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## April 2022: Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church

*Welcoming Congregation*

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### The Bridge

No Sunday School Programs and no Childcare during this time. The playroom is clean and open for parents who wish to use it. Due to Covid-19, except for Sunday 11:00 a.m. services, many activities remain cancelled. Sunday School programs have been delayed until Covid-19 variants are less prevalent.

**April 3, 2022: "Celebrating Earth Day" – Jimmy Merritt**

**April 10, 2022: "Hymn Sing" – Enjoying the Spring and Easter hymns from *Singing the Living Tradition***

**April 17, 2022: "Easter Service: He Appeared Unto James" – Reverend Justin Lapoint**

**April 24, 2022: "Good Nutrition" – with Lovelina Nadkarni**



This is the moment to change it all – the business climate, the political climate and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, our livelihoods; together we must "Invest in Our Planet". [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)



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#### Dates to Remember

**April 7: Spring yard clean-up.**

**April 10: Following church service, covered-dish lunch and board meeting.**

**April 14: 12:00 noon – lunch at church followed by AUW meeting at 1:00 a.m.**

**April 17: 9:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast; please bring a breakfast dish to share. Easter Egg Hunt following Breakfast.**

**May 9: Noon – covered-dish lunch following 11: 00 a.m. Homecoming Service.**



## “THE EASTER EXAM”: REVEREND GREG WARD

So here it is, this is your Easter Exam. Ready? Pencils up. Here's your question: While waiting in the hospital for a friend to return from tests, you see an elderly man waiting on a bench at the end of the hallway, alone. He is crying. You go to him. You introduce yourself, sit and you listen to his story. He tells you he has AIDS. He tells you his tale which is about betrayal, judgment, abandonment, rejection, isolation, loneliness, fear and despair. He finishes and looks down and begins to cry again. You reach for a tissue and hand it to him. You let him cry for a few minutes and put your hand on his shoulder. After a while he stops. Then, he raises his head, looks into your face and asks you in a soft voice, “Does God love me?”

What do you say? This is your 2015 Easter Exam. If Unitarian Universalism states that all life has inherent worth, how do you respond? If we believe that atonement is found by love rather than violence, what is your answer? If we believe that God – or the power of love – is real in this world and comes without ransom; that Easter is more than eggs in a basket but a way to help the suffering find a way back to hope, how will you pass this test?

The answer is you already passed this test when you saw him crying and you went over to him. You already understand Easter when you handed him a tissue and sat with him while he cried. You already gave him a way out of his suffering by giving him your hand and listening to his story. You already became a minister of your faith and an answer to the Easter Question by being present for his suffering without being consumed by it. For in this you showed him that love can live through hate; that hope will not be consumed by fear; and the world will not turn away from the brokenness of its people.

But if you feel compelled to say something more, remember in your response that it doesn't matter whether or not you, yourself, believe in God; whether or not you believe in the sacrifice, whether or not you believe in the resurrection. The power of atonement and the Easter message is larger than the small minds who have carried this conundrum forward. The power of the message is a faith in love as the salvific power of ALL life.

So if you want something more to say, say, “Yes! If what you mean by ‘God's love’ is to know you are not alone, then ‘yes’. If what you hope for is to know that there are people who will understand, who will care about you, listen to you, then ‘yes.’ If what you seek to believe is whether the love you long for is stronger than the fear and betrayal you have been shown, then ‘yes.’ If what you want to know is whether this kind of love exists the world over and you are part of it, then ‘yes.’

This is the Easter Exam that needs passing. And needs passing on. It is the only kind of resurrection that lasts more than six hours. Which is a good thing. For we live in a world with even more of the violence and betrayal and abandonment than was part of the original Easter scenario two thousand years ago. If the Easter message is to have any meaning, it requires us to pass this test – not just every spring, but every day.