

Unconditional Love
Grosse Pointe
Unitarian Church
Radical Inclusivity



Welcome! You have found an oasis of liberal religious and spiritual exploration serving the Grosse Pointes and the surrounding east side communities.
Reverend Dr. Alexander Riegel, Minister

November 2019

Upcoming Services

November 3, 2019
10:30 AM

Sermon: *Ripples*

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel
Worship Associate: Chuck Palmer

This Sunday is our annual "Day of the Dead" service. We will call to heart and mind the memories of our loved ones who have passed on. Toward that end, you are invited to bring a photo or other memento that represents a person(s) whose memory you would like to honor. Tables will be available to display our mementos and you will have an opportunity to take a moment, if you would like, to share why this person was significant to you.

November 10, 2019
10:30 AM

Sermon: *Don't it make my brown eyes blue?*

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel
Worship Leader: Chuck Palmer

Not many people are aware that Hitler appropriated his eugenic plan from the United States. But, everyone is aware that his eugenic plan (his intent to create a master race) lead to immoral and devastating consequences. Now we face a new form of eugenics, brought upon us by our understanding of the genetic code and the consequent ability to alter genes to create designer babies. What does this portend for the future and should we view this as a promising or disconcerting situation?

November 17, 2019
10:30 AM

Sermon: *Every Moment a Miracle: Pausing to Give Thanks for the Bounty of Life*

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel
Worship Associate: D.R.E. Julie Artis

Four years ago Dr. Riegel began a new GPUC tradition, an annual intergenerational Thanksgiving service/potluck. This will be a shortened service immediately followed by the communal meal (and pumpkin pie communion!). If possible, please bring a dish to share and join us as we celebrate the Thanksgiving tradition by giving thanks for the bounty of life.

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Upcoming Events

- [Fri Nov 1 Anti-racism Book Study](#)
- [Sun Nov 3 RE Committee](#)
- [Sun Nov 3 RE Spaghetti Dinner](#)
- [Mon Nov 4 The Other Side Workshop](#)
- [Sat Nov 9 New UU Dinner](#)
- [Sun Nov 10 Food Sharing Opportunity](#)
- [Sun Nov 10 Fall Cleanup](#)
- [Sun Nov 17 Thanksgiving Pot Luck](#)
- [Tues Nov 19 Book Discussion Group](#)

November 24, 2019
10:30 AM

Sermon: *Thanksgiving - Reflecting on what we have to be thankful for - with a little help from our Unitarian Universalist Principles and my philosopher friend, Winnie the Pooh*

Worship Leader: Dr. John Artis
Worship Associate: Suzanne Ross

Today is the Sunday before Thanksgiving, 2019. Today let us take the time together to reflect on what we have to be thankful for as we anticipate Thanksgiving Day. To help us in our reflection together, let us revisit the key words contained in our UU Principles and reflect on how those words have guided the unfolding of the American moral story. To help us with our journey, Winnie the Pooh will share some of his key philosophical ideas too.

Alexander's Meander



A sabbatical? For how long?!

As most everyone knows by now, I have a sabbatical coming up this year (January through April). I've heard some people express confusion and anxiety about a four-month absence on the part of the minister during the church year, so I thought I'd take advantage of this newsletter article to get us all on the same page.

First, Why do ministers take sabbaticals?

The sabbatical tradition for ministry follows the sabbatical tradition of academia. In both academia and ministry there is the realization that in order to keep one's mental game sharp, as well as make contributions to one's field, one periodically needs time away from regular duties. It's important to realize that this time away from duties is not time off/vacation time! Rather, it is time for spiritual renewal AND work/production. Toward that end...

Second, What will our minister do while on sabbatical?

As some of you know, I have more ideas than I could possibly accomplish in a lifetime! During the sabbatical I hope to make significant strides toward realizing some of those ideas. I have about 10 book ideas that have been floating through my head for a long time now. I hope to finish a complete draft of one of these books while on sabbatical. The book toward which I am leaning is an extension of the sermon I did last year, entitled, "Jesus, the Jewish Mystic." I will also be working on the creation of online content, including video material for my upcoming YouTube page and online classes for my website. I will also begin creating video sermon synopses of what I think are some of my better sermons, in digestible form (somewhere between five and 10 minutes, on average...). Finally, I am going to do a final edit of my doctoral thesis and turn it into an e-book, as well as create a website to support it. That's a lot! I may not realize all of these ideas but I should make great strides toward that end.

