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Member of The Unitarian Universalist Association

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Visit our Website at pullmanmemorial.org

Minister Musings by Lee Richards

Our congregation's annual meeting is at the end of this month. I find it difficult to comprehend that nearly a year has passed since you called me to serve this church. So much has happened that the time seems to have flown by. I thought you might be interested in recapping some of the high-points from this past year.

We had a complete redesign of our church website. The information and photos stored there are being sought – and found – by increasing numbers of people. Since its launch last May it has received over 4000 hits. In fact, many of our visitors and new members initially found us on the web.

Of course, we've gotten a lot of traditional media coverage, too. Unfortunately I lost count but I know we were mentioned in at least 12 newspaper articles during the year. We've been doing stuff! Our church was used several times for organizational meetings around saving the county nursing home. We held special services – to commemorate 9/11, confer Minister Emeritus status on Dick Hood, and one of our members organized a winter solstice service. C.W. gave a ghost walk tour at Halloween, and we held services on Christmas day.

In addition to our regular pulpit speakers, we heard about efforts to help Afghanistan war orphans, problems with our country's immigration policies, were regaled by an extraordinary poet, heard about a small but committed group fighting for justice against mortgage foreclosures, and learned about church music and the organ. Next month (May) one of our speakers will inform us about education efforts in Ecuador.

Some other special things have happened, too. The church witnessed its first legally sanctioned gay wedding, several members became inspired and started an "Occupy Albion" contingent to advocate for economic justice every week, we were granted a loan from NYSCU (New York State Convention of Universalists) to help repair our roof leaks, Louise and I served up a breakfast, we had a great picnic and tour of the Mount Albion cemetery, a water communion in September, and will have a bread and wine communion this month at Easter.

Sadly, we lost a few members but gained more. Our newer members are shifting the age demographics younger, and Children's Church is reportedly a fun place to be on a Sunday morning (after all, shouldn't learning be fun?). Movies with the minister have generated both tears and laughs, and conversation. Our best-attended book discussion was the one where the topic was sex.

A lot of work has been accomplished "behind the scenes" this year. To name a few - new support posts have been added under the floor, basement window wells repaired, the wheelchair ramp was repainted, much cleaning and polishing happened throughout, internet service was installed (and in the near future should be made wireless), a gas fireplace unit was put into the pastor's study, lots of organizing happened in the RE room, a hand-held mic was made available for use off the dais and a diaper changing table added to the restroom.

I know people have a tendency to look around and focus on what has not yet been done. That's why I wanted to highlight some of the accomplishments of recent months. My sermon series this year was about "doing church" in a Universalist manner, and I think all that has happened illustrates that "we get it." All these things came to fruition not because you invited me to be your pastor, but because we chose to "walk together" and share both the burdens and the rewards.

I'm very proud of all you've done in such a short time, and am very honored to be with you on this journey.

Service Schedule – Sunday at 11:00AM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Coffee Hour</u>
Apr. 1	Rev. Donald Reidell	"Ring Around The Rosie"	
Apr. 8	Lee Richards	Easter (w/ communion)	
Apr. 15	Susan Daiss	"There's a Crack in Everything...."	
Apr. 22	Lee Richards	Earth Day / Equinox	
Apr. 29	Rev. Richard Hood	"Cut 'em some slack...a new look at the Golden Rule"	Annual Meeting Lunch Provided
May 6	Lily Hollister	"Teaching in the Amazon Rainforest"	

Sunday, Apr. 1 – worship service @ 11 am with Rev. Don Reidell. The sermon title is "Ring Around The Rosie". An analysis of a crisis.

Mondays – "Occupy Albion" protests continue every Monday, from 3 to 4 pm. Stand up publicly for a justice cause you believe in. Make a sign at the church, or bring a sign, and join others on the sidewalk to work toward change.

Monday, Apr. 2 – Fund-raising committee meets @ 5 pm.

Monday, Apr. 2 – Pot-Luck Supper at 6:30 pm. Every month on the first Monday we get together to share our bounty. Everyone invited – you need not be a member of the church to join in on the good food and stimulating conversation.

Sunday, Apr. 8 – "Easter Through Universalist Eyes" worship service @ 11 am. A sermon in the Universalist tradition to proclaim Easter's message of Life & Love, featuring communion, with Pastor Lee Richards. Easter egg hunt for the kids during coffee hour.

