

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

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

February, 2011

February at PACC

Every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. – worship service and Sunday School followed by
Fellowship Hour

Feb. 9 & 23 - Bible Study Group series “From Text to Sermon”

And these special events:

Feb. 2 Women’s Guild discusses books, movies, hobbies and games

Feb. 6 Soup and Subs to Go

Feb. 8 PACC-Men presentation on psychiatry

Feb. 12 Sarah’s Circle discusses writings of the Dalai Lama

Feb. 12 Benjamin Road Band performs at coffeehouse

Feb. 13 Youth Group I plants bulbs

Feb. 20 Youth Group II bakes breads

Feb. 21 PACC-Women discuss books

Feb. 26 Potluck and Game Night

Feb. 27 Trip to Museum of Science for exhibit on race

Plus two outreach projects in honor of Valentine’s Day

See inside for details

Christian Education News

Sunday School

We've made some changes in our Sunday School classes. Our oldest Sunday School class, the Disciples class, now meets in the Fellowship Room. We've added a new class that includes some fifth through seventh graders. It is wonderful that our Sunday School is growing!

There will be no regular Sunday School on Sunday, February 20. Younger children will meet in the room next to the Fellowship Room for a story and activity. Older children are encouraged to attend the worship service that Sunday.

Youth Groups

Youth Group I (fifth-seventh grade) will meet on Sunday, February 13, from 4:00- 5:30 in the Nicoll Room. We'll be planting bulbs to share with others and making a special Valentine's Day treat.

Looking ahead to March: PS3 game day

Youth Group II (eighth grade and up) will meet on Sunday, February 20, from 4:00-5:30 in the Nicoll Room. We'll be baking quick breads to share with others.

Looking ahead to March: movie night (we'll vote on the movie at the February meeting).

Kate's new office hours:

2:30-5:30 Mondays and Wednesdays, 9-11 Thursdays

“From Text to Sermon”: Evening Bible Group considers lectionary

Evening Bible Group will continue the series "From Text to Sermon" when it meets February 9 and 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Between now and Easter, members will examine the church's liturgical calendar and the related 3-year cycle of Scripture readings known as the lectionary. Each session will consider one or more of the lectionary texts which will be the basis of an upcoming sermon. No advance preparation or biblical training is necessary. All are welcome. Just bring an open mind and your favorite Bible (or one will be provided for you). On February 9 we'll look at Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18; Psalm 119:33-40; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23 and Matthew 5:38-48. On February 23 the texts are Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-9. Bill Albright leads the group.

This past week, my wife Karen received the sad news that her great-aunt Mary Ellen had succumbed to pneumonia. After a brief struggle with congestive heart failure, she died suddenly but peacefully. As I write this, Karen is making arrangements to fly to Ohio for Aunt Mary Ellen's funeral. She was young for her 93 years.

When she was 90, Aunt Mary Ellen attended a family reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC, where she competed in a family golf tournament and gave everyone a run for their money. Two-and-a-half years ago, Karen and I were honored that Aunt Mary Ellen came to our wedding. At 91, she was as active and alert as anyone can be at that age. Aunt Mary Ellen was the benevolent matriarch of that part of Karen's family and she will be greatly missed.

Death is no stranger to me. Many times through the years, I've seen it up close. The first experience of death I can remember was when my pet dog Brownie was run over by a car—I was four years old. Since then, I've experienced the loss of many loved ones, friends, and strangers. As a pastor, I've been in sick rooms as some drew their last breaths. I've waited with families as a surgeon brought sad news. I've seen some make peace with death, like going home with an old friend, while others struggled because they still had unfinished business with life. I've stood in the presence of the dying young and held the hands of the elderly as death drew near. And I've experienced the loss of both of my parents. Standing in awe of the powerful mystery of death, I've often sensed that its coming is a holy moment.

Sooner or later, we all experience the deaths of loved ones. It's a normal part of the rhythm of God's creation. We are mortal beings. But as Christians, we believe that, as awesome as the mystery of death may be, *death is not the end of the story*.

