

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

The Rev. Dr. William Albright, Pastor

April, 2011

Holy Week is April 17 - 24

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 17

Pancake Breakfast: Come join us for breakfast: pancakes, bacon, sausage, coffee and juice! The youth groups will take your orders and serve. \$5/ adults, \$4/ children, \$15/family maximum. Breakfast will be served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit the Youth Fund.

Worship service at 10 a.m. includes a Blessing of the Palms. Communion will follow the service.

Sunday School will learn about the events of Holy Week through stories and crafts, and the children will come together for a special snack.

Maundy Thursday, April 21

Service of Holy Communion and Tenebrae (extinguishing of candles accompanied by readings from the Passion narratives in the Gospels) at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The choir will sing Stainer's "God So Loved the World."

Good Friday, April 22

Interfaith Worship at noon at St. John's Episcopal Church, 74 Pleasant Street. Bill Albright will participate.

Easter Sunday, April 24

Sunrise service at 5:40 a.m. Join members of other Arlington churches for a joyful service. Gather at the overlook over the east-facing hill at Robbins Farm Park, across Eastern Avenue from the Brackett School, to welcome the sun and The Risen Son with prayer, liturgy and song.

Celebration of the Resurrection at 10 a.m. The flower cross formerly at Pleasant Street Congregational Church will be in our chancel. A brass quartet will join our organ and Festival Choir, which will sing Randall Thompson's "Alleluia" and "O Clap Your Hands" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. There will not be Sunday School classes. Childcare will be available for children aged 5 and younger. Older children will receive activity bags to help them sit through the service.

Easter Egg Hunt will be in the Children's Garden after the service.

Christian Education News

Sunday School

- Our Sunday School classes will learn about Communion on Sunday, April 10. Information about the workshop and Communion in the UCC and at our church will be sent home the week before.
- See the listing of Holy Week activities for special programming on April 17 and 24.

Youth Groups

- Both youth groups are invited to participate in the Arlington Housing Corporation's Walk for Affordable Housing on Sunday, April 10. We'll meet at PACC (Wollaston Ave doors) at 12:45 p.m. and carpool to the Jason Russell House where the walk begins at 1:30. The walk is 3 miles, along Mass. Ave. and ends back at the Jason Russell House. We'll return to PACC at about 3:00. Permission slips will go home on April 3 and will also be available on the table in the narthex.
- Our youth groups traditionally serve at our Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast. Please come to Parish Hall at 8 a.m. on April 17 to help set up and get ready to serve.

Adult Education offerings in April

The Jesus Diaries

On Wednesday, April 6, we will share our essays about what Jesus means to each of us, inspired by *The Jesus Diaries*. Even if you couldn't attend the discussion on March 30, you are welcome to join the group at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. If you would like to borrow a copy of the book, talk with Barbara Wagner, Josh Young or Kate Lindheim.

Three Cups of Tea

In preparation for the appearance of Greg Mortenson in Worcester on May 3, we will discuss *Three Cups of Tea* on Tuesday, April 26. Everyone is welcome to join the group at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. For more information about Mortenson's speech, see the Mission and Justice page in this newsletter.

Evening Bible Study

The Evening Bible Study Group will continue our series, "From Text to Sermon." Everyone is welcome to join the group Wednesday, April 13, and April 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. So that you can prepare, these are the texts:

April 13 -- Readings for Easter Sunday: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18.

April 27 -- Readings for Third Sunday of Easter: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35.

Terry McKinney to address PACC-Men

The PACC-Men will meet on Tuesday, April 5, at 7:30 p.m. at PACC for our regular monthly meeting and a presentation by Terence E. McKinney, M.Div. Terry serves as Affiliate Minister of Mental Health Outreach at First Church Cambridge, Congregational (UCC) and as chaplain at two Boston-area hospitals. He provides spiritual direction, directs adult Christian education programs, and leads retreat work. He is also the founder of Avia Pastoral Care, which ministry he will tell us about in his presentation about one way in which churches can respond to those with mental health needs in their congregations and communities. See the website at <http://www.aviapastoralcare.com/>.

All PACC-Men and Pleasant-Guys are invited, as well as other adult, male friends and neighbors whom you might like to invite, invite, invite (as our Membership Ministry urges). RSVPs are not strictly necessary, but it would be good to have a rough count a day or so in advance in case Terry is going to bring handouts. To RSVP please contact Mike Rich.

Women's Guild meets April 7

Women's Guild will enjoy a pizza lunch and discuss books when the group meets Thursday, April 7, at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. Meredythe Schober will be the hostess. All women are cordially invited.