Third, Who will handle pastoral duties while the minister is away?

Many people assume I'm going back to India because I often go on pilgrimage to India when circumstances allow. Because I consider this sabbatical time a rare opportunity actually to realize some of my ideas, I've chosen to stay stateside this time. I'm going to hunker down and keep my nose to the grindstone... which means I will be available for urgent pastoral needs (hospitalization and death). The church president (Russ Chavey), church Administrator (Candy Dunn), and Director of Religious Education (Julie Artis) will contact me if they deem it appropriate. This means that if you believe that you are in need of my pastoral attention while I am on sabbatical, contact them first and leave it up to them to reach out to me. I will otherwise be out of communication with folk...

Ministerial sabbatical time is an opportunity for the congregation to learn about itself.

One of the things that I have been increasingly trying to convey to the congregation is that the congregation

should not be ministerial dependent. While the minister plays an important role in the life of the congregation, most of the functioning of the congregation - especially in the context of our Congregational polity - should happen through its members, e.g., the Board and our numerous committees. Indeed, one of the reasons for the bylaw revisions we did the last annual meeting was to help strengthen our ministry at the committee level, in order that the congregation can grow into an increasing ownership of the ministry. In sum, the congregation can keep on chugging on without the minister. Where it does this successfully is an indicator of the health of the congregation. Where struggles to do this is an indicator where attention is needed. In other words, one could consider sabbatical time a litmus test for Congregational health...

Finally, **Sabbatical time helps to ensure long-term ministry.**

Did you know that the average length of ministerial service in our modern age is 5 to 7 years? Sabbatical time gives ministers the opportunity for rest and renewal, which in turn lengthens ministries. I remain grateful and humbled for the opportunity to serve this beloved community. I look forward to coming back from sabbatical recharged and optimistic about the next phase of what I hope will be a long-term ministry together!

Namaste,

Alex

Religious Education News

Some of the most moving lessons are taught by your students.



When Mrs. Klein told her first graders to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful, she thought how little these children, who lived in a deteriorating neighborhood, actually had to be thankful for. She knew that most of the class would draw pictures of turkeys or of bountifully laden Thanksgiving tables. That was what they believed was expected of them. What took Mrs. Klein aback was Douglas's picture. Douglas was so forlorn and likely to be found close in her shadow as they went outside for recess. Douglas's drawing was simply this: A hand, obviously, but whose hand? The class was captivated by his image. "I think it must be the hand of God that brings us food," said one student. "It looks more like a policeman, and they protect us." "I think," said Lavinia, who was always so serious, "that it is supposed to be all the hands that help us, but Douglas could only draw one of them."

Mrs. Klein had almost forgotten Douglas in her pleasure at finding the class so responsive. When she had the others at work on another project, she bent over his desk and asked whose hand it was. Douglas mumbled, "It's yours, Teacher." Then Mrs. Klein recalled that she had taken Douglas by the hand from time to time; she often did that with the children. But that it should have meant so much to Douglas ... Perhaps, she reflected, this was her Thanksgiving, and everybody's Thanksgiving-not the material things given unto us, but the small ways that we give something to others. Reader's Digest Editors

May you all remember the small ways that we give something to others that can really make a difference. Happy safe Thanksgiving!!

Religious Education Lessons

The GPUC nursery will be open at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday. A pot of coffee is in the RE wing for our parents to enjoy and share conversations with others. Our loving care givers are in the nursery at 10:00 a.m. to welcome to small UU's.

All our classes are continuing with our Abrahamic Faiths curriculum for this year.



