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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

The church that laughs. How do you talk about your church to others? Do you say, "It's the best kept secret in western New York?" Maybe you trot out an old slogan, like "soft seats and no hell" or a new one, like it's the church of "open minds, open hearts, and open arms."

Perhaps you say it's a great little community of liberal-minded individuals who believe in social justice and the power of love. Maybe you focus on the beauty of our building, and how just attending and sitting in a pew can bring a sense of peace to the soul. It could even be that you wax eloquent on our love of potlucks and coffee and conversation!

However you speak of it, I'll wager you don't lead off with the idea that we are the church that laughs. And yet, this may be one of the defining aspects which makes us a unique haven from the trauma and stress of the world. We have a sense of humor (albeit maybe a bit quirky at times) and we know how to laugh.

Laughter causes one to inhale, and in so doing we draw into ourselves the energy and spirit of the universe. In some religions God is referred to as the "Breath of Life" and inspiration is literally inspiring (breathing in) that spirit. Therefore, when we laugh we come closest to knowing the giddy energy of connection to the web of life.

Look around. How many people do you see attending other congregations who appear almost dour as they leave a worship service? Have they been uplifted by their presence at church? Have they been prepared to go back into the world and engage it with energy for another week? And then look at us.

Our social hour really does last an hour - sometimes even longer - because we are excited to be with one another, to chat about what was heard in the service, or about a project, or even just about each other's lives. There are smiles everywhere, and folks often express disappointment that they must depart (even if they've lingered for that hour).

We are the church - or more accurately - the people who laugh. We laugh, and love, ourselves to good health and humor and spirits each week. Maybe that's what you should be telling others about your church.

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.

Service Schedule – Sunday at 11:00AM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Coffee Hour</u>
Oct. 7	Rev. Donald Reidell	Catered dinner after service celebrating 35 years of service to PMUC.	
Oct. 14	Lee Richards	“Religious Communities”	Come Early – Stay Late: Enjoy Coffee & Bagels before and after each service.
Oct. 21	Susan Daiss	“On Beauty”	
Oct. 28	Rev. Maureen Thitchener	“Shifting Images”	
Oct. 31	Sarah Diemer	Samhain at 7:00 PM	
Nov. 4	Dr. Beth Allen		

Sept. 26 - Oct. 10 - Pastor Lee Richards on vacation (staycation). Our part-time minister is granted two weeks each year for rest and relaxation. However, Lee continues to be available for emergencies if needed.

Saturday, Sept. 29 - Fundraiser for Cody Coopenberg at the Fireman’s field in Holley, NY. No admission, pig roast tickets are \$10. There will also be pasta dinner, pizza and hot dogs. Event includes cake auction, basket auction, large item auction which will include a gas grill, 4 laptop computers, flat screen TV, windows, and more. Noon until 10 pm.

Sunday, Sept. 30 – “**Redefining Family**” worship service @ 11 am, with Julia Hickman-Himes, M.Div. Julia works for Heritage Christian Services providing in-home support for individuals with developmental delays. She and her wife are working to develop a line of GLBTQI friendly greeting cards for their company Papersaurus Creative.

Sunday, Sept. 30 – **Special Congregational Meeting** @ 12:15 pm. The Finance committee has been examining our endowment funds and will present some ideas for improving our investments. Information will be provided, and a vote sought to authorize and direct the buying and selling of certain stocks and mutual funds. All members are urged to attend. Pizza lunch will be provided.

Monday, Oct. 1 - Potluck supper @ 6:30 pm. Open invitation: come share a meal and engage in amazing conversation. First Monday of each month. Bring a dish to pass.

Wednesday, Oct. 3 - First of a 4-part series "Path to Reducing Community Violence" presented by Peaceful Genesee. [More information at peacefulgenesee.weebly.com](http://www.peacefulgenesee.weebly.com)

Sunday, Oct. 7 - worship service @ 11 am with Rev. Don Reidell.

