light the candle of Joy. Stories, memories, sights and music live on in the Christmas messages of Love, Hope, Peace and Joy. Christmas comes each year, offering food for our souls in the darkness of winter. It's a spiritual reality that we need to interpret again and again. In place of our traditional Love Feast, during worship we will hold a Love Feast ritual in a safe and socially distanced manner.

December 27, 2020: "What Does It Mean to be Human?" – Dr. Jeff Price – How much are we alike and how much do we differ from our fellow humans and those that came before us.



Dates to Remember

Because of the COVID-19 Virus, formal activities at Outlaw's Bridge are curtailed. We are in Phase 3.0 for reopening activities for ourselves and the state. We are still encouraged to practice "Safer at Home" orders when possible and gather in groups of no more than 10 inside and 50 outside. We are asked to practice social distancing, wash our hands and wear face coverings.

**December 10: 2:00 p.m.
AUW Christmas party and book exchange! Please bring a dish to share and a wrapped book for the exchange.**

**December 17: 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Concert with Michael Mozingo and Jimmy Merritt with our new sound system!**



Claudia's Comments

Advent started early this year (November 29th). This season of light prepares us for a time of “amazement”. As Outlaw’s Bridge former minister Vernon Chandler writes, “prepare to awake spiritually to the miracle of life, the joy of giving and the power of love”. This is also the season of Hope. Every year as December approaches, many of us are filled with anticipation and promise, that this year...maybe *this year*..., our experience will be one of joy, peace and love...like the season appears in our mind’s eye. Hope returns with the season, (even in this time of Pandemic), to remind us that hope is possible...hidden in the moments, if we stop and pay attention. Moments of joy, love, hope and peace can be found even amidst the altered celebrations.

Though we can’t hold our traditional feasts and parties, we can still gather our church community in worship and spend time with family and close friends in gatherings that meet the criteria for COVID safe guidelines. Considering Hope as a foundational part of our holiday celebration, it strikes me that those of you who grew up on farms know the meaning of hope in the cycles of the crops. Every year those who farm the land begin again with a full measure of Hope when they choose to invest it all in planting a new crop. I imagine that knowing the complexity of the situation, they choose to go on, to plant anyway, to love what they do and to be vulnerable with hope, despite the whims of the weather and the markets.

However, we all don’t need to be farmers to understand that Hope is not only evasive and inconsistent, but also persistent and even illusive. This Christmas season, we can choose to be present and awake for the beauty of the spirit of the holiday season in spite of the doom and gloom we often hear about the Pandemic. For some, the holidays can be a time of increased sadness, grief or challenge. All of us who have been touched by suffering know the feelings I’m talking about. 2020 has been full of challenge for all of us. Hope in this season is seeing the complexity and mix of our lives and choosing to live and love anyway...to be hopefully present to life the best we can. My hope for the December holidays is that you will take the time to connect and enjoy your friends and family. Make those phone calls, Skype or Zoom with people you care about. Wear your mask and be present with us in our congregational worship. Our sanctuary has plenty of space for social distancing.

Due to the COVID-19 *Good Health Guidelines*, we will not be hosting our holiday Santa Party or our Love Feast Potluck dinner. Each Sunday in December we will continue to hold worship at 11:00 a.m. I will be leading worship on December 13th and 20th. In place of our evening Love Feast celebration, we have reimagined our Love Feast ritual and Candlelight Hymn as part of the morning worship service on December 20th.

Please note: The Love Feast ritual and Candle Lighting will both be done in a “COVID-Safe” manner. When you enter the sanctuary wearing your mask on Sunday morning December 20th, you will be invited to pick up your personal “Love Feast Worship Kit” before taking your *socially distanced* seat. All materials in the individual kits will be prepared in a “no touch” manner by me while gloved and masked.

Please know that I am available to listen and be with you if you need me during this season and always. Call if you need me, (919) 225-6885 or email cmfwisdom@aol.com.

With Love, Hope & Joy,
Reverend Claudia