Once again in recent weeks, death has come near, although in a different context: the closing of our sister church in Arlington—Pleasant Street Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. January 30th is the last Sunday that the Pleasant Street congregation will worship together in their marvelous white Greek Revival church building. That building is a landmark in Arlington Center, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Pleasant Street Church was founded by one Anna Bradshaw in 1842 (the church building was completed in 1944), which makes it older than Karen's Aunt Mary Ellen, older than Park Avenue Church, even older than the American Civil War. Its closing at the end of January 2011 is surely like a death for the greater Arlington community. We deeply mourn the loss of our sister Congregational (UCC) church, but we celebrate her 168 years of life among us.

As sister churches, our two congregations have had many things in common over these many years. Some of us have had friendships in both churches. Together we've shared a commitment to Christian outreach. We became Open and Affirming (ONA) churches about the same time, extending God's extravagant welcome to "all people who seek to know and love God," in the words of Pleasant Street Church's ONA statement, no matter what their "age, physical or mental ability, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious background, [or] socio-economic or marital status."

While there are many similarities in our two churches, there are also some differences. We've been *sister* churches—related through a common theological, denominational, and geographic bloodline—but we're not identical twins. In the years I've served as PACC's pastor, I've enjoyed many of the differences. Sometimes I've been amused by them and at other times I've been inspired, as I was a couple weeks ago when Pleasant Street Church celebrated the ordination to Christian ministry of one of their long-time members. I've often admired, even envied, Pleasant Street's energy for and commitment to mission and justice, the guidance of some members to ordained ministry, their engagement with the UCC's "God Is Still Speaking" campaign, and their love of inspirational music of all kinds.

In the past several years, I've also admired and deeply appreciated their pastor and teacher, the Rev. Rebecca "Reebee" Girash. In the time we've been colleagues in ministry, we've also become friends. I've been grateful for Reebee's interest in and compassion toward the Arlington community. Largely through her efforts, the Arlington Interfaith Association has begun to take some new breaths. Often, if we've had community Easter Sunrise Services on Robbins Farm Hill, it's been because Reebee has been enthusiastic about them. I've always been glad of that, even on the coldest and windiest of Easter mornings.

And in the process of the closing of Pleasant Street Congregational Church, UCC, Reebee has kept the essential Christian belief before our eyes, that death is not the end of the story. In a recent *Boston Sunday Globe* article, Reebee was quoted as saying, "The thing I've been preaching to our members for [the past] two years is that we are an Easter people. Whatever happens to this physical place, our ultimate faith is in a God of resurrection."

The closing of Pleasant Street Congregational Church, UCC, is evidence that even a church is subject to the rhythm of creation. There's no doubt in my mind that this is not only a historic moment for the Arlington community—it is also a *holy* moment. And, as poet Jane Kenyon has paraphrased *The Book of Common Prayer*, "God does not leave us comfortless." The great *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563 tells why. It asks, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" The answer: "That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." It's another way of saying that God's love never lets us go. Trusting God with that Good News makes us an "Easter people," indeed!

Yes, death is a great mystery and our sister church will be greatly missed. But her spirit lives on in the lives of its members who survive it, and of those who have been in some way touched by its ministries and mission, its joy and its hope. So, let us praise God for God's amazing love as we stand in awe before the *greater* mystery of resurrection.

"May mercy, peace, and love be *yours* in full measure!" [Jude 2].

— *BILL*

You are invited to help celebrate
Pleasant Street Congregational Church's Bright Legacy
Saturday, February 5

3:00 p.m.	Open House includes a display of photos and historic artifacts; light refreshments
4:00 p.m.	Worship Service
5:30 p.m.	Reception

SOUPER-BOWL SUNDAY!!!!

Although our favorite N.E. team didn't get into the Super Bowl, we are having a fundraiser of pre-made soup and sandwiches to take home for those who still plan to watch the big game. Or, if you don't plan to watch the game and would like not to have to prepare lunch or dinner, consider purchasing some items on Sunday, February 6th in Parish Hall after the service. All proceeds go to the General Fund.

