

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*

December 2016

Upcoming Services

December 4, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Who Goes First?

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Worship Associate: Joe Buttiglieri

Righteous indignation is a strong emotion, as are sadness, fear, and a host of other emotional responses we have in relationship to one another. When we over identify with these emotions we can end up in a veritable lock down relative to one another - intense emotions impede interpersonal relationships. This Sunday we will consider another one liner from my mentor Helen Palmer, one that has the power to change lives!

December 11, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Annual Christmas Pageant Julie Artis, Worship Leader

Join us for our annual church school pageant. This year our GPUC youth will be reenacting a UU version of Charlie Brown's Christmas. This is a performance not to be missed! Suggestion: We're gonna need a lot of dog biscuits! ;-)

December 18, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Annual All Music Service Dr. Alexander Riegel & Mr. Joseph Palazzolo

A morning of merriment and singing as we continue our annual tradition of an all music service (punctuated with a few reflections from Dr. Riegel). Bring your best singing voice and your holiday spirit!

December 24, 2016 **6:00 PM**

Christmas Eve in the Round Dr. Alexander Riegel

Have you ever attended Christmas Eve in the round at GPUC? It is an experience not to be missed! Join us as we honor the Christmas season with our traditional Christmas in the Round, with hymns of the season, a Homily by Dr. Riegel, and a special musical guest.

December 31, 2016 **6:00 PM**

New Year's Eve in the Round Dr. Alexander Riegel

Because Jan. 1 falls on a Sunday this year we will be holding a special service on New Year's Eve instead. This will be a more contemplative event as we say goodbye to the old and hello to the new! Members will be invited to do three minute reflections on a theme of their choice. (Or, you can always volunteer!)

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Everything Is Holy Now!



I think it was GPUC's dear old Mr. Young who said that aging is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end the faster it goes! That's probably the most crass, and oddly most accurate metaphor I have ever heard for the passage of time. How has another holiday season beset us so quickly?!

Regardless, I am again thrown upon my pensive haunches, entertaining the meaning of this coming season. Simply put, this is the season that bespeaks miracles. It tells the story of how Spirit pierced the incarnational veil, reached into human history, made its presence known, then disappeared - leaving only a pale story line for the faithful...

It takes little reflection to realize that implied in this story is a notion of the sacred which, save that one brief visit, holds no kin with humankind. Spirit is alien to us so we must, in an act of faith, grasp this pale story line if we ever wish to be pulled from this incarnational trap into a better fate. That is our only hope...

The now defrocked Matthew Fox pushed back against this narrative, with his book "Original Blessing." (A somewhat challenging theological dive but hey, if you want to take a shot: www.amazon.com/Original-Blessing-Spirituality-Presented-Twenty-Six/dp/1585420670) Others have followed suit, staking claim that Spirit is not alien to this world but deeply enmeshed within it! We walk within and among all that is sacred. This is the new revolution that can lead to revolution - if we can only manage to remember...

Peter Mayer, a wonderful folk musician whom we should invite to GPUC, has a beautiful song along these lines. It is entitled Everything Is Holy Now. It contains beautiful wisdom, like this:

*When holy water was rare at best,
It barely wet my fingertips,
But now I have to hold my breath,
Like I'm swimming in a sea of it.
It used to be a world half there,
Heaven's second rate hand-me-down,
But I walk it with a reverent air,
Cause everything is holy now.*

Peter's song can be found on this YouTube page: www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiypaURysz4. Enjoy, and let your revolution begin!

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

I just got home from our wonderful pot luck lunch. I am so grateful we have each other! GPUC has been a comfort following the election, and has helped me begin to regain my hopeful outlook. I hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season! Here are some issues the Board has been considering.

