


Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church

A Welcoming Congregation 



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

March 2016

Upcoming Services

March 6, 2016 10:30 AM

The Wisdom of the Sufis
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Tonya Wells, Worship**
Associate

The Sufi's took Jesus' example of unconditional love and ran with it! They are also well known for having intense spiritual practices and seeing everyday life as the place for spiritual work. And of course, many mystic poets are Sufi: Rumi, Rabia, Hafez, Lalla... Kabir. These and other things about them make them a unique spiritual presence in the modern world. In this sermon I will share shards of wisdom from these "dreg drinkers."

March 13, 2016 10:30 AM

Life as Pilgrimage
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate**

Pilgrimage is a religious act in which spiritual seekers across the world's many religions participate. Having recently returned from my own pilgrimage to India,

I have returned with many insights and questions in mind, including this question: "Can life itself be viewed as a pilgrimage?" * Spoiler Alert - The answer is yes! What would our attitude toward life be if we chose to see life as a pilgrimage?

March 20, 2016 10:30 AM

State of the Church 2016
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate TBD**

Every year Dr. Riegel does a sermon on the "state of the church." Join us as he takes this year's snapshot of GPUC, talks about the trajectory of our shared ministry, and makes recommendations for action steps as we move forward together.

March 27, 2016 10:30 AM

Abwoon d'bwashmaya
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Meghan Boomhower, Worship**
Associate

Easter comes early this year and on this day we will be taking a look at Christianity from a bit of a different perspective, exploring a common Christian theme but from an Aramaic perspective. The Lord's Prayer, which even most non-Christians can cite, takes on a very different meaning when interpreted through the Aramaic, the language Jesus himself spoke. Interpreting the Lord's Prayer thusly, we may even come to see Jesus in a new light.

GPUC Mission Statement

***"We are a welcoming, compassionate community,
committed to learning, service and social justice,
celebrating joy, diversity and integrity on our spiritual journey."***

Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

Alexander's Meander

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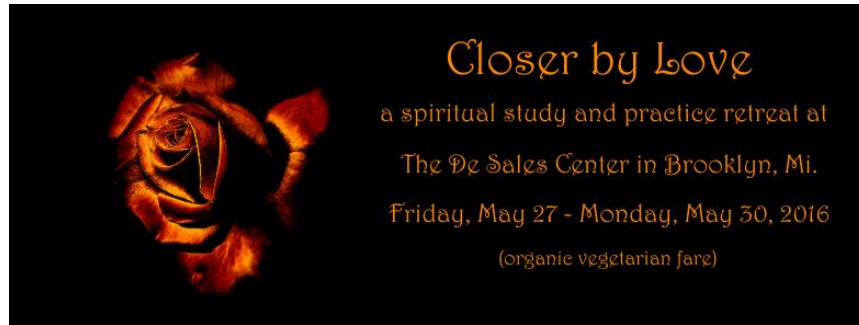
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It is so wonderful to be back at GPUC after my Study Break! While I had a phenomenal time in India, I missed you all a great deal and being back in the pulpit feels like Home 😊. You all achieved a lot while I was away: a new GPUC mission statement was voted in and you voted for a cooling system to be installed in the sanctuary. These are no minor decisions and demonstrate the continued forward moving momentum we have established at GPUC these days.

On top of these accomplishments, I have already met with the Social Justice Committee and Adult Ed. Committee. You will soon hear more and more about the direction the Social Justice Committee is taking but for now I want mention the foci it has chosen: LGBTQ issues, antiracism, and building bridges with the Muslim community. Adult Ed had a very successful meeting last week and has already established its Spring class offerings, beginning with my lecture mini-series April 21 and 28. Information about these lectures may be found on our Adult Ed page on our new website (Look under "Our Spring Kick Off Event": www.gpuuc.org/adult-religious-education)

In addition, some of you may be interested in attending my three day retreat Memorial Day weekend.



Details about this retreat may be found on one of my Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/events/1692144477731614/

So as you can see, GPUC is moving forward! In that spirit I look forward to seeing you all at the Fellowship Dinner March 12th. In the meantime, if you would like to reconnect with me one on one now that I am back from Study Break, drop me a note: drriegel@gpuc.us

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is thrilled to announce that GPUC now has a Mission Statement, adopted by an overwhelming majority of the congregation at our recent Congregational Meeting. Many thanks to the Mission Committee (Ann Helm, Christy Winder, Wally Friesen and Julie Artis) for their inspired hard work. Also at that meeting a large majority of those present voted to invest in air conditioning for our Sanctuary, Gallery and Foyer. We hope to have a cooler place for our endeavors by this summer. Veronica Smith, our Facilities Building Chair, is heading a committee that will solicit consultation from an expert in heating and cooling. They will present their recommendations to the Board concerning the technical plan. We will then solicit bids for the particular plan chosen by the Board, and choose a contractor to do the work.