Sunday, Apr. 15 – This morning's meditation will consider the final lines of the chorus in Leonard Cohen's "Anthem:" "There is a crack in everything/That's how the light gets in," and the wisdom they suggests for living through times of darkness, defeat and despair.

Sunday, Apr. 15 – Clothing drive (blankets/work clothes). Items collected will be distributed to area migrant workers. Members of the GUUSTO congregations are being asked to donate any surplus blankets and clothing – especially work pants for men; long sleeved shirts for men and women; children's clothes; blankets; as well as clothing for special occasions, such as church and dinner parties. All items should be reasonably clean, laundered, in good repair, and packed neatly in boxes or bags. Our church will collect your donations each Sunday morning, and finally on April 15th (last).

Monday, April 16 – Program on Immigration at 7:00 PM at the Newman Center at the SUNY College at Brockport.

Wednesday, Apr. 18 – Movie with the Minister @ 7 pm. "Mary and Max" is the story of two pen pals half a world, and a generation, apart. This quirky clay animation offers insight into Asperger's syndrome, love and friendship, finding one's way in life, integrity, and lots more. A fun way to wrap up our movie series until the Fall.

Friday, Apr. 20 - Building reserved for a student concert (evening)

Saturday, Apr. 21 – To mark the release of a new history book, a reception, celebration, and book-signing sponsored by the Orleans County Genealogical Society, all day at PMUC.

Sunday, Apr. 22 – Board of Trustees meets @ 9:15 am.

Sunday, Apr. 22 – "An Earth Day / Equinox celebration" worship service @ 11 am. Instead of trying to balance an egg on end, what can we do to balance our lives with the planet? Some thoughts from Lee Richards.

Wednesday, Apr. 25 – Building reserved for a GCC slide show

Thursday, Apr. 26 – Swan Library hosting a young poets contest at PMUC in the evening

Saturday/Sunday, Apr. 27-28 - St. Lawrence District Assembly 2012 in Rochester, NY. [District Assembly 2012 Flyer](#)

Sunday, Apr. 29 – "Cut 'em some slack...a new look at the Golden Rule" worship service @ 11 am. Is the Golden Rule out of date? Who cares about it anymore? Perhaps we need to modernize the Rule for living in the 21st century. On Sunday April 29th we'll explore some possibilities. Minister Emeritus Rev. Richard Hood returns to the pulpit to share some thoughts.

Sunday, Apr. 29 – 118th Annual Meeting of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church, immediately following the worship service. Lunch will be served. Please mark this on your calendar!

Sunday, May 6 – "Teaching in the Amazon Rainforest" worship service @ 11 am. Lily Hollister will present a program on a bi-cultural effort of education in Ecuador.

Sunday, May 6 – Book Discussion group meets after coffee hour (about 12:30 pm). This month's topic is "Earth." Choose a book to read on the topic and then share with us how it impacted your spiritual life. No book group in April. Last book group until Fall.

Friday – Saturday, May 18-19 – Transforming Women's Spirits, 3rd Annual St. Lawrence District Unitarian Universalist Women & Religion Women's Spirituality Conference. Starts at 5 pm Fri. and runs through 5:30 pm Sat. Location: First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse, 109 Waring Road, Syracuse, NY 13224. \$75 Registration due by May 10th. More info at www.slduuwr.org

Friday – Saturday, June 8-9 – Alternative Craft Fair and Book Sale during the Strawberry Festival

Sunday, June 17 at 3:00PM – Concert by Peter Griggs. "500 Years Of Music For Guitar," is a chronological tour from the Renaissance to the Contemporary (also including Baroque, Classical, flamenco, and jazz). The program includes music by J.S. Bach, Gaspar Sanz, Ferdinando Carulli, Bartolome Calatuyud, George Gershwin, Thelonious Monk and Baden Powell - as well as the artist's own compositions. Peter Griggs is a world-traveling musician.

JOYS & SORROWS

• Welcome new members **Jen Schnepf and John Orr**, who joined our church family on 2/19/12. They live in the Albion area and have three beautiful children -- **Tyler, Ryan, and Benjamin**. It's a joy to all of us to have you with us! And we were also very pleased that their son, Benjamin Orr, was dedicated here on 3/14/12. Tyler and Ryan are wonderful to spend time with and they love to have conversations about a variety of topics! And Benjamin is a bit younger and will soon be taking some first steps, but he enjoys looking at people and trying to figure them out.

