

The SPIRE

Park Avenue Congregational Church

The United Church of Christ

Arlington, Massachusetts

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

January, 2009

Christian Education News

Sunday School

We'll have a combined Sunday School class on January 18. We'll meet in the chapel.

During the next two months we'll be learning about Jesus' ministry. We'll learn about some of the miracle stories and some of the parables that Jesus tells. Children will bring home a list of the stories we'll be learning about so that you can talk about them at home or read them in your Bibles at home.

Youth Groups

Youth Groups 1 & 2 will meet on Sunday, January 11, from 4-5:30 in the Nicoll Room. We'll make valentines to sell in February and play some games. Bring a favorite board or card game to share if you would like.

Youth Group knitters will meet on Sunday, January 18 from 11:30-12:30 in the Fireplace Room. We'll be working on our prayer shawls. If you'd like to learn to knit or how to make a prayer shawl, bring a pair of long size 11 needles and 2-3 skeins of yarn and we'll show you how!

Sarah's Circle to discuss *Jesus and the Lost Goddess*

Sarah's Circle women's book discussion group will meet Saturday, January 17, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Those who wish to meditate can come at 9:30 a.m. Our book is *Jesus and the Lost Goddess* by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, which is about the earliest, secret teachings of the early Christians. The book also explores the myths of Jesus and the Goddess. If you have questions, contact Merrith Sabo-Jones.

PACC-Men schedules board game night January 13

At the December 9th meeting of an enthusiastic gathering of PACC-Men for Pastor Bill's Advent presentation, PACC-Men renewed a commitment to regular activities. They will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Odd numbered months will be for social activities and even numbered months for presentations.

The January get together will be on Tuesday evening, January 13th, for a night of board games. Bring a favorite or two and depending on how many people attend we will get a game or three going. The Game of Risk is the one that was most discussed as our primary possibility. All men are welcome to join us in the Fireplace Room.

On February 10 Robert Willey will present An Introduction to Genealogy.

For more information contact Mike Rich.

In preparation for Annual Meeting

Annual reports

There will be copies of reports of staff, officers and ministries along with financial information on the table in the narthex beginning January 11. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call the office, 781-643-8680.

Important Budget Meeting – PACC needs your input!

In order to prepare a balanced budget for 2009 some tough choices need to be made. The budget meeting on January 18th (after the Worship Service) is the opportunity to voice your views and help guide the Finance and Property Ministry in making these choices. It is a very important meeting for all who care about PACC. Come, learn, and participate.

Lunch to precede Annual Meeting

The Council of Deacons will provide a soup and sandwich luncheon preceding the Annual Meeting. You do not have to bring any food; there will be a basket for donations to offset the expense of the meal.

Annual Meeting Childcare

We'll have childcare available for young children during Annual Meeting on January 25 and a movie for older children. Please let Kate Lindheim or Barbara Wagner know by January 18 if you will need childcare. Thanks!

Concerning donations

Donation statements

To ensure that your church contributions are tax deductible, do not file your 2008 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. Some of your contributions may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving this written acknowledgement, which will be mailed mid-January.

Offering envelopes for 2009

If you indicated on your pledge card that you would like offering envelopes, there is a box with your name on the table in the narthex. Those remaining at the end of the month will be mailed. If you would like yours sent sooner, please call the office, 781-643-8680.

Have you sent in your pledge?

Thank you to all the people who responded promptly to our stewardship drive! If you are uncertain whether you returned a pledge card, call the office at 781-643-8680. Every pledge is important. We depend on these estimates of giving to build our budget for the coming year.

Capital Campaign Feasibility Study scheduled January 9-11

Andrew Gustafson, Associate Conference Minister for the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, is assisting us as we prepare for a Capital Campaign. On the weekend of January 9-11 he will conduct a feasibility study, interviewing about 20% of the people in our church community. We will be contacting those who are selected and schedule an appointment to talk with him.

Report on Massachusetts Conference UCC Annual Meeting

The Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ 209th Annual Meeting was held at the United Church of Worcester, UCC, all day on Saturday, November 1st. By 8:15 a.m., 648 delegates were in attendance at the meeting and many more arrived as the morning wore on. In attendance from PACC were pastors Bill Albright and Dick Phelps and lay delegates Judie Phelps and Mike Rich. Keynote speaker was Rev. Martin Copenhaver who spoke on 'discernment' and encouraged churches to get away from Robert's Rules to conduct church business and to take up the more difficult process of discernment instead. Copenhaver told delegates that Congregationalists have lost some of their rich history for decision-making clinging to the importance of democracy while losing track of the importance of listening to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst. He encouraged all congregations to stop using "majority rules" in their decision making for "majority rules is not a model for a Christian community but is what happens when we take God out of the process.

