CrossCurrents
CREATING COMMUNITY BY KEEPING YOU INFORMED
Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

September 2026

Welcome Back



By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Summer ends and another church year begins. It happens every year.

I'm sure many of you are anxiously looking forward to the annual Water Service, the symbolic beginning to the new church year.

However, there is a lot more to be excited about, and in this issue, you'll learn what has some of our congregants excited about the upcoming church year. You'll also learn about new Faith Engagement programs, a new Earth & Climate Ministry advocacy project, improved sanctuary lighting, and, after a hiatus, the return of the UUCWC Meet & Greet Q&A, this month featuring Sandee Steinberg.

Be sure to scroll down to the end of the newsletter to find out how fellow congregants spent their summer vacations and, in Part 2 of a segment that ran last month, what was on their summer reading lists. Clearly, UUs are prolific readers.

Don't hesitate to contact me at **scott_cullen@verizon.net** or at church with story ideas. I'd love to hear from you.



Shedding New Light on the Sanctuary Part 1: Defining the Problem

After years of dimly lit presenters and performers, a lighting upgrade is finally taking center stage.

By Andrew Kidd

(Editor's note: Starting with the August 30th service, you may have noticed a change in the sanctuary lighting, which now better illuminates the podium. In the first installment of a multi-part series, Andrew Kidd explains the reasons for this upgrade and its potential impact on the church.)

I have been a member of UUCWC for 26 years and have attended many daytime Sunday services and evening events in the Sanctuary. Over that time, there have been occasions when my concentration on the subject matter or the presenter has not been 100%. During these periods, I have often gazed around the sanctuary and wondered why the architect designed certain elements the way he or she did, particularly the lighting over the stage.

For reasons now probably lost to history, three lighting tracks were placed at ceiling level, 28 to 30 feet above the floor. Two were placed on either side of the skylights, and the third, directly over the front lip of the stage.

There are several problems with this design:

1. The conventional 120-watt tungsten bulbs were mounted so high above the floor that only the very brave dared to climb a ladder to replace them when they burned out. The last person to do so was Jon Holcombe, who served as sexton for a few months many years ago. As a firefighter, he was used to scaling tall ladders. By 2026, only four of the eight bulbs were working, and three of those were on their last legs.
2. The light output from these bulbs had negligible effect once it had traveled 28 feet to the stage floor.
3. They were directly overhead of presenters or artists on stage, so they illuminated only the tops of their heads and the bridges of their noses. Faces were in shadow, making them difficult to see.
4. During the day, the lighting had to compete directly with the sunlight pouring through the skylights.
5. The existing bulbs are of the old tungsten variety, where eight of them consume over 900 watts of power (when they all work). Modern LED bulbs, even though more would be required, would use about twenty-five percent of that, resulting in significant energy savings.

Any one of these problems was enough to doom this arrangement, but it was especially obvious at evening events, when, after dusk, the performers would become almost invisible.

We had gotten away with this defect for years because services occur mostly during daylight, though Reverend Kim did point out that Vespers and the Christmas Pageant were always gloomy in terms of lighting. For evening events, we have either rented lighting or just done without.

We have a beautiful, highly functional space within that sanctuary. The acoustics are good, and we have a decent, aesthetically pleasing sound system. We should be renting it out regularly, as the Board has indicated this is now a priority revenue source. In the meantime, several booking agents have found us and plan to use the space for their concerts.

So, after years of pondering, I decided that something had to be done.

(Editor's note: Read about the design and the installation in the October and November issues of CrossCurrents.)



Fall Adult Faith Engagement Programs

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Four new adult Faith Engagement programs will be offered in September and October.

“I’m excited about these offerings and how they will speak to the world and to our individual lives at this time,” emphasized Rev. Kim.

This fall’s programs include:

1. Simple Church Book Discussion - Are you in a leadership position? Do you like to think about church and how it functions (or how it could)? Join this year’s Simple Church book discussion, led by Rev. Kim. Tuesdays for 5 weeks: September 15, 22, 29, October 6, and 13. 7- 9 p.m. Groups will be split based on in-person and online interest and availability.
2. Bible Study on Christian Nationalism - Led by Rev. Kim and ELCA Pastor Stephanie Kershner, Sunday afternoons for 4 weeks: September 20, 27, October 4, and 11 from 11:45-12:45 pm. In person only. Room 201.
3. Rings of Love Small Group - Small group reflection, akin to Chalice Circles, that weaves our values with personal experiences and reflections. Tuesdays from October 20 to November 17, 2-3:30 pm and 7-8:30 pm. Online and in-person offerings depend on sign-ups.
4. Love at the Center Book Discussion - Led by peer member facilitators and supported by UUA question guides. Tuesdays from October 20 to November 17, 2-3:30 pm and 7-8:30 pm. Online and in-person offerings depend on sign-ups.

