

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*

January 2018

The editor apologizes for the tardiness of this month's newsletter. It is totally my fault.
Rudy Wedenoja

Upcoming Services

January 7, 2018 **10:30 AM**

Shhhhh!- On the Magic of Not Keeping Secrets

Worship Leader: Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Maurya Kay**

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!

January 14, 2018

10:30 AM

White Privilege

Worship Leader: Chuck Palmer **Worship Associate: Tonya Wells**

Growing up in Detroit, and attending a church in downtown Detroit, I became aware of race at an early age. Understanding and accepting the idea of white privilege took me a lot longer. [Chuck Palmer has been interested in social justice issues since joining the Vietnam anti-war movement in high school. He gave a sermon on institutional racism at GPUC in September 2016.

January 21, 2018

10:30 AM

Loving Kindness Meditation 101

Worship Leader: Meghan Boomhower **Worship Assoc.: Janet Weber**

Loving-kindness, or Metta meditation is the simple practice of directing well-wishes towards other people. We will be exploring the concepts of Metta and how it can be used as a tool for opening your heart. Doing a simple loving-kindness meditation can make us feel less isolated and more connected to those around us. One study showed that a single seven minute loving-kindness meditation made people feel more connected to and positive about both loved ones and total strangers, *and* more accepting of themselves. Come join us as we explore the concepts of this type of meditation and have an extended guided mediation.

January 28, 2018

10:30 AM

Exploring the Wisdom of Mary Oliver

Worship Leader: Tonya Wells **Worship Associate: Joseph Buttiglieri**

Mary Oliver's poetry is beautifully simple, concise and accessible, and it evokes a deep spiritual connection to the natural world and self-acceptance. Her work has been included in Unitarian Universalist worship for decades because the messages in her poems align so closely with UU principles. In this service we will reflect on several of Oliver's poems and glean the great life wisdom contained within.

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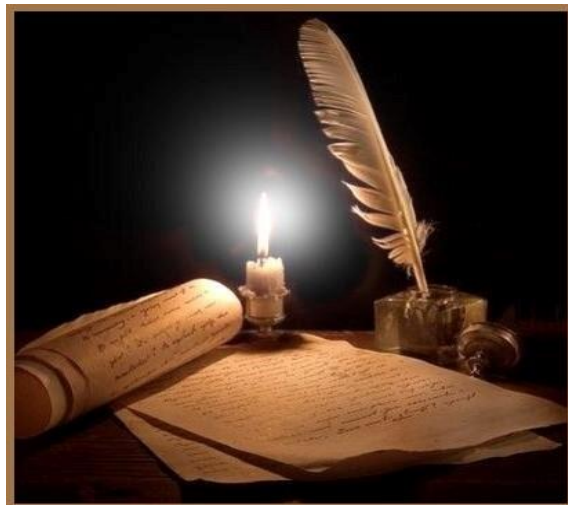
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Forward To A Friend



Write Your OWN Next Chapter...

As we approach the New Year my thoughts turn to the past. Specifically, I think of the theme of "narrative," about which you've heard me muse on other occasions. Narrative is the story that one tells oneself about oneself, i.e., the experiences one has had and the people one has known and who one consequently is. It is, in sum, the history of oneself.

Narrative also tends to serve as the rudder of one's life; it directs one's future course. That is, one's history writes one's future. Who one has been determined who one will be. This is the power of narrative. It has a deterministic quality. Indeed, narrative's deterministic quality is the reason most people take a passive stance toward their own future.

As the New Year dawns upon us, rather than letting your past write your future consider being a more active force in creating the rest of your life. Write your own next chapter... Don't let who you have been determined who you will be. Take an unexpected turn, make an unpredictable decision, or indulge in an atypical experience. The point is, history is the past in the past is history while neither is the future. A glorious life awaits you!

[On another note - I will be away on Study Break from January 9 through February 13. In the event of an urgent pastoral matter, please contact Candy Dunn, Joseph Buttiglieri, or Russ Chavey. In turn, they will contact the Rev. Kimi Riegel, who is covering urgent matters in my absence. Please do not contact Kimi on your own behalf.]