- Fundraising: BIDDING STARTS ON OUR ONLINE MINI-AUCTION on Sunday 11/27 at 12:01am. PLEASE CHECK OUT THE CATALOG on www.32auctions.com/gpuc2016. Despite the list of wonderful items donated by our members and others, the mini-auction can only be successful if you bid!!! Please bid high and bid often!
- We are grateful that Juli Moore has agreed to coordinate the Fellowship Dinner this Spring as part of our canvass process. Thank you Juli!
- Coffee: We are seeking a new Coffee Coordinator! As of December 4th, we will not have anyone to monitor the volunteers making coffee on Sundays. Leadership Development is working on a possible solution starting in January, but that is not yet firm. Meanwhile, we have at least a month not covered. We sent out a plea to the congregation, but as yet have not had a response.
- Foyer: You may have noticed furniture changes in the Foyer. We hope to make more space and

better traffic flow for coffee hour. Margo Bishop and Susan Hartz will be looking at ways to beautify the area while maintaining a larger space.

- The Vision survey is complete and the Vision Task Force has presented us with a tentative Vision Statement. Please attend the congregational meeting on December 4th.
- Building: The air conditioning project is moving forward. Our contractor has met with tradespeople. The Board authorized signing the contract and a deposit check. There have been efforts to repair our front door locking system, but the repair was unsuccessful. Veronica Smith has arranged for the Village Locksmith to assess the problem.
- Grounds: Russ Chavey will bring a landscaping proposal to the Board in December. The landscape designer has finished her recommendations. Russ informs us that efforts to pave the center island walkway in the parking lot will wait until spring, due to problems.
- Membership: Twelve interested people attended the New U class on Oct. 16th. Sonja Franchett and Suzanne Ross are planning these educational sessions quarterly.
- The Board has approved bringing the renowned author and speaker on racial issues, Cornel West, to Grosse Pointe for a speaking engagement in April. This will be a joint venture with the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. Thank you Dr. Riegel for researching and recommending this significant event. We are very excited about the opportunities that such an event will offer in terms of furthering our social justice goals and increasing the wider community's awareness of GPUC.

Robin Ramsay
GPUC Board of Trustees President

Online Mini-Auction

ONLINE MINI-AUCTION

NOVEMBER 27- DECEMBER 12--



CHECK OUT THESE GREAT ITEMS:

- Vacation homes
- Lunch and Dinner Parties
- Detroit tours
- Beautiful, tasty Gift Baskets
- Wines and Spirits
- Theater tickets
- Restaurants and shops
- Red Wings tickets
- Services like airport transportation, computer help, interior design
- Beautiful textiles and jewelry

BID NOW!!

IT'S EASY

- 1) Go to the website
www.32auctions.com/gpuc2016
- 2) Choose "login"
- 3) Register using your email address and other contact information.
- 4) The program sends a link to your email address. Click the link and you're registered.
- 5) View the auction items.
You can choose to see them all, or choose categories like parties, tickets, gift baskets, dining, entertainment, etc.
- 6) The program tells you the lowest bid accepted for each item.
- 7) Go ahead and BID! Some items as low as \$10
- 8) Then find another item and BID AGAIN!
- 9) The program will automatically email you when you are outbid, so you can BID AGAIN!
- 10) Experience the warm glow of contributing to our wonderful community.

www.32auctions.com/gpuc2016



On December 11, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. our students from the GPUC Religious Education program will provide a holiday program called **A Charlie Brown Christmas-UU Style**. The students will share their talents by acting, being ushers, singers, readers and more.

A Charlie Brown Christmas-UU Style is about Charlie Brown and his depression. Charlie Brown confides to his friend Linus this fact. He is dismayed by the commercialization of Christmas and that he cannot grasp what Christmas is all about. Come to our pageant and find out what Christmas means to our UU students!!!!

We are asking for donations of cookies, cheese, crackers and fruit for our after the program snacks for the whole congregation. Please join us for a morning of holiday joy, sharing and hope during this holiday season.

RE Lessons

The nursery will be open at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. We have the same loving childcare workers to provide a safe and caring place for our young UU's.

December calendar for our UU students

Sunday, Dec. 4 -10:30 a.m. all students meet in the RE wing for class. The students will have pageant rehearsal right after church until 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 11 - 9:15 a.m. all students report to the church for pageant rehearsal before service.