***Electra* is topic for Sarah's Circle**

Sarah's Circle women's book group will discuss one of the great Greek tragedies, *Electra* (also spelled Elektra) when it meets Saturday, April 9, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. There are multiple versions of the play; the group will read the one by Sophocles, which is probably the most accessible. All women are welcome to join the group. Those who would like to meditate should arrive at 9:30 a.m. If you have questions, speak with Merrith Sabo-Jones.

PACC-Women reflect on gratitude

PACC-Women will meet Monday, April 18, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. The topic will be Gratitude. What are you thankful for? It is not just something to be thought about at Thanksgiving but all year long. If you would like, bring a poem, a reading, a small piece of artwork that expresses appreciation for the blessings we experience - but only if you want to. We plan to have healthy snacks from now on; if you would like to bring something, contact Betty Rich.

Minister's Message

At last, spring has arrived! It has been a horrible winter—long, cold, dark—but the snowy weather was only *part* of the gloom. A lot of scary things have been happening these days: revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, tsunami in Japan, earthquakes in Haiti, New Zealand, and Japan, the fragile global economy. I heard on the news that earthquakes the size of the ones that caused so much devastation recently affected the tilt of the earth's axis, making the day a bit shorter, albeit by an almost infinitesimally tiny amount.

On the Sunday after the Japan earthquake and tsunami, I was reminded of a particularly evocative psalm:

God is our refuge and strength, / a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
 though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
 though the mountains tremble with its tumult. [Psalm 46:1-3]

As I read these words, I wondered where we, as people of faith, can find comfort and solace in these apocalyptic days. The next few verses of the psalm help to center us:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
 the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
 God will help it when the morning dawns. [vss.4-5]

Ah, I thought, but the city *has* been moved! Think Christchurch, New Zealand, and northern Japan. And a “river” as powerful as a tsunami has terrified the people of God instead of making them glad. Still, as people of faith, we are encouraged to remember that God is indeed “in the midst of the city” and “will help it when the morning dawns.”

The great 20th-century Protestant theologian, Karl Barth, advised preachers to preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. These days, the daily newspaper seems to jump right out at us as we read more of Psalm 46:

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
 God utters his voice, the earth melts. [vs. 6]

Although this text is so true to today's newspaper, we must not despair, because, as the psalm continues, it presents us with the great comfort of our faith:

The LORD of hosts is with us; / the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD; /
 see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

God makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
God breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
God burns the shields with fire. [vss.7-9]

Despite the world's political and even geological upheaval, our God is with us in the midst of it all. But if we give in to our anxieties about the latest headlines, we may miss God's saving presence. That's why the psalmist calls us to a quiet place, a place of listening:

“Be still, and know that I am God!

I am exalted among the nations, / I am exalted in the earth.” [vs. 10]

That is, God's love does not abandon us. As if to ensure that we get the message, the psalmist repeats the refrain: “The LORD of hosts is with us; / the God of Jacob is our refuge” [vs. 11].

Now that spring has arrived, and harsh winter packs up its things for a while, we watch for signs of the new season. It's time for new birth, new life, *resurrection* as we approach Easter. One text that is closely associated with Easter is Psalm 118, reminding us that out of the rubble of winter and the ashes of Lent comes the One who transcends it and points us back to our loving and omnipresent God:

The stone that the builders rejected / has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the LORD's doing; / it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; / let us rejoice and be glad in it. [vss. 22-24]

Which is why I can't wait for Easter this year when we will once again shout: *Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!*

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

—*BILL*

New Member Brunch - May 7th

The next New Member Brunch will be held Saturday, May 7, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireplace Room. Anyone who is thinking that it might be time to learn more about PACC and what it means to become a member are invited and encouraged to attend. Meet some of our current members, hear about our faith journeys and share yours! This brunch will be followed on May 22 with New Member Sunday which is the official recognition of membership at PACC by a short ceremony during the service. If you have been coming to PACC for a long time - or just a little while, and think it is the right time to make the decision about membership, please join us! Please RSVP to Membership Deacons Scott Jones or Betty Rich or to Kathy Richardson in the church office (781-643-8680) if you would like to attend.

Spring cleaning scheduled for April 9

We will have a work day to focus on cleaning the Narthex, Sanctuary, and church grounds and putting the last touches on the Fellowship Room before Easter. Any time you can spend on Saturday, April 9, between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. will be appreciated. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the kitchen door or see Jeff Steinheider for details.