Sign up on our **website** (under the Learning tab) or on Realm.



A New UUCWC Resource: Area Farmers' Markets, Farm Stands, and Orchards

By Sylvia Light for Earth & Climate Ministry

Looking for ways to get fresher, healthier food on your table? UUCWC's Earth & Climate Ministry has compiled a list of local farms, markets, and orchards offering a bounty of responsibly grown vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat, and other specialties. Their products are fresher than flown-in and long-haul imports, preserving more nutrients and flavor.

Organized by state (NJ and PA), the list includes addresses, operating hours, and contact numbers.

Shopping at these local outlets not only benefits you but also supports sustainable farming practices. Many local farmers limit or avoid pesticides, herbicides, and preservatives. Buying local also reduces pollution by cutting the fossil fuel use for long-distance food transport and refrigeration. Farms using sustainable practices can also maintain the health and productivity of our community farmland for future generations.

Some farms offer a partnership system in which consumers buy a seasonal "share" of a farm's harvest in advance to receive weekly boxes of fresh, local produce. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) helps farmers with planning and cash flow, provides members with great seasonal produce and a deeper connection to the people who grow their food, and strengthens the local food economy.

Encouraging the purchase of local farm and orchard products is an educational/advocacy project of the UUCWC Earth & Climate Ministry (ECM). During the church's 2025 congregational Climate Justice Dialogues, we suggested enhancing congregants' awareness of the availability and value of local farm products.

See the new list. To learn more or to provide updates to the list, contact **EarthMinistry@UUCWC.org**.

Photo by Barbara Drew



What Has You Excited About the Upcoming Year at UUCWC?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

So many things, actually. New board members, our Fall retreat to define Board goals for the year, the new Community Connector and Rental Coordinator positions, and our wonderful programming to Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World! – **Bob Alt**

I've recently joined the Stewardship Committee and am interested to see what we can accomplish this year. – **Maria Baratta**

The new Community Connector position will make a huge difference in our ability to connect with one another, including with children and newcomers. We're also going to expand the use of REALM to support that position. Both things really light me up! – **Martha Bell**

So many good changes are getting off the ground this church year that I can't name them all. We will have a new staff member working to connect and engage everyone from newcomers to veteran members to children and youth. Improvements in how we communicate and connect with members, friends, and the rest of the world will continue and accelerate. We will see more fruit from our relationships with worthy

causes like Trenton Microloan and interfaith coalitions serving refugees. I'm chairing Stewardship this year, and we have a great team ready to help members turn their gratitude for our congregation into more soul-filling generosity. In the face of fear, doubt, and chaos, we are moving forward! – **Rab Bell**

Seeing new faces and reconnecting with the old ones! – **Sue Busch**

I'm looking forward to coming to church more in person in the Fall. – **Kathie Chaikin**

I am really excited to see what we are going to do with Paul, our new Community Coordinator. – **Parker Cohen**

How everybody will be submitting their *CrossCurrents* articles on time, well before each deadline. – **Scott Cullen**

I look forward to what the new staff person in the Community Connector role will bring to our community, and of course, the experiences provided through the auction. There are so many interesting and creative ways to gather and connect with one another. We already have a theme identified for Auction 2027. – **Barbara Drew**

I'm looking forward to seeing what our Community Connector will do to make our great community even better. On a personal level, Elliot is a senior in high school this coming year, and I'm excited and wistful about their Bridging Ceremony. I'm not ready to send them off into the world just yet, but I know they are ready and will be amazing at whatever it is they decide is next. – **Mike Gianella**

Seeing a realistic budget that promises to keep us in the black, and continuing opportunities for spiritual development that nurture both adult and child congregants. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

I'm looking forward to our church continuing to do good in the world and getting to know our Community Connector, Paul. Also, as always, getting to spend time with the special people that enter our doors every week.- **Karen Kent**

Connecting with people. – **Andrew Kidd**

Kim's thought-provoking sermons. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

What wouldn't excite me? I'm now entering my third year on the Board. If you ever get asked to join the Board, I'd advise you to take that opportunity. First, you get to work with amazing folks. And if you join next year, you get one year of me, so do with that what you will. But seriously, working with talented, driven, smart, sensible, beautiful people in covenant to help this church create community, celebrate life, and change the world? Isn't that why we're here anyway? It's a pretty direct way to do just that. Each Board I've been a part of here has been composed of people I admire. It reflects the congregation as a whole: a congregation of superheroes. I couldn't be more proud to serve with them, and I'm excited to see what we get up to this coming year.

