

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 2021

January 2022 Newsletter Deadline

Mark your calendars and please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by

Wednesday, December 22nd

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

Upcoming Services



Sunday services policies

As you all should be aware, the board decided early in the summer to resume in-person Sunday services “officially” on September 12, with several trial runs in July and August. The situation with COVID in our community and State remains quite fluid so the board and the Sunday services committee are continually re-evaluating our policies related to in-person gatherings. At this time we will continue to plan for in-person services Sunday mornings with a zoom option available for those who are unable or are uncomfortable with attending in-person. However, since data show that singing produces anywhere from 3 to 11 times more droplets that then circulate throughout the occupied space (compared to speaking), services will not include singing at this time. We will continue to have hymns during the service and those who are viewing via zoom can sing at home if they wish. Those who are in-person in the sanctuary can feel free to hum along with the music, tap their feet, clap, sway with the music or express themselves in any way that does not involve verbalizing with an open mouth. As a reminder, current church policy requires anyone entering the church must be fully vaccinated (if eligible) and masked (if over two years of age). We also encourage everyone to inquire of friends you see in church as to their comfort level with handshakes, fist bumps, hugs, etc. before engaging anyone physically. Greeters will not be touching folks upon entry to the church.

Worship services will continue to be provided online using Zoom.

It is recommended that you join early and use a laptop, desktop with a webcam or you may

download the Zoom app on your tablet or smart phone via the App store. We also request when joining the online session limiting to one connection per household.

The Sunday worship service Zoom link will be sent by email on Friday afternoons, December 3, 10, 17 & 24. Christmas Eve Service email will be sent the day before, on Thursday, December 23rd.

UNFAMILIAR WITH ZOOM? - DO THIS IN ADVANCE OF SUNDAY

- Sign onto zoom meeting link 15 minutes prior to service.
- Bring a chalice or a small candle so you can light the chalice when we do.
- Have the order of service handy - either electronically or in printed form, so you can follow along with the service.
- Have your preferred refreshments and hot beverages ready to enjoy during the service.
- Enjoy the service and provide email feedback to us on how this option is working for you.

December 5, 2021

10:30 AM

Sermon: "Oasis"

Worship Leader: Dr. Alexander Riegel

Worship Associate: Chuck Palmer

These are difficult times in which we live! Of course, you don't need to be told that. But it is good to recognize the life challenges we face these days, so we can remember to be a little gentler with ourselves – and others. Indeed, it is important to seek out places and people where, and in whom, we can find such gentleness. Church, i.e., GPUC, is one such place with such people. This Sunday is dedicated to the recognition that our beloved community is an oasis in difficult times.

December 12, 2021

10:30 AM

Sermon: "The Holy in the Holiday"

Worship Leader: Dr. Alexander Riegel

Because not all of our youth will be able to attend church just yet (due to vaccination status), we thought it better to do another intergenerational service in lieu of our usual holiday pageant. For this service, we will remember the "holy in the holiday" by taking a closer look at the spiritual messages behind those beloved holiday songs we sing this time of year.

December 19, 2021

10:30 AM

Sermon: "Hallelujah"

Worship Leader: Dr. Alexander Riegel

Worship Associate: Carol Guither

Leonard Cohen's most famous song is "Hallelujah." It has been covered many a time by various artists (my favorite is Jeff Beck's version). You probably know the song but do you know much about the meaning it held for Cohen? For that matter, how much do you know

about Cohen himself. Dr. Riegel will speak about how “Hallelujah” holds important spiritual wisdom for our lives.

December 24, 2021

Friday

6:00 PM

Sermon: *"Christmas Eve Service"*

Worship Leader: Dr. Alexander Riegel

Yes, we will be doing Christmas Eve in person this year. However, vaccinations and masks are still required. The Board has decided, however, that for this service we can sing *while wearing our masks*. Otherwise, expect the usual: Readings, Homily, Music, and “Silent Night.” Get that booster, don that mask, and come celebrate the reason for the season!

December 26, 2021

Sunday

10:00 AM

Sermon: *"Joint Virtual Service with UU Naples, Florida"*

Worship Leader: Rev. Tony Fisher

Anne Roberts has graciously arranged for us to join the UU Naples congregation for service this Sunday. It will be led by the Rev. Tony Fisher of the Naples church in Florida, including readings and special musical pieces. **PLEASE NOTE – This service will begin at 10am.**

Alexander's Meander



It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is already upon us! Where did the time go? Did it get eaten by this pandemic? Maybe it's been eaten by my aging process? Maybe I've just been too involved in this summer's flood and my subsequent bout of covid... Somehow, someway, time has flown by at sonic speed!