RUMMAGE SALE - SATURDAY, APRIL 30 from 9 to 2

Is it time to edit your wardrobe? You know, remove those items you don't wear because they are the wrong size, color, or style and add something fun, fresh, and reasonably priced that just says, "You!" Well, you are in luck! The church rummage sale is just around the corner, and we are happy to accept all clothing items (clean and in good condition) that you are ready to edit out of your wardrobe and give you the opportunity to find some special additions to enhance the whole.

Along with gently worn clothing for men, women, and children and all manner of accessories (hats, scarves, belts, gloves, wallets, pocketbooks), we are also seeking household goods of every description: linens (sheets, blankets, bedspreads, pillows, cushions, towels, tablecloths, napkins, place mats, table runners, curtains, shower curtains, bath mats), housewares (dishes, mugs, glasses, utensils, pots and pans, bake ware, vases, lamps, and small appliances in working order), books, and small pieces of furniture (something that can be carried by one medium sized woman.)

We also sell jewelry, shoes, records, tapes, videos, CDs, DVDs, pet items, sports equipment, yarn, fabric, baby items, paintings, prints, frames, tools, and gardening equipment. Please be sure all items are clean. Please don't give us broken things or junk!

So, here is your rummage sale check list:

- _____ Mark sale date on your calendar now. Also the Thursday and Friday for set up if you can help then.
- _____ Clean out closets, drawers, and cupboards and bag or box donations.
- _____ **VOLUNTEER** to work Thursday and/or Friday sorting and pricing. We begin at 9 each morning and work both afternoons and Thursday evening.
- _____ **VOLUNTEER** to sell for all or part of the day and/or clean up at 2 on Saturday.
- _____ Share information about the sale with friends, neighbors, and family members who are rummage sale fans.
 - _____ invite them to work with you
 - _____ invite them to make donations.

Please check the Sunday bulletins or listen for announcements as the sale date nears to find out when and where to bring your donations. We will not want anything until the Sunday before the sale at the earliest. If at all possible, bring things in on Thursday, April 28 when they can be sorted right onto the tables. Workers will be on hand all day and into the evening to accept your donations. **Please bring everything in by Thursday.**

We cannot say too often how much we need your help! This is a huge undertaking, much too big to be left to the same few women who have been involved for years. In order for the sale to go smoothly on Saturday, we need many sorters and pricers on Thursday and Friday. We need strong backs to unload cars and tote boxes. We need people to test electrical equipment. We need people to ferret out the good stuff and price it accordingly. We need an energetic clean up crew. We need lots of volunteers. We need you! So please, save us the trouble of tracking you down. Volunteer! And if you have friends who like this sort of activity, invite them to join you. We can always use more help.

If you have any questions or to volunteer, please contact one of us. **THANK YOU!**

Judy Miller, Diane Wells, Lauren Evans.

Craft Fair is May 14th - Mark your calendars now!

Please mark your calendars for the 9th Annual Craft Fair to be held on May 14 in Parish Hall from 10 a.m. to 3p.m. There will be 18 tables* with a variety of unique and affordable crafts to purchase. Some of the crafters from previous years are returning and some will be new to the Craft Fair. As we have in the past, there will be sandwiches and beverages available for sale around lunchtime!

***What you can do to help!** We will have a PACC baked goods table and I am looking for folks to provide baked goods and to help with sales on May 14th! Please let us know if you can help out for a few hours.

We would also appreciate your ideas of where to place flyers around Arlington and in neighboring towns as well as help distributing flyers to local venues or where you work.

We will have plenty of flyers you can take to distribute as well as a .pdf version to send by email to your friends and associates or to post on your Facebook page. Let us know if you can help with that!

Remember - **Mark your calendars** and invite your friends to shop and to have lunch with us on May 14th at this established fundraising event!

Betty Rich and Barbara Wagner

2010/2011 PACC Concert Series
for the Benefit of the Music Program is pleased to present
Stories Sacred and Secular

A concert with
Vox Lucens
An A Capella Early Music Choir

Sunday, April 3, 2011 at 3 PM

in the Sanctuary of the Park Avenue Congregational Church

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: www.pacc-ucc.org or 781-643-8680