You can choose from several options:

Cup of Soup	Sandwich	Bag of potato chips	Bakery cookie
chicken	turkey & Swiss	\$.50	oatmeal
corn chowder	ham & American		chocolate chip
<u>or</u> chili	<u>or</u> roast beef		<u>or</u> sugar
\$3.00	w/lettuce & tomato		\$\$.50
	on a bulkie roll		
	\$3.00		

Or one from each column for \$6.

Adult groups

Women's Guild – February 3

Weather permitting, the Women's Guild will have a pizza lunch and book discussion on Thursday, February 3. The ladies should bring books they have read and would like to recommend to the other members. Also the group will discuss movies, hobbies and games people have enjoyed. All women are invited -- come to the Fellowship Room at 11:00 a.m. Hostesses will be Meredythe Schober and Diane Wells.

PACC-Men – February 8

The February meeting of the PACC-Men will be on Tuesday, the 8th (note change from usual meeting date) at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room and will include the presentation "A brief history of psychiatry in Massachusetts," by Oliver Freudenreich, M.D. RSVP to Mike Rich in advance so that Oliver will know how many handouts to bring and Mike will know a rough quantity of snacks.

Sarah's Circle – February 12

Sarah's Circle women's book group will meet Saturday, February 12, from 10 a.m. until 12 noon in the Fellowship Room. Those who wish to meditate may come at 9:30 a.m. Each person is reading a book of her own choosing by the Dalai Lama to discuss. All women are welcome. Contact Merrith Sabo-Jones if you have questions.

PACC-Women – February 21

PACC-Women met on Monday, January 24 on a very very cold night, and several brave women braved the elements to join in our lively discussion! All women are invited to come when the group gathers again on Monday, February 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. We will discuss the books we are reading! If you have questions, contact Betty Rich.

Pot-Luck and Game Night- WOTWB!*

Winter seems to be going on forever - doesn't it? Well, to try to have a little fun at no expense, the Fun(d) raising Team will hold a Pot-Luck and Game night on Saturday, February 26, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Bring what you would have cooked for dinner for your family and a game you enjoy playing and we will see how much fun we can have to *Ward Off the Winter Blues! We will need to know if you plan to join us and what food or beverage you are bringing by February 13th so that we have a good balance of food. Please let Diane or Betty Rich if you plan to attend or sign up on the sheet in the Parish Hall.

Cabin Fever?

Are you frustrated by the cold, wind, and snow? Are you tired of spending more time indoors than you would otherwise choose? Put those enforced hours of confinement to good use by cleaning out closets, drawers, and cupboards of the clutter that invariably collects in these places. Things that are "good" but that you no longer want can be placed in boxes and bags and labeled **RUMMAGE SALE**.

We are looking for clean clothing that has been gently worn and housewares in good condition. You will be doing yourself a favor by using your time productively to tidy up your own house and the church a favor by providing salable items for the upcoming event. The PACC Rummage Sale will be held on **SATURDAY, APRIL 30** from 9 to 2. Please mark your calendars now and plan to donate, work, and shop. And remember that we also need lots of help sorting and pricing the two days prior to the sale. If you have questions about the sale, questions about the suitability of any items, or wish to be one of the first to volunteer, please contact Diane Wells, Lauren Evans or Judy Miller. Thank you!

Mark Your Calendars -

Orange and Grapefruit orders due March 6

Temple oranges and pink grapefruit will be delivered direct from the orchard in Florida. Deadline for orders: March 6th. Delivery will arrive March 12th. The price is \$28/box or \$14/half-box. Order forms will be available at church in February. If you have questions, speak with Jill Lewis.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper March 8th!

PACC will have our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper in preparation for Lent on March 8 from 5:30-7:30 pm in Parish Hall. It is not too early to mark your calendars. Hopefully the weather will be better than last year! This is a child-friendly event. Please invite your friends to join us!

from the Membership Ministry

Membership Ministry reminds everyone that the best way to encourage new membership in our congregation is to make personal connections and extend invitations. Some of us feel uncomfortable starting with an invitation to worship service, so try an invitation to a fellowship event as a route to growing membership. Visitors can begin to know our congregation in a personal capacity first and that can lead to interest in the spiritual life of our community.