•**Sarah Diemer** – her books (which are available on Amazon.com) have been so successful that she has been able to quit her job so she can devote her time to writing even more. To celebrate this milestone, she is now sporting lovely pink hair (looking good, Sarah!). And if you haven't purchased and read one of her books yet, please do because you will be amazed at her talent.

•**Louise Wu** – happily reported that Ryan Acuff and his group, which is advocating for families who are losing their homes in the midst of this mortgage crisis, has scored a victory in Rochester for Louise's neighbor. This woman lost her husband a while ago and found herself unable to pay her mortgage. She tried to negotiate with the bank to find an affordable solution for her in order to keep her home but faced an obstinate bank and a hostile police department. With this

win, a new mortgage was negotiated that she can afford and she will be able to stay in her home. However, this woman has been traumatized by all she has gone through and this all was so unfortunate. Many thanks to Louise and to Ryan's group to help bring a happy ending for one person unfairly treated.

•**Rev. John Rex** – sadly has made the decision to retire from the pulpit this June. His last date to preach in the pulpit here will be June 10th. John has been a wonderful addition to our line-up of talent for the last 6 years. His extensive travels all over the globe have given us insights into how UU's in far and remote places 'do church'. And his activism for gay rights has been noted and appreciated here. John has given many wonderful sermons at this church and he will be very much missed. Thanks for all your excellent work with us, John!

•**Beth Allen** – relayed that her wonderful mother died about 5 months ago, and she has also lost an uncle and a niece to cancer recently. On a happier note, one of her nephews was accepted at UB and another niece who graduated from High School with an Associate's Degree is attending Stanford.

•What a joy to have **Margaret-Ann Milne** CAGO (Colleague of the American Guild of Organists) here to devote an entire service to organ music! She also added remarks about her career as an organist with a little history, a little music theory, and a bit of humor. What a treat!

•**Chris Loss** – thanked Pastor Lee Richards and the entire congregation for all the support through her mother's decline

and death, and with the Memorial Service with calling hours at the church on February 22nd. Pastor Lee was wonderful, ever present in person or by phone through the whole ordeal, and he did a great job with the entire Memorial and Internment service. And Chris especially thanked Dick Hoffman for cleaning and polishing the church and C.W. Lattin for all of his work as well. And there were many calls, cards, and well-wishes from the entire congregation that were much appreciated. This church meant so much to Chris's mother and she would have been very pleased to see all the efforts that were made on her behalf, and the church packed with people for her final farewell. This is what it means to have a church family and Chris and her family were so grateful for all the support and help.

•**Sarah and Jenn Diemer** welcomed their wonderful friend, **Kat**, at a recent service to join them in their sacred space. And Kat, it was great to have you here!

PULLMAN PLAUDITS

•**Craig and Gay Smith** have donated a computer for the Minister's study.

•**Sarah and Jennifer Diemer** have donated a espresso maker to the church, and we are looking forward to having some fancy coffees soon!

•\$820 has been donated in memory of Jean Bistoff to this church so far. Thanks to the many generous donators!

•**Chris Loss** has donated some toys to the RE room for the children.

•**Sarah and Jennifer Diemer** have graciously agreed to serve on the Fund-Raising Committee!!! Other volunteers are desired. Please see Sarah if you are interested.

•Many thanks to **Diana Dudley, Eileen Della Costa, Betty Knight, and Chris Loss** for helping out in the Sunday School room.

•**Pastor Lee Richards and Louise Wu** for the wonderful breakfast that they made for the kick-off pledge drive on March 4....fantastic!! And that's what I call a breakfast...scrambled eggs, bacon, fruit salad, oatmeal, bagels, and juices.

•**Jennifer Diemer** has agreed to serve on the Shut-In Committee and will be sending out cards to members and

friends as needed. If you are aware that someone has had an occurrence in their life that would call for the church to respond (such as a graduation, birth, death, wedding, illness, etc), please contact Jennifer. If you are unsure how to reach her, you may e-mail the webmaster or also contact Chris Loss, and we will be sure to get the information to Jenn. If there is a need for Pastoral assistance, don't forget to also contact Pastor Lee Richards.

•**Andrea Rebeck** – for all her excellent work with the Building and Grounds Committee!

•**Diana Dudley, Jim Knight**, and others, who continue to march at the Courthouse every Monday from 3 PM to 4 or 5 PM. for Occupy Albion!

•**Dick Hoffman** – for all the repair work that he continues to do to help out the church.

•**Alan Nugent** – who has been getting out Newsletters all winter despite his living in Florida for part of the year! He is anticipated to return sometime around Easter...welcome back, Alan!