At the conclusion of Copenhaver's address, the delegates divided into small groups and discussed how the local churches are called to support the wider church.

On Friday, before the opening of the general conference, Bill Albright attended a Clergy/Lay Leaders Gathering.

After the general opening and key-note speaker, the group attended one of many workshops offered and had lunch at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Worcester. Bill attended a Workshop on "How can your local congregation experience discernment?" Dick attended the Workshop on "renewing the work of the Board." Judie's workshop was on "Becoming a Hospitable People," and Mike was in the workshop entitled "Praying and Acting for Justice." The Market place was also available for delegates to peruse and obtain information and materials, ideas and products from many vendors, organizations, and committees of the UCC.

After lunch and workshop presentations, the delegates returned to the United Church for the business meeting. All reports presented were approved. One resolution that was

brought before the body for action gave much discussion. It was about the development of a Massachusetts Innocence Commission. Although, after much discussion and many amendments the resolution passed, it was by a majority of only 12 votes, not enough in most delegates minds to be a clear victory. After reconsideration, the resolution was tabled until next year. This was a good example for the delegates of how discernment, listening to each others concerns, is better in a church decision than is majority vote when it is clear that no consensus was reached.

In other business, delegates voted to authorize the Board of Directors to sell Warner Farm, a property owned by the MACUCC in Western Massachusetts. The Board intends to sell it to a UCC pastor who wishes to develop it into a year-round retreat facility. The Conference Budget and the clergy compensation guidelines were also approved.

The meeting ended with a communion service. For further information, there are several materials that were handed out at the meeting that are on file in the PACC Office if you wish to explore them further.

Respectively submitted,
Judie Phelps, lay delegate

Arlington's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance

21st Anniversary: Monday, January 19, 2008

Guest Speaker: Professor Hassel McClellan,
Associate Professor of Statistics and Management
at Boston College

Tapas begins at 6 p.m.
Please bring finger food or dessert to serve six.

Program begins at 7:30 p.m.

Robbins Memorial Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Ave.
Call 781-643-4345 for more information

*A free-will offering will benefit the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington, DC,
the African American Society Scholarships and the Arlington Public Schools.*



Please recycle: Look for the recycling containers in the Narthex and Parish Hall to deposit your bulletins and other papers. There is also a container in the downstairs kitchen for other recyclables.

New member breakfast January 24

Anyone who might be interested in joining Park Avenue Church on February 8 is welcome to come to the Fireplace Room (upstairs) at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 24, to discuss faith journeys with the minister and some of the Deacons. If you have questions, speak with Bill Albright, Anita Clarke or Doug Record.

What's Happening at PACC

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| Sun. | Jan. 4 | 10:00 a.m. | Worship service includes Communion |
| | | 11:30 a.m. | Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall |
| | | 11:45 a.m. | Capital Campaign priorities discussion in the Parish Hall |
| | | 11:45 a.m. | Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |
| Mon. | Jan. 5 | | Annual reports due |
| Thu. | Jan. 8 | 7:30 p.m. | Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |
| Fri. | Jan. 9 | evening | Capital Campaign feasibility, Fireplace Room & Chapel |
| Sat. | Jan. 10 | 10:00 a.m. | Remove greens, Sanctuary and Narthex |
| | | afternoon | Capital Campaign feasibility, Fireplace Room & Chapel |
| Sun. | Jan. 11 | 10:00 a.m. | Worship service |
| | | 11:15 a.m. | Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall |
| | | 11:45 a.m. | Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |
| | | afternoon | Capital Campaign feasibility, Fireplace Room & Chapel |
| | | 4:00 p.m. | Youth Groups 1 & 2 in the Nicoll Room |
| Mon. | Jan. 12 | 7:30 p.m. | Council of Deacons in the Nicoll Room |
| Tue. | Jan. 13 | 7:30 p.m. | PACC-Men in the Fireplace Room |
| Wed. | Jan. 14 | 10:00 a.m. | Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room |
| | | 7:30 p.m. | Evening Bible Group in the Fireplace Room |
| Thu. | Jan. 15 | 7:30 p.m. | Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |
| Sat. | Jan. 17 | 9:30 a.m. | Sarah's Circle in the Fireplace Room |
| Sun. | Jan. 18 | 9:20 a.m. | Youth Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary |
| | | 10:00 a.m. | Worship service |
| | | 11:15 a.m. | Communion in the Sanctuary |
| | | 11:15 a.m. | Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall |
| | | 11:30 a.m. | Budget discussion in the Chapel |
| | | 11:30 a.m. | Youth knitters in the Fireplace Room |
| Mon. | Jan. 19 | | <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i> ; office closed |
| Tue. | Jan. 20 | 1:30 p.m. | Bible Study at Sunrise Assisted Living Center |