There are many fellowship opportunities to bring a friend along: PACC-Men, PACC-Women, choir, Sarah's Circle book club, youth group... and the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on March 8.

Many PACC members plan on attending the services and reception at Pleasant St Congregational Church on February 5th. Membership has sent a letter on behalf of our congregation inviting their members to worship with us, but there is no substitute for personal connections. If you have a friend there, or hit it off with someone you meet there, don't be shy about asking them to accompany you to the pancake supper, or to your favorite fellowship activity at PACC. Having a specific date and time is always better than a vague invitation, so please take just a moment to give it some thought and preparation.

What's Happening at PACC

Thu.	Feb. 3	11:00 a.m.	Women's Guild in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Feb. 5	4:00 p.m.	Legacy worship service and reception, Pleasant Street Church
Sun.	Feb. 6	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes installation of Deacons, Communion
		11:30 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
			SOUP AND SUBS TO GO
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
		11:45 a.m.	Christian Education Ministry in the Fireplace Room
Tue.	Feb. 8	7:30 p.m.	PACC-Men in the Fellowship Room
Wed.	Feb. 9	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Feb. 10	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Feb. 12	9:30 a.m.	Sarah's Circle in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Benjamin Road Band in the Parish Hall

Sun.	Feb. 13	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
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group I in the Nicoll Room
Tue.	Feb. 15	7:30 p.m.	Membership Ministry at the Record/Stark home, 15 Bellevue Rd., Arlington
Wed.	Feb. 16	7:30 p.m.	Council of Deacons in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Feb. 17	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
		7:30 p.m.	Fellowship & Care Ministry at the home of Margaret Bell, 33 Birch Hill Rd., Belmont
Sun.	Feb. 20	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
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group II in the Nicoll Room
Mon.	Feb. 21		<i>Presidents' Day</i> ; office closed
		7:30 p.m.	PACC-Women in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Feb. 22		Deadline for March <i>Spire</i>
Wed.	Feb. 23	10:30 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Feb. 24	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Feb. 26	6:00 p.m.	Potluck and Game Night in the Parish Hall
Sun.	Feb. 27	10:00 a.m.	Worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		after church	Leave for Museum of Science exhibit on race

coming later in the year

Sat.	Mar. 5	3:00 p.m.	Trumpet and Organ Concert in the Sanctuary
Tue.	Mar. 8	5:30 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
Wed.	Mar. 9	7:30 p.m.	Ash Wednesday worship service
Sun.	Apr. 3	3:00 p.m.	Vox Lucens Concert in the Sanctuary
Sun.	Apr. 17	8:30 a.m.	Pancake breakfast in the Parish Hall
		10:00 a.m.	Palm Sunday worship service
Thu.	Apr. 21	7:30 p.m.	Maundy Thursday worship service
Sun.	Apr. 24	10:00 a.m.	Easter worship service
Sat.	Apr. 30		Rummage Sale in the Parish Hall
Sat.	May 14		Craft Fair in the Parish Hall

**The Benjamin Road Band
Saturday, Feb. 12**

7:30 – 10:30 PM

Park Avenue Congregational Church Coffee House

**Rhythm & Blues from Across America
Featuring vocalist Cal Armistead**

Church Fundraiser - \$10 in advance; \$15 @ door

Light refreshments available

Tickets on Sale Jan. 30th @ PACC

Fellowship Room dedicated, next steps planned

PACC's new Fellowship Room was dedicated on Sunday, January 16. A good crowd of members and friends stayed after church to dedicate this lovely space. As part of the dedication people expressed ideas about how this room can become a center of the spiritual, intellectual, and social life of our church. At the same time that we looked forward to using the new room, we remembered the chapel it replaced and the many years that PACC people worked and worshiped there. There will be a plaque in the Fellowship Room to commemorate the memorial gifts that made that original room possible.

