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**Member of The Unitarian Universalist Association**

Minister: Lee Richards, 585-436-1786, [pastor.lee.richards@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.lee.richards@gmail.com)

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## Minister Musings

by Lee Richards

Family. Holidays. Each okay separately, but maybe not so much together. I think it is useful to recognize that holidays aren't always Norman Rockwell occasions. Many movies have been made about dysfunctional family holiday get-togethers, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas, but also for Seders, Fourth of July picnics, and more. The added stress of a holiday which is supposed to be a heart-warming reuniting of family members to share a brief time around a meal is fodder for many a comedy, and tragedy.

We dream of sitting down to a big spread, seeing distant relatives, sharing stories and laughs, and maybe exchanging thoughtfully-selected gifts but somehow the actuality falls short, maybe even far short of the ideal. The main course is overcooked, cousin Patty gets too tipsy on the sherry, the people we really want to see don't show up (or have passed away and are sorely missed), a storm takes out the electricity, the dog knocks over the tree, or any of a myriad of things go wrong.

This year, life's "little stressors" may even be worse than in the past. Many folks are struggling financially and can't afford to travel or to buy the food for putting on a holiday meal - or worse, have lost house and home to foreclosure. Others may be struggling medically, and are unable to be physically present. Some family might be stationed overseas, and in harm's way. Statistics tell us that domestic violence and suicides increase in November and December.

I say all this not to depress anyone but to help us be more realistic about the holidays. They can still be great fun and valuable times in our lives if we approach them the right way. Begin with accepting that no matter how much effort you expend, they will not be perfect. Perfect is for Hallmark greeting cards, not real life. We are imperfect human beings so why should we think we can pull off the perfect banquet or choose the perfect gift? Relax, accept that something (or several things) will not go as planned and the holidays will be more enjoyable for everyone.

Secondly, recognize that some of the best family gatherings may not be with blood relatives. I often speak of our "church family" - a faith community formed by folks who can be different in many ways but also have a spiritual commonality. Sure, we may disagree on a lot of things but we come together each week to practice being in covenant - showing love for one another even if, or when, we disagree.

Our pot-luck suppers are so much fun because we don't expect perfection from either the food or each other. It's a little like having a holiday family gathering once a month. And this month is extra special because we have two chances to break bread together - our "first Monday" pot-luck, and again on the 20th after service for our Thanksgiving meal. So let us be thankful for small pleasures, like being able to create our own family when the occasion arises, and continue to be mindful of others who may be struggling.

### Pastoral Care

One of the advantages of having a called minister is the 24/7 availability of a listening ear. Pastor Lee Richards 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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## Service Schedule – Sunday at 11:00AM

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Nov. 6	David Friedman	“Borders and Immigration” (Daylight Saving Time Ends.)
Nov. 13	Rev. John Rex	“Remembering Michael Servetus”
Nov. 20	Lee Richards	“Recipes for Life” + Thanksgiving Dinner
Nov. 27	Lee Richards	“And Service is its Law”
Dec. 4	Rev. Donald Reidell	

**Wednesday, Nov. 2 - "The Faces of Immigration** - How our Unjust and Broken System Destroys Lives - and What We Can Do About It." A panel of migrant advocates featuring: the pastor of Oscar Romero Church, who celebrates Mass in Spanish with migrant workers in their home; a high school Spanish teacher who has been trying to set up a support network for families and friends of "disappeared" victims of raids; and a guest speaker who will give a personal account of a detained loved one. At 7:00 pm, Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester.

**Sunday, Nov. 6 - "Borders and Immigration"** at 11 am, by UUA trustee David Friedman. David visited Arizona earlier this year to see first-hand the situation with deportation of "illegal aliens." What he saw the U.S. doing will break your heart, what the UUA is doing about it will start to mend that broken heart. This is a talk you won't want to miss - so remember that Daylight Saving Time ends this Sunday (set your clocks back one hour).

