

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

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

March, 2011

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner**

Come have pancakes for dinner at church on Tuesday, March 8, from 5:30p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Parish Hall. Pancakes, bacon, sausage and fruit will be served. \$5/adult, \$3/child with a \$15 max per family.

Invite your friends or family to come and enjoy a fun evening out at PACC. Let us do the cooking for them. We'll have a Mardi Gras craft project for the kids.

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday and traditionally is the day when fats and oils are used up before the simpler days of Lent.

If you'd like to help with food preparation, serving or clean-up, please speak to Meg Moloney, Betty Rich, or Kate Lindheim.

**Ash Wednesday Service**

Our Ash Wednesday service will be March 9 at 7:30 p.m. It will include hymns, prayers, scripture readings, a brief meditation, and the "imposition of ashes" for those who wish. Traditionally, the ashes used in the service are made from palm leaves from last Palm Sunday which are burned, crushed, and mixed with olive oil. The ashes have a twofold meaning: a visible "confession" of our need for forgiveness, as in "sackcloth and ashes," and the recognition of our mortal and finite nature as human beings, as in "ashes to ashes and dust to dust." We hope you will join us for this time of reflection.

*See the Minister's Message (inside) for a reflection on the season of Lent.*

## **Christian Education News**

### **Lent**

Materials for observing Lent at home will be available on the table in the narthex on Wednesday, March 9. We'll also have materials available at the Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on Tuesday, March 8. On March 13 children will also bring home additional materials to observe Lent at home.

### **Sunday School**

On Sunday, March 13, we'll start Sunday School with our Sunday School Lent service in the Fellowship Room. We'll talk about what Lent is, and have some prayers and readings to help explain this season of the church year. Kids will take an active part in this service. Regular Sunday School will follow.

### **Youth Group**

Youth Group I (fifth-seventh grade) will meet on Sunday, March 13 from 4-5:30 in the Fireplace Room for PS3/Wii games.

Youth Group II (eighth grade and up) will meet on Sunday, March 27 from 4-6 in the Fireplace Room for a movie and popcorn.

Rescheduled quick bread baking will be on Sunday, March 20 from 4-5:30 in the Nicoll Room. This is open to anyone from either youth group who would like to do some baking. We'll give the breads to match up families or others in our congregation to let them know we've been thinking of them.

## **Potluck lunch and party to honor Kathy Richardson**

Please come to a potluck and party on Sunday, March 13, after church to recognize Kathy Richardson's 17 years of faithful service to PACC. Please don't panic. Kathy is not retiring. The Deacons would just like to show her how much we appreciate all she does to keep our church functioning. This will be a chance for those of us who are not around the church office during the week to see and talk to Kathy in person.

We request that you bring food according to the following plan:

If your last name begins with A-L, bring a main dish;

If your last name begins with M-R, bring a dessert;

If your last name begins with S-Z, bring a side dish or salad.

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

Looking forward to a great celebration --

Linda Cohn and Lauren Evans

## Adult Education for the Spring

The Christian Education Ministry is pleased to offer the following opportunities for adult education during the next three months:

### ***The Jesus Diaries***

At 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, and Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, we will use *The Jesus Diaries*, a short (30 page) booklet from the UCC containing personal essays written by the Still Speaking Writers Group, as a study guide for Lent. For the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, we will have the opportunity to share our own essays about what Jesus means to each of us. If you are interested in ordering this booklet (\$6.95/copy), please let Barbara Wagner, Josh Young or Kate Lindheim know.

### **Singing rounds and new hymns**

Andy Hart will lead two musical sessions this spring. The first will be held Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., and will be geared toward learning and singing spiritual rounds of different types. We'll sing a few from our hymnal as well as rounds from other countries and from collections such as the Revels, Kings Singers, and the Libana songbooks (as time allows). The second session will be Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 7pm, with a focus on learning new hymns that Pastor Bill would like to consider for possible use in worship. Teen and adult singers are welcome for one or both sessions. (If you are a non-singer and would like to come and listen, feel free!).

### ***Unbroken***

A book discussion on *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand will take place on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. Laura Hillenbrand who also wrote *Seabiscuit* has written another book based on a true story. This time, it is a story of an airman, Louis Zamperini, who survives many days at sea after a plane crash and then as a POW during World War II. Words like mesmerizing, gripping, stirring and triumphant are used to describe this book. It comes highly recommended by several church members who have already read it.