We're also welcoming Paul Muñiz to the staff this year, filling the new role of Community Connector. We were excited about the role and are even more excited to have someone in it who seems like such a natural fit. We look forward to meeting Paul and growing together with him over this next year. Ultimately, it's the people that make this congregation as great as it is. I'm most looking forward to being with you all this upcoming year. Learning more about you, working together with you, celebrating and mourning with you. Being together for the highs, the lows, the

mundane and the exciting, the expected and the unexpected. It's the *together* that keeps me coming back week after week, year after year. – **Chris Marietti**

I always look forward to Water Sunday, blending our summer waters and seeing a full church. – **Lynne Molnar**

I love singing in and with the choir and always look forward to the music planned for our services. I also look forward to our continued justice work and making a difference in our local communities. – **Chris Piatek**

Exploring new possibilities and opportunities. – **Jane Root**

Continuing to promote community through my involvement with church hikes, bike rides, Romeo's, ECM, Safety Task Force, and potluck dinners. – **Steve Saddlemire**

Rev. Kim's excellent and thoughtful sermons, being with our wonderful community in person, exploring new music with the choir, and wishing Erin, our director, well as she and her husband welcome their new baby. – **Anne Sears**

Meeting new families and connecting with current ones. – **Lynda Shapiro**

I look forward to further building my friendships and involvement with the community. – **Roger Shapiro**

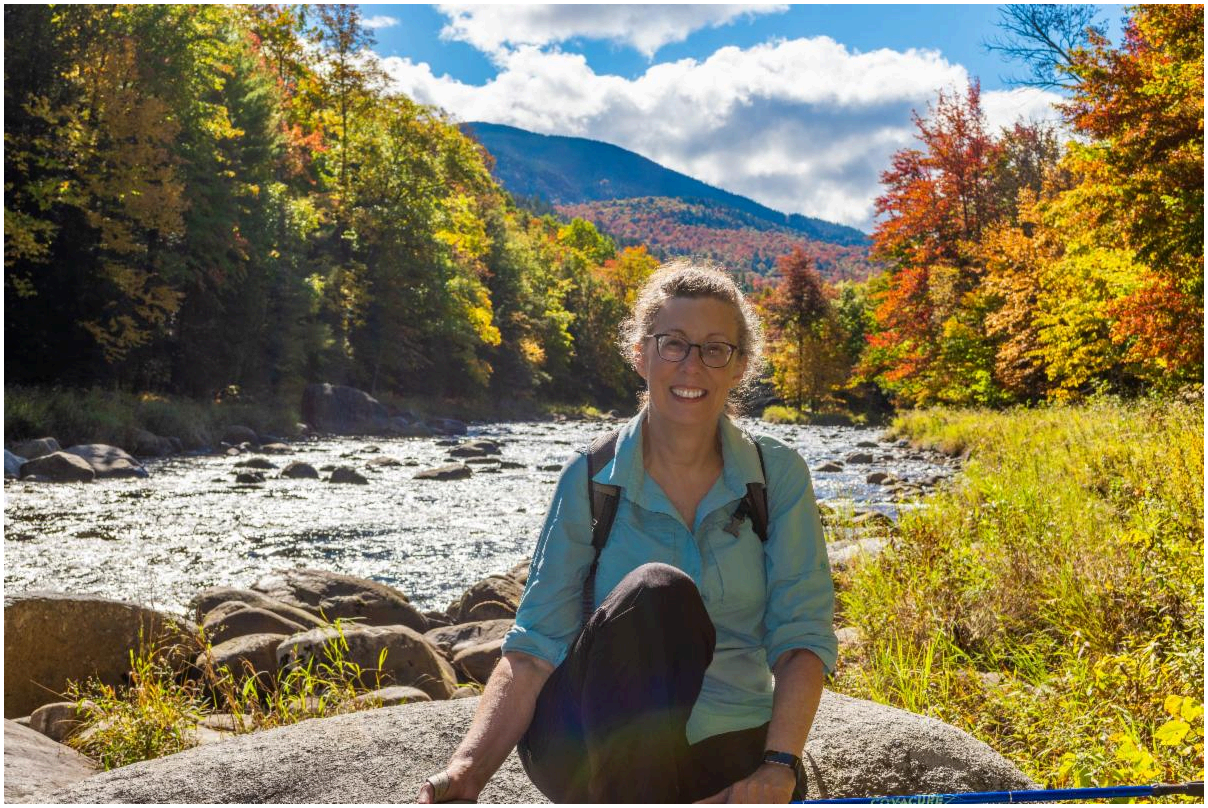
I am looking forward to more wonderful, inspirational sermons, great music, and opportunities to volunteer both at the church and through church groups to help the local community. And of course, seeing all the nice people at church and getting to know them better. – **Sandee Steinberg**

The new possibilities of how the church works are being restructured and shared within the church community and the outside world in the area of social justice. – **David Thomas**

I am really looking forward to our focus on expanding our community. I'm excited that we've hired a dedicated Community Connector. I can't wait to see how this unfolds and how I can participate most effectively. - **Jayme Trott**

I am incredibly excited about the creativity alive in our UUCWC Community through the Music Ministry, from the Friday night Sing-alongs to the Auction Events to the "Creativity Matters" program, Rev Kim's sermons, and so much more. This coming year, I am also excited about the new possibilities for our community to grow and deepen our connection through the energy and spirit that our Community Connector, Paul Muñiz, will bring to this position. In times of challenge, we all have the opportunity to become even more creative! – **Brian Tucker**

That our church construction is complete. – **Susan Vigilante**



Sandee Steinberg on a hike in the Adirondacks.