If you haven't had a chance to see the Fellowship Room yet, do take a look. The transformation is amazing, from the new entry doors to the flooring, lighting, and walls. Lots of storage is built in, both in the area for serving food and in the worship center on the opposite side of the room. Check out the stained glass medallions in the windows. They were created for the former PACC building by Arthur M. Dallin (son of Cyrus Dallin) and moved to the chapel when our current church was built in the 60's. People have commented that they show to much better advantage with the new colors.

This new meeting room would not have been possible without our gifts to the Capital Campaign and without the hard work of many PACC people. Particular thanks are due to Gary Kane and Eric Rochon, who supervised the whole process from drawing up plans to the final painting parties and did much work on the project themselves. Thanks to everyone, too many to name without inadvertently leaving someone out, who pitched in.

Now that this first project is completed it's time to turn our attention to the other two major projects of the Capital Campaign, the lift and ramp to increase accessibility and the work on our beautiful organ. We had originally thought that we would need to decide which of these two projects to work on next. As it turns out, there really is no choice to make, since neither of them can be started and finished in 2011. The soonest we can get the major organ work done is the summer of 2012, because the company that will do the work is not available for such major work this year. It will probably also take a year or more to draw up final plans, hire a contractor, and begin work on the lift. Instead of choosing which to do first, the Capital Campaign Implementation Committee recommended that we begin the planning on both projects and do as much as we can of the preliminary work this year. For the organ this means doing all we can of the preliminary work that will prepare for the redoing of the console in the summer of 2012. For the accessibility improvements this means drawing up plans, working with a contractor, and perhaps splitting the work and getting the ramp done this year. The Capital Campaign Implementation Committee presented its recommendation to the church membership at the Annual Meeting on January 23, and the congregation voted an enthusiastic YES on the Capital Campaign's next steps.



Sacred Conversation on Race

As part of our continuing Sacred Conversation on Race, we'll be going to the Museum of Science on Sunday, February 27 to see the RACE: Are We So Different? exhibit. We'll leave for the museum together after church. See mos.org for more information about the exhibit. See Jill Lewis, Mike Rich or Kate Lindheim if you'd like to join us on the 27th.

Valentine's Day Outreach: "Love Your Neighbor"

Somerville Homeless Coalition

The Somerville Homeless Coalition is always in need of personal items and toiletries to distribute to the people it serves. Its supply of these items is particularly low right now. We will be collecting the listed items on February 6 and February 13. There will be a box in the narthex for donations. Thank you for your support!

- Toothpaste/toothbrush
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Razors & shaving cream
- Bars of soap, bottles of body wash
- Face cloths
- Deodorant
- Alcohol-free mouthwash
- Diapers, Pull-ups
- Liquid dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Personal packets of tissues
- Moist wipes
- Baby wipes
- Charlie cards
- Gift cards (Target, CVS, etc.)

Arlington Fuel Assistance

The Town of Arlington is in need of donations to support the Arlington Fuel Assistance program. If you would like to make a donation and help keep your Arlington neighbors warm this very cold winter, you may send a check to PACC with "Arlington Fuel Assistance" in the memo line or make an online donation through the following link. Thank you. arlingtonma.gov/fuelassistance

Save the date: March 5 for the Mass. Conference UCC's Super Saturday day of workshops. See the possibilities at <http://macucc.org/>.

2011 Council of Deacons

At its meeting on January 10, the Council of Deacons determined the following assignments for 2011:

Moderator: Tim Durning
Vice-Moderator: Barbara Wagner
Clerk: Valerie Censabella
Treasurer: Robert Willey
Financial Secretary: Kathy Richardson

All of the above were confirmed at Annual Meeting. Ministry assignments are:

Administration: Valerie Censabella
Christian Education: Barbara Wagner and Josh Young
Fellowship and Care: Linda Cohn and Lauren Evans
Finance and Property: Don Cohn, Gary Kane and Jeff Steinheider
Membership: Scott Jones and Betty Rich
Mission and Justice: Karen Friedman and Anne Kelly Contini
Worship and Music: Norma Allen and Margaret Bell