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## June 2021: Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church

*Welcoming Congregation*

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### The Bridge

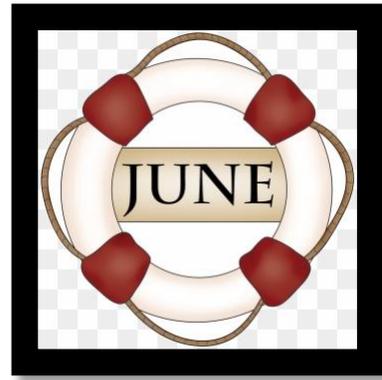
**No Sunday School Programs and no Childcare during Phase 3.  
The playroom is clean and open for parents who wish to use it.**

**June 6, 2021: "Richard's Journey to Unitarian Universalism" – Lay Service with Ann Malpass.**

**June 13, 2021: "Journey of a Lifetime" – Reverend Claudia M. Frost –** Developing spiritual maturity and wisdom is the journey of a lifetime. What do spiritual courage, letting go, living with uncertainty, aging and living wisely have to do with this journey? Learn what you need to explore for further progress in your spiritual maturity and wisdom.

**June 20, 2021: "Mater: Pater, the Mother of all Gods and a world in need of correction. Learned lessons of early fatherhood" – Jimmy Merritt**

**June 27, 2021: "The Art of Starting Over" – Reverend Claudia M. Frost –** Forgiveness, Repentance, Mulligans and Do Overs all share the need or desire for starting over. How do we pick up the pieces and begin again after something painful or egregious has happened? Forgiveness is not easy...not always possible but necessary for living well. Let's look at the many way starting over can change our lives.



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#### Dates to Remember

**Happy Father's Day to all the great dads. The positive role models and the real men. The world appreciates you.**

**June 10: AUW Meeting at 1:00 p.m. following Dutch-treat lunch at Johnny's Seafood.**

**June 13: Covered-dish lunch following church service. We will be celebrating Justin and Rachel Lapoint's 51<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary. (Covid interfered with their 50<sup>th</sup>.) Board Meeting following lunch.**

## Claudia's Comments

The path toward my retirement (August 31<sup>st</sup>) is only three months away. Our time together is getting shorter and more precious. Even though I've spoken with you often via newsletter columns, private conversations, classes, meetings and sermons over almost twelve years, I'm feeling a sense of urgency to figure out what's most important for my last six summer sermons. It's not like I'll never be able to talk with you again, but due to UU Ministers Association Guidelines, it is expected that I stay away from the congregation for a period of time.

Recently I've been reviewing the sermons I've shared with you since 2009. I'm wondering, "Did I miss anything?" What's missing? What do I know for sure? How can we live happier and better? What have I learned from my own mistakes? In my ministry, I've learned about what we humans long for. We suffer about many of the same things, too. We've fallen into many of the familiar traps or "potholes" of life. Learning to admit our mistakes, improve our relationships and feel more at home in the Universe are all part of living a happier life.

Last month was *Mental Health Awareness* month. I spoke about the toll of the pandemic on our bodies, minds and spirits. It's important to repeat key points of that sermon for those of you who couldn't be with us in worship. Vaccines opened a way forward but we're all still feeling the prolonged effects of the pandemic. Many people still feel exhausted, experience forgetfulness, distraction, low moods, trouble concentrating, procrastination and low productivity.

The early news of the COVID-19 virus activated our stress responses...our autonomic flight, fight or freeze responses...sending our nervous systems into overdrive...a state we haven't completely recovered from. Our mind/body/spirit connections remain disrupted by all that has happened. We're still carrying losses and traumas from the past 15+ months. We've also lost the connections with others that are so important for healing...touch, closeness, hugs, family and friends. Our entire society is stressed, leading to more impulsive, moody or rigid thinking...more irritable, less patient, more frustrated behavior.

Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist, says "people are not truly depressed...just joyless and aimless." He says the symptoms we've been feeling have a name...*languishing*...a sense of stagnation and emptiness. Dr. Grant thinks *languishing* might be the dominant emotion of 2021. *Languishing* is the void between depression and flourishing. He says, "Most people don't have symptoms of mental illness but they're not the picture of mental health either."

It's time to pay attention to how you are feeling in your spirit, mind and body during this time. Part of the danger if you're *languishing* is a gradual dulling of your joy or decrease in your zest or appreciation of life. If you remain unaware, your indifference can lead you to slip slowly toward solitude. As we move toward a post-pandemic reality, it's time to rethink and affirm the connections of mental health and well-being...the important connections of mind, body and spirit. What feeds your spirit? How are you caring for your body? Does music, art or reading calm your mind? What connections with family and friends do you long to renew?

*With Love, Hope & Joy,*

Reverend Claudia