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Member of The Unitarian Universalist Association

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Minister Musings, by Lee Richards

Close to home. It feels like the world is becoming too dangerous a place to live. Twenty children are gunned down in their classroom just 300 miles from here. Two firemen are killed (and three other first responders shot) on the east side of Rochester. Threats to commit harm made in the Holley high school. The Waterport mosque incident with a discharged shotgun just two years ago.

These all have two things in common - they involved guns, and the residents of these communities were shocked because they believed "it could never happen here." But it did.

Albion and Orleans county may seem like "Mayberry R.F.D." at first glance but this is not the "innocent" 1950's or 60's. There is honest cause for mothers to hug their children tightly to their chests and fear that every time they see them off to school that the next time they lay eyes upon them just might be in a morgue.

We can no longer say, "It could never happen here" because the reality is that it could. Yes, it is very unlikely, the odds are slim, but violence is occurring all around us, and it really *is* close to home.

I don't write this with the intent to scare anyone. Rather, I imagine you're already scared and I'm just naming the fear - naming the elephant in the room - so we can begin to talk logically about it.

This country is going to have a discussion about gun control and mental health care. It can't be avoided after Newtown. It's a safe bet there will be many shrill voices on all sides of the issues. We have an opportunity as a congregation of rational and caring people - as a community of faith and love - be a voice of reason in the coming debates.

Service Schedule – Sunday at 11:00AM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Coffee Hour</u>
Dec. 30	Lee Richards	"Fireside Service"	
Jan. 6	Michelle George Yates	"Epiphany!!"	
Jan. 13	Lee Richards	"Locating Community"	
Jan. 20	Susan Daiss	"Making much of something small"	
Jan. 27	Timothy Madigan	"When a Body Meets a Body"	
Feb. 3	Don Reidell		

Sunday, Dec. 30 - “Fireside Service” @ 11 am. This annual event in the church parlor offers a different setting and format for coming together in blessed community. Pastor Lee Richards will help us situate ourselves between the year just past and the year ahead.

Sunday, Jan. 6 - "Epiphany!!" worship service @ 11 am. It is celebrated in many ways among Christians throughout the world as the revelation of the Divine in the person of Jesus. What does Epiphany mean in our individual lives? How do we recognize epiphanies or revelations of the Divine to us and in our lives, and what to we do with them? Presented by Michelle George Yates. Michelle is a member of the Amherst UU church, attended seminary at CRCDS, married this summer, inherited three beautiful stepchildren, and is currently a Chaplain Resident at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Monday, Jan. 7 - Potluck supper @ 6:30 pm. Bring a dish to pass and enjoy the fellowship of good company, good conversation, and good food.

Saturday, Jan. 12 - Board Retreat, 9 am to noon.

Sunday, Jan. 13 - Finance committee meeting @ 10 am.

Sunday, Jan. 13 - “Locating Community” worship service @ 11 am with Lee Richards. According to realtors the three most important factors in determining the desirability of a property are “location, location, location.” Today we’ll explore the importance of location to community.

Wednesday, Jan. 16 - Movie with the Minister @ 7 pm. “Murderball” Think you know what the limitations are of being a quadriplegic? Think again. Free admission & popcorn.

Sunday, Jan. 20 - Board of Trustees meets @ 9:15 am.

Sunday, Jan. 20 - Worship service @ 11 am with Chaplain Susan Daiss. The opening line of a poem I read recently... "Make much of something small..." captured my imagination. My service on the 20th will be a meditation on the practice of noticing grace and beauty in overlooked corners of our lives.

Friday, Jan. 25 - Last day for newsletter submissions. Please send your articles and news in advance of this date, if possible.

Sunday, Jan. 27 - “When a Body Meets a Body: The Ethics of Displaying Human Cadavers” worship service @ 11 am with Timothy Madigan (Associate Professor of Philosophy, St. John Fisher College). Robert Louis Stevenson’s “The Body Snatcher” and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein both address the very real phenomenon of body snatching (best exemplified by the real-life case of Burke and Hare, the “resurrection men”) which was endemic in early 18th century England. I will discuss the medical demands for cadavers at the time, as well as the interesting reasons why the philosopher Jeremy Bentham had his body put on display in the front foyer of the University of London shortly after his death in 1832, where it still remains, as an attempt to encourage people to donate their bodies to science. I will also address recent examples of “body snatching” in cases where human remains and tissues have been stolen and sold for profit, as well as the phenomenon of such exhibits as Gunther van Hagens’ “Body Worlds” – should cadavers be displayed and, if so, what – if any – should be the ethical limitations on such practices? In particular, what role does consent play when it is obvious that the dead can’t consent?

Sunday, Jan. 27 - Book Discussion group @ 12:30 pm. This month we’ve agreed to all read the same book: “I Don’t Believe in Atheists” by Chris Hedges.

Sunday, Feb. 3 - worship service @ 11 am with Rev. Don Reidell.