### **Evening Bible Study**

During Lent we will continue our series, "From Text to Sermon," discussing lectionary texts for upcoming Sundays. Everyone is welcome to join the group Wednesday, March 2, and March 23 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. The sessions are led by Bill Albright.

Please consider joining us for one or all of these opportunities to explore and deepen our faith. Other programs are in the planning stages, so stay tuned for more dates! If you have questions, please see Bill Albright, Kate Lindheim, Andy Hart, Barbara Wagner or Josh Young.

## Minister's Message

“’Tis the season to be jolly” was never said about the season of Lent. Many churches avoid it like the plague. Too morbid, too grim. While it’s true that, at this time of year, the days are *lengthening* (which is what the word “Lent” literally means), the coming of Lent seems like some kind of bait and switch. Yes, the world is emerging from gloomy winter—the signs of spring are all around. Cheery crocuses thrust their fragile blossoms through the lingering snow. The chirping of robins and cardinals lifts our spirits. Seed catalogs show up in our mailboxes. And families turn out for the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper (on March 8th this year). All signs of the approach of spring.

Then, wham! Ash Wednesday jolts us out of Epiphany and into Lent, like some cruel trick. Worshipers suddenly find themselves in a season heavy with penitence and self-denial that seems more suitable for “the bleak mid-winter” than springtime. Lenten biblical texts evoke images of wilderness, temptation, mortality, the journey to the cross. Traditional Lenten hymns are more somber than the music that characterizes other seasons of the church year. On the Sundays ahead, we will confess our sins, both corporately and individually, as we acknowledge our need for forgiveness. It’s as if, just when our northern hemisphere tilts its axis toward the sun, some cosmic groundhog sees its shadow *again* and flings the church into the six weeks of Lent. No wonder attendance at Ash Wednesday is typically sparse, for many of us are not so eager to take up this spiritual venture.

And yet, the Lenten season deserves our serious attention. Admittedly, Ash Wednesday brings us face-to-face with our mortality. Worshipers are invited to receive on their foreheads the sign of the cross made with ashes from last year’s Palm Sunday palm leaves. Solemn words are uttered: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return.” But the Ash Wednesday liturgy is not an end to itself. It tilts us toward the deepest mystery of our faith that we will celebrate at Holy Week and Easter. Without that preparation, our experience of Easter will be superficial. To put it bluntly, without death, there can be no resurrection. The disciplines and liturgy of Lent invite us to examine what in our lives needs to die in order that a new creation can blossom forth within and among us.

Many people associate the Lenten season with self-denial, and that’s not entirely wrong. Self-denial is the church’s counter-cultural response to the self-indulgence that is so pervasive in our world. Traditional Lenten disciplines—such as self-examination, fasting, contemplative prayer and study, sharing with the poor—serve to disorient us from

our usual way of living and reorient us toward things that really matter. That's the true meaning of repentance. It's a spiritual turnaround that toward reconciliation with God and neighbor.

The Old Testament reading on the First Sunday in Lent provides the context with a familiar but widely misunderstood mythic story in the second and third chapters of Genesis. That story draws us powerfully into the tragic reality of human life. It opens with the idyllic scene of the first man and woman living in close company with God in a garden paradise.

All seems right with the world until those spiritual ancestors of ours give in to their baser instincts, represented by the serpent. As they partake of the fruit that God has forbidden them to eat, they declare that they no longer need God—they have been persuaded that they can now be gods unto themselves (Gen. 3:5), and at first they believe it. Unfortunately, though, their close communion with God comes to an end and they are cast out of the garden into a wilderness where they are indeed on their own, fending for themselves for their very survival. Estranged from their Creator, they must now eke out a miserable existence for themselves by the sweat of their brow. In the unfolding biblical story, it's all downhill from there for those believe the lie that they don't need God.

That's where Ash Wednesday comes in. It disorients us away from the bad-news world we experience in the various news media and reorients us toward the good news of "treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20). We begin our Lenten journey with the solemn reminder that we are not, after all, gods unto ourselves. We did not create ourselves, but must bow before the awesome mystery of life in all its diversity, beauty and brevity. The truth is that we depend on God for the very breath of life.

