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Member of **The Unitarian Universalist Association**

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## Minister Musings – by Lee Richards

Groundhogs, omens, portents, icons, logos, and other symbols. February begins, and an amazing number of people wait with baited breath for a prognostication about the winter season's length to be delivered by a woodchuck. It doesn't seem to me like the most rational way for a person to seek meteorological advice. Even the Farmer's Almanac makes its predictions based on historical averages.



And then I wonder about the new Unitarian Universalist logo that the UUA put forward last year. The familiar lit chalice inside a circle has been modernized and stylized beyond recognition. The new symbol of UUism has left most everyone scratching their heads, asking, "What is it?" Anyone with a modicum of imagination can "see" all sorts of things depicted by the new artwork. It will take a lot of work to get people to recognize it as representing our denomination.

At Pullman we tend to rely more on our beautiful building to represent us. As an interpretive symbol, we have no lofty spire reaching for the heavens because our focus is on the earthly here and now. So too, our building lies low to the ground - another symbol of our being grounded, or rooted, in our community. Its construction materials were quarried locally, and assembled by skilled masons with attention to detail and meticulous care, just as in the manner by which we lead examined lives.

Predicting the future - whether with marmots or tarot cards or runes - is pretty much a crap shoot. Don't expect anyone to get it right the majority of the time. But that doesn't mean we don't harken to the warning signs of the planet in distress, or of people burdened by anxiety. Sometimes the omens indicate a bleak future, but we do not despair because the very essence of religious faith is hope. We believe it is never too late to change things for the better, and we understand that we must take action to make it happen rather than praying for some outside force to intervene.

Our church (with an all encompassing meaning defined as the building, the religion, *and* the congregation) is rich with symbolism. I invite you to attend on February 22nd when I'll speak more about this in the service that follows our annual breakfast with the minister. So mark the date! Come and find sustenance in both food and words. In fact, bring a friend along, too. It's a great opportunity to show others your community of faith and reason.

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### Service Schedule – Sunday at 11:00AM

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Feb. 1	Don Reidell	
Feb. 8	Lee Richards	“Have a Heart with Art”
Feb. 15	Scott Schmitt	“Living with the Dead”
Feb. 22	Lee Richards	<b>Breakfast with the Minister Buffet</b> & “These Stones”
Mar. 1	Susan Daiss	

~ Childcare available during service times ~

## Calendar stuff...

Wednesday, Jan. 28 – “A Gathering of Hearts & Minds” @ 7 pm. Gather for a light supper offering and discussion. *Wild Card Wednesday* – topics of interest brought by attendees, tonight featuring guided meditation period, and an “Introduction to Qi Gong” with Darlene Benton, MS, LMT. Qi Gong is a series of movements done standing in one place that cultivate internal body energy for health and wellbeing. Darlene has been a daily practitioner of Qi Gong for over 12 years.

Sunday, Feb. 1 – worship service @ 11 am with Don Reidell.

Monday, Feb. 2 - Pullman Pourings Event committee meets @ 5 pm.

Monday, Feb. 2 - Potluck Supper @ 6:30 pm. Dish-to-pass. Always good food and conversation. Open invitation to all.

Wednesday, Feb. 4 – “A Gathering of Hearts & Minds” @ 7 pm. Gather for a light supper offering and discussion. Money is very much in the news right now so we’ll explore money, wealth, debt, and personal finances for our current events topic.

Thursday, Feb. 5 – Cobblestone Society meets @ 7 pm.

Sunday, Feb. 8 – Finance committee meets @ 10 am.

Sunday, Feb. 8 – “Have a Heart with Art” worship service @ 11 am with Lee Richards. We use cupids and hearts to express our feelings of love on Valentine’s Day but an appreciation of, and sensitivity to, the aesthetic experience of art can deepen our spirituality all year round.

Sunday, Feb. 8 – Building & Grounds committee meets at 12:15 pm.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 – “A Gathering of Hearts & Minds” @ 7 pm. Gather for a light supper offering and discussion. Our spirituality topic is centered on poetry – “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” Please bring two examples of poetry to share – one that you really like and moves you, and another that’s really bad.

Sunday, Feb. 15 – Board of trustees meets @ 9 am.

Sunday, Feb. 15 – “Living with the Dead” (Chautauqua Sunday) worship service @ 11 am with Scott Schmitt. Scott will share how being a coroner and funeral director gives a person a unique insight into death and life. Includes time for Q&A discussion.

Wednesday, Feb. 18 – “A Gathering of Hearts & Minds” @ 7 pm. Gather for a light supper offering and discussion. Pop culture topic is “living in imaginary worlds” – cosplay, reenactors, gamers, etc.

**Sunday, Feb. 22 – Breakfast with the Minister Buffet** from 9:30 to 10:30 am. Come, and bring a friend, too, for a breakfast of fruit salad, eggs, bacon, croissants, and more before the Sunday service.

