



SEPTEMBER 2026

THE COMPANION

CUU'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 9

Minister's Message Grace Notes

Written by Reverend Kimberley Debus

What happened to summer? It seems like we just filled our sanctuary with flowers, blessed one another, and made our way out for a summer of exploration. Yet here we are, already coming back.

I remember in school, we heard the inevitable question (which was sometimes an essay prompt), "what did you do this summer?" Some years I loved it, because I'd had a great time at Girl Scout camp, or we took a fantastic trip. But some years I dreaded it, because camp wasn't fun, or we didn't go away. What did I do? I read, I stared at the clouds, I helped my folks in the gardens, I picked blueberries (So. Many. Blueberries.), I dreamed of a future that looked like getting to sing and talk and love other people and think deeply as part of my job.



minister@cedarhurstuu.org

**See end of article for Office
Hours.**

I hadn't imagined ministry was my future, but if this is what the 'be careful what you wish for' warning led to, I'm quite pleased for those quiet summers of dreaming about the future.

Of course my own summer was busy – traveling to Ann Arbor, MI, and White Plains, NY, to work on my doctoral project; attending the Association for UU Music Ministries conference in Milwaukee, WI; and figuring out my non-CUU work for the coming year. I am on a half-time contract with you all, and the other half of my work often looks like projects, workshops, and other preaching opportunities. This coming year, the other half will include not just my dissertation work, but also part time, long-distance interim work with our congregation in Canton, NY (way up in the North Country, not terribly far from Ottawa). The plus side is that much of my ministry

with them will be virtual. The downside is that some of my trips to Canton will be in the bitter cold of winter (and boy oh boy it gets bitter cold there).

But the best part is I get to continue on this journey with you! We have so much in store this year – finishing Elevate Cedarhurst!; expanding our outreach; expanding our offerings for spiritual growth, education, social action, and fellowship; and living into the promises and covenants we have made to one another.

So... that's what I did this summer. How about you? Where did your explorations take you? What did you discover, or lay down, or change? Did you rest? I can't wait to hear your stories as we come back together for what promises to be an exciting year.

Blessings,
Rev. Kimberley



Rev. Kimberley's Hours

Rev. Kimberley will be available [by appointment only via Calendly link](#) and is usually available after worship when she is in the pulpit. Unless otherwise noted, she is always available by phone for emergencies and will respond in a reasonable time frame to texts and emails for non-urgent matters.

Spirit Circles: Connecting to Our Spirits and One Another



With all that we are doing to improve our space and grow our congregation, and all the burdens we carry from our lives and these unprecedented times – we need each other more than ever. And we need spiritual grounding and connection to help us make our way in the world. Spirit Circles provide that support.

Formal groups will meet once per month for about 90 minutes; they'll include a time of deep check in, sharing our thoughts on the topic, a shared spiritual practice, and other kinds of engagement.

Wondering if it's right for you? Here's what current Spirit Circle members have to say: "Spirit Circle is a way to center myself during the week and continue to build community with my CUU friends." — Francine Hahn

"I've enjoyed getting to know people better through our monthly Spirit Circle discussion group. The topics are always interesting and the responses are always thoughtful." — Beth Blevins

You might also choose to explore the Spirit Circles packet on your own – although we do encourage joining a group, whether you've been at CUU for a long time or are just starting to explore the congregation.

Current groups:

Second Tuesdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Rev. Kimberley

Third Wednesdays at 10am - in-person - with Becky Zimmerman

Third Thursdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Beth Schilpp

For more information, email Rev. Kimberley at minister@cedarhurstuu.org



Theme for September: Covenant

Our theme for September looks at the spiritual concept of Covenant: When you hear the word “covenant” what springs to mind? What does covenant mean in your congregation? Your relationships? What are the similarities and differences between a covenant and a promise?

To accompany our exploration is our Spirit Circles packet ([download here](#)). Each packet is organized in a typical covenant group format: a chalice lighting/opening words, a check-in question, some questions to help you think about the theme, quotations, and poetry. Following that are more questions to ponder, and suggestions of other resources for further exploration. Finally, there is a chalice extinguishing to send you on your way.

Whether you dip in, use it as a focused guide, or share your insights at a Spirit Circle group, we hope you will find something that connects you to your spirit – and to others.

Sharing the Plate



We will resume our share-the-plate offering on September 27th. It is on these fourth Sundays that we share our gifts with the larger community, and help lift up the work already being done by others.

In September and October, we dedicate our plate to [PFLAG](#), whose mission is to welcome all people - gay, straight, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and their families, friends, and allies. They offer support each other, educate the broader community, and advocate for equality. They also provide opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Your donations to these worthy community partners are always welcome; while we dedicate the offering on the fourth Sundays of the month, your gifts can come in anytime. Make checks out to CUU and put the organization name and/or ‘share the plate’ in the memo line.