UUCWC Meet & Greet: Sandee Steinberg Finds the Community She Was Seeking

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Sandee Steinberg found her way to UUCWC in 2018, thanks to a recommendation from her eldest son, Ben, who had attended a couple of times and thought she might feel at home here. He was right. Sandee became a member in 2019 and has since been an active part of the congregation, most recently serving two years as Finance Chair. Although she has stepped down from that role, she remains on the Finance Committee as a member-at-large and also participates in the Earth and Climate Ministry and the tech team, helping with the remote portion of some services.

For this month's Meet & Greet, Sandee shares more about the faith journey that eventually brought her back to a spiritual community, the advice from her parents that has stayed with her, a memorable trip to France, and a health condition she hopes more people will understand.

What religion were you brought up in?

Sandee: When I was growing up, my family attended a Congregational church that is part of the United Church of Christ.

How would you describe your faith journey?

Sandee: I attended church as a child, but in high school and college I began to question some of the church's core beliefs. I questioned the existence of God and the concepts of heaven and hell. After I graduated from college and left home, I stopped attending church. During the following years, when I was working full-time, navigating married life, and raising my kids, I felt too busy to seek out any kind of

spiritual or faith experiences. In hindsight, I should have done so at the time, and I believe having spiritual and/or faith experiences would have helped with my stress levels during those years. When I discovered UUCWC, I realized what I was missing. That was when I was in my late 50s.

What's a favorite hymn or worship song that brings you comfort?

Sandee: I love the hymn *Blue Boat Home*.

What do you do for fun when you're not at UUCWC or attending an online service or UUCWC-related meeting?

Sandee: I love to read and walk/hike. I do yoga and Pilates. We foster kittens at our house through the EASEL animal shelter in Ewing. I also take community classes through Princeton Adult School and the Center for Modern Aging in Princeton.

What's one piece of advice that has stuck with you throughout your life?

Sandee: My Dad was a big proponent of the Golden Rule. He was a child psychologist and worked at our local school district. Both of my parents expected us to treat other people kindly.

What's a tradition in your family that you cherish?

Sandee: My two grown sons still live with us. A few times a year, we set up a game on the dining room table and enjoy a game night. I love those times when we really get to connect—no TV or cell phones!

What was your most memorable vacation destination?

Sandee: One of my favorite vacations was a trip to Normandy, France, a few years ago. My husband and I toured various WWII sites and enjoyed the beaches, the food, and the calvados (an apple brandy).

Is there anything else you'd like people to know about you?

Sandee: If you see me at church or online, you may have noticed that I have a head tremor. Many years ago, in my 20s, I was diagnosed with Essential Tremor and Cervical Dystonia. Both are neurological movement disorders. These diseases are incurable and may worsen with age, but they are not life-threatening. In my case, the symptoms mainly cause social discomfort, but for some people, they can be quite debilitating, especially when the tremor is in the hands. I belong to the **International Essential Tremor Foundation**, which is working to raise awareness of ET and other movement disorders.



How I Spent My Summer Vacation: UUCWC Members Share Their 2026 Adventures

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Northern Michigan, relaxing with family and friends, and enjoying time on a lake. - **Bob Alt**

Now that we are empty nesters, my husband and I don't plan many summer vacations. We vacation at other times of the year. During the summer, we host a lot of get-togethers at our house and generally hang out by our pool on weekends. – **Maria Baratta**

I took a trip out West with my husband, Rab. First stop was Olympia, Washington, to see Rab's middle brother, Tom. Olympia gave us a glimpse of Mt. Rainier and plenty of lovely time with Tom, his significant other, Candace, and his son, Cameron. Then we hopped on an overnight train, the "Starlight Express," to travel down to California to see Martha's sister, Judy. Judy lives in Aromas, nestled in the foggy hills near Watsonville (a huge farming country) and not too far from Santa Cruz on the coast. While there, Martha and Judy visited Paicines Ranch, a 7,000-acre "regenerative" farm. Among other practices, they plant their vineyards to allow room for sheep to graze between the plants. The fruit-bearing part of the vines sits higher than usual so the sheep don't eat the grapes. The sheep "weed" for the farmers, remove suckers from the vines, and, of course, provide manure. The idea is to replenish the soil. Apparently, worldwide, only about 40 more years' worth of topsoil remains. This animal-based farming method is meant to address that and help move us away from killing everything in the soil to prevent insects and weeds. – **Martha Bell**

