

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

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

May, 2010

Special Services in May

Worship services every Sunday through the year at 10:00 a.m.

May 9 – **Anniversary Sunday:** We will honor those who have been members of Park Avenue Church for 25 years or more.

May 16 – **Confirmation Sunday:** Youth affirm the promises made at their baptism and join our church.

May 23 – **Pentecost:** Also known as Whitsunday, Pentecost celebrates the birthday of the Christian Church, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles.

other special activities in May

Tuesday, May 4 – PACC-Men go to MIT Museum

Wednesday, May 5 – Discussion of *Jesus Interrupted*

Thursday, May 6 – Women's Guild Annual Meeting, presentation on Rose Parade

Saturday, May 8 – Craft Fair and Bake Sale

Saturday, May 8 – Sarah's Circle discusses Dan Brown's latest novel

Sunday, May 23 – Youth Group bike ride to Lexington for dinner

All-church evaluation forms due May 2.

See inside for more details.

Christian Education News

Confirmation

- Our last Confirmation class will be May 2 in the Fireplace Room from 12 to 2. Our topic is Body of Christ/Followers of Christ. We'll also be making baptism boxes.
- Confirmation is May 16 during the worship service. We'll meet in the sanctuary on May 9 after church for a quick 30-minute rehearsal of what will happen on Confirmation Sunday. Mentors and a family member should also come to the rehearsal if possible.

Youth Groups I and II

We'll have our annual bike ride to Mario's for dinner on May 23. We'll meet at PACC at 4:30, ride our bikes on the bike path to Lexington Center, have dinner at Mario's and ride back to PACC for dessert. Permission slips will be sent home May 2.

Sunday School

- There will be no Sunday School on May 30.
- Mark your calendars for Youth Sunday on June 13. Our rehearsal will be on June 12 from 9:30-11:30 in the sanctuary.
- Our last day of regular Sunday School will be June 20. On June 27 we'll start Summer Sunday School. We'll meet as one class and then divide into smaller groups for activities.

***Jesus Interrupted* topic for book discussion**

Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them) by Bart Ehrman will be the topic on May 5 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fireplace Room. All are welcome to the discussion, which will be co-led by Bill Albright and Kate Lindheim.

2010 All-Church Evaluation forms due May 2

There are two ways you can complete this year's all-church evaluation: via internet or on paper. An email sent April 2 contains a link to the on-line version. Copies of the paper form are on the table in the narthex or you can ask Kathy to mail one to you. Members and active friends of PACC are encouraged to complete a form and return it by May 2. Your response will help to strengthen our life and ministry and to guide us in making necessary adjustments. If you have questions, speak with Don Cohn or Doug Record.

PACC-Men sponsor trip to MIT Museum on May 4

Debbie Douglas, Curator of Science and Technology at the MIT Museum, has invited the PACC-Men and adult PACC-family members (high school age and older, please) to a tour of the Museum including some "behind the scenes" places that are not generally open to the public. The size of the group needs to be limited so the first 20 people who RSVP to Mike Rich will get to attend. Debbie will offer an all-church family trip to the Museum in 2011 after it reopens from renovations scheduled to begin next month.

Anyone interested in car pooling should gather at PACC at 6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4, to leave for the Museum at 7:00. Or, if you prefer, you can meet us at the MIT Museum, N51-209, 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, at 7:30. See the Museum website <http://web.mit.edu/museum/visit/directions.html> for directions. After 5 p.m., it is possible to park in the Windsor Street lot behind the museum. (The meters require feeding until 6 p.m.) There is a handicapped space in the small 5-car lot directly behind the museum and another on Front Street right near the main entrance. The tour will conclude around 9:30 to return to Arlington by 10:00 or so.

There is a dinner option: Gather at PACC at 5:30 p.m. to arrive at Asgard Irish Pub and Restaurant, (two blocks from the Museum) for dinner at 6:00. Check it out at <http://www.classicirish.com/asgard-home.php>.

It is important to call Mike Rich or e-mail him by noon on Tuesday, May 4th, if you would like to be one of the 20 to attend.

Dick Erickson to speak at Guild potluck, Annual Meeting on May 6

The Women's Guild of Park Avenue Congregational Church will have its Annual Meeting and potluck luncheon on Thursday, May 6. As a special treat, Dick Erickson will speak on the Rose Parade. All women are cordially invited to come to the Chapel at 11:00 a.m. If you have questions, speak with Diane Wells.

