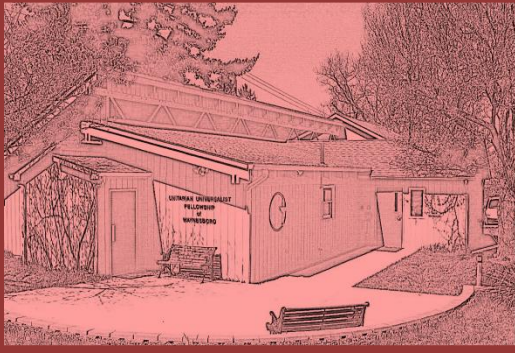




The CommUUnicator

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

Thanksgiving Miracles

It's not long now till Thanksgiving. I've had a fall cleanup done, clearing up the yard and plantings so that the house looks a whole lot more presentable than it has any time since my partner Walter fell and broke a hip in September of 2021. It was easy just to ignore the mess that was developing at my door. Other things were more important. Attention constantly refocuses. And that is good.

Thanksgiving is a holiday very dear to me in memory. No, not the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the Wampanoag people – even though my 9x-great grandparents were there at that mythically manipulated “First Thanksgiving.” And not because how that piece of our national story that was, by my time, taught in public school on the same scale of importance as cultural practices around Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, which my family also ignored rather than treated with any reverence. Nor did it retain any reference at all to President Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation 118 of 1864.

When I was a child, most years we would go to an extended family Thanksgiving Day feast at the home of one of my great aunts. The house was as packed with relatives as the tables were with food. Teens were in the basement playing pool. In an out-of-the-way corner, adult cousins were playing rook, a.k.a. “missionary cards,” a game created in 1906 to provide an alternative to standard playing cards for those of us in a Puritan tradition. Somebody was out riding a great-uncle's horse to get a break from the crowd. Women were in the kitchen doing the work of the day. Men and children were wherever they could avoid being

underfoot. It was through those gatherings that I knew “cousins” so distant that the word barely fit anymore.

As is the rule of this world, everything eventually breaks down and new things emerge. Families cease to fit into the old family gathering spots. New generations have their own lives, locations, and connections. My great-granddaughters in Montana have played on furniture made by my great-grandfather for my grandmother when she was little. We cherish the pictures that prove that connection over more than a century and seven generations. But we cherish it mostly because the lives represented in those photos have gone past forever. It is a picture for which my older brother and I are the hinge generation. We are living witnesses to the old folks of our youth and to the emergence of generations only beginning their journey.

Like my fall cleanup, other cleanups are always needed. In mid-to-late December my beautiful willow oak will finally drop its leaves, and, then, leaf blowers and rakes will be needed. We are so lucky to be part of the flow of time that constantly calls us to remember those who have gone before, to bury or scatter the ashes of parents and ancestors, the flow of time that never stops sweeping us into futures both hoped for and dreaded – necessary ports of call on our grand sea journey. The mess is always returning to our door. We always have cleanup and a whole lot of living to do. May our hearts fill with gratitude for this miracle. Happy Thanksgiving!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

Our condolences to Rev. Paul on the loss of his father.