Sunday, Oct. 7 - Recognition of 35 Years of Service - a catered dinner for Rev. Donald Reidell immediately following the worship service @ noon. Please join us in the social hall to fete Don in appreciation of his dedication to our congregation since 1977.

October 12-13, 2012 NYSCU Annual Meeting
Caring: For Ourselves, One another, and the World - Many Forms
 Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, NY
 Download brochure and Register at www.nyscu.org

Sunday, Oct. 14 – **Walk to End Breast Cancer** with the Pullman Pink Ladies & Gents @ 9 am. Join us in a fundraiser to help the American Cancer Society. Registration @ 8 am, walk through the orchard begins @ 9. Watt Farms on Rte. 98 (just north of Albion).

Sunday, Oct. 14 – “**Religious Communities**” worship service @ 11 am with Lee Richards. A look at how Native Americans, Amish & Mennonite, and some early Unitarians thought about community.

Wednesday, Oct. 17 – Movie with the Minister @ 7 pm. “**Street Fight**” looks at how some elections are won, or lost, in the street. Free admission & popcorn.

Sunday, Oct. 21 – Board of Trustees meets @ 9:15 am.

Sunday, Oct. 21 – “**On Beauty**” worship service @ 11 am with Chaplain Susan Daiss. Of all the unlikely places to find a sermon topic, look what I found in a sidebar in a recent mail order catalog from the Museum of Modern Art in NYC: "We have to replace beauty, which is a cultural concept, with goodness, which is a humanist concept." (Philippe Starck, designer). This Sunday's message will explore the idea of beauty from multiple vantage points - and meditate on how different understandings of beauty might inform our lives.

Sunday, Oct. 28 – “**Shifting Images**” worship service @ 11 am, with Rev. Maureen Thitchener. Howard Thurman uses metaphors of plants and gardens to prod us to think about the hard road or the easy road. He goes so far as to say that if the soil is too rich, and the plant too protected it loses energy. His point is that it is our choices that will make us go to seed, or blossom into fulfillment. Without ever digging in for a cause, we do not live fully or passionately. It's Fall now. Let's live like perennials.

Wednesday, Oct. 31 – “**Samhain**” service @ 7 pm with Sarah Diemer:

Open Samhain Ritual -- The Beloved Dead. It was believed by ancient peoples--and still is by modern Pagans--that Samhain (Halloween) is the day of the year when the veil between worlds is thinned, and our loved ones who have passed on come to visit us again. Come and take part in a ritual that honors those loved ones who have gone before you, hallowing out a time and space in your life for magic. This will be a full Pagan ritual, including circle casting, Goddess invocation and a meditation. Please bring an image or trinket that reminds you of the loved one you miss most.

Sunday, Nov. 4 – worship service @ 11 am with Dr. Beth Allen.

Sunday, Nov. 11 – **Book Discussion group** meets @ 12:30 pm. This time we've agreed to all read the same book: “God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything” by Christopher Hitchens. Come, and share your insights. January's “choose any book on the topic” discussion will be about the element of Fire.

JOYS & SORROWS

***John and Jenny Orr** – have recently moved into a new home, and were assisted by several members of the congregation. Congratulations on your new digs!

***Beth Allen's** – sorrow that her Aunt Carol's grandson, A.J., who has had some personal struggles, was found dead recently. What a sad event!

***Jim Knight** – recommends the book ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’ by Paramahansa Yogananda and said it was a ‘life changer’ for him. This author took all concepts of religions and opened up a new world of meditation.

***Andrea Rebeck** – reported that a Universalist Church built in 1841 in Portageville, New York was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church, which had fallen into ruin, was purchased in January of 2007 by a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating a private rehearsal facility for organists. Passers by on the intersection of Rt. 19A and 436 are amazed at the transformation which has taken place in only 18 months. Restoration is 80% complete, and has been funded almost entirely through private donations. Installation of a two-manual Schantz organ began in July of 2008 and will be completed this summer. Part of the mission of The Portageville Chapel organization is to share this historical treasure with the community by offering free concerts each summer. Andrea was amazed at the commitment of this group and the amazing things they have accomplished!