In some ways, the Lenten journey may remind us of a 12-Step Program. The first step acknowledges that "we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone," as the Ash Wednesday prayer puts it. Worshiping together during Lent, we confess before God and one another that "we have not loved you with all our heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves." By offering this prayer, we admit that, like the first family described in the opening chapters of Genesis, our separation from God and neighbor prevents us from enjoying the benefits of close company with God and the fullness of our human experience.

Through the Scriptures and prayers of the Lenten season, we are invited on a kind of "pilgrim's progress," whereby we may join with other recovering sinners—Jesus' "disciples," both then and now—in a six-week spiritual journey with Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem. Along the way, Jesus bids disciples and pilgrims to "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). It's a call to join him in great sacrifice but even greater glory. It is a comfort to know that we do not make this journey alone. We do it together in the Spirit of the living Christ.

We welcome you to join us on this solemn and sublime Lenten journey. What awaits us at the end is nothing less than Easter, when God's love raises us up to new life. Easter makes reconciliation possible for us and proffers the hope that, somehow and someday, the whole world might tilt its spiritual axis toward God's loving embrace. The good news we celebrate during this holy season is that, through it all, God's love never lets us go.

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

—*BILL*

### **PACCMEN Outing [or is it an Inning?]**

All men are invited to join the PACCMEN Monday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room for a Bar-B-Q take-out dinner from Blue Ribbon. Please RSVP to Gary Kane by Friday March 4th so that food arrangements can be made.

### **Greek mythology to be topic for Sarah's Circle**

Sarah's Circle women's book group will meet Saturday, March 12 from 10 a.m. until 12 noon in the Fireplace Room. Each person will choose a book dealing with Greek Gods/mythology to return to more discussion of pagan and early civilization's views of spirituality. Greek mythology has exerted an extensive influence on the culture, the arts, and the literature of Western civilization and remains part of Western heritage and language. Poets and artists from ancient times to the present have derived inspiration from Greek mythology and have discovered contemporary significance and relevance in these mythological themes.

As usual, those who wish to meditate may come at 9:30 a.m. If you have questions, speak with Merrith Sabo-Jones.

### **PACC-WOMEN declare "Food Rules!"**

The next meeting of PACC-Woman will be held on March 21st at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. The topic of the evening will be "FOOD RULES!" If you are curious - come to PACC-WOMAN in March to find out what we're up to. RSVP's would be appreciated. Contact Betty Rich.

# *2010/2011 PACC Concert Series*

*for the Benefit of the Music Program is pleased to present*

*Christopher J. O'Hara, Trumpet*

*Mark Engelhardt, Organ*

## *Trumpet and Organ in Concert*

*Saturday, March 5, 2011 at 3:00 PM*

in the Sanctuary of the Park Avenue Congregational Church

50 Paul Revere Road, Arlington MA

In advance: Adults - \$15, Seniors/Students - \$10

At the door: Adults - \$20, Seniors/Students - \$12

*Please join us for a Post-Concert Reception  
in the Parish Hall*

for more information check our website at [pacc-ucc.org](http://pacc-ucc.org)

or call the church office at 781-643-8680

## Easter Festival Choir Rehearsals Starting

Do you like to sing but don't have the time to be part the choir each Sunday? Do you have a friend who likes to sing? Would you like to try out the choir without a long term commitment? Consider joining and/or bringing a friend with you to be part of our Festival Choir for Easter. This year we will be singing Randall Thompson's "Alleluia" and "O Clap Your Hands" by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Our rehearsals are at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays in the Nicoll Room. We will work on the Easter Music at the start of the evening and then the Festival Choir can leave when we turn to the music for Sunday. We hope to see you on Thursdays between now and Easter, April 24. If you have any questions you can talk to Jeffrey Brody or Doug Record.

## What's Happening at PACC

Wed.	Mar. 2	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Mar. 3	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Mar. 5	3:00 p.m.	Trumpet & Organ Concert/Sanctuary, reception/Parish Hall
Sun.	Mar. 6	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes Communion
		11:30 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Mon.	Mar. 7	7:30 p.m.	PACC-Men in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Mar. 8	5:30 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
Wed.	Mar. 9	7:30 p.m.	Ash Wednesday worship service
Thu.	Mar. 10	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Mar. 12	9:30 a.m.	Sarah's Circle in the Fellowship Room