Sunday, Dec. 18 - All family music service at 10:30 a.m. All students are invited to the church.

Saturday, Dec. 24 - at 6:00 p.m. All family. No nursery.

Sunday, Dec. 25 - no service.

My gift to all of you for this season is Gandhi's Peace Prayer.

I offer you peace
I offer you friendship
I offer you love
I see your beauty
I hear your needs
I feel your feelings
My wisdom comes from a higher source
I honor that source in you
Let us work together

May you all have a safe and wonderful holiday season. I am honored to be your Director of Religious Education. Happy Holidays!

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

GPUC Vision Statement



Vision Statement Meeting - Sunday December 4, 2016

The GPUC Visionear Team thanks everyone who participated in the vision survey and congregational meetings. Based on your input, we now have a Vision Statement for your consideration. If it is approved by the congregation, the Vision will guide the Church's activities for the next five years.

Please take a few moments to read the statement. You can access it by clicking on this link: <http://www.gpuuc.org/proposed-gpuc-vision-statement.html>. This link is password protected please use your password to the members only area of the website.

On Sunday, December 4, immediately after service, there will be a brief congregational meeting to consider and vote on the statement. The meeting, as well as coffee hour, will be at the Annex. Prior to the vote, the Visionear Team will talk about how we developed the statement and will answer any questions you may have. This meeting is vitally important to the church. Please plan to attend!

Chris Vadino

Proposed GPUC Vision Statement Preamble

We, the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church congregation, commit to creating a liberal religious presence in our community and beyond--a dynamic presence that enables us to "envision a life filled with compassion for all, shared in beloved community, and lived in a just world." *

Our vision statement reflects our congregational commitment to the future. It is based on the congregational responses to an anonymously administered survey followed by vigorous discussion shared in open, small groups.

The vision captures our congregational dreams for our spiritual and programmatic needs, outreach and social justice efforts, facilities needs, pastoral care, fellowship opportunities and fundraising efforts.

Vision Statement

We provide diverse and compelling ways for people of all ages to grow in spirit, conscience, and wisdom. Our worship services, lifelong educational programs, music, and service initiatives inspire children, youth, and adults to live with greater purpose, respect, and love. Through meaningful advocacy, outreach, and service we express our common commitment to social justice, peace, and compassion within and beyond our community.

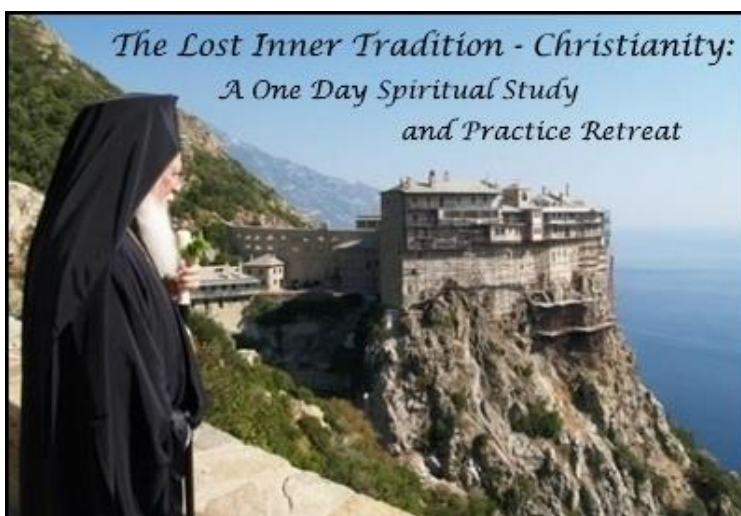
As a welcoming and compassionate community we recognize that the care of one another is our shared responsibility. We recognize the importance of deep and enduring relationships within our congregation. We respond kindly and generously to needs within our community. We strive to welcome and integrate newcomers effectively. We foster fellowship by offering a variety of opportunities for social interaction in large and small groups.

