

The SPIRE
Park Avenue Congregational Church
The United Church of Christ
Arlington, Massachusetts

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

September, 2009

Regathering Sunday September 13

On Sunday, September 13, Park Avenue Church will celebrate "Regathering Sunday." This annual worship event marks the return to active participation in the life of our faith community after vacations and other summertime diversions.

Following the worship service and congregational meeting (see below) will be our traditional potluck luncheon in the Parish Hall. To assure a reasonably balanced meal, we request that you bring food according to the following plan:

- If your last name begins with A-K, bring a main dish;
- If your last name begins with L-R, bring a side dish or salad;
- If your last name begins with S-Z, bring a dessert.

The Fellowship and Care Ministry will provide bread and butter and beverages.

WARRANT
Special Meeting

A **Special Meeting** of the Park Avenue Congregational Church of Arlington Heights, Massachusetts, is called for Sunday, September 13, 2009, immediately after Morning Worship (i.e., approximately 11:30 a.m.), in the Sanctuary, for the following purposes:

1. To elect Robert Willey to the position of Interim Treasurer.
2. To consider a proposal by the Capital Campaign Implementation Group.
2. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

In case of lack of a quorum due to inclement weather or some other circumstance, the meeting will be convened on Sunday, September 20, 2009, at 11:30 a.m.

/s/ Michael L. Rich
Michael Rich, Moderator

/s/ Valerie L. Censabella
Valerie Censabella, Clerk

Christian Education News

Sunday School

Welcome back to Sunday School! Regular Sunday School will start again on Regathering Sunday, September 13. Look for an email (or a letter in the mail if you don't have email) with your class and Sunday School teachers during the first week of September.

Youth Group

We're trying something a little different with youth groups this year. Youth Group I will be fourth and fifth graders. We'll meet on September 20 from 4-5:30 in the Nicoll Room. Youth Group II will be 6th grade and up. We'll meet on September 27 from 4-5:30 in the Nicoll Room.

Here is the schedule for the youth groups through December:

October 18- Youth Group I

October 25- Youth Group II

November 13- both Youth Groups help/serve at Lasagna Dinner and Pie Shop

November 29- combined Youth Group Advent activities

December 20- Youth Group II

December 27- Youth Group I

Youth Groups will meet from 4-5:30 unless otherwise noted. Youth Group members will get a Fall Youth Group newsletter with scheduling details and activities.

Minister's Message

On **Sunday, September 13th**, Park Avenue Church will celebrate “**Regathering Sunday**” during our worship service, including the return of the Chancel Choir, the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and the dedication of our Sunday school teachers. This annual worship event marks the welcome of the PACC congregation as we return to active participation in the life of our faith community after vacations and other summertime diversions.

Christian Education Director Kate Lindheim and I are pleased to announce the following **schedule of adult education events** for the upcoming program year, fall through spring **2009-2010**:

—**Evening Bible Study Group** to meet in the Fireplace Room at **7:30 p.m.**, usually on the **second and fourth Wednesdays** of each month, unless otherwise scheduled. In September, we will begin a study of **the Book of Revelation**. We will discuss the nature of apocalyptic literature, comparing Revelation with examples from both biblical and extra-biblical sources. As is our custom, we will reflect on the relevance (if any) of such literature for Christians today and strive to discern what Revelation may have to say to Park Avenue Church in particular. September meeting dates are **September 9 and 30**. Prior biblical background is not required, and all are welcome to participate.

—On **Sunday, September 27, at 10:00 a.m.**, we are pleased to welcome **Rev. Charles H. “Chuck” Harper** to a “**Poetry Sunday**” at PACC. See a more detailed announcement elsewhere in this issue of the *Spire*.

—On **Sunday, October 11**, we will offer, jointly with Pleasant Street Congregational Church, UCC, a “**Blessing of the Animals**.” It will take place in the garden area between Arlington Hall and Robbins Library, in the early afternoon at a time to be announced. The public is invited to participate in a brief introductory liturgy (singing, readings, prayers), followed by the ministers’ blessing of people’s pets. All are welcome.

—Several other **book discussion events** are being planned for several **Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.** in the Fireplace Room. Pencil in the following Wednesdays on your calendar (dates are tentative): **October 7**, *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks; **December 2**, *The First Christmas* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan; beginning **February 24, 2010**, a Wednesday evening Lenten series around the book, *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor; and beginning **April 14, 2010**, a post-Easter series around the book, *Jesus Interrupted* by Bart D. Ehrman.