Thu.	Jan. 22	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Jan. 24	10:00 a.m.	New Member breakfast in the Fireplace Room
Sun.	Jan. 25	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes baptism of Elsie Colello
		11:30 a.m.	Luncheon in the Parish Hall
		12:00 noon	Annual Meeting of Park Avenue Congregational Church
Tue.	Jan. 27		Deadline for February <i>Spire</i>
Wed.	Jan. 28	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	Jan. 29	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Jan. 31	morning	Council of Deacons retreat; location tba

coming later in the year

Sun.	Feb. 8	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes reception of new members
		3:00 p.m.	Tuttle/You Concert in the Sanctuary
Sun.	Feb. 22	3:00 p.m.	Edwards/Brody Concert in the Sanctuary
Sat.	Apr. 25		Rummage Sale
Sat.	May 9		Craft Fair

Get your *Spire* by email. It arrives as a Word document attached to an email and is reformatted to letter-size paper, so you can print any pages that you wish. You will have it earlier than if it is sent via the postal service. What you will not receive is the clip art. Call 781-643-8680 to request this change.

Church-wide email list proposals

(Previously sent via email to the church)

Summary of Dec. 14 discussion. (Those attending the meeting were Valerie Censabella, Don Cohn, Jill Lewis, Mike Rich, Karen Stark, Jeff Steinheider, and Mark Tuttle.)

THE PROPOSAL: Two church-wide email lists:

1. An email list for church business to which any member of the church can post a message, but every message posted to the list will be screened by a group of moderators and must be approved by at least one moderator before it is released for distribution. The primary purpose of this list will be announcements of official church events, such as reminders about coming events (e.g., the Christmas pageant) and requests for help (e.g., asking for help at the church fair).
2. An email list for general church-related discussion to which any member of the church can post a message without being screened by a moderator. Generally speaking, any comment that would be considered appropriate at the coffee hour after the service would be considered appropriate on this list. Conversation on this list would include brainstorming on how the church could project itself into the community, how the church could be made more attractive to prospective members, family news, notes about outside events that might be of interest, or other things that are not 'official business' but that our members might like to share or discuss with each other.

HOW THIS DIFFERS FROM TODAY: The proposal broadens the charter of the current email list, and adds a second email list.

The original purpose of the current list was to supplement the telephone tree, conveying only news of momentous events like funerals, but the use of the list has clearly changed over time to include other announcements such as the fair, concerts, and picture updates. While we are making a formal proposal to broaden the charter to more general church-related business, this has already happened in practice, and the only real change we are proposing is to change the list so that anyone can post to it, and it will automatically send to a moderator first for approval.

Neither list will replace the current channels of communication, like notices printed in the worship bulletin or Spire or letters sent to the home. The lists will be used simply to accelerate communication, and take advantage of the opportunities for communication and fellowship that modern technology offers us.

HOW TO RESPOND: If you want to register support or opposition to this proposal, or if you have any comments at all, send a message to Mark Tuttle.

Got Space?

Often people move or clean out their houses during the course of the year and have some nice items to donate to the rummage sale. But if this occurs during any month other than April, they are often unable or unwilling to store things until such time as they can be brought to the church. What to do. Over the years we have tried to tuck things in various corners around the church or someone has graciously agreed to store things for several months, but we are looking for a better solution. Do you have any unused space around your house where storing bags and boxes of rummage would not be too intrusive? It would need to be clean, dry and fairly easily accessible. If you are the owner of such space and are agreeable to the prospect of storing items for the sale, please contact the church office at 781-643-8680. Thank you. We could really increase the quantity and quality of what we are able to sell if we could have an ongoing collection all year long.

Storm Cancellations to be on TV

If church services are cancelled because of a storm, the information should be posted on the three network TV stations (channels 4, 5 and 7) as well as WBZ radio, 1030 am. We also will attempt to post an announcement on the church web site and on the answering machine message. Power outages could affect our ability to access some or all of these systems. Of course, you should not attempt to come to church whenever you feel that conditions are unsafe.

Flower Calendar

Would you like to remember a loved one or share a celebration with the PACC community by dedicating the flowers on Sunday morning? You can do that by signing the calendar in the narthex or calling the church office, 781-643-8680. You can take the flowers home after the service or deliver them to a shut-in. January 11 and February 8 –

March 1 are available. The cost is \$35 or more; you can indicate on the sign-up sheet how much you would like to pay.