**Monday, Nov. 7 - Pot-Luck Supper** at 6:30 pm. Each 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, Nov. 13 - "Remembering Michael Servetus"** at 11 am, by Rev. John Rex. If you haven't heard of him, the time has come. If you have heard of him, you know how very important he is among our heretical religious forebears. Let us recognize the 500th anniversary of his birth.

**Wednesday, Nov. 16 - Movie with the Minister** at 7 pm. Join us to see and discuss "Duck." Come, watch, and be amazed at how a web-footed, feathered being can evoke humanity in others. I guarantee you won't be eating duck for Thanksgiving.

**Sunday, Nov. 20 - "Recipes for Life"** at 11 am. To whet your appetite for the dinner to follow, a cook and/or baker's view of the necessary ingredients for maximizing Life, presented by Lee Richards.

**Sunday, Nov. 20 - Thanksgiving dinner** at noon, immediately after the service. You may bring a dish to pass, suggested food items are on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the social hall, or send an email to [closs@rochester.rr.com](mailto:closs@rochester.rr.com) (Everyone is welcome, with or without a dish.)

**Sunday, Nov. 27 - Board of Trustees** meets at 9:30 am.

**Sunday, Nov. 27 - "And Service Is Its Law"** at 11 am. The second in a series of reflections on what it means to do church in a Unitarian Universalist way, presented by Lee Richards. NO BOOK DISCUSSION group meeting this month or in December due to the busy holidays! Topic for January will be "Sex." Choose a book to read on the topic of sex and then share with us how it impacted your spiritual life when the group meets again on Sunday, Jan. 29th.

**Wednesday, Nov. 30 - Women of Reform Judaism** present a program on obstetric fistula at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Rochester at 7:30 pm. Dr. Deborah Rib, a private OB/GYN, will address this serious issue and present a screening of "From Despair to Dignity." All women are welcome and encouraged to attend this important and informative program. Please RSVP by November 20th, 244-7060 x233.

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## JOYS & SORROWS

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- \* **Rene' Schasel** – it is a great joy to be installing Lee Richards as our Pastor!
- \* **Louise Wu** – was amazed at how this church, this congregation...the people here make it such a great place to be!
- \* **Gay Smith** – reminded the congregation that November is 'novel-writing' month, and if you are at all interested in writing, this may be the time to tackle that book.
- \* **Chris Loss** – wanted to wish Andrea Rebeck a very happy birthday on October 30 and thank her for all of her wonderful work on the grant.
- \* **Dennis Seekins**– expressed that the Occupy Wallstreet group is really giving him hope for the future.
- \* **Chris Loss**– is hoping that some more progressive candidates are elected to the Legislature and that the Concerned Citizens group can keep the nursing home (The Villages) from being sold and privatized.
- \* **Louise Wu** – is hoping that the Occupy Wallstreet movements will continue to spread and make a difference in the lives of average Americans!
- \* **Jean Bistoff** – turns 93 on November 6!! She resides now at the Villages of Orleans.

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## PULLMAN PLAUDITS

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- \* **Rev. Donald Reidell** – his sermon on October 2<sup>nd</sup> was straight from the heart on why he must attend church and cannot sit on the sidelines! Although these were **his** reasons for needing to attend church, many of these same reasons seem to resonate for the rest of us, as well. See the synopsis in this newsletter!
- \* **Diana Dudley** – kudos to her for organizing the Albion chapter of the Occupy Wallstreet protestors (Occupy Albion, or the 99 %). A group has been out protesting on several occasions and seems to be growing. Inquiries are being made as to what they are out protesting, and a recent article in the Batavia Daily News showcased some of the complaints (such as the Afghanistan war, corporate greed, student loans, etc.). Way to go, Diana!

\* **C.W Lattin** –did an awesome job with his walking tour of the town on Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. Bill talked about the only hanging that took place in Albion in the late 1800's. And he spoke about some of the interesting architectural features of the each of the churches in the square. It was interesting how the Catholic church was built so close to the sidewalk to hide the Baptist church from view, that the Presbyterian church was an architectural masterpiece with a blending of different styles and has the largest steeple in town, and that the Free Methodist church was built after the Methodist minister was dismissed from his duties because he was preaching about ending slavery. Great job, Bill!