Religious Education News



Happy New Year! Wishing you...Love, Peace, Happiness, Joy, Success, Health, Abundance, Creativity and everything else your heart desires!

New Year is the day of new beginnings and wondering what the year will bring.. Winter is upon us and I think of an evening of good food, friends and fun. This description reminds me of the **Circle Circle Dinner**. Friday, January 5th, 2018 we will begin at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is asked to sign up in the GPUC lobby or contact julie@gpuc.us. We ask everyone to sign up for an appetizer, salad or dessert. The cost is \$5.00 for anyone over 10 years old. Our entertainment this year will be "**Dr. BB and special guest "San Ya Si" will entertain us.** We will enjoy **music and dancing** in the main church. This is an evening for all ages. Bring your family and friends. The circle of strength of our church is love and friendship. See you all on Friday, January 5th!

I have recently read the book *365 Days of Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. Here are some wonderings to start the 2018 New Year. There is one for each month of this New Year.

1. "We carry within us the wonders we seek around us." -Sir Thomas Browne
2. "All you need is love." -John Lennon and Paul McCartney
3. "It is better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers."-James Thurber
4. "Your best takes your time" -Thomas
5. "Ignorance is not saying, I don't know. Ignorance is saying, I don't want to know." -Unknown
6. "Accept what you can't change. Change what you can't accept." -Unknown
7. "Find out what your gift is, and nurture it." -Katy Perry
8. "O world, I am in tune with every note of thy great harmony." -Marcus Aurelius
9. "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the

world." -Desmond Tutu

10. "One little word can light up someone's day." -Ainsley

11. "We didn't all come over on the same ship, but we're all in the same boat." -Bernard Baruch

12. "Nothing will work unless you do." -Maya Angelou

RE Lessons:

The **nursery** will be open at 9:45 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 get to know each other.

Lower and Upper Elementary students on January 7, 2018 will begin their lessons on World Religions and begin later in the month on Islam. They will also continue their study of Tolerance for all people. Parents will be receiving their teaching schedule next week.

Junior and Senior High students will continue their lessons on World Religions during their class time. On Sunday, January 7 at 6:30 p.m. the Jr/Sr classes will start their OWL classes (Our Whole Lives).

Dates to remember:

- January 5th-Circle Circle Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- January 7th-RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m. in Room 7
- January 7th-OWL classes begin at 6:30 p.m.

Food sharing Sunday starts Sunday, January 7th. Please remember to have your student bring in food for Crossroads. Thanks for caring.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Holiday Giving

Holiday Giving was Wonderful!

It was wonderful what we accomplished together! We helped 130 people, including 82 children and 48 adults, have some holiday meals to remember. In addition, the parents could pick out four books for each child from the 470 donated and two items from the mitten tree collection of 227 for each child to keep warm this winter. Ann Helm knitted 42 beautiful hats this year (a new record). The recipients were grateful and the children were prone to giving hugs of appreciation. The giving spirit of our Church was manifest in the number of volunteers who signed up. Twenty-four whole baskets and eight half baskets were donated so we did not have to send shoppers to buy baskets of food. Jim Kelly picked up 33 beautiful, double glazed, spiral-cut hams wrapped in silver paper. Juli Moore shopped for 33 bags of fresh fruit and 33 loaves of good bread. The \$1,090 in donations was spent wisely.

When the baskets arrived at Church, Janet Weber, Jo Ann Kelly and Kathleen Ruhl checked the contents and assigned the largest baskets to the biggest families, then they attached a tag sending season's greetings from our Church. On another day Kathleen Ruhl spearheaded counting and packing up the gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and socks from the mitten tree, and Valarie St. John sorted all the books into grade levels as well as counting up the grand total of 470 books.

The super-efficient crew that loaded all the baskets into a seven car caravan in record time also unloaded at school in the same manner and were assisted by eight students at the school. Wendy Biernat organized the crew to assemble each family's tote bags and tubs together, while Karin Garrett oversaw the work to attractively display the large supply of mittens, hats and books. Then the crew used their muscle power to take each family's bountiful baskets on carts and dollies to the cars. When we found out that one woman had to take the bus, Rudy Wedenoja volunteered to drive her and her two children home with their heavy load. Thanks to the others in this hard-working crew: Colin Gillis, Amy Thelen, Jim Kelly, Ann Ottenhoff, Leigh Wedenoja, and Mark Reeve, The distribution of the baskets was completed in a little over one hour, What hustle!