Now that we have adopted a Mission Statement, it is the Board's intention to engage with the congregation in identifying a shared Vision for the future of GPUC. We will appoint a committee with background in this area to determine the steps we will take together to discover our Vision. You will be hearing more on this subject in the next few months.

Right now, our Pledge Campaign for 2016-2017 is beginning with the Fellowship Dinner to be held on Saturday, March 12. By this time, you should have been contacted about attending the dinner. It is a lovely event that I hope all will try to attend. The pledge campaign is extremely important in the life and health of our democratic society. We cannot survive without your support. The generosity of our members last year allowed us to dream of capital improvements. We are growing in many ways right now: In our spiritual offerings, educational opportunities, fellowship events. We are hoping to grow in the size of our congregation, and possibly in size and/or functionality of our facility. The investments we make with our time and our money help our church to become an even more satisfying place for all of us. Please be generous. Generosity enriches the giver, not only the receiver.

As always, you are welcome to attend GPUC Board Meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Gallery. Members of the Board and Committee on Ministry await your comments and questions after Sunday services by the fireside in the Gallery. We want to know what you think!

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- March 12: Fellowship Dinner
- May 1: Budget Hearing
- May 15: Annual Meeting

Robin Ramsay
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

Religious Education News

"It is the first mild day of March, Each minute sweeter than before...There is a blessing in the air..."-----William Wordsworth



Our GPUC youth are our blessing! Our youth are going to Boston. The fundraising has begun and you will be seeing posters, news articles, bake sales, things to purchase, spaghetti dinner event and much more. The youth of Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church are planning their trip to Boston to learn more about our faith and the cradle of our early heritage as a nation. Any student in 6th grade through 12th grade is eligible to join the trip.

Why do we plan a Boston trip? A trip to Boston can help to make our liberal heritage a real part of the lives of our youth and parents. A youth group trip to Boston can be fun, help build community, and be a great learning experience for all involved. They will visit the downtown Unitarian Universalist churches where important historical events occurred, see the public statues of our heroes, the graves of our forebears, and visit the UUA and the staff. The students will also choose from a list of other events such as a boat ride in the Boston Harbor, a baseball game, a trip to Quincy Market or Chinatown, a stroll through the Boston Public Gardens, a visit to the New England Aquarium, the USS Constitution, or Harvard University, a theater outing, or the Paul Revere House Tour.

Tours and historical sites aren't the only ways they will learn on the trip. They will learn to talk with new friends, respect the boundaries of others when all are tired and hungry, make decisions as a group, and figure out how to handle being away from home.

If you are interested in helping our students go to Boston 2016, step up and let us know. They are looking for donations now for their Spaghetti Dinner and would love some help. **Think and Act Boston 2016!**

Religious Education 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. We also have a pot of coffee for parents to enjoy and take the time to get to know each other.

Lower and Upper Elementary students will continue their studying on Unitarian Universalism. We will continue our study of Tolerance through our Golden Club. We are asking for donations of juice and snacks for our classes.

Junior students will continue their study of Unitarian Universalism. Students signed up for OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes will continue their assigned dates. They will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the annex. All junior students are asked to help with the jewelry, cards and bags for fundraising for the Boston trip each Sunday before and after church.

Senior High students will continue their assigned dates for their OWL classes. Mrs. Ottenhoff will email all students with the dates and times for service projects. Any Senior students may also contact Mrs. Artis if willing to be an assistant teacher in the younger classes.

Dates to Remember:

March 6-Spaghetti Dinner in annex, 5:00 p.m.
March 12-Fellowship Dinner, Childcare available
March 13-Pool Party, 1:00 p.m. in Warren, Michigan
March 21-RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Adult Religious Education

Thursday Evening Spring Lecture Series

Please mark your calendars for the GPUC Adult Religious Education lecture series April 21st through May 26th. Lectures begin at 7:00pm in the church sanctuary. Dr. Riegel kicks off our Spring offerings with a special two part lecture mini-series. The first lecture is entitled "Sun of God" (April 21st) and will examine the astrological structure of the Jesus narrative. The second lecture is entitled "The Mystical Jesus" (April 28th) and will explore what remains of the Jesus narrative once the astrological structure of the narrative is removed. Other presenters and topics will be announced in the April newsletter.

Sunday Offerings

Mystic Poet Workshop, with Dr. Riegel

First Sunday of each month: (March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5)

In these workshops we utilize a method of dream interpretation in order to use mystic poetry as a tool for personal and spiritual growth. In small group settings we will examine one poem per month, collectively sharing our personal insights into the possible meanings of these poems. Poets include the likes of Rumi, Hafez, Mary Oliver, Goethe, Kabir, Lalla, etc.