What's Happening at PACC

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|------|--------|------------|---|
| Sun. | Apr. 3 | 10:00 a.m. | Worship service includes Communion, One Great Hour of Sharing collection, Clayton Steinheider baptism |
| | | 11:30 a.m. | Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall |
| | | 11:45 a.m. | Youth Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |
| | | 3:00 p.m. | Vox Lucens Concert, Sanctuary; reception in Parish Hall |
| Tue. | Apr. 5 | 7:30 p.m. | PACC-Men in the Fellowship Room |
| Wed. | Apr. 6 | 7:30 p.m. | Lenten Study – <i>The Jesus Diaries</i> - in the Fellowship Room |
| Thu. | Apr. 7 | 11:00 a.m. | Women's Guild in the Fellowship Room |
| | | 7:30 p.m. | Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room |

Sat.	Apr. 9	9:00 a.m.	Spring cleaning (to 4:00 p.m.)
		9:30 a.m.	Sarah's Circle in the Fellowship Room
Sun.	Apr. 10	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
Mon.	Apr. 11	7:30 p.m.	Council of Deacons in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Apr. 12	7:30 p.m.	Membership Ministry at 15 Bellevue Rd., Arlington
Wed.	Apr. 13	10:30 a.m.	Staff meeting in the Fireplace Room
		7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Apr. 14	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Sat.	Apr. 16	10:00 a.m.	Memorial service for Dorothy Kelly in the Sanctuary
Sun.	Apr. 17	8:30 a.m.	Pancake breakfast in the Parish Hall
		9:20 a.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary
		10:00 a.m.	Palm Sunday worship service
		11:15 a.m.	Communion in the Sanctuary
		11:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
Mon.	Apr. 18		<i>Patriots' Day</i> ; office closed
		7:30 p.m.	PACC-Women in the Fellowship Room
Tue.	Apr. 19	7:30 p.m.	Choir rehearsal in the Nicoll Room
Thu.	Apr. 21	10:00 a.m.	Women's Coffee in the Fellowship Room
		7:30 p.m.	Maundy Thursday worship service in the Sanctuary
Fri.	Apr. 22	12:00 noon	Interfaith worship service at St. John's Episcopal Church, 74 Pleasant Street
Sun.	Apr. 24	5:40 a.m.	Sunrise service at Robbins Farm Park
		10:00 a.m.	Easter worship service
		11:30 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall
		11:30 a.m.	Easter Egg Hunt in the Children's Garden
Tue.	Apr. 26		Deadline for <i>May Spire</i>
		7:30 p.m.	Discussion of <i>Three Cups of Tea</i> in the Fellowship Room
Wed.	Apr. 27	7:30 p.m.	Evening Bible Group in the Fellowship Room
Thu.	Apr. 28	9:00 a.m.	Rummage Sale set-up (through the evening)
Fri.	Apr. 29	9:00 a.m.	Rummage Sale set-up (through the afternoon)
Sat.	Apr. 30	9:00 a.m.	Rummage Sale in the Parish Hall (until 2:00 p.m.)
			<i>coming later in the year</i>
Sun.	May 8	10:00 a.m.	Worship service with recognition of long-time members
Sat.	May 14		Craft Fair in the Parish Hall
Sun.	May 22	10:00 a.m.	Worship service includes reception of new members
Sun.	June 12	10:00 a.m.	Youth Sunday worship service

What does the Membership Ministry do?

This ministry is devoted to spreading the word by moving the church outside the walls of the building, so that others can see and be inspired by the people and the ministry of the church and wish to become a part of it. Membership Ministry was created during our restructuring in response to input from the congregation that it needed more focus. We are responsible for attracting people to visit our church, extending a warm welcome when they do so, and ushering them through the process of joining when they feel ready. PACC members have always been very welcoming once new people come through our doors, so membership has placed an emphasis on drawing more visitors by increasing our visibility in the community. We interface with many of the other ministries in order to do this.

We have been experimenting with a variety of approaches to increase our visibility. We usually run a booth at town day, and we have been working on setting up a second one of our bulletin boards to promote the church to those who visit, rent our space or vote here.

One important way to attract new visitors and inform the community about our church is through our website, to which we made a number of interim changes last year. Having conducted some listening sessions and collected lists of other church websites that our members like, we are in the process of moving forward with further changes. We are very excited about what the next few months will bring.

Last Christmas, we mailed a card to 100 neighbors of the church inviting them to our December events and worship services. We hope to expand the mailings to more services this year. We are implementing plans to create an events email list for non-members who wish to receive notices about happenings at PACC. We will use it to publicize events and special worship services at PACC. Non-members who are interested will be able to sign up on our web page or at church events. We are expanding our efforts to publicize the church through other e-mechanisms and lists as well.