I imagine I'm not alone in this perception. It's such a difficult time for everyone that I imagine most everyone is scratching their heads a bit and wondering how Thanksgiving got here so quickly. In fact, by the time you read this Thanksgiving will have passed and will be looking forward to *Christmas!*

With that in mind, I offer you a belated Thanksgiving thought (good for any time of year, really), rooted in a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a 19th century poet whose Thanksgiving poem begins like this:

*We walk on starry fields of white
And do not see the daisies;□
For blessings common in our sight□
We rarely offer praises.
We sigh for some supreme delight□
To crown our lives with splendor,
And quite ignore our daily store□
Of pleasures sweet and tender.
Our cares are bold and push their way
Upon our thought and feeling.
They hand about us all the day,
Our time from pleasure stealing.
So unobtrusive many a joy□
We pass by and forget it,
But worry strives to own our lives,
And conquers if we let it.*

“But worry strives to our own lives, and conquers if we let it.”

Friends, there's plenty of worry in life right now, no doubt. But there are many a joy, as well. Let's heed Wilcox's wisdom in this poem and be intentional about being conscientious enough to notice the joys that surround us: family and friends who love us, the bounty of nature that envelops us, and the luck of having been born in the “first world,” in which we are free of many of the struggles and strife that ail others.

Let us count our blessings this holiday season and remember to bless others in return.

Namaste,

Alex

Religious Education News

Holiday = HOLY DAY

Holidays are celebrated all the time, and many times they have a tie to a Holy day. It is important to know the difference between a holiday and Holy day since they change the way that we treat the day.

What's the difference between a holiday and a Holy day? **If there is a religious reason behind your celebration it is a Holy day. For holidays, most people are given time off work to celebrate.**

Differentiating a Holy day and a holiday in this day and age may be useful as you approach each holiday. There is a lot that goes into each holiday whether that means a deep religious

meaning or a day to celebrate or honor something that is of value in society.

Please join our Religious Education students on December 12 at 10:30 to celebrate **The Holy in the Holidays** service. The students will be sharing special readings and a wonderful guest will join us. We will also pick the winner of the **Love Quilt!!!**



It's time for our RE families to spread Holiday cheer and think of others. Please remember to bring some warm mittens, hats and scarves to decorate the mitten tree. The gifts will go to the children at the Detroit Merit Academy. The next time you or your student is out for recess at school you can smile knowing your gift and kindness is keeping another child warm!

Dates to Remember

- Sunday, December 5 - all classes at 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday, December 12 - The Holy in the Holiday Service
- Sunday, December 19 - Holiday crafts
- Sunday, December 26 - no classes

My gift to all of you 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

Support our RE Juniors and Seniors by entering the Spread Love Quilt Raffle!!

You can win this beautiful quilt by buying a **\$5.00 raffle ticket from the GPUC Juniors and Seniors.**

Tickets on sale now!

We will pick the winner Sunday, Dec. 12 at the church service. You do not need to be present to win. Help our Juniors and Seniors fund a Spring



bonding trip!!! Spread the LOVE!!!

You can enter by purchasing raffle tickets on Sunday's or contact Ameera in the office.

You may also purchase tickets online by going to: <https://gpuuc.breezechms.com/give/online>

Please select: **Give to RE Junior-Senior Income**

Announcements, Upcoming Programs And Events



Holiday Giving Begins

To continue a 25 year tradition, it's time to share the joy of the season with our neighbors in need. The Schools Tutoring Committee will begin to collect money this Sunday to use for Kroger Gift Cards for the neediest 25 families at Detroit Merit Academy at Alter and Jefferson.

The amount on each card depends on the size of the family and the total donations received. Each card allows the family to purchase hams, fresh fruit and favorite foods. In addition, the teachers and staff will purchase and wrap a toy or clothes for each child.