Sunday, Feb. 22 – “These Stones” worship service @ 11 am with Lee Richards. Stones have been used for religious symbolism since people stood upright. At the dedication of our church in 1895, Royal Pullman delivered the sermon “What Mean These Stones?” Today Lee will update Pullman’s symbolism, add in Simon & Garfunkel’s “I am a rock,” and consider what it means to “be a rock.”

Wednesday, Feb. 25 – “A Gathering of Hearts & Minds” @ 7 pm. Gather for a light supper offering and discussion. *Wild Card Wednesday* – topics of interest brought by attendees.

Wednesday, Feb. 25 – deadline for submissions to the March newsletter. Send to: [pmuc.albion@gmail.com](mailto:pmuc.albion@gmail.com)

## **Come Early, Stay Late**

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, get a bite, and then stay after the service for our usual social hour. We'd love to see you at church!

## **ENDING: All Saints All the Time**

Our "All Saints All the Time" art show exhibit wraps up on Valentine's Day weekend. The exhibit continues to be available for viewing whenever the church building is open until then. Religious prints in original frames, and objects of the Victorian era, from Bill Lattin's collection, reflecting what people respected and what they found important within the legends and examples of the sainted. Many of the prints represent the more popular saints as seen through many unidentified illustrators of the past. Earlier print examples are hand colored, while later publications are chromolithographs.

## **Become a "UU Saint"**

In Pastor Lee's sermon about saints on January 11th he pointed out there is one "postmortem miracle" we can all perform, by leaving a bequest to Pullman Memorial. It's very easy to do! Just update your Last Will and Testament by including a version of this language: "I hereby give and bequeath \$ \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the rest, remainder and residue of my estate, or the proceeds from the sale of real estate by my estate that I own located at \_\_\_\_\_, to Pullman Memorial Universalist Church, located at 10 East Park Street, Albion, NY 14411, Federal Tax ID # 47-2500608. [Did you miss the sermon? It is available in MP3 format for downloading or listening to online at <http://pullmanmemorial.org/sermons/> ]

## **Dedicate a Hymnal**

We now have several new copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* available for "memorializing." For a mere \$50 you can have a personalized bookplate placed in the front of a book and know that you are helping augment our restoration funds at the same time. See Louise or Lee to arrange for your dedication.

## **Pullman Gift Shop**

Looking for a special gift? You'd be amazed how much is available in our little shop. Notecards and posters, t-shirts and sweatshirts, antique and vintage glassware, Pullman porter uniform buttons, totebags, bumper stickers, hand-crafted jewelry, Pullman loveseats and more are available now. Check out our "wee shoppe" for your gift-giving needs.

## **Wednesday Evening GATHERING of Hearts & Minds**

Our "Ministry of Ideas" program presents a topic for discussion each Wednesday at 7 pm. In general, first Wednesdays focus on a current events issue, the second on some aspect of spirituality or philosophy, the third on pop culture, and the fourth is a "wild card" where the evening's topic is up to the audience. A light supper is also offered. Check the detailed listings on page two for February's topics.

## **DOWN THE STAIRS RECYCLING!**

Return-for-deposit bottles and cans, plus assorted metals, help generate additional funds for the church. Bins for these items are at the foot of the stairs between the kitchen and dining hall doors. Clean, washed metal objects may be mixed, but please separate aluminum from the rest.

## **Electronic Donations & Automatic Pledges**

Our website [pullmanmemorialdonations.com](http://pullmanmemorialdonations.com) offers several choices for making financial contributions to our mission. 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.

If you have a smartphone then check out our electronic “virtual offering plate.” Look for the QR code on the back of Sunday programs and do a quick scan. You’ll be whisked to a special donation page where you can easily make a donation online.

## **Pullman Pourings 2**

Mark your calendars! Buy your tickets! The great Pullman wine tasting event is coming up and it’s shaping up to be even bigger and better than last year. Food. Live music. Wine samplings. Antique booth. Saturday, March 21, 2015. 7 - 9 pm. Learn more and buy tickets at [pullmantickets.com](http://pullmantickets.com)

## **Eye on the Board**

It was announced that C.W. Lattin will receive an additional award amount from GoArt for his upcoming art book project. PMUC will be the Albion venue for a movie about rape, shown by RESTORE during Crime Victims Week in April.

No treasurer’s report submitted. Our holdings of Comcast stock were sold (as authorized by the congregation). The Building and Grounds committee met to start prioritizing projects for the current year, which includes getting a few more quotes for work to be done. An agreement on the bill for services rendered was reached between the architectural firm and the board of trustees.

Rich Della Costa’s work on a video promo has been hampered by the dim lighting of the church. The March wine tasting event has commitments from five wineries and several other establishments; posters will be printed this week. Also in the works - First Friday Jam Sessions are expected to begin in April.

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## **Pastoral Care**

You are encouraged to contact Pastor Lee when experiencing difficulties at 585-454-9450, or his cell at 585-729-8167, or his a toll-free number: 877-265-1709. Lee is also available for home and hospital visits.