Over a year ago, after several recent members we interviewed described their first impression of our church exterior as ‘foreboding’, we consulted with property ministry, and then committed to provide some decorative wreaths for the exterior. The Women’s Guild has been providing the lovely seasonal plants and planters. We hope that visitors now find our entry welcoming.

But perhaps the most important route to growing membership is a personal invitation to worship or to a fellowship event at PACC, and this is where each of you can help. Invite friends to the rummage sale, book club, PACC-Men or -Women, or our always inspiring

Easter worship service with its lovely and breathtaking music. A good opportunity is to ask friends to come to our potluck/game night on March 26.

When we do have visitors, we take a number of steps to encourage them to return. One of us is in the Narthex after the Sunday service so that Bill or any of you can direct visitors to us to accompany them to coffee, chat or answer questions. We have yellow name tags with 'Membership Ministry' printed on them to make us easy to find. We are readying a new batch of 'welcome gifts'. These little bags contain useful items with our name and address imprinted that will be a reminder to visit again. We also send a handwritten note later in the week.

Many people have expressed the desire to make former members of the Pleasant Street Congregational Church feel welcome at PACC. The membership ministry has taken a number of additional steps to ensure this. We sent a letter to PSCC shortly before they closed officially inviting them to visit and join us, and we understand it was well received. We invited them to our Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper, and were pleased to see several of their families came to it. We have a mechanism in place to send emails to members of PSCC in order to invite them to future events at PACC and used it to extend the offer to join the Easter festival choir. If you have an event you wish to inform them of, just let us know. On Sundays since PSCC closed, we have had a few of their former members come to our service each week. Based on our conversations with those from PSCC who have visited us, many of them feel the need to take some time in reaching a decision about joining a new congregation. What you can do is your usual good job of being welcoming to all visitors and be patient with their current spiritual journeys as they go through this difficult experience.

You can see that we interface with many activities and the other ministries of our church, but our emphasis is outwardly directed: How can we make the wider community more aware of our church? As a relatively new ministry, we are still trying new things; we are very open to suggestions and encourage you to bring any of us your ideas. We welcome anyone who feels inspired to join with us in this work.

The Membership Ministry: Deacons Scott Jones and Betty Rich, Members: Anita Clarke, Kathy Fink, Doug Record, Karen Stark and Mark Tuttle

Fifty Years Ago

The first worship service in our present Sanctuary was at 8:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1961. It was followed by services at 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The building was dedicated on the afternoon of May 14.

Mission and Justice Matters

Disaster relief for the people of Japan: Although events in Libya have moved Japan to the bottom half of the front page, relief efforts in response to the earthquake and tsunami are ongoing. The Japanese government has requested international assistance in response to this massive disaster. The United Church of Christ is supporting emergency relief and rebuilding efforts. If you would like to make a donation, you can send a check to PACC with “Pacific earthquake/tsunami” in the memo line or you can donate online at <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/japan-earthquake-2011/>. Thank you for your support of the people devastated by these events.

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 for stories about the projects and people our sharing supports.

Walk for Affordable Housing April 10: Last year, PACC fielded an impressive team of walkers to raise funds for the Housing Corporation of Arlington. Mark your calendars and join Team PACC to raise funds to provide affordable housing and prevent homelessness in Arlington. This is a family-friendly three-mile walk through Arlington Center and runs from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Walk for Hunger: We'll have a PACC team participating in the Walk for Hunger on Sunday, May 2. We'll start early and walk 10 miles. Please talk to Jill Lewis or Kate Lindheim if you'd like to join us.

Greg Mortenson speech: Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones Into Schools*, will be speaking at Mechanics Hall in Worcester on May 3, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. Mortenson is the co-founder and Executive Director of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute and founder of Pennies for Peace. Central Asia Institute’s works to promote and support community-based education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. You may purchase tickets (\$51.50) for this UCC-sponsored event through the Mechanics Hall Box Office at 508-752-0888 or online at www.mechanicshall.org Proceeds will support the building of a school in Afghanistan and after school programs in Worcester. We will be discussing *Three Cups of Tea* on April 26 as part of our Adult Ed series at PACC, and the Sunday School’s Lent box collection will go to Pennies for Peace.

Easter Plants

I/We wish to have plants for the sanctuary given in memory of/in honor of:

Tulips _____ # Lilies _____ **\$10.00 each**

_____ I will take my plant(s) home after Easter services.

_____ Please give my plant(s) to a shut-in.

Signed _____

*Please put your order form and check in the Administrative Assistant file
in the gray box at the Ushers' Stand or mail to the office. Thank you.
The deadline is April 11.*