With heat waves, torrential storms, and wildfires, summer ain't what it used to be. Now that we're retired, we are shifting our vacations to spring and fall. This November, we are taking our first-ever cruise on a small vessel hopping along the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. If it lives up to its reputation, it should be great. – **Rab Bell**

I will be in my cabin in Vermont, built by my late husband in 1972. – Beth Brasor
We traveled with some friends to Copenhagen and vacationed there for 5 days, then boarded a ship for a cruise circumnavigating the Svalbard archipelago. – **Sue Busch**

I am spending my Summer at our neighborhood pool in Pennington, swimming and reading. Also, John (Fowler) and I enjoy taking country drives around Hopewell and Bucks County and stopping at farm markets. There's nothing like the tomatoes and corn we can get here. John's daughter, Alisha, and family live in Princeton, and we have fun with them too. I was playing pickleball with my friends before it got too hot. – **Kathie Chaikin**

We adopted a big black dog who is afraid of riding in the car in November, so we'll spend this summer closer to home. My husband Fred and I took a few days down in Cape May to get away to the beach and eat well. I would like to get out and see more local Revolutionary War history that is local this summer on the weekends. – **Parker Cohen**

We spent a long weekend in early July visiting Mary's daughter and husband in Lexington, KY. In September, we spent a night in Essex, CT at the legendary Griswold Inn, followed by a week and a half on Cape Cod, eating Quahogs, lobster rolls, and fried clams.- **Scott Cullen**

I have been more mindful about getting walks in before it gets too hot during the day. I participated in a "Save the Whales" event in Stockton, New Jersey, where I helped out as "Vanna" and also read some original poetry. Other highlights included a recent Paul Simon concert through our church auction. It was fabulous to see and hear him in person! We are always looking to support live music events in the local area and do so often. I enjoyed a very short visit to Texas, where my son and fiancé have moved after he received his doctorate and a great job offer at MP Materials. It really wasn't any hotter there than it has been here – **Sara del Castillo**

We spent one week at a beach in Cape Cod (Scott's preference) and one week by a lake in New Hampshire (my preference). Both places are where we vacationed with family in our youth. We've also spent a few weekends in the Poconos with friends, plus some day trips. – **Barbara Drew**

Watching World Cup games and going to our community pool. – **John Fowler**

We went to New England last month for college visits with Elliot and traveled to Boston as part of that trip. Most of the rest of summer is about relaxing for me. It's my slow time at work. I generally work 4-day weeks for most of the summer. – **Mike Gianella**

"Vacation" changed in meaning when I retired. And, sadly, changed again when I became a widower. Today, vacation means going to Medford, NJ, staying with Russell, my elder son, and enjoying the Italian-inspired cooking of Gina, his wife. Looking back, I'd like to tell you about three special vacations. On the 100th anniversary of the Yukon Gold Rush, Janet and I spent 5 days hiking the **Chilkoot Trail** from Skagway, Alaska, to Bennet, British Columbia. I'll never forget scaling the

“Golden Staircase” and thinking about the prospectors. They had to make multiple trips in order to carry the mandatory 2,000 tons of supplies into Canada.

My second memory is of the time we rode our bicycles across the U.S., from Seattle to Washington, DC. When hiking Chilkoot, we camped every night. Bicycling cross-country, we'd pitch our tent most nights, but sometimes we’d bed down in a hostel, and occasionally we’d take it easy in the luxury of a motel! Finally, I think of our river trip from Amsterdam to Budapest. Fine food and wine, no aching legs, no cooking, and no dishwashing. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

My summer was very busy with projects around the house. As many know, my mom passed away, and I inherited all the family photos and videos. I found a man who is going to put all the videos on a thumb drive, which is much better than a hundred VHS tapes. I also got to visit with friends I hadn't seen in a while, and in August, I spent time at my happy place, Seaside Park, with my sisters, brothers-in-law, nephew, kids, and my best friend. She was a regular visitor to the family beach house in our teens and early twenties, but as life got busy and the house was sold, she hadn't been on vacation with us in 30 years, so this was a magical experience for both of us. - **Karen Kent**

I went to England during the Fourth of July and experienced being a "foreigner." – **Geri Koblis**

This last year has been a whirlwind. Co-presidency on the Board, all the senior-year milestones for our son, Jakob, culminating in graduation in June, divorce, co-parenting two teens, and moving, just to name a few. Now, two months removed from the move, precious little has settled in my life, but the changes the last year have brought are rounding into new perspectives and opportunities as the summer unfolds. So far, summer has been a mix of short trips, reconnecting with family and friends, learning the ins and outs of living in a new place and in a new way, and learning with my family a new way to be a family. – **Chris Marietti**