—Together with PACC’s Mission and Justice Ministry, the Christian Education Ministry plans to offer ongoing events in 2009-2010 around the theme, “Home and Homelessness.” This theme begins on **September 13** with our traditional “Homecoming” on PACC’s **Regathering Sunday** featuring a worship service with Communion at 10:00 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch in Parish Hall and a brief Congregational Meeting to deal with some “home-related” issues for our church (see official Warrant elsewhere in the *Spire*). Throughout the fall, the Christian Education and Mission and Justice Ministries will be in conversation with various **homelessness ministries** in the area—perhaps in Boston, Cambridge, and Waltham—to provide PACC adults and youth with opportunities to engage in some local mission events. Together, we’ll explore ways in which we *can* make a difference in the world around us!

We hope to see you at one or more of these adult education events. There is no cost to attend, except for your time. Please feel free to bring a friend.

So, welcome back to PACC!!! And, “may mercy, peace, and love be yours in full measure!” [Jude 2].

-- *BILL*

PACC POETRY SUNDAY

On **Sunday, September 27**, we are pleased to welcome **Rev. Charles H. “Chuck” Harper** to a “**Poetry Sunday**” at PACC. Not only will he and Rev. Albright celebrate the evocative power of poetry within the setting of our worship, but the service will also feature poetry readings from Rev. Harper’s new collection, *Sorting Things Out*. After worship, you will have the opportunity purchase his book and meet the poet-preacher in our Parish Hall for a book signing.

Before his retirement, Rev. Harper served for 39 years as a pastor in the greater Boston area, where he also served as Area Minister for the Metro Boston Association. In his second career as a poet, he is a member of the Academy of American Poets and the Tidepool Poets of Plymouth, Massachusetts, where he and his wife Pat reside.

Here’s an excerpt from the Preface to Rev. Harper’s book, written by Harvey Cox, professor emeritus at Harvard Divinity School and author of “The Secular City”:

“...Is this then a book of ‘religious poetry’? Well, yes and no. It is poetry that links the secular to the sacred, indeed melds the two. It is poetry that admits, too, that—as one poem puts it, ‘Sometimes it’s hard/to see the magic work/of fairy dust—especially when you’re sad.’ May I suggest to the reader that you don’t try too hard. Don’t ponder these poems. Don’t look for a hidden meaning. In Harper’s poetry, what you see is what you

get. He is not trying to sell you anything, convert you or—least of all—‘get across an idea.’ He has nothing up his sleeve.

“Still, I think these poems do constitute a sign. They may foreshadow the rebirth of a real language...”

And here’s an excerpt from a review by Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, Publisher and Editor of *The Aureorean*:

“...Harper finds elation in the ordinary. His poems are full of light—references to light, images of light, and symbolic light—all of which serve as a beacon to the reader. His words are concise and hopeful, yet they are real, with an inherent sense of elegance and maturity. They are poems to share, to return to, and to bask in their juxtapositions....”

So come and celebrate this unique PACC worship event as we experience together the power of poetry in worship!

Town Day is September 26.

Watch the Sunday bulletins to learn how you can help with the PACC booth.

PACC-Men meet to schedule programs

PACC-Men will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of every month, beginning on September 1. This will be the fall planning meeting. All men are welcome to come to the Fireplace Room at 7:30 p.m. that evening. Questions? Speak with Mike Rich.

Mission and Justice News

Gateway Motel - Back-to School Collection

We will be collecting some very basic items - shoes and underwear - for the children temporarily living at the Gateway Motel to help them start the new school year. Sign up at coffee hour to participate. Our goal is to collect the items by Sunday September 6th so the children will have them for the first day of school.

Birthday Box

PACC’s Mission and Justice Ministry invites you to assist an organization called Birthday Wishes to provide birthday parties for children in homeless shelters. Look for a box wrapped like a gift in the Parish Hall under the In the News bulletin board. Please feel free to add any of the following to it: party table cloth, goodie bags, decorations, small toys to fill the goodie bags and anything else you can think of to make a child’s birthday special. Questions? Speak with Lauren Evans or Joan Amon.

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. PACC will receive the NIN offering on October 4 as part of our World Communion Sunday observance.

Capital Campaign update

PACC's *Restoring, Renewing, Reaching* Capital Campaign is in full swing! We have received payments of \$49,199 as of August 23, and the Capital Campaign Implementation Committee has begun meeting to discuss how we might spend these dollars. We are researching and weighing the different possibilities and will present a recommendation to the Congregation after church on Regathering Sunday, September 13. PLEASE make every attempt to attend this meeting because we would like the Congregation to be involved in decisions about the plans we approved for the Campaign. We will have a recommendation out to the Congregation before the meeting so that you may have some time to review it. The Co-Chairs of this Committee are Christie Getto Young and Anne Kelly Contini. Members of the Committee are Gary Kane, Eric Rochon, Linda Cohn, Doug Record and Bill Albright. We are very excited to realize the plans and dreams that we've made! Even though we hope that work will begin as soon as possible, it's still not too late to make your campaign pledge and we still need you!