\* **Andrea Rebeck** – has finished her work on the EPF grant and has submitted it. She has done a fantastic job on this effort and we are very grateful for her efforts! Many thanks, Andrea!

\* **Louise Wu** – has been busy with several social justice efforts in Rochester and has been marching with the Occupy Rochester movement. And she has also taken time to come and help out the Albion faction! Louise works tirelessly to help others!

\* **Pastor Lee Richards** – who continues to do an excellent job for this church! His first Movie Night with the Minister was a resounding success. Participants munched on cupcakes and popcorn and watched the amazing offering 'Marwencol', followed by a great deal of discussion. What a surprise of a movie, and what fun!!

\* **Pastor Lee Richards, Diana Dudley, Chris Loss, Gay Smith, and Betty Knight** – for their participation on October 16<sup>th</sup> in the Breast Cancer Walk at Watts Farm. This group (called the Pullman Pink Ladies & Gents) raised over \$100 for the cause and managed to solve the world's problems while we were walking and talking.

\* **C.W. Lattin** – wowed the crowd with some interesting opening words at the Installation Service on October 9<sup>th</sup>. He talked about the swastikas that appear at various places in the building and what they meant back in 1894 before they took on a more sinister meaning in the 1920's. The symbol back when the church was built was positive, and has represented concepts such as life, sun, power, strength, and good luck and has roots that go back over 3,000 years.

\* **Dennis Seekins** – did a tremendous job with Pastor Lee’s portrait, which will hang in the church and was presented to him at the Installation service on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

\* **Pastor Lee Richards, Susan Daiss, Rev. Richard Hood, and Chris Loss** – who all gave mini-speeches at the Installation service. What a wonderful event that was!!

\* **Harriet Greaser** – guest organist at the Installation service, who offered a masterful rendition of “Toccatà from Symphony No. 5” by Charles Marie Widor. Harriet spent almost a week practicing on this extremely challenging piece, and her efforts produced perfection!

\* **Maarit Vega and her daughter, Lydia Erakare**- guest soloists at the Installation Service, who sang like angels on the “Pie Jesu” by Andrew Lloyd Weber and “Liebst du um Schönheit” by Mahler. What tremendous talent we have in this area!

\* **Richard Hoffman** – for painting the ramp prior to the installation service. It looks very nice!

\* **Diana Dudley and Gerald Lombardi** – who were spotted trimming the hedges in front of the church so that the Wayside Pulpit is more visible!

\* **C.W. Lattin** – for the spectacular floral arrangements for the Installation Service! They were amazing!

14 October 2011

Dear Christine, members of the Board, members and friends of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church,

Lee and I wanted to be sure that we told you all how absolutely fantastic the special double installation ceremony of Lee as minister, and Dick Hood as emeritus, was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month! The deeply caring and selfless effort given by everyone made it an unforgettable occasion. We will always be so moved by the memory of the planning, polishing, painting, invitations, phone calls, flower arranging, refreshments, and much more (even clean-up afterwards!) that showed off this already remarkable church in the finest light. It was a substantial undertaking, which in stellar form, you all made look effortless! PMUC is a great church unlike any other.

Thank you for making Lee (and me) so welcome.

With love,

H. Lee Richards

Louise Wu-Richards.

Many, many thanks for the honor that you have bestowed on me by giving me the title Minister Emeritus. I am deeply touched by your kindness.

Also, the service of recognition and installation was perfect. The decorations (especially Bill's striking centerpiece in the parish hall) were beautiful. The music was inspiring. The words of all the speakers were very meaningful to me. Even the cake was unique!

My thanks to everyone, and especially to Lee who put the whole thing together.

My 35 years were wonderful and are in the past. Your time with Lee has just begun. The future is bright.

Dick Hood

Hello Susan and Chris,

This is Molly and I want to tell you once again how moving and touching your speeches were at Sunday's afternoon service. I had no idea what to expect but the whole service was awesome and reflected a lot of careful planning.