Sarah's Circle reading Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol*

The Lost Symbol will be the topic when Sarah's Circle meets on Saturday, May 8, from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. Robert Langdon returns in a thriller that Publishers Weekly calls "brain candy of the best sort." Dan Brown's hero seeks the wisdom known as the Ancient Mysteries, or the lost wisdom of the ages as he introduces the reader to noetic science, superstring theory, and Apotheosis of Washington. As has been the group's practice, those who wish to meditate may come at 9:30. All women are welcome. If you have questions, speak with Merrith Sabo-Jones.

Merger Update:

PACC Not Merging with Pleasant Street Congregational Church

As you know, we have been in conversation with Pleasant Street Congregational Church for the past several months about possibly merging our two churches. In preparation for a congregational gathering after church on Sunday, April 11th, I met with Reebee Girash, the pastor at Pleasant Street, and Johan de Besche, the chair of their Merger Action Team, on Friday afternoon, April 9th.

Pleasant Street's Merger Action Team had been meeting primarily with PACC during February and March to consider a merger with PACC. But they had told us early in this process that they were also in conversation with the Congregational Church of West Medford about the possibility of a merger. Because they focused most of their time and energy on PACC, it seemed that their interest in West Medford as a merger partner had declined. They also shared with us that West Medford is a struggling church and they did not think that combining two struggling churches made the most sense.

But on March 30th, the West Medford Strategic Planning group invited Pleasant Street to meet with them. At that meeting, West Medford articulated a prayerful and creative vision of transformation and growth which they were already beginning to live out. Pleasant Street was being invited by West Medford to be equal partners and co-creators in a future with a vision that closely matched the goal articulated during Pleasant Street's discernment process in 2009. Both Reebee and Johan spoke about how surprised they were at what they learned at that meeting at West Medford.

What followed were 7 meetings in 10 days for the Merger Action Team at Pleasant Street. At the conclusion of those 10 days, the Merger Action Team recommended to their church leadership at their Council meeting on April 8th that Pleasant Street Church pursue a partnership with the Congregational Church of West Medford. That recommendation was affirmed by their leadership. So Park Avenue will not be working towards a merger with Pleasant Street in the future. We responded faithfully to a request from Pleasant Street, our sister church, but they have chosen a different partner and a different path.

At my meeting with Reebee and Johan, they expressed profound gratitude for the welcome they received from the members of PACC and for the work completed by PACC's Merger Study Group in pursuing this question of merger which they posed to us last year. In a document given to me that explained their decision, they wrote, "We have been so deeply blessed by the Merger Study Group at Park Ave, and your whole congregation. You have fully engaged in a process that you didn't invite, didn't expect

and had some major reservations about from the beginning. But you jumped into the deep end of the pool with us, even going so far as to consider significant changes to your own ministry, and significant financial obligations and risks, all to accommodate a neighboring church's request. And we have learned that Park Ave is filled with wonderful people, strong programming for all ages and heartfelt worship. Most of all, we have learned that the folks on your Merger Study Group are really fantastic folks." If anyone would like a copy of this document, please email me or call me to request a copy. You can also get one through the church office.

Also, if anyone has questions or comments they would like to share with members of the Merger Study Group, please email the entire group at or contact any member of the group individually. The members are Bill Albright, Don Cohn, Linda Cohn, Tim Durning, Gary Kane, Kate Lindheim, Doug Record, Mike Rich, Kathy Richardson and Barbara Wagner.

On behalf of PACC, I would like to profusely thank the members of the Merger Study Group for their generosity of time and talent and for guiding us through this process the past 9 months. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be part of this group of dedicated PACC members.

Barbara Wagner

from the Mission and Justice Ministry

JOIN US IN TAKING A STAND AGAINST RACISM, April 30 – May 2

You are invited to participate in events being organized in Arlington in conjunction with a national **Stand Against Racism** movement initiated by the YWCA. **Stand Against Racism** began in 2008 to raise awareness that racism still exists in our communities and that it cannot be ignored or tolerated. Our goal in Arlington is to unite as one community in order to celebrate diversity, raise awareness that racism and all forms of prejudice still exist, and silence the voices of those who promote hate.