Our religious education department is sponsoring the Mitten Tree again to collect sturdy mittens, gloves and hats so necessary in the midst of winter winds and snow. ***Please drop off all donations by Sunday, December 12.***

Write checks to GPUC with "Holiday Giving" in the memo line. Also, if you are comfortable using Breeze, text any amount to (313) 766-2911. When prompted, please select: Give to Other Projects.

For further information, please contact Ameera in the office or Susie Boynton.

Detroit Concert Choir

GPUC member participants are Stan Harr and Veronica Smith.



Detroit Concert Choir

Michael A. Mitchell, Artistic Director
presents

A Joyful Noel!

Ring in the season with festive music
and a live premiere of Dr. Mitchell's
arrangement of *Silent Night*

Sunday, December 12, 3:00 pm

Sweetest Heart of Mary Church
4440 Russell Street, Detroit

Sunday, December 19, 3:00 pm

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church
467 Fairford Road, Grosse Pointe Woods

Individual Tickets - \$20
Senior - \$18 Student - \$10
Group Rates for 10 or more

Ticket Information: (313) 882-0118
dcc@detroitconcertchoir.org
Order online: at detroitconcertchoir.org



This concert season is supported by the Michigan Council for Arts
and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the ARTS
arts.gov

SAFETY PROTOCOL: For the safety of our patrons and performers, all guests must provide proof of full vaccination for COVID-19 or proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the performance start time. All individuals must also wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. These safety protocols allow the DCC to safely bring back as many people as possible to our concerts. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church



Adult Religious Education

- **JOIN US!** If you are interested in becoming a member of the ARE Committee, please let us hear from you. Members are Ghada Abdallah, Jerry Herron, Bill Rehahn, Lynn Rehahn, and Marlane Washington. If you want to join us, or if you would like more information, please contact our chair, Jerry: Jerry.Herron@wayne.edu.

SAVE THE DATES — PLEASE!

Is Santa Claus a Psychedelic Shaman?



In recent times, the theory that Santa Claus began as a Siberian shamanic reindeer herdsman has taken flight. Indeed, maybe there is more to those eyes than meets the eye!

Join us for the webinar:
"Is Santa Claus a Psychedelic Shaman?"
and weigh the evidence for yourself!

Wednesday, December 15, @ 7pm.

To register for this event,
email Dr. Alexander Riegel
[alexgpuc@gmail.com]
with "Psychedelic Santa Webinar"
in the subject line of the email.

[Note - This webinar takes place through Zoom.]



Wednesday, Dec. 15, Zoom at 7:00 PM: So, you think you know who Santa is? Jolly old St. Nick, bag of toys, keeping that list — who's naughty and who's nice? Right? Well, you may not have heard the whole story. Stay tuned for a big reveal, as we get closer to the Winter Solstice! Email alexgpuc@gmail.com to register for this event.

Special Invitation

The Adult Religious Education committee invites the congregation to join in a celebratory virtual New Year's Toast via Zoom

Friday, January 7, 2022
@ 7 p.m.

Bring:

- your favorite beverage
- a poem, joke or inspiring words
- Celebrate our GPUC community!

Register at: <https://bit.ly/gpucNewYearToast>



The New Year's Toast Links:

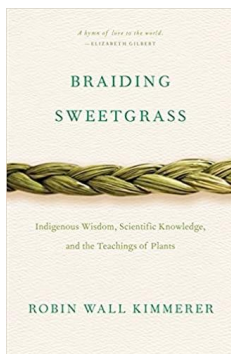
<https://bit.ly/gpucNewYearToast>
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4FA8AF28A0FCC16-gpuc2>

The Adult Religious Education Committee Is Requesting Your Help

On behalf of the Adult Religious Education Committee, I am asking your help in planning future programs. Are there specific kinds of events that you would like our committee to consider — lectures, films, book study and/or discussion groups, guided visits to local arts or cultural institutions, or some other kind of programming? Please let me know. We would be grateful for your suggestions!

Thanks,

Jerry Herron, on behalf of the ARE Committee (Jerry.Herron@wayne.edu)



Book Discussion Group To Discuss: Tuesday, January 18th, at 6 pm

The book discussion group will not meet in December. Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 18th at 6 pm via Zoom. Pi Irwin will lead the discussion of Robin Wall Kimmerer's ***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants***. The Zoom invitation will be sent the day before the meeting. Non-members can get further information by contacting Juli Moore: jdmoore1415@gmail.com. All are welcome to join us!