***Chris Loss** – was excited that her grandson, Carson Uderitz, turned 5 in September and will be starting kindergarten on the 5th! How soon they grow up!

***Sarah Diemer** – stated again that she is so grateful to always have PMUC to come to!

***Dennis Seekins** – said it's a joy for him that this church makes people so happy!

***Chris Loss** – attended a bridal shower for Sara Phillip's daughter, Katie, in Rochester!

***Sherry Hagnier** – happily reported that Cody Coopenberg, her son-in-law who was injured in Afghanistan, is well enough to be out of the hospital! The previous prognosis was that he would stay in the facility for a year! He has fought hard to recover, and while there are ups and downs and he still has a long way to go, he has come very far in a short period of time! Many thanks to everyone who continue to donate and send messages of support!

***Rich DellaCosta** – was very sad to report that a volcano erupted in Guatemala on September 13th which buried some villages and displaced around 33,000 people! Rich and Eileen are familiar with that area because they spent time there while in the Peace Corps back in the early 1970's.

***Beth Allen** – visited the Mercy Prayer Center the day after the anniversary of her mother’s death and it was beautiful place. In one of the rooms, she found a prayer shawl and the motivation to finish a children’s book she had been working on for a while about tolerance of people with mental illness!

***Craig Smith** – his eldest son’s wife recently discovered she has breast cancer! This is a terrible disease that we hope one day to eradicate!

***Chris Loss** – reported that Andrea Rebeck’s Uncle Jack has died and she will be attending his funeral in Brooklyn, and will sit shiva with her relatives. We are so sorry for your loss, Andrea!

***Dennis Seekins** – was visiting his brother in Naples, Florida, who has been ill, and saw some signs for a UU church in that area. Lo and behold, it was the very church that Jan Jurgens and Nick Provenzo attend! We miss Nick and Jan!

***Gerald Lombardo**- brought a guest with him on Sunday,.. Justin. He said the good news is that “Jesus had a wife!”

***Beth Allen’s** – husband, Mark, is retiring and will be working on the house and doing other projects. She also said that Debbie Rodriguez had minor surgery recently and to keep her in our thoughts as she recovers.

***C.W. Lattin** – looked out in his yard and saw something white...and it turned out to be 10 puffballs!! Also, C.W. and Rene’s beloved dog, Jarus, is having some health issues. He’s doing fine on medication, though.

PULLMAN PLAUDITS

***Susan Daiss** – has applied at Strong to a challenging program and will be taking a leave of absence from the Memorial Art Gallery, where she has worked for over 25 years. It is both “thrilling and terrifying at the same time” for her. We believe that Susan is up to any challenge and will do well in her new endeavor! Congratulations, Susan! Don’t panic, though, as she is not leaving PMUC!!

***Betty Knight** – who was the team captain, and Jim Knight, Sara Bundy, Chris Bundy, Monica Beck, and Chris Loss for attending the ‘Walk to End Alzheimer’s’ on Saturday, September 22nd in Brockport. It was an hour of talking and walking and money was raised for a wonderful cause!

***Diana Dudley** – continues to collect bottles and cans and is raising money! And thanks to those who have brought in donations.

***All the wonderful gardeners** – who have been bringing in produce from their garden to share with others! What a great bounty!

***Pastor Lee Richards** – has been working on the sound system and says he is “almost there”, and add in all the other wonderful things he does every month!

***Louise Wu** – continues to fight against hydro-fracking that is being proposed for New York State!!!

***Sarah Diemer** – led the opening words for the Mabon feast on Sunday, Sept 23rd – wow what a lot of great food! Thanks Sarah for introducing us to the concept of Mabon Feast. Also, Sarah and Jen have been toiling at a book endeavor for about a month, putting in 17 hour days until finally this past Sunday submitting their effort to an agent. There was a lot of hard work involved, but this is an exciting step in their career path! Good luck, ladies!