David kept saying how happy he was to attend and how meaningful to was to him. I was telling my younger son Alex in California all about it and he wondered if I could get ahold of a copy of your speeches. [...]

We arrived back at our home in South Carolina this afternoon...965 miles from David's house. The address here is 17 Wainwright Drive , Bluffton , SC 29909 .

THANKS SO MUCH!!!! It was just great seeing everyone again.

Love, Molly Hood

Dear Pastor. Richards,

With a glad heart I write to congratulate you and your congregation on the occasion of your installation. They are so lucky to have you, and you are lucky, I am sure you are already know, to have them. May you and the good folks of Pullman Memorial enjoy many blessed years of ministry together.

In faith,

Rev. Kelly W. Asprooth-Jackson

## Notes from Rev. Don Reidell's Sermon on 10/2 How He Became a Church Drop-In!

For a while in his youth, Don had decided that he hated church. He even dropped out for awhile because he thought church was boring, a prejudicial prison. When he decided he was free of church, at first it was great - he could sleep in, go sailing and golfing. He was free. .hallelujah! But that didn't last. A gradual sense of emptiness began to set in. It ate away at him and became overwhelming. At some point, he could no longer ignore the gnawing feeling of emptiness. Here is why he decided to become a church 'drop-in':

- 1) The folly of the skeptic – he thought he could ignore church because of his doubts, but by doubting everything, you become barren.
- 2). The folly of the academic –he thought he could read books and gather information and he wouldn't need church, but merely collecting academic information does not fill the soul. A personal faith shared with others is necessary to survive reality.
- 3). The folly of the individualist –he thought he didn't need to go to church because he could have his personal beliefs and be happy with that, but when we insist on autonomy, we become isolated and our soul flounders. We need to share beliefs and ideas with others, otherwise we reside in a solitary desert.
- 4). The folly of illusions of perfection –he thought he could avoid church because he was unhappy with this or that , but no institution is perfect, and you are still better off being there. We need kindred spirits, there is strength in numbers. We need to be patient, do the work of the church, advocate for a better way....
- 5). Not to be here – that's another folly. The church is forever building, you have freedom to cultivate the mind, relish the dialogue, cultivate a better world, sacrifice for a better world. The church offers that hope, fellowship, renewal of the spirit, communal acts of kindness, a family spirit. Church is where you can share your pain. Church is where you gain strength. Church is where you gain advocates to help.