So far, a week in Greenwood, Maine, Lake Placid, and heading to Tanglewood, MA, August 6th, after we finish helping my daughter move to Philadelphia! – **Lynne Molnar**

I am (as folks read this) on a cross-country bus tour of historic Route 66 from Chicago down through Missouri, Oklahoma, and west through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The return trip is through Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, Iowa, and Ohio. I am doing my best to keep a detailed journal of the trip! – **Chris Piatek**

My son graduated high school this year and is off to UVM (University of Vermont) in a matter of days. Burlington is on my favorite body of water—Lake Champlain is magic. As I write this, I’m visiting my folks in Syracuse, NY, and making a trip to Blue Mountain Lake in the Adirondacks to see the trolls at the Wild Center, among other fascinating things. Loosely, this path makes a heart through these three states. New York, New Jersey, and Vermont. I hope that your summer, your season, is making a heart in your life too. – **Nicole Robinson**

In late August, I'll make my first (and I hope not my last) return trip to Bucks County and UUCWC since moving back to Indianapolis in November 2024. My trip will include attending the annual retreats of the Congregational Engagement Committee and the Community Outreach Fund and, of course, spending most of my waking hours with UUs! – **Jane Root**

I went to Nashville with my former college roommates and their wives, visiting the Grand Ole Opry, the Country Music Hall of Fame, and the Hermitage. In August, I take the family and grandkids to a house down near Lewes, DE, for a week. – **Steve Saddlemire**

We were in Ecuador and Peru in May and then spent a week at the Jersey Shore with family in July to coincide with Michele's birthday. We depart for South Africa on July 31st to visit the non-profit sites of "Adopt a South African Pre-school" on whose Board Michele sits. – **Joe Schenk**

I'm focusing much of my time on recovering from back surgery. I'm hoping to spend some time on the Eastern Shore of Maryland later in the summer and in the fall. - **Anne Sears**

Summer vacation is centered on family this year. We have a brand-new grandson, and our 13-year-old daughter is spending 10 days with us. I am sure we will fit in a few camping trips as well. – **Lynda Shapiro**

My summer vacation started July 3, the official retirement date. Every day has been a new adventure, starting with meeting our newest grandson, James Owen Kapilevich, who was born July 3. We then had our Texas granddaughter visit for 15 days, which included my birthday celebration and a fun retirement party with family and friends. The rest of the summer will be spent learning what retirement is really like and planning a big vacation to Finland in October. – **Roger Shapiro**

I retired about a year ago, so now every day is vacation. My husband and I have a cottage in upstate NY, north of Binghamton, where we spend time during the summer. – **Sandee Steinberg**

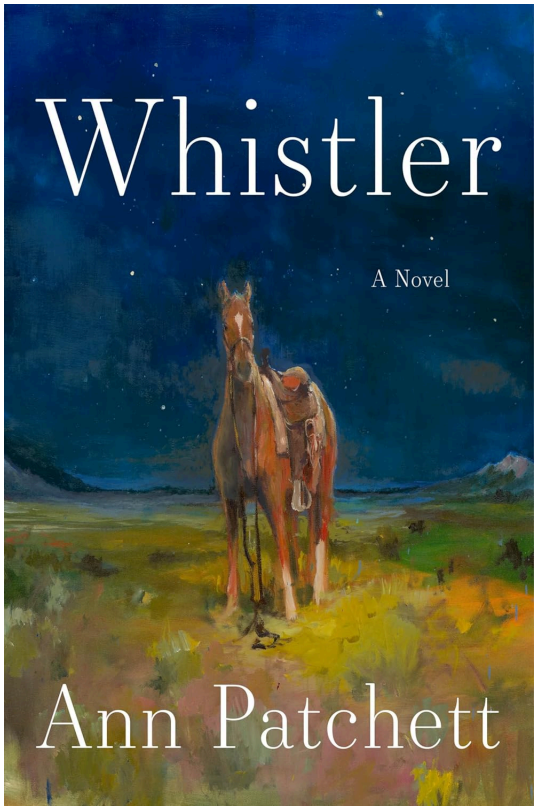
Now that I am retired, I don't consider summer "the" vacation time. Vacations can break out any time. Yet, during the summer, Rehoboth Beach is the draw for our family. Beach, food, music, board games, and the requisite family chaos that come with all of this. – **David Thomas**