President's Message

Written by Rich Dean

Cedarhurst UU Board Retreat: Building Momentum for a Bright Year Ahead

On August 15th, the Cedarhurst UU Board gathered for its annual retreat — a time to reflect on our progress, celebrate our accomplishments, and chart a path forward for the coming year. This year's retreat was full of energy, clarity, and a renewed sense of purpose.

We began by revisiting the goals we set last year. Project Elevate — our major building renovation — brought excitement, recognition, and a sense of growth to our congregation. While BG&E delays and cost increases challenged us, we are nearing the finish line. We look forward to celebrating with a ribbon-cutting ceremony this fall.

Our outreach efforts also blossomed. The Growth for Engagement Committee launched a beautiful new website, staffed booths at local festivals, and introduced CHMeetings to strengthen communication. We're now ready to expand our reach beyond Westminster into Eldersburg, Sykesville, and Owings Mills. Welcoming Sunday on September 13th will be a key moment for connecting with newcomers.



boardpresident@cedarhurstuu.org

Availability:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 4-6pm

An alternate appointment time may be made via email request.

Inside the building, we made great strides in organizing our records, updating policies, and creating a digital archive. A lively workday last November brought 25 members together to clean, repair, and refresh our space. We also resealed windows, remediated mold, added a new back staircase, and improved our outdoor areas.

Looking ahead, the Board added an exciting new goal: Program Development. With our building nearly complete and our organizational foundation stronger than ever, we're ready to grow in spirit and community.

Ideas include social justice initiatives, art and activism space, expanded fellowship events, accessibility improvements, OWL and religious education, and creative gatherings like poetry slams and open mic nights.

This retreat affirmed that Cedarhurst is entering a new chapter — one filled with possibility, connection, and purpose. We look forward to sharing this journey with all of you as we continue to grow, serve, and thrive together.

I love you Cedarhurst

Rich



SEPTEMBER'S THEME IS COVENANT

September 6th
Rich Dean

Art of the Deal Meets the Death of a Salesman

Join us for our last lay-led service for the Summer!

September 13th
Rev. Kimberley Debus

Where the River Will Never Run Dry

We gather at the river of love, connection, and grace as we begin our new congregational year.

September 20th
Rev. Kimberley Debus

Rainbows and Pinkie Swears

We are a covenantal faith, but what does that mean? We will explore what covenant calls us toward.

September 27th
Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg

To Be Announced

Watch our Weekly Invitations (CUUpdate) for more information.



CEDARHURST UU ANNUAL AUCTION



NOVEMBER 14, 2026



Our annual **Goods and Services Auction** is coming up on November 14th and it's much more than an opportunity to find a great bargain or bid on something unusual. It is one of the ways we come together as a community to support the people, programs, and ministries that make our church special.

The auction raises money for our **operating budget**, helping to support the everyday work of our congregation—from keeping our building welcoming and functioning to supporting our programs, worship, music, outreach, and all the behind-the-scenes work that allows our church community to thrive.

Every year, our members offer an amazing variety of **goods, experiences, meals, and services**. Maybe you'll bid on a homemade dinner, a special dessert, a garden project, a creative service, or an experience you never expected to find at an auction. You never quite know what will appear—and that's part of the fun.

And there's another wonderful thing about the auction: **we are not just buying things from one another; we are sharing our gifts with one another.** Someone who loves to cook can share a meal. Someone with a particular talent can offer their expertise. Someone who enjoys entertaining can host an event. Someone who has a special skill can turn it into a gift to the congregation. Many donations we have had in the past are favorites that have been included in the auction are; Pamela's card making class: Sherry & Rich's movie and St. Patty's Day dinner: Linda Joy's Chocolate Cherry cake: Beth's Italian goodie basket, Terri's Salon and Sandwiches and many other wonderful offerings.

In other words, the auction is a celebration of what we have to give—and what we can accomplish together.

So start thinking about what you might like to **offer, donate, bid on, or simply enjoy**. Bring your sense of humor, your competitive spirit (just a little!), and your generosity.

Most importantly, remember that every bid and every donation helps strengthen our church. When we participate in the auction, we are investing in the community we have created together and helping ensure that our congregation continues to have the resources it needs to carry out its mission.

Come join the fun. Bid generously. Give generously. And let's see what wonderful things we can create together!

More information about donating goods and services, auction dates, and how to participate will be coming soon.

CUU PROVIDES FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS IN SEPT.

Loaves and Fishes Lunch - We Need Your Help!

Can you help support our upcoming Loaves and Fishes Lunch that we do once or twice a year? We are scheduled to provide a lunch for 60-80 **Saturday, September 5 at 12 noon.** Area churches in Westminster provide a lunch every day of the year. Several of the churches have gotten smaller and have reached out to outlying churches to help support this amazing work.



We try to provide at least one lunch a year at **Westminster Church of the Brethren.** They provide their kitchen and large dining area, along with drinks and plates/cutlery.