- *Freedom Writers* Movie Showing
Friday, April 30th; 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., Arlington High School, 869 Mass. Ave.
- Stand Against Racism Community Stand
Saturday, May 1st; 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Mass. Ave. between Town Hall & Pleasant St.
- A Community Conversation About Race.
Sunday, May 2nd; 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 630 Mass. Ave., Arlington

Please come to any or all of these free events, and share this information with others who might be interested. Questions? Talk with Jill Lewis.

Jumping for Justice, May 1

The MACUCC Restorative Justice Task Team will have a table and be doing workshops at the Jumping for Justice conference on Saturday, May 1. Tom Howard and Mike Rich plan to help with the afternoon workshop which starts at 1:30. Interested Arlington people can carpool from the Stand Against Racism event if they'd like. Talk with Mike for more information

Walk for Hunger, May 2

Jill Lewis and Kate Lindheim will walk 10 miles of the Walk for Hunger as a PACC team on May 2. If you'd like to join it, please let them know. They'd love to have company!

Great participation!**Walk for Affordable Housing**

The Mission and Justice Ministry would like to thank everyone who participated in the Housing Corporation of Arlington's annual Walk for Affordable Housing by walking with Team PACC, providing snacks or helping at our refreshment table. We had an impressive showing from PACC and beautiful weather for a walk. Walkers included: Jonathan Daniels; Paul and Maddie Domenichella; Tim Evans; Catherine Freudenreich; Karen Friedman; Abby, Becky, Olivia and Scott Jones; Andrew, Kate and Nick Lindheim; Abby McNulty; Susanna and Santanna Palou; Gabe Putnam; Christine and Eric Rochon; Deirdre Westcott and Thomas Willey. Anne Kelly Contini, Bonnie Hayner, Betty Rich, and Debbie Lewis were stationed at our well-stocked refreshment table. Many thanks to all those who pledged – we raised \$550 to help further HCA's mission to provide affordable housing and prevent homelessness in Arlington.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Thanks to the generosity of the PACC community, we are able to send a check for \$1215 as our contribution to the One Great Hour of Sharing collection. Thank you!

What's Happening at PACC

Sun.	May 2	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes Communion
		11:30 a.m.	Refreshments and fellowship in Parish Hall (downstairs)
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary
		12:00 noon	Confirmation Class in the Fireplace Room
Tue.	May 4	6:45 p.m.	PACC-Men meet to go to MIT Museum
Wed.	May 5	7:30 p.m.	Book discussion in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	May 6	11:00 a.m.	Women's Guild in the Chapel
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	May 8	9:30 a.m.	Sarah's Circle in the Fireplace Room
		10 am-3 pm	Craft Fair
Sun.	May 9	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, recognition of long-time PACC members
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		11:45 a.m.	Confirmation rehearsal in the Sanctuary
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Mon.	May 10	7:30 p.m.	Council of Deacons in the Nicoll Room
Wed.	May 12	10:00 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	May 13	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	May 16	9:20 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary
		10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes Confirmation
		11:30 a.m.	Communion in the Sanctuary
		11:30 a.m.	Refreshments and fellowship in Parish Hall (downstairs)
Tue.	May 18	7:30 p.m.	Membership Ministry at the home of Doug Record and Karen Stark, 15 Bellevue Rd., Arlington
Thu.	May 20	10:00 a.m.	Coffee Group in the Chapel
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	May 23	10:00 a.m.	Pentecost worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		4:30 p.m.	Youth Groups I & II bike to Lexington for dinner
Tue.	May 25		Deadline for June <i>Spire</i>
Wed.	May 26	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	May 27	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	May 30	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, no Sunday School classes
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
Mon.	May 31		<i>Memorial Day</i> ; office closed

coming later in the year

Sun.	Jun. 13	10:00 a.m.	Youth Sunday worship service
		12:00 noon	All-Church picnic at Lexington Christian Academy
Sun.	Jun. 20	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes Choir Appreciation

8th annual Craft Fair, Saturday, May 8, 10 am to 3 pm

It's almost time for the Craft Fair! There will be 18 tables of crafts—photography by our own Karen Stark and Arlington photographer Gloria Leitner, silk scarves, jewelry by several different crafts persons, fiber crafts and pot holders, sachets, painted stones and boxes, cards posters and pillows, soaps, candy bouquets, and more! PACC will have a bake table and baked goodies will be sold at the PACC bake table.. Do you need gifts for Mothers' Day, birthdays, baby showers, weddings, graduations, anniversaries? Or something for yourself? The Craft Fair is the place to purchase them. As in previous years, a scrumptious lunch will be available to purchase which will also benefit PACC.