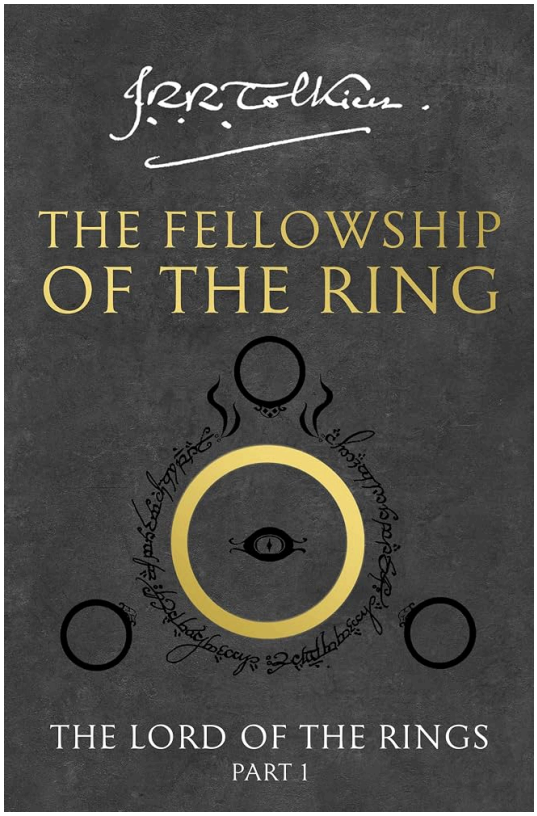
Summer vacation has a whole different meaning when you're retired, like I am. But I still have favorite summer activities. In particular, we have a small cabin on a lake in the Poconos where I used to vacation with my aunt and uncle as a child. I have described it as my "heart home," and now that we own that cabin, we try to spend time there as much as possible in the summer. – **Jayme Trott**

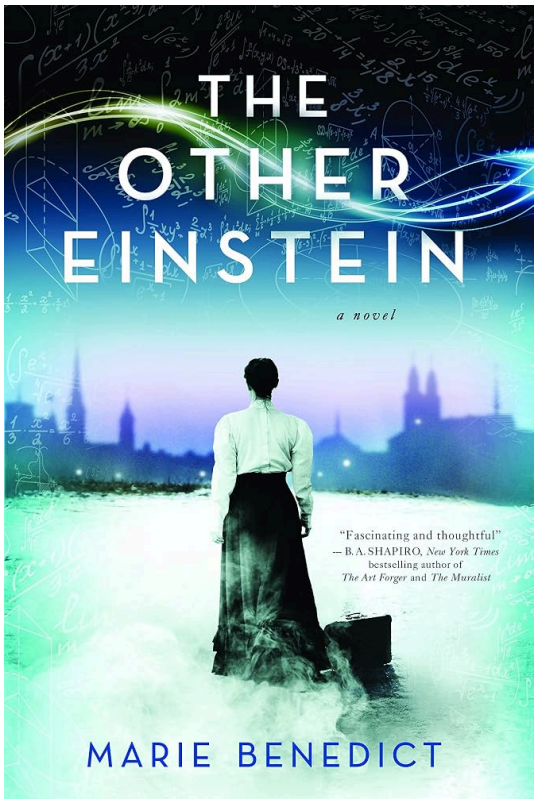
In early July, I joined a 7-day intergenerational delegation at the UN in NYC with the Loretto Community, a group of Catholic Sisters who advocate for the global rights of women and girls. Our nine-person delegation included participants aged 15 to 66, representing communities in Missouri, Kansas, Kentucky, and New Jersey. Together, we participated in meetings during the week of the high-level political forum, a time when member states participating in Voluntary National Reviews share their progress on a subset of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This was truly my best summer vacation ever!– **Brian Tucker**

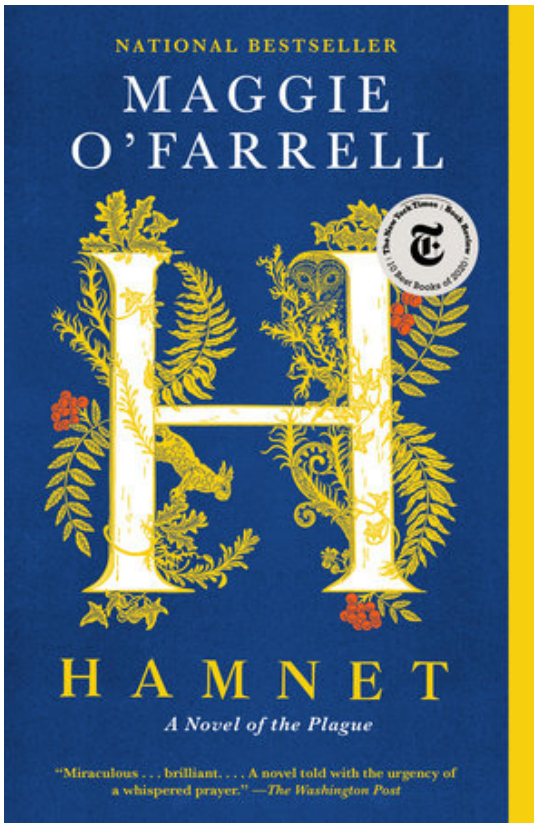
I haven't really taken a summer vacation in a while, and this summer is no different. I will be having cornea replacement surgery in the last week of July, and it is a gradual recovery process. I had my right eye done last summer, and this is the left eye's turn. – **Dan Tuft**