All students and their families are asked to attend the Junior's Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday, November 3,

5:00 to 8:00 p.m. The funds from the Spaghetti Dinner will go towards different events for the students during the year. Tickets are available in the lobby before and after church and at the door on November 3rd. Adults tickets are \$12 and students 10 years old and under are \$8. This is an evening of fun, good food and fellowship. See you all Nov. 3rd!

If you would like to help now, we need sponsors! We want to start the dinner with zero debt. You can help by sending a check (payable to GPUC/Spaghetti Dinner) to help us cover food expenses. **Salad** provisions are \$130, the **Sauce** is \$100, **Bread and Pasta** is \$60, **Beverages** are \$40, and **Dessert** is \$40. Another way to support this event is to make sure you, your family, and friends attend the dinner!

Dates to Remember

Sunday, November 3 - RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Sunday, November 3 - Spaghetti Dinner 5 - 8 p.m.

Sunday, November 17 - All Family Thanksgiving Potluck Service

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Committee On Ministry News



Committee On Ministry:

Sarah Neely, Kathy Konwiak, Jud Cole and Mark Franchett

I want to introduce the 2019 - 2020 Committee on Ministry (COM). We meet the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the GPUC library with Rev. Alex Riegel. The GPUC Policy Manual defined our purpose as:

Statement of Purpose *The Committee on Ministry shall focus on the health of the total ministry of the congregation.*

This includes the work of all facets of the congregation: clergy and lay leaders, staff and volunteers, the Board of Trustees and other committees, members and friends, and people of all ages including children, youth and adults.

* The Committee is a group of caring and open lay people dedicated to the well-being of the congregation as a whole.

* The Committee's role is to monitor all facets of the congregation as the congregation works in a spirit of mutual respect toward common goals.

* The Committee's evaluation shall be guided by the church's Statement of Mission and Covenant.

* The Committee shall give honest and pertinent feedback to the Board of Trustees, Minister, staff and other committees concerning their effectiveness in serving the congregation's total ministry.

* The Committee is responsible for identifying issues within the congregation and, if necessary, suggesting a process for resolution and healing. The Committee itself is not responsible for resolving disputes.

* The Committee shall report at least annually to the Board of Trustees regarding the health of the shared ministry.

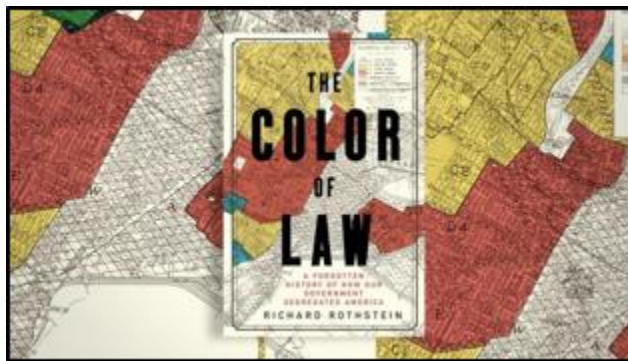
In the end, we are here to help. Please feel free to contact any us.

Regards,

*Mark Franchett
Chair COM*

Anti-racism Book Study

Anti-racism Book Study, "The Color of Law," Rescheduled



Dear GPUC Members and Friends,

Our first book study in our anti-racism series this year is entitled, "The Color of Law," by Richard Rothstein. Because people have requested more time to be able to read the book, we have rescheduled the book study until **Friday, November 1st, at 7pm**, in the Sanctuary.

This book is an eye-opening experience! We hope you will take the time to read it between now and then and join us in this book discussion. Here is the Amazon description of the book:

("Widely heralded as a 'masterful' (Washington Post) and 'essential' (Slate) history of the modern American metropolis, Richard Rothstein's The Color of Law offers "the most forceful argument ever published on how federal, state, and local governments gave rise to and reinforced neighborhood segregation").

Sincerely,

Dr. Riegel

Announcements

The Other Side: A Three Course Session on Near Death Experience - Session Two

Session two will be held on **Monday, November 4th at 7pm** in the Church Sanctuary. The third and final session will take place on **Monday, December 2nd**.