Contact Pamela Malkin at [443-487-1299](tel:443-487-1299) if you think you could lend a hand.

We continue to serve 50 people at the **Night by Night Shelter** in Westminster.

Contact Pamela Malkin for more information.



SEPTEMBER SPECIAL EVENTS

CARROLL BOOK FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 19th at 10:30am

Location: 500 S. Center St., Westminster

The festival is from 10am to 4pm. We will meet near the entrance (no entry fee) at 10:30am. Wear your Blue CUU shirt. (If you only have the black one, that is ok, too.)



There will be food trucks available to buy lunch. Jodi Picoult is the prime attraction, and her presentation is sold out. There are many other authors and attractions.

Call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 with questions.

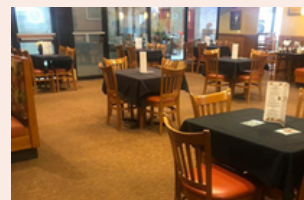
LUNCH AT BISTRO 91



Sunday, September 27th at 12:15pm

The Bistro is located in the Finksburg Plaza.

Reservations are needed, so please contact Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 by Friday, September 25 at 5pm if you can attend.



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

CUU BOOK CLUB

*****Please note new time for this month only***

****Sunday, September 6th at 12:30pm in-person and on Zoom**

The book for September is ***Vesper Flights*** by Helen MacDonald.

*In **Vesper Flights** Helen Macdonald brings together a collection of her best loved essays, along with new pieces on topics ranging from nostalgia for a vanishing countryside to the tribulations of farming ostriches to her own private vespers while trying to fall asleep. Meditating on notions of captivity and freedom, immigration and flight, Helen invites us into her most intimate experiences: observing songbirds from the Empire State Building as they migrate through the Tribute of Light, watching tens of thousands of cranes in Hungary, seeking the last golden orioles in Suffolk's poplar forests. By one of this century's most important and insightful nature writers, **Vesper Flights** is a captivating and foundational book about observation, fascination, time, memory, love and loss and how we make sense of the world around us.*

Please come and participate even if it is your first time....would love to have more people participating. Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 7th at 7:30pm on Zoom

We are always looking for activities that bring us together for fun and/or learning. If you cannot come to the meeting please stop by the Welcome Table with your ideas.

All are welcome to attend on Zoom.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP Tuesday, September 8th at 5:30pm on Zoom

If you are or have been physical and/or emotional support for another person, this could be the group for you. We have no experts, just people that are willing to share their experiences.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



SPIRIT CIRCLES

Tuesday, September 8th at 7:30pm on Zoom

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Tuesday's group is led by Rev. Kimberley Debus. Contact Rev. Kimberley if you are interested in joining.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Wednesday, September 9th at 7:00 pm
on Zoom

September's Board meeting will be on Zoom for all who wish to attend.

Board meetings are open to all unless otherwise noted.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

CUU IN-PERSON GAME NIGHT

Friday, September 11th at 6:00 pm in-person

Our monthly game night will begin at 6pm to enjoy dinner together with each person bringing their own food and drink (no potluck). Games begin at 6:30. Please bring a game or games you love. As always, folks are welcome to just come and eat or just come to play games.

Call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 with questions.



SPIRIT CIRCLES

Wednesday, September 16th at 10:00am in-person

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Wednesday's group is led by Becky Zimmerman. Contact Rev. Kimberley if you are interested in joining a Spirit Circles group.



Watch for location updates in the Weekly Invitations (CUUpdate).

SPIRIT CIRCLES

Thursday, September 17th at 7:30pm on Zoom

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Thursday's group is led by Beth Schilpp. Contact Rev. Kimberley if you are interested in joining a Spirit Circles.



Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

NIGHT-BY-NIGHT: FOOD PROGRAM

Friday, September 18th at 6:15pm

We continue to serve 50 people at the Night by Night Shelter in Westminster.

Contact Pamela Malkin at 443-487-1299 for more details.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 23rd at 7:30pm on Zoom

Interested in helping to create the Sunday worship services?
Then this is the committee for you! All are welcome.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.





CONTACT

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Header and calendar photos by Mark Pollitt

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30am Lay-Led Service	7 7 pm Congregational Life Committee Mtg.	8 5:30 pm Caregivers Support Group 7:30pm Spirit Circles	9 7pm Board of Trustees Mtg	10	11 6pm CUU In-Person Game Night	12
13 10:30am Sunday Service 12:30pm Book Club	14	15	16 10:00am Spirit Circles	17 7:30pm Spirit Circles	18 6:15pm Night-by-Night Shelter Dinner	19 10:30am Carrolll Book Festival
20 10:30am Sunday Service	21	22	23 7:30pm Worship Committee Mtg.	24	25	26
27 10:30am Sunday Service 12:15pm Lunch at Bistro 91	28	29	30	31		
NOTES:						