Special recognition is due to those who shopped for the baskets of food. Mollie Fletcher brought two baskets, and Debbie Connelly again had the most original tub decoration. Other donors: Laurie Arora, Lynn Baker-Hunter, the Bocci Family, Randi Borys, Caitlyn & Carl Collins, Margaret Hudson-Collins and Steve Collins, Debbie Connelly, Candy Dunn, Miriam & John Engstrom, Karin Garrett, Mollie Fletcher & Alan Darr, Brooke & Jeremiah Hess, Carole Hosey, Margit Jackson, Jessica & Everett Keyser, Kathy Marcozzi, the Marck family, Elizabeth Marck & Rob Cobau, Mary Morshead, Colin Partlan & Amanda Batts, Robin Ramsay & Rudy Wedenoja, Lynn & Bill Rehahn, Shona Spratt, Amy Thelen, Chris Vadino & Chuck Palmer, Sonja & Mark Franchett, Christy Winder & Russ Chavey, Marlane Washington, Beth Whitney, Susie Boynton and Anonymous. Thank you to Candy Dunn for her beautiful spreadsheet that kept track of all the volunteers and dollars.

A final thanks to those who donated funds for all the activities above. Many gave money in addition to other donations and service. Helping so many others have happy holidays was truly wonderful.

Announcements

Church Safety Committee Forming *[Important - Please Read]*

The Board has created a subcommittee to look at the issue of church safety, particularly around traumatic events, given the unfortunate incidence of such events in recent years. We are looking for members of the congregation who would be interested in helping serve on this committee. Particularly helpful would be those with experience in the legal and psychiatric fields. However, any help is welcome. If you are interested, or know somebody who might work well on this committee, please contact Joe Buttiglieri, Lynn Rehahn, or Jud Cole.

Laurie Arora Retires from GPP City Council

Accolades to Laurie Arora for her tenure on the Grosse Pointe Park City Council. Last year Laurie decided not to run for a third term. Shortly before the November election, her colleagues feted her for her outstanding eight years of service. "You hit the ground running and never ever stopped," said one colleague. Another added, "Laurie made us work and think, and that's a good thing."

Mayor Denner said, "You often were the first person a resident called if they had a concern. That is a great service to be accessible, to be approachable, to be someone the community wants to talk to about a concern."

Congratulations, Laurie. You are an inspiration to us all.

Women's Book Discussion Group

The Book discussion group meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the church library. Membership is open to all; please join us. Contact Jill Crane if you have any questions: villajilla@sbcglobal.net

Wednesday, January 17, 5:30pm, GPUC Library

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis is a memoir by J. D. Vance about the Appalachian values of his upbringing and their relation to the social problems of his hometown. Led by Julia Moore

UU Crafters

UU Crafters will resume meeting in January. Our meetings in January on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month (January 16 and 23) in the Annex 7-9pm. All are welcome to join in for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.) and other small crafts. Check the church calendar on the website and the weekly email for any changes. Please contact Ann Helm with any questions.

Flowers for the Sanctuary

Please consider recognizing or honoring someone dear or commemorate a special occasion by providing fresh flowers for the Sanctuary. Flowers add significantly to the ambiance on Sunday mornings. Please use the insert in the Sunday order of service or contact the church office to sign-up for a Sunday or two.

Let us know if you will bring your own arrangement or provide a check (minimum cost \$20) for Susan Hartz (our talented flower chairperson) to purchase and arrange the flowers.

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

Care Committee Update

We have secured a small table just outside the sanctuary where you will be able to write a message of cheer to anyone in the congregation. There are note cards and paper, envelopes, pens, etc. A member of the Care Committee will be sure to see that your message is sent.

Linda Lawrence and the Care Committee

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, January 19 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

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