Are you interested in the phenomenon of near death experience? Do you wonder whether after-life communication is possible? Have you intuited that reincarnation might be true after all? If these topics interest you (skeptics welcome!), join Dr. Riegel and Linda Lawrence for their class: *The Other Side*.

Save the Date! Getting to Know UU Dinner - Saturday, November 9th

The Fellowship Committee and the Alliance invite you to an evening of food, fellowship and an opportunity for newer church members and friends to get to know veteran GPUCers. The evening will begin with wine and appetizers at 6 pm in the Annex and continue with dinner and dessert. There will be no charge for the event; seating will be limited due to space restraints. Reservations are required and can be made in the church lobby after service or by contacting Juli Moore (jdmoore1415@gmail.com)

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10 IS OUR NEXT FOOD SHARING OPPORTUNITY

On the second Sunday of each month, food pantry and bathroom staples are collected at GPUC. The donations are delivered to Crossroads East, a local social services agency located inside Love Rising Lutheran Church on Moross in Detroit. If you prefer to donate monetarily, your donations are used to purchase perishables such as milk, eggs, bread, potatoes, and fruit. These perishable items are purchased and delivered several times a month to help keep the fridge stocked.

Our donations are always gratefully received! Thank you for continuing to help folks in our community who could use a hand!

Fall Cleanup

The colors of the trees are beautiful at this time of year, but as we know the leaves come down too quickly. Our church is no different than your yard, it needs to be made ready to be put to sleep for the winter. This year's fall cleanup will be **Sunday, November 10th** right after service. Please mark your calendars and

consider joining the group effort to clean up our grounds. We will be doing the usual raking, hedge trimming, weed pulling along the edges of the parking lot as well as trying to remove ivy from the memorial garden area this year. As usual, this is intended to be a family friendly event and you can spend as much or as little time as you wish; every bit helps!

Annual Thanksgiving Pot Luck

On **Sunday, November 17th** we will celebrate the holiday with a pot luck **feast immediately following our church service**. Dr. Riegel will begin the festivities with a pumpkin pie communion followed by a buffet in the church. The Fellowship Committee is providing ham, a salad bar, cider, water and coffee. Sign up for a "dish to share" (be specific: main dish, side dish, bread & spread or dessert) in the church lobby. Please let us know if your dish is GF, vegan, vegetarian and/or if it contains nuts and it will be labeled for our diners. All containers should be labeled with the owner's name.

Book Discussion Group News

Our **Tuesday, November 19th** discussion will be of Michelle Obama's "Becoming." We will meet at 5:30 pm in the church Annex. Light refreshments will be served. All are welcome! Please let me know if you are able to attend.

See you there!

Juli Moore (jdmoore1415@gmail.com)

Save the date! Calling all church members and friends!

The GPUC Auction for this year is **April 18th, 2020**. Our theme is "The Roaring 20s."

We have kicked off planning. If you are interested in helping out with the auction please contact Robin Ramsay (rjramsay@comcast.net) or Christy Winder (cwinder@gmail.com).

New 2019 - 2020 Phone Directories

The 2019 - 2020 GPUC Phone Directories are here and ready to be picked up. They are available in the foyer on Sundays or in the church office during the week. It is your responsibility to notify the office of any changes in your contact information. If you do not see a directory with your name on it - please contact the church office. An electronic copy of the directory can be found on the church website under the password protected members only page; please call the office for electronic directory access and password. 313-881-0420

Community Event

GPUC's MUSIC DIRECTOR TO PERFORM AT THE DIA

Joseph Palazzolo, our longtime music director and pianist will once again present his popular show Warsaw Concerto: 75 Years in the Diego Rivera Court of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Our very own Miriam Engstrom will be producing and narrating, and violin virtuoso Sonia Lee (she's played for Billy Joel, Rod Stewart, Josh Groban, et al.) will be performing along with Joseph.

**Friday, Nov 1 at 7:00 p.m. Diego Rivera Court, DIA
Admission free for Tri-County Residents**

Please see <https://www.dia.org/events/friday-night-live-warsaw-concerto-75-years> for details.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by **Friday, November 22nd at noon**.

Submit items to the newsletter email address: newslettergpuc@gmail.com

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