To make this fundraiser successful, we need your help. First of all, please publicize the Craft Fair by posting flyers and inviting your family and friends to come. Please consider baking goodies for the bake table and helping to staff the table during the Fair. Perhaps you could help with lunch. If you are able to help in any way, please contact Betty Rich. Every fundraiser is important for PACC. Thank you for making the Craft Fair successful! And most certainly invite your friends and neighbors! We look forward to seeing you on May 8th!

Capital Campaign Implementation update

The Capital Campaign Implementation Committee expects that work will begin on the Chapel after that space is used for the Craft Fair on May 8. When we have more information, we'll update you in church or by email.

Donations to the Capital Campaign through April 18 total \$113,792! We appreciate the generosity of the PACC community. May is the end of the first year of this three-year drive. Is your pledge up to date? If you have a question about the status of your pledge to the Capital Campaign, call Kathy in the office.

	January – March 2010	<u>budget</u>	<u>actual</u>	<u>difference</u>
Quarterly	income	\$62,524	\$63,283	\$ 759
Report	expenses	<u>65,160</u>	<u>68,951</u>	3,790
		(\$ 2,636)	(\$ 5,668)	

Thank you

Thank you to Margaret Tuttle and the Ariel Woodwind Quintet, for the wonderful concert on April 18. The Tuttle's generously contributed a portion of the ticket sales to benefit PACC's music program.

Finalizing our restructuring

At a special congregational meeting on October 14, 2007, the membership of PACC voted to accept the recommendation of the Restructuring Working Group to organize around ministries rather than committees. The first three years of the new system were considered a trial period during which by-law provisions concerning committees would be suspended and the recommendations of the Restructuring Working Group would be used instead. Our experience working with ministries would then inform our revision of the by-laws. At that time we expected to be ready for a congregational vote on new by-laws by mid-October of this year.

When Pleasant Street Congregational Church asked that we consider a merger, our time line for evaluating the new structure and writing new by-laws became unrealistic. If we did merge, further changes to the by-laws might be required. If we did not (as turned out to be the case), there would not be enough time for thorough, thoughtful consideration of appropriate wording for the document.

Consequently, the Council of Deacons at its meeting on April 12 voted to call a special congregational meeting on Regathering Sunday, September 12, 2010, to request an extension of the suspension of certain sections of the by-laws and to continue to operate under the recommendations of the Restructuring Working Group for two more years, until October, 2012.

Doug Record, who chaired the Restructuring Working Group, and Karen Friedman have volunteered to work on the draft of new by-laws. They will work with Mike Rich and Bill Albright to recruit additional members of this group.

also from the Council of Deacons

Major agenda items at the April meeting of the Council of Deacons were a review of the process of merger discussions and the schedule for revising our by-laws. Both are reported in separate articles. Additionally at that meeting it was announced that:

- Valerie Censabella, Beverly Miller, Keith Truesdale and Tom Putnam will serve on the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
- Judie Phelps and Mike Rich will represent PACC at the Spring Meeting of the Metropolitan Boston Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC.
- Margaret Bell and Judie Phelps will represent PACC at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC

The next meeting of the Council of Deacons will be Monday, May 10, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nicoll Room. Anyone may attend, but only elected members may vote.

May is Fellowship and Care Ministry month at PACC

The Fellowship and Care Ministry focuses on strengthening our bonds with each other and how we support those among us who are shut-in, ill or overwhelmed by life's troubles. You are part of this ministry if you have supplied refreshments for coffee hour, visited someone who can't get out, provided a meal or a ride to someone in need, sent a card to cheer someone, delivered flowers or otherwise let someone know that the church family cares for them. If you would like to be more actively involved in this ministry, contact Margaret Bell, Hong Chin or Lauren Evans.

Look in the Sunday School hallway for the Ministry of the Month bulletin board.