April 26-27 - District Assembly in Jamestown, NY. “Out of Bounds: Moving Beyond Our Boundaries.” Rev. Peter Morales, President of the UUA, will be the keynote speaker. More info at www.ohiomeadville.org/districtassembly

JOYS & SORROWS

•**Alan Nugent** – it was with great sadness that we reported that Alan's life partner, Charlie Proctor, died on December 19th in Florida. There were no formal services held. Alan has some very dear friends in Florida who have been with him, and he has received a lot of support from his church family here at PMUC as well. Alan publishes our Newsletters to send out online and mail out hard copies each month, and despite all that has been going on, he has continued to do this for us. Alan is a remarkable man and we are very grateful he is part of our community! Our hearts are with him at this difficult time!

•**Sherry and Dave Hagmier** – were very pleased that Cody Coopenberg made it home for the holidays! He was greeted by a crowd of people at the airport! This has been a long road and the Hagmiers have been cheerleaders for this brave young man since he was burned so badly in Afghanistan back in July to have Cody home for the holidays is a dream come true! And soon Cody, their daughter Hannah, and young child will be reunited as a family.

•**Sara Phillips** – has been filling a dumpster with memories lately because she and her husband, Tom, are planning to sell their home and move to a place where they won't have to care for a big house and lawn. Don't worry..they plan to stay in the area..just a bit further out.

•**Jim and Betty Knight** – traveled recently to Atlanta, Georgia, to see their youngest daughter, who recently had surgery due to breast cancer. She will have chemotherapy as well. Jim and Betty needed to see her and be with her, make sure she's ok. We all hope for a speedy recovery!

•**Sarah Diemer** – performed her first public reading in early December, reciting her work 'Wolves of Leaving'. What an amazing talent she is!

•**Debby Rodrigues** – is trying to organize a group to attend 'The Book of Mormon' in Rochester in March...and if you are interested, please see her!

•**Penny and George Miller, Bonnie Beiswenger, Monica and Fiona Beck, Marilyn Kilborn, and Danny and Lynn Wright** – it was so nice to see your faces this past month!!

•**Gay Smith** – announced recently that Craig had some kind of heart 'event', and this was following his having a stent put in a week before. Craig said that he had some chest pain and decided to go to the hospital and have it checked out, which is always a good idea. He feels fine now, thank goodness!

•**Tyler Smith** – performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (vocally) in December. What an incredible honor and well deserved as Tyler is an incredible talent!

•**Debby Rodriguez** – said recently that finding this church has changed her whole life and she is so happy to have found us! To spend time with such compassionate and intelligent people has been a great experience for her! Thank-you so much, Debby...and we are so glad that you have come to this community, as well!!

•**Liz Schaal** – attended the Winter Solstice service and was grateful for that, and said it was wonderful!!

•**Dr. Kelly Richards** – Pastor Lee's daughter, attended the Candlelight Service..it was very nice to see her!

•**The tragedy in Newtown, Conn** – Rich DellaCosta played a piece to honor those who died in Newtown and many tears were shed in the congregation! This is a horror we just can't grasp in any way – it was so senseless. Let us work now to end this kind of violence!!

PULLMAN PLAUDITS

•**C.W. Lattin** – the holidays would not have happened quite so well at this church without all of his hard work!!!! He not only decorated the church beautifully, but was around and set up for all of our events at the church! And his religious prints and nativity figures added a real touch of class! He also was the contact person and assisted the Genealogical Society with the Hand bell choir event here in early December. He is a treasure to us!

•**Sarah and Jenn Diemer** – provided a beautiful Christmas tree for our holiday festivities! They also hosted several Vespers services as well as the Winter Solstice Service here! What talented and generous ladies they are!!

•**Jim Knight** – graciously provided plants or gifts for our shut-ins for the holiday season. This is Jim's second year volunteering to do this! Many thanks, Jim!

•**Chris Loss** – purchased gifts for the youth of the church for the Annual Candlelight Service.

•**Monica Beck** – shared her beautiful voice with us as our soloist for the Candlelight Service! Great job, Monica!

•**Bonnie Beiswenger** – performed several holiday tunes on her dulcimer for the Candlelight Service! It is always a joy to hear the sweet tones of that unique instrument!

•**Roger and Ingrid LaMont** – who donated a large sum to the church for the Restoration Fund. This was done because of our assistance to the Swan (now the Hoag) Library.

•**Pastor Lee and Louise Richards** – were present at every event over the holiday season, and also worked very hard behind the scenes with needed pastoral care, setting up the sound system, planning for the future and so on. What a gift they have been to us, providing leadership and comfort that we have badly needed for so long!

•**Chaplin Susan Daiss and Rev. Donald Reidell**, who have been in the pulpit and part of our church community for yet another year, delivering great sermons and helping make PMUC a great place to attend!

•**Heather Boyd** – has been organizing some 'walking' events over the past weeks. It has been a fun way to relax and have more time to socialize.