Choirs begin rehearsals

The Chancel Choir, which sings during our worship services most Sundays, will begin rehearsals Thursday, September 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nicoll Room (upstairs). The coming season promises to be most exciting as we revisit many familiar and beloved pieces and, at the same time, add novel and interesting works to our repertoire. For those who would enjoy singing but not on a regular basis, the Festival Choir is your place! The Festival Choir will assist our Chancel Choir not only on Easter (with Alleluias of Brubeck and Mozart) but also in our annual Christmas Concert which this year features the first 2 of the 6-movement choral masterpiece *Christmas Oratorio* by J. S. Bach. If you have questions, speak with Jeff Brody or any member of the choir.

Youth Choir rehearsals will begin Sunday, September 13, at 11:45 a.m. Its director, Andy Hart, can answer your questions.

Please think about joining us in active musical ministry this coming year.

What's Happening at PACC

Tue.	Sept. 1	10:30 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	PACC-Men in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	Sept. 3	2:00 p.m.	Church directory photography, Parish Hall/Chapel (to 9:30)
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	Sept. 6	10:00 a.m.	Worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
Mon.	Sept. 7		<i>Labor Day</i> ; office closed
Wed.	Sept. 9	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Study in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	Sept. 10	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Chapel
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
		7:30 p.m.	Fellowship & Care Ministry at the home of Margaret Bell

Sun.	Sept. 13	10:00 a.m.	Regathering worship service includes Communion
		11:30 a.m.	Congregational meeting in the Sanctuary
		11:45 a.m.	Potluck lunch in the Parish Hall
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Mon.	Sept. 14	7:30 p.m.	Council of Deacons in the Nicoll Room
Tue.	Sept. 15	10:30 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	Membership Ministry in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	Sept. 17	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	Sept. 20	9:20 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary
		10:00 a.m.	Worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group I in the Nicoll Room
Tue.	Sept. 22		Deadline for October <i>Spire</i>
		2:00 p.m.	Church directory photography, Parish Hall/Chapel (to 9:30)
Thu.	Sept. 24	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Chapel
Sat.	Sept. 26		Town Day
Sun.	Sept. 27	10:00 a.m.	Worship service; Chuck Harper preaching
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group II in the Nicoll Room
Wed.	Sept. 30	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Study in the Fireplace Room

coming later in the year

Sun.	Nov. 1	3:00 p.m.	Concert in the Sanctuary
Fri.-	Nov. 13- –		Church Fair
Sat	Nov. 14		
Sun.	Dec. 6	3:00 p.m.	Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary

THANK YOU

The Fellowship and Care deacons, Margaret, Hong and Beverly and members of Hospitality Committee are very grateful to all of you who helped with the Summer Coffee Hours. With your help, the coffee hour goodies remained quite plentiful and were enjoyed by all who kept our summer participation to a healthy number.

As we move into the busier part of our church year, we are once again asking that everyone in the congregation consider bringing something for Coffee Hour once or twice a year. Just drop it off before church on Sunday with no further obligation. This is so helpful to the five standing teams on the Hospitality Committee who provide and serve the refreshments one Sunday a month during September through June.

We all love the fellowship that is evident during the Coffee Hour, so thanks ahead of time for all you awesome and generous members and friends who make it happen.

The sign-up sheet is posted on the kitchen door in the Parish Hall.

Preparations underway for the Church Fair November 13 & 14!

Our Church Fair will be November 13 and 14, and preparations have begun. This is a great time to make jams and jellies, to bake and freeze desserts, to set aside books that others will enjoy, to plan your donation to the silent auction, to knit or crochet or sew, to

select items to give to the jewelry table. Perhaps you have an idea for a new item that we might sell. Let us know how we can help to make that happen.

Fair Cookie Walk: Coffee cans for the Cookie Walk should be brought to the church, and placed under the wooden table in the Parish Hall in paper bags with Connie Dugan's name on them, no later than the middle of October. Please contact her to let her know that they are there, as she will probably not be able to get to church every week during Bob's illness. Thank you very much.

Cookie Walk needs cookies: Dozens and dozens of your most delicious cookies are needed for the Cookie Walk. There will be a sign-up sheet on the kitchen door in the Parish Hall. Thank you so much for your help with this popular money maker.

**Is your
pledge
up to
date?**

Through August 23 the payments received toward pledges to the General Fund are nearly \$10,000 under budget. Our expenses since January have exceeded income by a bit over \$12,000. Quarterly statements indicating the status of your pledge will be mailed early in October, but you can request an update at any time – just contact Kathy in the office. Thank you!

Appointments still available for church directory photography

The September 3 photography date is fast approaching, and we have a very full schedule of appointments for that day. We'll try to fit you in, however, if you really need an appointment on September 3. The schedule for Tuesday, September 22, however, still has appointments available in the afternoon and in the evening. We encourage everyone to get a picture taken for the directory. It's a great way for all of us to put names to the faces we see at PACC. See Linda Cohn for an appointment, or call her.