### **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS – turn clocks AHEAD one hour**

Sun.	Mar. 13	10:00 a.m.	Worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Potluck in the Parish Hall
		11:45 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group I in the Fireplace Room
Mon.	Mar. 14	7:30 p.m.	Council of Deacons in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Mar. 15	7:30 p.m.	Membership Ministry at 15 Bellevue Rd., Arlington
Wed.	Mar. 16	10:30 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	Lenten Study – <i>The Jesus Diaries</i> - in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Mar. 17	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room

Sun.	Mar. 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 Groups II in the Nicoll & Fireplace Rooms
		7:00 p.m.	Singing rounds in the Nicoll Room or Sanctuary
Mon.	Mar. 21	7:30 p.m.	PACC-Women in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Mar. 22		Deadline for April <i>Spire</i>
Wed.	Mar. 23	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Mar. 24	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sun.	Mar. 27	10:00 a.m.	Worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		11:30 a.m.	Tremendous Hearts presentation in the Fellowship Room
		4:00 p.m.	Youth Group II in the Fireplace Room
Thu.	Mar. 31	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
			<i>coming later in the year</i>
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 legacy of Pleasant Street Congregational Church, UCC**

Although it is no longer holding worship services, Pleasant Street Church (PSCC) will continue to support liberal religious values and serve those in need through legacy gifts. In January the membership voted how its assets would be distributed when the building is sold and the corporation legally dissolved. [The distribution is subject to approval by the Attorney General of the Commonwealth.] Park Avenue Church is one of four organizations which are major beneficiaries, and many other charities will receive smaller gifts. All allocations are expressed as percentages; the exact dollar amount will not be known until a final accounting is done. Although the gift is not restricted, the members of PSCC expressed interest in our helping to keep its memory alive by naming something at PACC in its honor, helping to support the future of the denomination through programs such as sponsoring a seminarian, and helping to maintain a quality music program.

Additionally, PSCC requested that we accept their designated funds and administer them in accordance with their restrictions. These are several small funds; an example is the Flower Fund.

In its long history PSCC acquired many items which added meaning to its worship and elegance to its social events. We are honored that PACC has been entrusted with the flower cross, brass Advent wreath stand, hymnals, Christmas pageant costumes, Communion set and linens, silver tea set, china and silver flatware. They will enrich our life as a worshiping, caring community and remind us of our sister congregation. We are also the grateful recipients of many other items that will be useful in our classrooms, office and kitchen.

All of us at Park Avenue Church wish the former members of Pleasant Street Church well as they finish the work of closing their church and move on to other religious communities. We deeply appreciate being part of their legacy.

### **Is there a metalworker in the house?**

The lovely brass Advent wreath stand that we received from Pleasant Street Church needs some repair. Is there someone in the congregation who has the skills to work on it? Please contact Kathy Richardson in the office.

### **From the Word:**

*“In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*  
[Acts 2:17, NRSV]

## Report from the Council of Deacons

At its February meeting the Council of Deacons took three votes regarding grants from Pleasant Street Church:

- To accept PSCC's restricted funds and respect the restrictions.
- In respect to the Legacy Grant, to look to name something with the Pleasant Street name.
- To accept PSCC's proposal that, as part of the Legacy Grant, we respect their wish to use money toward a seminarian program. It was noted that we might use only the interest from the money or both the principal and interest.

There was also considerable discussion about ways that we might make Pleasant Street Church members feel welcome here at Park Avenue Church.

In the only other vote of the evening, Connie Dugan was named a Collector. In the winter months when other Collectors are often away, we especially appreciate her volunteering for the job.

If you have questions, speak with Tim Durning, Moderator, or any of the other Deacons.

## Mission and Justice Matters

**One Great Hour of Sharing:** As part of Our Church's Wider Mission, OGHS is the refugee, relief and development fund of the United Church of Christ. It provides support in more than eighty countries in the form of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, refugee assistance and disaster response. The OGHS theme for 2011 is "*Sharing Brings Joy. To Us. To Others. To God.*" The Dedication Day for this Lenten Offering will be April 3. Look for emails and bulletin inserts in March for stories about the projects and people our sharing supports.

**Tremendous Hearts presentation March 27:** Marilyn Votaw, founder of Tremendous Hearts and a former member of Pleasant Street Congregational Church, has graciously accepted our invitation to speak at PACC about the mission and work of Tremendous Hearts, an organization which sends highly-skilled volunteers to childrens' homes and other agencies that care for orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. In response to a challenge issued by the Mass. Conference UCC, PACC's Mission and Justice Working Group committed to a \$1000 gift to Tremendous Hearts. Meet us in the Fellowship Room during coffee hour on March 27 for Marilyn's talk and slide show and see how your outreach funds are helping to make a difference in people's lives.