Giving Made Easy Thanks to Breeze!

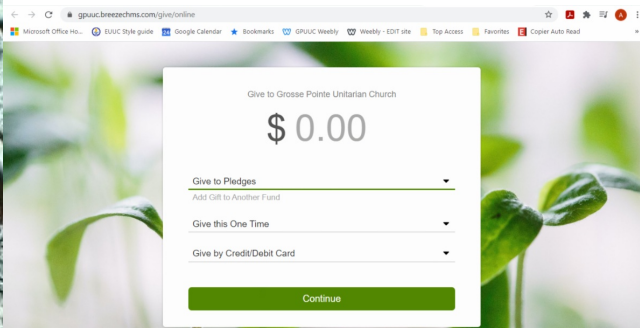
We have been encouraging many to utilize Breeze as an alternative to paying for your pledges, fundraising or just giving a donation! Breeze gives the option of setting up recurring transactions or give one time.

When using Breeze, it will give you the option to cover the processing fee without having to

calculate. The processing fee will be credited towards your total tax-deductible giving and will help us retain every bit of your donation!

If you have any questions about Breeze, please feel free to reach out to Ameera.

Thank you!



[Click Here To Give Now!](#)

RESALE SHOP NEWS!!!

Our Shop is bustling with worker elves marking newly donated items in preparation for the Holiday Season. The sale rooms are full of wonderful holiday decorations, gift items for those special folks on your list, and our regular inventory of clothing, books and household goods. Our gift certificates will make you shopping even easier. Come visit us on Wednesdays from 10 am – 3 pm. Our friendly staff is here to welcome you and help you!



Thursday evenings are here again! Beginning in January, the Resale shop will be open from 7 - 9 pm, the **last Thursday of each month**. It's the perfect time to shop, because the last Thursday is bag day in the Clearance Corner. For \$5 you can fill a grocery bag with merchandise. Plus we provide the bags! **See you there January 27.**

Crossroads East: Second Sunday Food Share Ongoing

CROSSROADS EAST collections and drop offs are ongoing. If you would like to contribute nonperishable food items or hygiene products, please drop them at the church. We also gladly accept monetary donations, which are used to purchase fruit, veggies, eggs, milk, and bread. Your contributions are delivered to Crossroads East on Moross, and always gratefully received there. *Thank you for helping our community!*

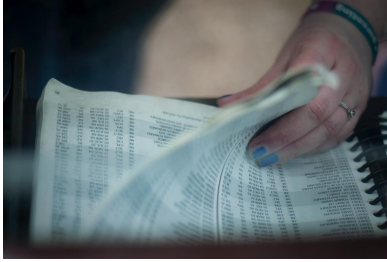
Sunday Morning Flowers

Now that we are having in-person services, we are resuming having flowers to add to the ambience of the Sanctuary on Sunday morning.

We welcome donations for flowers on Sunday mornings. Take a moment to recognize or honor someone dear or to commemorate a special occasion by providing fresh flowers for the Sanctuary. You can make arrangements to bring your own flowers or a monetary donation and someone from the Flower Committee will purchase flowers and make a beautiful arrangement. Please use the insert in the Sunday order of service or contact the church office and sign-up for a Sunday or two.



If you have questions, please feel free to email or call the church office at officegpuc@gmail.com or (313) 881-0420. Thank you for sharing your remembrances of special occasions and important people in your life.



2021-22 Directories are now available!

Beginning Monday, you may pick up your directory to take home. We will also have them available for pick up at Sunday Services. They will also be mailed out to those folks out of town or if requested. Please contact Ameera to secure your copy.

There is an online version of the directory available on our website under our password protected "Membership" section. The online version will be updated throughout the year as changes are received.

Virtual Services Archive

Those of you that have missed any of the virtual Sunday worship services can watch, listen to the audio or read the chat on our website under: [WHO WE ARE - SUNDAY SERVICES - VIRTUAL SERVICES](#) or click this link: <https://www.gpuuc.org/virtual-services.html>

We continue to upload the weekly virtual services to the church website.

Dueling Pianos V a Success

If you viewed the October 23rd concert in person or online you were treated to a musical variety show. From Nuevo Tango to Russian Dramatic, the program was a study in contrasts. A very receptive live audience of 70 as well as 25 people on Zoom watched us as we plowed through Beethoven's 5th, Brazilian tangos, and Blues. Anne and I had so much fun and judging from the audience's response and letters and cards, so did they! GPUC cleared \$520 on the show. Even though fully vaccinated and masked, many told us how great it was to be out at a live concert.