***Heather Boyd** – for her submission of several wonderful paintings that have been displayed at the church! They are beautiful!

***Bill Lattin** for donating the ice cream and toppings for our Sundae Sunday Social, for all the wonderful flower arrangements that grace our pulpit each week and for setting up the social hall for the Mabon Feast.

***Diana Dudley**, for arranging to have our piano surveyed for repairs.

***The Finance Committee** (Alan Nugent, Diana Dudley, Dennis Seekins and Rene’ Schassel) for their work in researching investments and creating a plan for our endowment funds.

***To all** who have given so generously to the Cody Coopenberg family.

***Beth Allen**, for contributing a variety of photographs to sell in our church webstore.

***Heather Boyd**, for agreeing to be the first exhibitor in our new monthly art gallery.

Come Early, Stay Late

It seems that one of the big successes to come out of the summer sermon series was the availability of bagels and cream cheese before the service. Therefore, we're going to try offering these again, beginning in October, and running through December.

One thing we know is that hospitality really helps "sell" a church, and so does making attendance easy. Having a quick bagel and coffee ready to grab on a Sunday morning can sometimes make the difference in deciding to roll out of bed and show up at church.

So come a few minutes early, grab a bite, and then stay after the service for our usual social hour. We'd love to see you at church!

Shop Online

The Pullman Memorial Universalist Church Online Store is up and running. This fundraiser venue offers a variety of Pullman collectibles, books, postcards, movie DVDs, and more. Check it out at pullmanmemorial.com, and watch for more items to be listed for sale soon.

Helping Cody Coopenberg

Early in July Pv2 Cody Coopenberg was caught in a gasoline explosion while serving in Afghanistan (Cody is the son-in-law of David and Sherry Hagmier). He suffered severe burns over 60% of his body and faces a long and painful recovery with many surgeries.

As you might imagine, his family faces many unanticipated expenses over the course of the next year or so. Many people are stepping up to help. A fundraiser will be held on Saturday, Sept. 29th at Holley Fireman's Field.

An account has also been set up for Cody and Hannah at First Niagara Bank. You can go into to the bank and tell them you would like to donate/deposit money into the Coopenberg Family Fund. If you can't get to a bank, it is possible to make donations online through GoFundMe.com.

And don't forget that cards and letters mean a great deal to Hannah and Cody. You can write to the address below to pass along your best wishes:

Hannah Coopenberg
2108 9th st. Suite 407
Bldg. 4190 Door X
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-5100

Upgrading our Sound System

Work continues on adding enhancements to the sound system of the sanctuary. Please bear with us as we add new speakers and hearing assistive devices for folks with some auditory deficit. All of the equipment is on hand - it's just a matter of getting things sorted out to work properly.

Pullman Pastor's Blog by Lee Richards

What are the four "ahs" of a good sermon? How can water help kindle the fire of community? To what niche market does our Unitarian Universalism appeal? What happens when not making plans? These are examples of topics that recently had my attention in the blog.

The Minister's Musings appears in our monthly newsletter. In between, I invite you to check out my explorations and ramblings on the blog. 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

Electronic Donations & Automatic Pledges

Automatic pledge payments and/or one-time donations can easily be made online from your choice of funding sources. If you go to the website pmucdonations.blogspot.com you'll find several choices available 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 using a bank transfer or a PayPal account.

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

Historical Postcard Views of Albion, New York

Heads up! This limited edition book is moving toward a sell-out. Author Bill Lattin has stated he's down to the last two boxes. If you wish to get a copy (or several for gifts) it would be wise to not delay purchase.

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. Books are still modestly priced at only \$20 each and are available at the church, in our online store (pullmanmemorial.com), and selected area stores.

