
June 2024: Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church

Welcoming Congregation

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.

June 2: "Songs That I Wished I Had Written, and a Few That I Did"

– Jimmy Merritt

June 9: "I Never Thought of it That Way" – with Ann Malpass

June 16: "The 'I' is an Illusion, Only God is Real" – Reverend Brian Clougherty – Rumi, the Persian mystic and poet, wrote poems to try and share the oneness of all things, because words written in ordinary prose can only express "this" and "that". Rumi and Sufi mysticism try to take us beyond "this" and "that". Let's see if we can make sense of Rumi's poems and teachings.

June 23: "Thoughts of Fathers and Grandfathers" – Lisa Stolar – Actually Daddy and Granddaddies. Also, a sharing service; please bring your memories to share.

June 30: "Hugs...Come and Get One" – with Rodney Sutton



Dates to Remember

June 9: Covered-dish lunch and Board Meeting following services.

June 13: AUW meeting at the church at 1:00 p.m. Meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. for quilting. Leave for lunch at 11:45 a.m. Other quilting days to be announced.



“JUST LIKE A DAD: A FATHER’S DAY ESSAY”: JEREMY MARKOVICH

At some point, my dad decided never to throw out a shirt unless it had holes in it, and even then, maybe it was worth saving, because, c’mon, this was a perfectly good shirt. Later on, he started tucking an ancient Kent State sweatshirt, rendered thinner and less warm after each washing, into his jean shorts. “You can’t wear that,” I’d say horrified. Dad would shrug, acknowledging the fact that he’d heard what I said, but also acknowledging that he didn’t really care. That’s just one of his greatest hits. Another one? We ate breakfast at a place called the Post House one time – *one time* – on the drive to a football game. In the 22 years since, he has mentioned this experience every time we have ever passed this restaurant. This is my Dad: wearer of sweatshirts. Rememberer of breakfasts.

None of this squares with the man I’ve heard about in stories. My dad played basketball in college. He listened to Jethro Tull, which, I assume, was a thing people did. (No other rock band features the flute so prominently, he’d say.) His first date with my mom was a Cheech & Chong show. He proposed to her at a stop sign. Some of their first casual pictures together from their honeymoon in 1976 have the same theme: a touristy Hawaiian backdrop (Diamond Head! Don Ho!). There’s my mom – gorgeous and tan – with long brown hair. And in every photo, there’s my dad – shaggy, with goofy glasses, and shorts too short for Dr. J – standing next to her. He is, as far as I can tell, a suave guy. He’d have to be to land a woman like my mom, because, you know, those shorts.

Sometime between 1976 and my birth four years later, my dad became Dad, and made the transition to jorts. Maybe it happened around the time of his first Father’s Day. So, I asked him. “I don’t really remember it,” he said. I told him I understood. I forget things all the time now, too. Plus, his first Father’s Day was 35 years ago. “I don’t remember what happened 35 minutes ago,” he said, chuckling. He’s such a dad. And now I am, too.

My son, Charlie, was born last July in Charlotte, and he’s grown up quickly, from a slowly wiggling, stare-at-nothing-in-particular infant, into a crawling, squeaking, smiling little guy who does somersaults on the carpet and has blond hair that sticks up in the back like a cockatoo. Before now, Father’s Day was the kind of holiday that I’d only remember when my wife told me to go out and buy my dad a card. I always forgot. I’d usually just call him. Sorry, I’d say. I’m not a card guy. This year I remembered. I’ll go get him a card I told my wife. In March. They don’t release them until at least May, she said. Oh.

This is my initial response to all fatherhood-related lessons. The line on the front of the Pampers turns blue when the diaper’s wet. Oh. You blow in your baby’s face, so he’ll close his eyes and mouth before you dunk him at a swimming lesson. Oh. You have to lower the crib now, because he can pull himself up, and if he pulls off a Western roll over the railing, he will not stick the landing. Oh. It hit me when he was born: I’m a Dad. But it took me longer to realize that being a father meant that I would cease being someone else. “Charlie’s always going to see me as Dad,” I told my wife. “He’s never going to know Cool Jeremy.” She paused. “I’m not sure if I’ve ever seen Cool Jeremy,” she said. Oh.

But it’s true. When you become a father, you’re no longer the man you used to be. That man is a fictional character to your son. He only exists in photo albums or Facebook posts. He might briefly reappear on an occasional night out. Someday Charlie will see an old picture of me, maybe on a date with his mom; maybe as a gangly teenager making a funny face, trying to fit in; maybe on my wedding day. That picture will not square with the image of me that he’s already built up, as the dad who will serve a grill-prepared meal or wear an old-era polo shirt around much too pridefully. He won’t care about the Post House, no matter how many times I tell him about it. I didn’t think I would be like this. When I was young, I had no idea what I wanted out of life. Now I do. It’s a wife. It’s a son. It’s exactly this. Charlie will have no idea who I was. He’ll only know me now as Dad.

And that’s exactly who I want to be.