The architectural design of Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church and its grounds are a statement of hope for all to see. We will maintain and enhance our church grounds and facilities to meet the needs of our church family.

We are committed to revisiting this process every five years.

December, 2016

Spiritual Retreat



This is the second of four retreats scheduled between now and May 2017. Each retreat focuses on one of four mystical traditions, within: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Each morning we examine the teachings from one of these mystical traditions. In the afternoon, Dr. Riegel provides guidance on a variety of spiritual practices, i.e., mantra, silent meditation, walking meditation, and turning exercises. Retreats run from 9am - 4pm (with a one and a half hour lunch break, off site or bring your own lunch).

Date: Saturday, Dec. 3rd, 2016

Cost: \$30 at the door (lunch not included) or via PayPal available on the church website:

<http://www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events.html>, in which case the cost of the event will be \$31, to cover fees. If paying via PayPal, we will keep your name at the event ticket desk for check in upon arrival. No tickets will be otherwise issued so please bring a copy of your PayPal email receipt as proof of purchase

Musical Notes

Merci, Gracias, Danke, Dziękuję, धन्यवाद, Thank You, to all who attended the Matthew Ball, 'Boogie Woogie Kid', concert Saturday, October 15, 2016. This was the opening concert of the second year of GPUC's new concert series, showcasing local talent on the eastside, as well as raising funds for our great church. While the audience was on the smallish side, there was no less enthusiasm for this wonderfully spirited music! Matthew Ball, and his vocal soloist, did not disappoint! After paying the necessary 'bills', GPUC netted \$364.41 for this fundraiser! A lovely surprise was the generous amount of money freely given in the offering plate after the concert! Stay tuned to future newsletters and weekly email blasts for exciting news about the 2nd and 3rd concerts of this series, coming in 2017!



The Christmas holiday season is upon us and children and adults alike are rehearsing for Christmas and Winter Holiday concerts throughout the country. Be sure to attend church on Sunday, December 18, 2016, for Music Sunday when our Adult Choir will perform beautiful music to help us keep the spirit of this glorious, and busy, season in mind. The choir will be singing the songs that they will perform at the Christmas Eve Service, realizing that not everyone is able to attend that particular evening.

MORE holiday music can be heard from our Adult Choir, and sung by everyone, at GPUC's annual Christmas Eve Family Service on Saturday, December 24, 2016, beginning at 6:00 pm. We are fortunate to have a talented harpist share her lovely music with us and accompany the choir during several selections from Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols! Don your favorite, or your ugliest, or your favorite-ugliest Christmas sweater if you'd like, bring the family, and be ready to sing lots of favorite carols during this classic, Christmas Eve Service!

Announcements

Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, December 4.

Please bring boxed, canned, or bagged donations for our contribution to the Crossroads East food pantry. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, your contributions are used to purchase eggs, milk, produce, bread, and lunch meat for the pantry. The clients at Crossroads East, located at Salem Memorial Lutheran Church, are assisted with social services needs, food, transportation, and clothing. Through November 14, our donations to Crossroads East this year have totaled 6,072 pounds. Our donations are always greatly appreciated! Thank you!!!

Chamber Music at the Scarab Club continues its 19th season with ***Beyond the Orchestra Pit*** at Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church on **Sunday, December 4th at 7 p.m.** Please note the new time!!!



Don't miss CMSC's December 4th concert at GPUC! ***Beyond the Orchestra Pit*** is a delightful concert showcasing members of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra. The main work on the program is the Schubert Octet in F Major. This amazing piece is written for clarinet, bassoon, French horn and string quintet. It's seldom heard in live performance due to its unusual instrumentation, but it's an incredible work with all the beautiful lyricism and rhythmic energy we expect from Schubert. The remainder of the program will include familiar selections arranged from opera and ballet literature performed by Opera Winds, a fabulous wind quintet consisting of members of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra.

As always, each piece will be introduced by one of the musicians and the performance will be followed by a delicious and friendly reception.