Water Communion Sunday Sept. 9th – Participants in this service brought water from many sources and shared these thoughts:

- Chris Loss – her water came from a waterpark in Spencerport. Her daughter, Joni, and son-in-law Ryan were in Jamaica at a wedding and the boys stayed with Chris and her husband, Ernie all week. What a treat that was. It was hot all week and they did fun things daily, and on one of the hotter days, they stopped at the park and the boys played in the water to get cooled off. It was a very special week!!
- Eileen DellaCosta – she and Rich spent some time in St. Louis and her water came from the Mississippi River.
- Beth Allen – her water was from her backyard bird baths and pool because it brings her so much peace and relaxation. And this past summer, she had a significant spiritual experience while relaxing there.
- Louise Wu – had traveled to Albany to protest hydro-fracking and that is where her water is from...nice and clean. If fracking is allowed to happen, clean water may be in short supply. Louise said that thousands were there and thousands more were pledging online.
- Dennis Seekins – his water came from a cave he explored in Canada recently. Years ago, he explored caves with more regularity and says that while he enjoys it just as much now as he did then, he can see it getting harder for him, while Mother Nature throws out just as many challenges.
- Heather Boyd- was biking at Johnson's Creek and that is where her water came from. It is a place she enjoys, where she can see a raccoon washing her food, a deer walking by..it's a place that has a good, caring spirit.

- Sherry & Dave Hagmier – they traveled to Texas to visit their son-in-law, Cody Coopenberg, and found a ‘Warrior and Family’ center where soldiers and their families could go to enjoy food and family entertainment free. There were also beautiful gardens and their water came from a lovely fountain there.
- Sarah and Jen Diemer – their water is from Massachusetts, where they had originally hoped to make a home someday, but instead have found a home here.
- Sara Phillips – vacationed in Massachusetts and that is where the water is from. While there she visited a UU church in the area, something she often does when traveling to see what other UU churches are like.
- C.W. Lattin – his water came from creek behind his house, and that water came to a halt when the sinkhole emerged. He was one of the last cars to go over that stretch of road before it collapsed down in the 30 ft wide area and he’s very lucky not to have fallen into it!
- Debbie Rodriguez – all of her family lives in Portland and Exeter, Rhode Island. Her family laughed when they saw a facebook entry that spoke of something happening “at church” because they couldn’t believe Debbie was at church. Debbie says she is not only in church, but enjoys coming here!
- Monica Beck – she traveled to Ithaca and actually got lost on the wrong side of Seneca Lake! But it was even more beautiful taking the wrong path. Monica says that was a good reminder that sometimes in life, your plans get changed.
- Rene Schasel – he has been traveling back and forth to Rochester to see his sister all summer because she’s been so ill , and she needs one more operation and then hopefully, she can get back to normal.
- Diana Dudley – her water is from the Erie Canal because she has been riding her bike on the towpath for about 3 miles almost daily, and enjoys the sky, the crops, the trees...it’s very nice!
- Sara and Chris Bundy – went to Atlanta to a SciFi Comic Book Convention! What a great time they had!!
- Ed – didn’t do any traveling, but enjoys his miniature schnauzer dogs. He recently welcomed a new female schnauzer into his home. One day in the kitchen, she was playing in the water and he happened to walk in in just his socks and got all wet.

Eye on the Board

Much of the focus for the board of trustees during the September meeting revolved around finances. These included 1) a proposal for repair of the roof was on the table for discussion, 2) the finance committee shared their thoughts on how to rearrange our endowment investments, 3) offering hospitality in the form of bagels before church services, 4) catering the recognition dinner for Rev. Don Reidell, 5) reimbursing the pastor for travel expenses incurred when attending the upcoming NYSCU (New York State Convention of Universalists) meeting, and 6) authorizing the installation of air conditioning for the main sanctuary.

The board takes its fiduciary responsibilities very seriously and works hard on behalf of the congregation to keep costs in line while also promoting our church and its causes. Please be sure to attend the special congregational meeting on September 30th for information about our investments and plans for maximizing our potential.

Complete minutes are available upon request.

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