Thanks to all who helped. Thank you Anne, for your advice, support, and teamwork and for having your own grand moved in and out of the sanctuary to join forces with our Yamaha grand. Thank you board and people of GPUC for allowing us to use your great venue. Thank you Ameera and Rev. Alex for your great work and support.

Stay tuned for Dueling Pianos VI now in the planning stages!

*Joseph Palazzolo
Director of Music
and ½ of Dueling Pianos*

GPUC Vaccine Clinic News!!

Thank you to all who participated in this year's vaccine clinic! Macomb Pharmacy and Wellness said this was their most successful clinic since they began this year. Over 60 vaccines were distributed with Pfizer and Moderna Boosters at the top of the list! We took one more step at protecting our most vulnerable in the community and another step towards working to end this pandemic. Wishing you all a safe and healthy holiday season. Cheers!



Earn Money for Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church



□ Kroger rewards support GPUC

Join the 32 households who currently support GPUC by shopping at Kroger. This activity earns around \$500 a year and once enrolled in KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS it is an easy way to help. **Thanks to those who have enrolled.** Check the bottom of your receipt the next time you shop for the message reassuring you that Kroger is donating to GPUC.

Kroger Community Rewards gives to GPUC - enroll at any time!

Our organization number is: FF794

Go to: <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>

Thanks, Janet Weber

FREE Grief Support Offering



Grief: Releasing Pain, Remembering Love & Finding Meaning

David Kessler is one of the leaders in Grief work in the counseling field. He started a free private online grief group for so many who are isolated during the pandemic and not able to reach out and get the grief support they need. There are live sessions and amazing guests so check them out and feel free to join the free group at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DavidKessler/>.

Additional grief support: If anyone needs grief support due to cancer, here is a local link to get set up in a virtual program right now with Gilda's Club Metro Detroit. Contact information:

Photo by Milada Vigerova on Unsplash

Rebekah Agnew, LLPC

Gilda's Club Metro Detroit: Lake House Location

An affiliate of the Cancer Support Community

Program Manager

Email: ragnew@gildasclubdetroit.org

Gentle Yoga

Weekly Gentle Yoga

THURSDAYS 4:30-5:30PM

(EST, US and Canada)

Beginning Thursday October 14, we moved all yoga classes to **Zoom only**, with the Venmo link for payment. Carol is also accepting check or cash payment as well.

This is a 60 minute gentle yoga session that occurs every Thursday from 4:30pm - 5:30pm with Carol Guither.

If you have a mat, blocks and a strap (or necktie) that is helpful but you don't need anything except a clean space to lie, sit and stand on.

Please make sure you are honoring your own level of activity and flexibility. Make any adjustments you need. The yoga "mantra" always is "honor your own body". If it's not comfortable, don't do it.

Cost will be \$5.00 per session, and participants can either pay cash/check in person for each session, or pay by the Venmo app.

Please [click here](#) for Carol's Venmo information.

If you need help signing up for Venmo, please contact Ameera in the office and she will walk you through the sign up process.

Note: Venmo is a subsidiary of PayPal, and requires a credit card number for the transaction.

Thursday, December 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30



Healing Clinic and Meditation

**Healing Clinic and Meditation
Third Thursday of the month
December 16, 7- 8:30PM**

Join us for this in-person community event, every 3rd Thursday of the monthly, offering Pranic Healing sessions and Meditation on Twin Hearts.

Pranic Healing is an advanced system of energy medicine that utilizes prana or chi to cleanse and harmonize the body's energy system.

The healing clinic begins with a beautiful guided meditation. Then Pranic Healers offer mini healing sessions for relief from physical and/or emotional issues.

Must be 16 years old to participate in the meditation. All ages welcome for healing.

**NOTE: If you are symptomatic or not feeling well please stay home. You may schedule a distant healing session. Please call or text if you are requiring distant healing.
Carrie 586-943-4404**

Donations welcome.

Venmo

<https://venmo.com/Carrie-Viviano>

Cash App

[https://cash.app/\\$CarrieViviano](https://cash.app/$CarrieViviano)

Paypal



<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/carrieviviano>

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