Church members pay only \$18 for adults, \$10 for students. Tickets may be purchased at the door. For more information: 248 474-8930 chambermusic@scarabclub.org www.scarabclub.org/chambermusic

Holiday Giving

Our Church has a long tradition of launching the Holiday Giving program at our Thanksgiving service. Our goal is to provide 25 of the neediest families at Detroit Merit School with a great holiday meal and treats which include a big spiral-cut, glazed ham, fresh fruit, bread and pretty napkins. The parents also pick out mittens, hats, scarves, socks and gently used books for their children from our donations. Every member and friend can choose a way of giving: either baskets, donations and/or service to make these families' holidays happier.

For planning purposes, we appreciate your filling out the Holiday Giving form and retaining the bottom part

to serve as a reminder. We will collect the forms and monetary donations during the church service. Please write checks to GPUC with "Holiday Giving" in the memo line. We will continue to collect donations for the mitten tree, books and money until December 18 when the Holiday Baskets are due. For further information please contact Susan Boynton or the church office.

SCRIP Gift Cards - Holiday Shopping

Get a jump on your holiday shopping by ordering gift cards through our SCRIP program! Gift cards make great gifts and stocking stuffers for everyone on your list! **Holiday orders are due Wednesday, December 7 with delivery by December 16.** And of course, SCRIP cards can be ordered at any time throughout the year. Pick up an order form in the church office or foyer. Please contact Jennifer Semanision with any questions, and happy shopping!



Alliance Potluck

The Alliance Annual Christmas pot-luck and concert will be held on **Tuesday, December 13th at 11:00am** in the church sanctuary. The Grosse Pointe North choir will perform at 11:30am with lunch to follow. This program is an opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who run our Resale Shop many of whom are not church members. Some of our members may not be aware of the valuable service the Resale Shop provides to the community at large as well as the significant monetary contribution it makes to the church every month.

Let's begin this holiday season with wonderful music, good food and socializing with old and new church friends. We would like to extend a special invitation to all of our new members. All church members and friends as well as their guests are welcome. Please call Joan Hines at 313-885-0726 with your food contribution.

Thanksgiving Potluck

I would like to thank all of the people who made our new event, the Thanksgiving Potluck, such a success. The Fellowship Committee gave their full support in helping with early gathering of all the set-up items, getting the church ready on the Saturday before, helping with last minute preparations on Sunday, setting up the buffet tables, and the big job of cleaning up afterwards. I would also like to thank the young people from Religious Education who helped with the coffee service and clearing up after the potluck. They did a wonderful job. Many thanks also to all of our members and friends who so graciously brought delicious food and desserts, and to the people who donated money to help defray the cost of the many items that had to be purchased to make the event special. Last but not least, thanks to Rev. Alex for the idea of the Thanksgiving Potluck; what a wonderful day enjoyed by all!

Jill Crane, Fellowship Chair

UU Crafters-Holiday Break

UU Crafters meet in the Annex on the third and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. We are taking a break during the holidays. We will not meet in December, we will resume meeting in January. January meetings will be held on January 17 and 24, 2017. All are welcome to join in for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.) and other small crafts. Also, if you like to color and haven't tried the new adult coloring books there are books and markers for anyone who would like to give it a try. Please contact Ann Helm with any questions.

Jane Perry

Former Grosse Pointe Park resident Jane Perry, 56, died Friday, Sept. 30, 2016, in Atlanta, Ga. Born June 19, 1960, in Detroit, to Alfred and Ula Perry, Jane was raised in Grosse Pointe Park and graduated in 1978 from Grosse Pointe South High School. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Wayne State University in 1989 and a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan in 1992. She worked for the state of Georgia nearly 25 years in various environmental and public health roles.

Jane was a lifelong Unitarian Universalist. Jane is survived by her husband, Tony Lewis; sisters, Jill Perry and Anne Johnson and brother, Cliff Perry. She was predeceased by her parents and brother, Ken Perry.

Donations may be made to Lifeline Animal Project, P.O. Box 15466, Atlanta, GA 30333.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, December 16 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

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