Do you think you might be a Unitarian Universalist?
You may find this church fills your spiritual and human needs...

--If you are eager to consider religious questions with others who are not always certain they have all the answers, but who are determined to keep searching with an open mind, and acceptance of other peoples' beliefs...

--If you are looking for a religious community in which to seek spiritual growth...

--If you would like the fellowship of others for celebration and worship, discussion and education, friendship and mutual support...

--If you want children to be helped to develop their own religious beliefs...

--If you wish to preserve and extend the traditions of personal freedom and human dignity against the dangers they face today.

Pastor Lee Richards would love to answer questions about us as you consider membership.

Pastoral Care

One of the advantages of having a called minister is the 24/7 availability of a listening ear. Pastor Lee Richards is 100% committed to helping parishioners when stuff hits the fan. You are encouraged to call Lee and share what's going on, or pull him aside during coffee hour. Lee wants to know about the difficulties people are facing. Sometimes just talking about your troubles with a minister will help with finding a solution.

Lee can be reached at 585-436-1786, or on his cell at 585-729-8167. He also has a toll-free number: 877-265-1709. Lee is also available for home and hospital visits, or can meet with people in the pastor's office at the church.

Update on our AED Fund-raiser



Level of Donations

Help fully charge our campaign for an AED

This special project was begun in October. It is common during a minister's installation to take up an offering to be used for a special purpose. At Lee's suggestion, the board agreed to the wisdom of having an AED unit on site and so that was chosen to be the physical legacy of that ceremony.

An automated external defibrillator (or AED) is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses potentially life threatening cardiac arrhythmias, and is able to treat them through the application of electrical therapy. Many public buildings are equipped with one or more of these time-saving units and they have been proven to save lives while waiting for EMT's to arrive.

At PMUC we know one cannot place a price on life, but an AED will cost about \$1350 to buy. As of March 20th, we've raised over \$825.00 towards our goal! A big hearty thank you and hug to all the generous contributors! We are almost 2/3 of the way to our goal.

Now won't you help us finish up this drive with a donation? On our website you can find a "Donate" button in the right-hand column of any page. That's a quick and easy way to contribute. Or, if you prefer to send a check, please write "AED" in the memo line so we can properly credit your funds. Thank you.

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.
Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882)

Eye on the Board of Trustees

-from the Board Meeting held on Sunday, March 18, 2012

*Ministerial Report – Pastor Lee Richards. Pastor Lee has conducted 3 worship services, one funeral, and one wedding this past month. He attended a book discussion group on 2/25, a Potluck supper on 3/5, and a Building and Grounds meeting on 3/11. He conducted a new member ceremony on 2/19 (Jen Schnepf and John Orr), a child dedication on 3/4 (Ben Orr), a pledge drive kick off with breakfast on 3/4. He will be attending a SLUUD meeting and presented a plan for summer services to be held. He estimated that there would be about 7 services, with the need for one to two speakers besides him at a cost of about \$500. Chris Loss stated that it is clear that having a minister is making a difference in the growth of our church and the satisfaction of our members.

*Update on NYSCU Loan – Chris Loss reported that PMUC has been granted a \$40,000 loan. We have until December, 2012 to claim this loan, and once we submit the request for the check, we will have three years to pay the loan back at 0% interest.

*Update on Building & Grounds – one meeting was held and another one will be needed to further determine priorities.

*RE Committee – have been having Sunday School recently, and have been utilizing the children's story during the service to fuel RE instruction and dialog. The committee will be re-activated and volunteers will be needed to help out. Also more supplies are needed.

*Fund-Raising Committee – Sarah and Jennifer Diemer have agreed to serve on the committee. Sarah presented a plan for the Strawberry Festival that will involve very little cost to us. They plan to have an Alternative Craft Fair, including a cupcake booth. Dennis Seekins has also offered to donate a large amount of books for a book booth. Sarah plans to do a lot of advertising. And there was discussion about how to get on the actual festival program this year for more publicity. We would also be selling doughnuts and coffee each morning, popcorn, and will offer tours as we have done in the past. The Board agreed that this was a good plan and will estimate some costs for the next meeting.

* Summer Picnic – Diana Dudley proposed a 'family reunion' picnic and will invite back past members.

*Annual Meeting – the date was set for Sunday, April 29th. This will be posted, as per the by-laws.

*The nominating committee will be activated.

Next Board Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 15, 2012.

Pullman Memorial Universalist Church
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