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## July 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 Fall 2022.

**July 3, 2022: "Apprentice in Creation: The Inspiring Story of Mary Crovatt Hambidge"** – Jimmy Merritt – How she entered my life 12 years after her passing.

**July 10, 2022: "Olympia Brown"** – Using our new monitors and sound system, Olympia Brown will be portrayed by Reverend Janet Bowering. Reverend Brown was ordained a Universalist minister, the first to achieve full ministerial standing recognized by a denomination.

**July 17, 2022: "Love is Our Doctrine"** – Reverend Barry Whittemore.

**July 24, 2022: "Principle Five from Stories in Faith: – with Ann Malpass.**

**July 31, 2022: No Church Activities. Universalist Convocation 2022 in Bellville, Ohio.**



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#### Dates to Remember

**July 10: Covered-dish lunch and Board meeting following service.**

**July 14: Quilting at 10 followed by lunch and AUW meeting.**

**Quilting Sessions will be announced each week.**

**October 1: Harvest Sale**



ADAPTED FROM: "IF EVERYTHING'S CONNECTED, WHAT IS INDEPENDENCE?"

REVEREND JOE CLEVELAND

There are many undeniably American things. Two of my favorites are jazz music and old-time music. Both are hybrids. Both are born out of connections and interdependence. I wonder if it's possible to understand them this way: I wonder if we could say that they combine different traditions not by denying those traditions, but by celebrating how different those traditions are. I think that lots of people are beginning to see how interdependent we are. We see it in ecosystems and economies. Everything's connected. And if everything is connected, if we want more combining and connecting going on, what happens to independence?

My new friends in Reading, I am not going to be coy about this. I'm just going to say it flat out: independence is an illusion. It might seem to me that I acted independently with a self-reliant freedom when I let myself go to the Apple store and buy an iPad. But... if I want to address my deep loneliness, well, that's why I joined my first Unitarian Universalist congregation. What I want to celebrate isn't independence. What I want to celebrate is interdependence.

There's a recent book about consumerism called *Consumed*. Its author, Benjamin R Barber, in 2002 started something called Interdependence Day. It happens September 12<sup>th</sup> of every year. Basically, it seems to be a big conference event held in a different cosmopolitan city every year. There, folks get together to try to think through what it means that everything's connected. At its best, I think this is what happens in religious congregations every week.

If something we've bought wears out, we can buy a new one. If a religion lets us down, we can acquire a new one. I think we've all done a little of this. But in the end, it's dissatisfying, I think, and it's disingenuous to the nature of religion. Religion is all about recognizing how things are tied together. The word *religion* comes from a Latin word meaning to *bind together*. Religion is about connection. If we deny connection, we deny religion – and meaning. Nothing is meaningful on its own; it's from the connections and relationships, from the interdependence of things – that is where meaning comes from. If we deny connections, interconnections, I think we also deny some of what's best about America.

I've been greeted a few times in the last week with the phrase "Happy Independence Day!" How about we celebrate Interdependence Day? What would that do to the American experiment in loneliness? What if we celebrated interdependence day every day? What if that is what it means to be religious? To be Unitarian Universalist? What would that look like in your life?

May it be so. Amen.