Meditation Class, with Dr. Riegel

Third Sunday of each month: (March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19)

This is an introduction to meditation class (though experienced meditators are welcome) with mini lectures, Q & A, an introduction to various meditation techniques, and 30 minutes of silent meditation per class. We will begin by working with the book "The Attention Revolution: Unlocking the Power of the Focused Mind," by Alan Wallace. Participants are encouraged to read this book ahead of time though you may attend the class even if you haven't gotten to it yet. (Meets at from noon - 1pm in the sanctuary)

The Philosopher's Club, with Dr. Riegel

(NO MARCH MEETING, April 24, May 22, NO JUNE MEETING)

In this class we do Philosophy on par with an introductory college level class. We are currently working our way through "The Consolation of Philosophy," by Boethius (Penguin Classics is the recommended version). Following "The Consolation of Philosophy" we will explore "Flat land," by Edwin Abbot, "Teddy," by J. D. Salinger, The Myth of Sisyphus, by Albert Camus, and many other Philosophical works. (Meets from noon - 1pm in the sanctuary) NOTE - It is required that you have read the material in order to attend this class.

Women's Book Discussion Group

Please Note: The Women's Book Discussion Group will meet for the next three months on the 4th Thursday of the month.

March 24, 2016 (Meets in the Annex at 6:00pm)

"The Children Act," by Ian McEwan

Fiona Maye is a leading High Court judge who presides over cases in the family division. She is renowned for her fierce intelligence, exactitude, and sensitivity but her professional success belies private sorrow and domestic strife. There is the lingering regret of her childlessness and now her marriage of thirty years is in crisis. At the same time she is called on to try an urgent case. Adam, a beautiful seventeen-year-old boy is refusing, for religious reasons, the medical treatment that could save his life and his devout parents echo his wishes. Time is running out. Should the secular court overrule sincerely expressed faith? In the course of reaching a decision Fiona visits Adam in the hospital-an encounter that stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. Her judgment has momentous consequences for them both.

Discussion leader, Karin Garrett Refreshments, Cindi Arfken

UU Crafters New Meeting Schedule!

The UU Crafters will meet the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Annex, from 7-9pm. The next meetings will be March 15th and 22nd. 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.

Writers Workshop

Please feel free to join the Writing Group on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month in the church library. Bring your writings and listen as others read theirs, and join in the discussions regarding the selections. The next meetings will be held on March 14th and 28th. Please contact Patty Gillis for more information.

Announcements

Alliance Program

Church member, Laura Wagner, will present an overview of the Detroit M-1 Rail Project on **Friday, March 4th** at 7pm in the Annex. Laura, a civil engineer, joined Stacy and Witbeck in 2011 as a Quality Control Manager for light rail projects and is currently working on the M-1 Rail Streetcar Project.

Laura will be giving a photo-filled tour of the M-1 Rail project including an overview of rail construction and project start-up. We will look at current progress from one end of the project to the other and follow-up with a discussion on the impact to the community.

Wine, cheese, dessert and coffee will be served. For reservations you may sign-up at the table in the foyer or call Mary Morshead, Guests are welcome. A \$5.00 donation is suggested.

Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, March 6.

March 6 will be our next First Sunday Food Sharing. Our donations are taken to Crossroads East on Moross, just east of I-94. This location is close to our church home and has a food pantry, clothing closet, provides job assistance, and counseling. We will be collecting non-perishables such as cereal, noodles, rice, canned fruits, veggies, soups, and sauces. If you prefer to donate monetarily, your money is used to buy items such as eggs, milk, meat, produce, and bread. Our donations are greatly appreciated and really help keep the shelves, fridge, and freezer stocked. Our donations are always gladly received! During January through the 23rd of February, GPUC has provided 1,345 lbs. pounds of food and toiletries to Crossroads East! Many, many thanks!

MUSICAL NOTES

**Joseph Palazzolo in Concert
Saturday, April 16, 2016, 7:30 pm**

For what is certain to be an exhilarating piano performance by our very own, talented JOSEPH PALAZZOLO!

Joseph will be performing a variety of beautiful piano selections by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, as well as Kitten on the Keys, a tango, and Clair de Lune!

TICKETS: \$15 adults in advance, \$10 students & seniors in advance, \$20/\$15 at the door
Reserve tickets from church office - call 313.881.0420

Consider Camp Unirondack

Unirondack is a special place; it is a UU camp nestled at the base of the Adirondack Mountains in New York.

My family has been going to family camp there for the last three years. They also have a whole summer of kid camps. The staff makes a point to hear the voices of all and to plan wonderful programming from juggling, to climbing cliffs. Spending a week in natural paradise with like-minded folk and no cooking is...well, paradise!

Check it out! <http://www.unirondack.org/>

If you have questions about the camp. Contact Sarah Neely

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, March 25 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

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