Golfing 5 days a week, helping my sister at The Market Roost Eatery 1-2 days a week, and hanging at the beach. – **Susan Vigilante**









What Books Are on Your Summer Reading List? Part 2

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

I got on an Elizabeth Strout kick. I still haven't read *Olive Kitteridge*, but I have read: *My Name is Lucy Barton; Olive, Again; Anything is Possible; The Burgess Boys; Ask Me Everything*; and *Oh, William*. I love her writing and the inner connection and emotional depth of the characters. Plus, they are aging and falling in love after ending relationships that really don't end. This is my story too! – **Lynne Molnar**

This summer, I've read *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell, about the death of Shakespeare and his wife, Agnes' son, Hamnet; *Whistle*r by Ann Patchett, a beautiful story about flawed family and forgiveness; *The Gift of Stones* by Jim Crace, a novel (recommended by Phyllis Warren!) with characters from the age of stone cutting verging on the discovery of bronze; *The Beginning Comes After the End* by Rebecca Solnit, a book of essays about the dark time we are in right now and how we can/will survive it, and *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi, a story about kindness and generosity and taking the time to "see" people. There were others, but these were the most wonderful. My next book will be *Seek Immediate Shelter* by Vincent Yu, a first novel for this author. – **Chris Piatek**

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande, *The Good Good Pig* by Sy Montgomery, and *Indian Givers* by Jack Weatherford. Don't look for a theme here; in general, I read mostly non-fiction and a few mysteries. – **Jane Root**

I read *The Other Einstein* about Albert's first wife, a very interesting portrayal of their relationship, and am currently reading David Baldacci's *Strangers in Time*, a novel about a couple of kids at the end of WWI. – **Steve Saddlemire**

I read Dan Brown's *Secret of Secrets* and have queued Virgil's *The Aeneid* and Maggie Haberman's *Regime Change*. – **Joe Schenk**

I'm finishing *Birding to Change the World: A Memoir* by Trish O'Kane. Ann Patchett's *Whistler* and Kathryn Stockett's *The Calamity Club* are up next. – **Anne Sears**

I plan on reading *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. We loved the movie, and I hear the book is even better. – Lynda Shapiro

My current book list is focused on traveling. I'm reading several travel books on Finland, a book on *5,000 things to see in America*, and the *Fifty Places to Drink Wine Before You Die* by DC Helmuth. – **Roger Shapiro**

Currently, I am re-reading one of my favorites, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Every few years I reread *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. I am on the waitlist at the library for *Whistler* by Ann Patchett, one of my favorite authors. I also read a lot of non-fiction, but I have to pace myself because they are mostly very sad books. One book on my list is *There Is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America* by Brian Goldstone. – **Sandee Steinberg**

Mark Twain's biography by Ron Chernow. It's 1,000 pages, so it seems like three books. Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*—wonderful writing. *The Last Slave Ship* (Clotilda) by Ben Raines. Lastly, I am revisiting a book that I read 30 years ago, *Seven Arrows* by Hyemeyohsts Storm—many stories rich in Native American wisdom. – **David Thomas**

I just finished reading *James* by Percival Everett and re-reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain for book club. Also, on my list for the next month or so are Lisa Scottoline's new book *This Changes Everything* and *Empty Mansions* by Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell, Jr. – **Jayme Trott**

Shamanic Journey into Earth's Wisdom: Reflections on the Cosmovision of Thomas Berry, edited by Gail Worcelo, SEC; *The Philosophy of Sri Chinmoy: Love and Transformation* by Kusumita P. Pederson; and *Eco-Civilization: Making a World that Works for All* by Jeremy Lent. Loved reading *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future* by Patty Krawec. - **Brian Tucker**

I am hoping that after this surgery, I will be able once again to read! It's a long story, but reading distance has not returned...at least on the printed page, which I do for reading books. I can't seem to bring myself to read on a device. I started a book last summer before the last surgery, *Mr. Jimmy from Around the Way* by Jeffrey Blount. I got to the last 50 pages before the surgery, and those 50 pages are still waiting for me. – **Dan Tuft**

Good People by Patmeena Sabit, *Be a Player: A Breakthrough Approach to Being a Better Player ON the Golf Course* by Pia Nilson and Lynn Marriott, and *The Dollar Rebellion: How Billie Jean King and the Original 9 Became the Change They Wanted to See* by Billie Jean King. - **Susan Vigilante**

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