## **Rummage Sale - April 30**

The Rummage Sale is coming up the last Saturday in April! Here is how you can help:

**Save the date!** If you have not already done so, mark your calendar now and plan to join us for fellowship and fun in this all-church event. (There are also many opportunities to help the two days before the sale.)

**Save your stuff!** We are looking for donations of clothing, clean and in good condition for men, women and children. Better women's clothing will be featured in a special ladies' boutique. We are also looking for housewares, linens, books, small furniture and all manner of white elephants, again, clean and in good condition. We don't want junk!

**Save the hassle!** Do you really want to organize a yard sale, or just to get all those extra household items out of your life? Donate them to the Rummage Sale and help support this worthwhile undertaking.

**Save us the trouble of tracking you down -- volunteer!** There will be sign up sheets at church in April, but why not call one of the people listed below and be among those we know we can count on to help make the sale run smoothly. We always need more sorters and pricers on Thursday and Friday (April 28 and 29) as well as clerks to sell merchandise on Saturday. And an energetic clean up crew following the sale is a must! We hope you are making lots of progress cleaning out all those closets and drawers and finding some good items for the sale. Due to space limitations, we are unable to accept donations until the week before the sale. We are also not able to accept large items. If in doubt about the suitability of any item, or you must move things earlier, or you have any other questions, contact one of the committee members below.

**Friends welcome!** Perhaps you have friends who would enjoy working with you at the sale. Sign them up and bring them along. And we are always happy to accept donations from your friends and neighbors (stress clean and in good condition!) Talk it up. There is nothing better than an enthusiastic first person approach. Do plan to join us and make this important fund raiser a rousing success!

Judy Miller, Lauren Evans, Diane Wells

## **Fresh Florida Oranges and Grapefruit**

You can enjoy fresh fruit from Florida and help PACC at the same time by supporting our Orange & Grapefruit fundraiser. The oranges will be Temples, which are easy to peel (hence good for eating) but are also good for juice. They are a little more tart than the navels which we got in December and have a few seeds. The grapefruit will be pink grapefruit.

Deadline for orders: 8:00 p.m., Sunday, March 6. Note that Jill Lewis, who is organizing this, will be out of town March 5, returning the evening of the 6th. If you haven't gotten the paper order form (available on the table in the narthex) to her by March 6, please email or call with your order by 8 p.m. on Sunday, March 6. Payment can be made at time of pickup.

Delivery will arrive sometime Saturday, March 12. You will be notified a couple of days before arrival what the pickup time will be. The price will be \$28 for a full box, \$14 for half a box.

This sale benefits the PACC General Fund. December's sale netted over \$400.

## **9th Annual Craft Fair on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**

Planning is underway for PACC's 9<sup>th</sup> annual Craft Fair! It will be held on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. We have invited back some of the crafters from previous fairs and are looking for several new ones. As in past years, there will be a PACC bake table. We are also planning to sell a homemade lunch again.

Volunteers will be needed to post flyers around Arlington and surrounding communities, to bake yummy goodies, and to help with lunch. We hope everyone will invite their friends and family to come so that we have a great turnout! Stay tuned for more information! To volunteer or to ask questions, please see Betty Rich or Barbara Wagner.

## **Financial information**

Financial statements from 2010 are available on the table in the narthex or contact Kathy in the office if you would like a copy mailed to you.

Did you know that PACC pays \$19.70 for each of our members to support the work of the Metropolitan Boston Association and Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ? We appreciate the generosity of those who make a special contribution to cover this cost.

**Subparish lists for 2011** are posted on the easel in the narthex or you can phone the church to find out who your Deacon is. In order to foster a stronger sense of fellowship and community within the congregation, each Deacon on the Council has been assigned to a "subparish" consisting of a small group of individuals and families who live locally. The Deacon will keep in touch with members in their sub-parish informally (a phone call, a conversation on Sunday morning, or a card), but feel free to contact your Deacon if there is some way the church can be of help to you. Families who live a significant distance or are out of state and not currently worshipping here receive the *Spire* for news and should contact the church office if they are in need of help from the church.