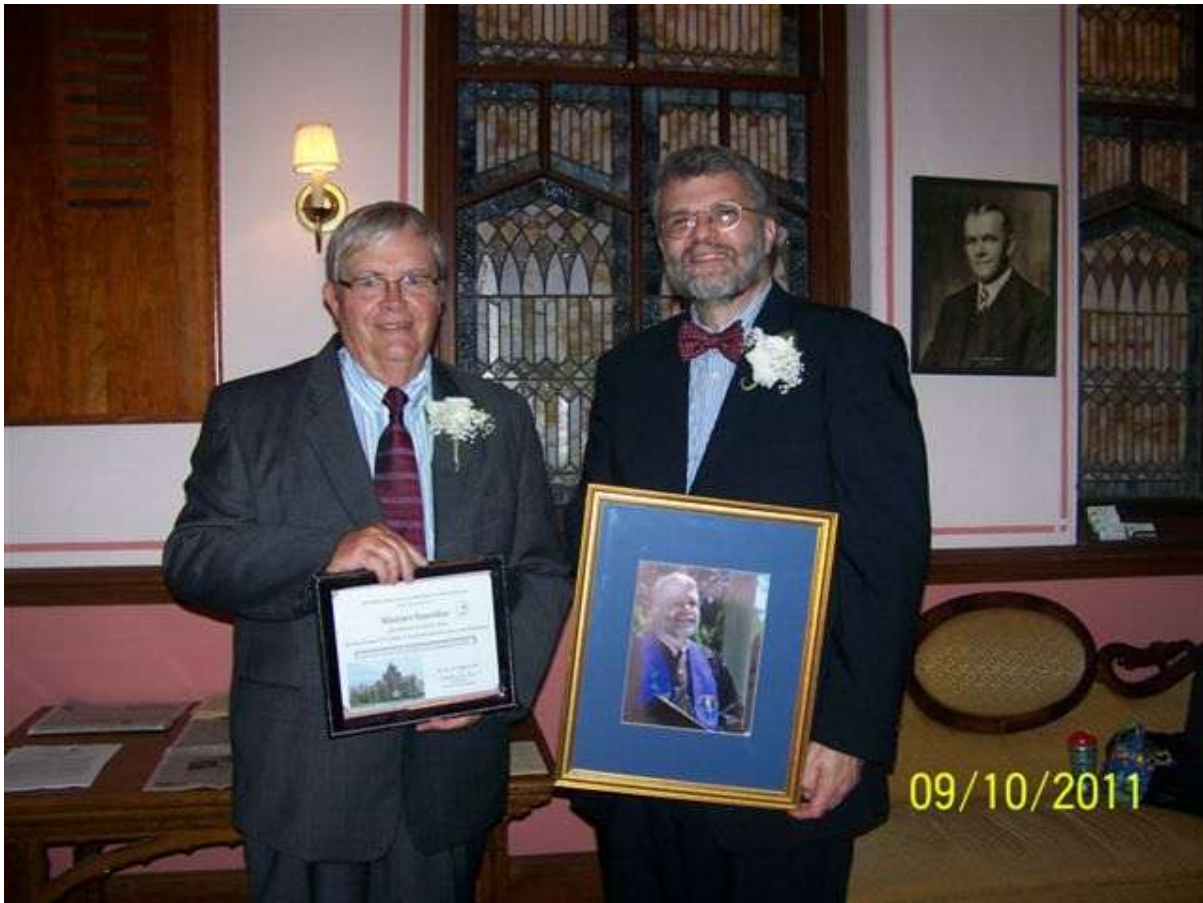
### "Help Us Help You"

PMUC's campaign to purchase an AED (portable defibrillator) continues. We've received over \$400 but we still need your help to reach our \$1350 goal. You can donate on our website <http://pullmanmemorial.org/> using PayPal or any major credit card and it will be earmarked for the AED. Or you can donate by check or cash - just be sure to notate "AED" so we'll know to add it to the special fund.

So Help Us Help You - after all, you never know what "heart-stopping" event may transpire when at church!

### Reports From the Road with Susan Daiss, October 9

- \* **Dan Miller** – saw lots of open fields.
- \* **Chris Loss** – reported seeing lots of pumpkins, gourds, and squash everywhere!
- \* **Dennis Seekins** – noted a rise of water in the creek...and he planned to take a row boat out on it.
- \* **Pastor Lee Richards** – could smell fields that had been freshly cut.
- \* **C.W. Lattin** – could see diminishing green, to be replaced with more red, orange, and brown.
- \* **Sarah Diemer** – witnessed a tree that appeared to be encased in gold as the sun surrounded it, and it looked magical.
- \* **Diana Dudley** – on one of her walks, she had the rare privilege of seeing about 20 vultures flying toward a tree.
- \* **Susan Daiss** – as she drove to church, could see a sky crowded with geese, flying calligraphy in motion, swirling and trying to find an equilibrium. What an amazing scene!



### Eye on the Board of Trustees

-from the meeting held on Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

\* **Treasurer's Report**- there is some confusion regarding how to retrieve the money from the PayPal account, and if we should have a check cut and if there will be a fee. The money will be left in there until that is sorted out. Discussion was held regarding the sale of HSBC banks in this area to First Niagara. We will wait and see what happens with the banks here locally. A check will be made out to the Soup Kitchen for some past months that haven't been sent yet.

\* **Ministerial Report** – Since the last Board meeting...Pastor Lee has done the following:

-**Conducted**: 3 worship services, 1 special installation service on 10/9, rehearsal and wedding, movie with the minister night, and a Memorial service in Rochester .