Year-end Gifts and Donations

Just a quick reminder that December 31st is the last day to make a charitable donation for income tax purposes. If you've reached the end of the year and find you've got a little something leftover, why not throw a little love at your favorite church? Checks can be written and sent to PO Box 87, Albion, NY 14411, or electronic donations using credit cards, PayPal or bank transfer can be accomplished online at pullmanmemorialdonations.com.

Thinking more long term? You can show your love even after departing this earth with planned giving. Contact Pastor Lee Richards or Sara Phillips for a Planned Giving Packet which describes the easy process for leaving a legacy gift to your church community.

News from Down South

The annual holiday letter from Molly and Dick Hood (our minister emeritus) brought the following news...

Molly heads up an adult/student reading group (Dick is one of the volunteers). Molly belongs to the "Chimers" - a group which performs like a handbell choir but with tuning forks. She also makes her own greeting cards, participates in a luncheon group and women's book club, and volunteers on Saturdays at a non-profit thrift shop.

Dick plays bridge whenever he can, does volunteer tax preparation for AARP, is president of the neighborhood association in Maine (where they vacation), and occasionally preaches to stay in practice.

Travels this year included Maine, Boston, San Antonio, Oakland, and will conclude with New Zealand and Australia after Christmas. Children and grandchildren are all well. You may read the full scoop in the PMUC social hall where the letter is posted on the bulletin board.

Hearing Assistive System

The hearing assistive system is ready for use. We have six hearing assistive devices on hand. They look like, and work like, little FM transistor radios. Each has an on-off switch and volume control, plus a choice of earplugs or headphones. We provide labeled ziplock plastic bags to our regular users so you can, in essence, have and identify your own device. The bag system will allow you to maintain your individual settings and keep your device from entangling with others while in storage.

PullmanMemorial.org

Have you spent some time looking through our website lately? There is an amazing amount of information to be discovered there. Photos, videos, sermons to read or listen to, links to other websites, descriptions of our building and organ, info for first-time visitors, lists of recommended books and movies, testimonials, UU quotes, minister biographies, an archive of past newsletters, current events, history, and so much more!

What's more, new information is being posted weekly (sometimes daily). Be sure to check it out for yourself and also suggest it to your friends. Next to word of mouth, it is our best advertisement of what PMUC has to offer.

Pullman Pastor's Blog

by Lee Richards

What are you missing? About once a week I post a short reflection on the internet regarding some subject matter that captures my attention. Recent posts have been about finding happiness, unfinished projects, the war on children, and the promise of Christmas.

The Minister's Musings column appears on the first page of the monthly newsletter. In between, I invite you to check out my explorations and ramblings on the weblog. And please, if you feel so moved, leave your own ideas in the comments section after an article. The direct url for the blog is pullmanpastor.blogspot.com, or you can get there by a link on our main church website at pullmanmemorial.org

SPECIAL >>>> No access to the internet but want to read my weekly musings? Subscribe to receive a paper copy by postal mail once a month. Send your name and address to: Lee Richards, 31 Ravenwood Ave, Rochester, NY 14619. This service is offered free of charge as a means for staying connected and promoting Unitarian Universalist thought.

Historical Postcard Views of Albion, New York

Everyone is raving about Bill Lattin's newest book. This limited edition book was published on behalf of our church with proceeds to be used for building restoration.

A beautiful book, it features 200 postcard views in full color, with the images covering almost an 80 year span – from the 1890's to the early 1970's. It makes a wonderful gift, and since it is a one-time-only, limited edition run I recommend you do your Christmas shopping early before they are gone. Books are available at the church, in our online store (pullmanmemorial.com), and select area stores.

Electronic Donations & Automatic Pledges

It's the easiest way to support your faith community. Using modern technology to "set it and forget it" you can make regular electronic donations and pledge fulfillment via the internet.

The website pullmanmemorialdonations.com offers several choices for making financial contributions to our mission. (You can also click on the "Donations" tab at the top of any page in our main website.)

Drop-down menus provide a variety of monthly and weekly automatic options. Alternatively, you can make one-time donations in any amount, learn where to send a check, or inquire about planned giving. All major credit cards are accepted, or you can fund your contribution with a bank transfer or a PayPal account.

Of course, cash and checks still work OK, too. The offering plate will continue to circulate during a Sunday service to provide an opportunity for "instant wallet withdrawals." But if you prefer to plan ahead and pay online then please check out our donations webpage.

Eye on the Board

An assortment of odds and ends tidbits from the December meeting:

- 1.) Sara Phillips announced her planned retirement from the position of collector, and Diana Dudley from the position of treasurer, as of the next annual meeting in April.
 - 2.) It was noted we received a \$500 check designated for church restoration from the Lamonts on behalf of Bill Lattin's support of the new library and for storing their bookshelves at our church.
 - 3.) The \$40K loan check from NYSCU for roof repair has arrived.
 - 4.) It was decided to discontinue providing bagels before service, except for the months of July and August.
 - 5.) Sarah and Jenn Diemer will be away from mid-January until summer, but still have plans to hold the Alternative Craft Fair during the Strawberry Festival.
- Complete minutes are available upon request.

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.

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