

Christmas 2022



Merry Christmas greetings to all!

This year is our 51st Christmas together, our 50th in Irvine. To celebrate this auspicious anniversary, in June and July we went on a month-long vacation on the east coast. We started in Pittsburgh after Sharon's on-campus D.Min. class at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. We visited Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York state. Early highlights included the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water house, Steamtown train museum in Scranton (where we stayed in a train station converted into a hotel), Hartford, Block Island, and Plymouth Rock.



Falling Waters



At the hotel that used to be a train station

Boston deserves its own paragraph since we celebrated Sharon's birthday and the Fourth of July! We had always watched the Boston fireworks on tv and it was exciting to see them in person! Another unbelievable moment was finding 16 grave markers for Sharon's Twing forebears at St John's Church Burying Ground. They dated back to the 1600s.



St. John's Burying Ground, surrounded by relatives



Fireworks on the Charles River

Continuing on---Acadia National Park (which included a tour by Cessna!), Bar Harbor, the Mt. Washington Cog Railway (the first cog railway built strictly as a tourist attraction), visiting our friend Andrew Ponder Williams in St. Johnsbury, the Shelburne Museum which has a fascinating collection that includes a landbound steam-powered paddlewheeler.



In the sky over Acadia NP



Aboard the Mt. Washington Railway



Our rental was upgraded from a compact!



Grey Fox Bluegrass- Robin and Linda Williams

Finally, we headed to New York, south to Oak Hill where we attended the Grey Fox Bluegrass festival, just outside Albany, the final state capitol we saw. Heading back north and more east, we took a boat ride through Lock 18 on the Erie Canal, the Women's Rights Museum in Seneca Falls (including the Methodist church where the movement began), then to our final destination, Niagara Falls.



Niagara Falls, up top, staying dry



On the Maid of the Mist, getting soaked!

One month of adventures, seeing places we had never been to before! What a great way to celebrate half a century of marriage! We had never had such a long trip before! This reawakened our desire to travel together, the Covid confinement of the past two+ years gone but not forgotten. We are still being careful, though, so don't worry.

Dale once again served on the annual conference media team, and is still very involved at church, still serving as a trustee and managing a series of projects, mainly sound and tech related. Both of us are still singing in the choir and once again Dale sang a solo in the Christmas concert, this one entitled, "For Mama." We are still missing his mom. This is our second Christmas without her.

Sharon is halfway through her D.Min. program in Creative Writing and Public Theology. She is now a published poet (!) and has edited and written part of an Advent study from a mental illness perspective. The study is currently being piloted and will be distributed more widely next year through the Disability Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church. Meanwhile, work on her first book has begun. She is documenting the work of United Methodist deaconesses/home missionaries in the Philippines. This means that at least one trip to the Philippines is coming up.

We have also begun fixing up the house after 43 years here. Our first project is our front bathroom and it is beautiful! Can the other bathroom and then the rest of the house be far behind? We don't think so!

Love to all, and to all a happy New Year!

Dale and Sharon