-**Attended**: 1 PMUC worship service, book discussion group, meeting with the Finance Committee on 9/28, Albion Ministerium meeting on 10/4, church potluck supper, lecture on immigration issues at St. John Fisher College, NYSCU annual meeting in Binghamton as a delegate for PMUC , and 5K walk for a Cure (breast cancer research) with the Pullman Pink Ladies& Gents group

-**Other Activities**: Newsletter submissions, continuing to update Facebook and PMUC website, submitted press release to SLUUD newsletter editor, submitted information about Minister Emeritus to UUA, UUMA, and UURMaPa, updated Wikipedia article with info about Dick Hood's Minister Emeritus status, purchased First Aid kit for main floor restroom, provided additional microphone and floor stand for services "from the floor", correspondence with researcher in Cambridge, England regarding the PMUC Tiffany windows, and provided pastoral care to two members.

**Report from 183<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of New York State Universalists** : Business meeting was chaired by NYSCU President Joyce Gilbert. Two by-law amendments passed: 1) allowing for electronic (on-line) voting by trustees, 2) allowing the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown to join NYSCU. Announcements were made to the convention by Lee Richards that Rev. Richard Hood is to be named Minister Emeritus by PMUC . Plenary speech: was delivered by current Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Association Senior Lecturer in Divinity at Harvard, Dan McKanan. Dan's talk was entitled "Before Clarence Skinner; Rediscovering Early Universalist Radicals". Lee Richards attended two workshops (Marriage in Religion and Law, Informing Our Future: Archiving Church History, and Responses to Diversity in Church and Community). Louise Wu-Richards attended two workshops (Wellspring Spiritual Direction, and Cyber Bullying).

**-Other Concerns** – Lee has been our minister now for six months and would like the Ministerial Committee activated to assess his performance and discuss how things are going.

\* **More Discussion on the NYS Convention** – Chris Loss discussed a phone conversation that she had with Joyce Gilbert prior to the convention. Grants are available through the Convention for social justice efforts, and zero percent loans are also available but need to be submitted before December 31<sup>st</sup> each year. This is a possible idea for the matching fund grant or the fee for hiring a professional fundraiser. We need to check with other agencies to obtain the names of some potential fundraising experts, and also research where other money might be available throughout the country.

\* **Building & Grounds** – Dick has been collecting old windows to have re-cut for use in replacing our basement windows. He has so far replaced about six windows, and there are more to do. Some will need reframing as well as a new window.

\* **Grant Proposal** – Andrea is working on the grant and it will be submitted on October 31<sup>st</sup>. She will need the deed and a new article of resolution, all which she will have today.

\* **Finance Committee** – Chris requested specific actions to be discussed and worked on by January: audit the books, look into software programs for churches that would be viable, recommendation for a financial advisor, look into splitting the Treasurer's responsibilities into the Treasurer handling the incoming and outgoing money, and the Finance Committee overseeing the investments. Diana Dudley will be Dick Hoffman's assistant. The Finance Committee will be setting up a meeting.

\* **UUA Membership** – Discussion of a matter that we were unaware of. If we list only the most active members on the UUA roster, the UUA will then send out a letter to those who are not listed and tell them that they are no longer members, even though we have not removed them as members. We were doing this because our Fair Share is considered to be \$75 per person. Discussion was held regarding possible solutions.

\* **Thanksgiving Dinner** – scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers will do the turkeys this year, unless no one signs up to do them, and then we will order the turkeys. BUUF will be invited back this year to join us.

\* **AED Fundraising Effort** – over \$400 has been raised so far!! Will still be seeking donations.

\* **Steam Punk Conference** - Louise Wu talked about what a Steam Punk conference is, and said she recommends that we take more time to plan and perhaps do this next fall. She suggested that we have a Craft Fair that appeals to young people and said that several members have expressed interest in this. This could easily be put together and would help to advertise the church to younger members. We will discuss this at the next meeting.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> AT 9:15 AM.**

Pullman Memorial Universalist Church  
10 East Park Street  
Albion, NY 14411

