



The CommUUnicator

**Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro**

Signs of Fall

You can tell it's almost fall. In addition to the clues in the weather and vegetation, it's been a month since our Water Service and public schools' resuming instruction. There is additional traffic through my neighborhood – school buses and parents picking up and dropping off their children at Berkeley Glenn, as at other area schools. Our children's religious education program is also well under way with its fall curriculum.

And just last week, my younger brother who lives in the Denver area told me he had just gotten his Covid 19, flu, and RSV vaccinations in preparation for his trip to visit our father in Illinois in a few days. That jogged my awareness of how, most years, I am reminded by my primary care doctor to get my shots before the season is advanced and the usual sicknesses are already moving through the community. But this year, I knew I would be going to Illinois right after my annual physical, with no time for shots. And Dad is in a rather fragile state, so, even more than usual, he needs to be exposed to as few of germs carried in by visitors as possible. I got online and found appointments available for Covid, flu, and pneumonia shots on the same day my brother reminded me. I didn't get the RSV jab because I'd gotten it a couple of years ago. But I'm about as protected as possible, a key marker of fall.

We find ourselves in a peculiarly anti-scientific time in this country, with the current administration leaving the watching of the hens to

the foxes. I saw a Washington Post article recently reporting on the demographic that most falls into some version of the antivaxxer camp. It reported that "The American parents who are choosing to skip or delay vaccines for their children are more likely to home-school their children, be White and very religious, identify as Republican or be under 35." We must recognize nuance. We know that not everything that is good works for everyone in the same way. Yet we must realize that group behaviors include risks – some being risks to public health – that we insufficiently engage because we value individual autonomy. Meanwhile, RFK, Jr. tries to assert his antiscientific beliefs in the middle of CDC and HHS processes, replacing people in the scientific mainstream with anti-science people. It is a signpost on the way to the fall.

Another fall thing, one I trust is more hopeful than problems with the way our government sidelines evidence-based public good: I will be offering an adult discussion class using as its common read *Love at the Center: Unitarian Universalist Theologies*, a collection of 29 short essays edited by UUA President Sofia Betancourt (Skinner House Books, 2025, 224 pages). The essays are written by mostly well-known and respected Unitarian Universalist leaders, including two past presidents of our association. The class will meet in person in Chalice House at 6:30 PM on six successive Thursdays, beginning on October 16. If you will participate in this class, get a copy of the

book, which is available in paperback, as an audio book, and on Kindle. Please let our administrative assistant Savannah Fersner know by October 6 that you will join the class. We need eight members to make the class.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy the arrival of fall!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

UUA Features One of our Own

By Florence Ferguson, Newsletter Editor

This week I was looking for some content to fill up the second page of this issue. As I often do, I went to the [UUA website](#) to see if it had any news worth sharing with our congregation. You can imagine my shock when I saw the name of our member, Clint Nicely, who has authored the most recent essay on the UUA's weekly inspiration, Braver Wiser.

Unbeknownst to any of us, Clint submitted his essay to Braver Wiser several months ago and has been working with its editors to get it to publication. It is titled "[Crossing the Lines](#)." You can find it at the link, and it will also be reprinted in a future issue of this newsletter.

This newsletter, in its current format, is beginning its eighth year. It is designed as a two-page weekly with a feature article written by one of our members, or Rev. Paul's monthly column, on the first page. The second page is reserved for news about UUFW and UUA activities and actions, reports from ministry teams, introduction of new members, news about individual members, and information about community events of interest to the congregation.

This Fellowship has several great writers, including Clint, who have regularly contributed feature articles. When I don't have a feature article from a member, I have sometimes reprinted essays from Braver Wiser.

It has been my hope that more UUFW members would use the newsletter to share their insights, reflections and experiences. The only requirement is that feature articles are 600 words or less and are consistent with UU values, or would otherwise be of interest to our readers. I like to think that one day another one of our fine writers will have their newsletter piece accepted by Braver Wiser!

So, I will take this opportunity to encourage everyone to think of the newsletter as a place to share your thoughts and report on our activities (with pictures, if available). You can reach me at newsletter@uufw.org.



Clint Nicely (he/him) lives along the base of the Blue Ridge in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. After a successful career as a teacher and professor, he owned and operated a community store and deli with his wife Donna until retirement. He and Donna are active members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro, VA.

This is the citation that accompanied Clint's essay.

