

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*

November 24, 2014

Upcoming Services

November 30, 2014

10:30 AM

"Hey, What Happened to Thanksgiving"

Cynthia Luce

Tonya Wells, Worship Associate

Somewhere between what has become two major holidays for children, Thanksgiving has gotten lost. Oh, we still have it and we are grateful for the day off from work, the chance to get together with family, and the opportunity to gorge ourselves with a great meal, but it still seems like Thanksgiving itself has faded into the background.

December 7, 2014

10:30 AM

"Shame on You"

Rev. Alex Riegel

Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate

Did you know that the concept of original sin did not appear in the Christian tradition until the 4th Century?! Not only that, but the number of usages of the term "sin" is far outnumbered by the number of usages of the term "shame" in the Bible. We will look at the use of the term "shame" in the Bible and also consider its role in the culture at large and our own private lives. Come join us ("Shame on you" if you don't!). You might be surprised to discover that unlike the concept of original sin, shame actually plays a vital role both in the culture at large and our personal lives.

December 14, 2014

10:30 AM

The Annual Holiday Pageant

Rev. Alex Riegel

Allyson Hartz & Michael Grady, Worship Associates

Come join us as the youth of the church perform their annual pageant. This time honored tradition is an opportunity to witness the talent of our youth and demonstrate through our attendance that we believe they have much of value to bring to our community. I won't tip my hat as to the theme, but as always, Julie Artis and the wonderful volunteers that work with our youth are sure to do a fine job pulling this special morning together! I hear the rumblings of the stage being assembled already ;-)

December 21, 2014

10:30 AM

Holiday Music Service

Rev. Alex Riegel

Joseph Palazzolo

This will be GPUC's first holiday music service. Joseph, our wonderful adult choir, and some special musical guests (a hammer dulcimer group from Alex's neck of the woods) will be the highlight of this morning, while the congregation will join in singing hymns interspersed with readings that reflect the season. Come, raise your voice in song and join the merriment!

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Upcoming Events

[Mon, Dec 1 - Mental Health Wrkshp Part 1](#)

[Sun, Dec 7 - Congregational Meeting](#)

December 24, 2014

5:30 PM

[Sun Dec 7 - Food Sharing](#)

Christmas Eve Celebration

Rev. Alex Riegel

Jim Moir & Cynthia Luce Worship Associates

We will celebrate Christmas in the Round, a time honored tradition at GPUC. We will follow the format of previous years, singing carols, doing readings, and having a Christmas message from Dr. Riegel. Come early. We may have a large crowd this year.

[Dec 8 - GP Choir Holiday Concert](#)

[Mon, Dec 8 - Mental Health Wrkshp Part 2](#)

December 28, 2014

10:30 AM

[Tue, Dec 9 - Alliance Holiday Luncheon](#)

Guest Speaker

Tonya Wells, Worship Associate

[Fri, Dec 12 - Movie Night](#)

[Mon, Dec 17 - Jazz Concert](#)

[Forward To A Friend](#)

Comments from Rev. Riegel

A Most Unexpected Gift

As we enter the seasons of Thanksgiving and gift giving, I have been reflecting upon the nature of gift giving, i.e., what it means and how to do my part to alter our culture's penchant for using the season to fuel consumerism. One way my family has chosen to do this in the past is to forgo giving material items during this gift giving season in favor of giving non-tangible items. For instance, on the dashboard of my car sits a stuffed animal, a wolf, named Lou. Lou was given to me by a foundation that saves wolves, in return for a donation from my stepdaughter, in my name, as a Christmas present to me. Another example is when I made a donation to an organization that works with endangered GLBTQ youth in Boston, in my friend's name, because that organization was a lifesaver for him at one point in his life. Every year during the gift giving season my family reduces its participation in consumerism by giving such intangible gifts to people. Though it runs against the grain of the culture and initially seems odd to the person receiving the gift, it doesn't take long for them to realize that such gifts are far more personal and meaningful than something pulled off the shelf (that the person often doesn't even need) at the local mall. It's a trend that I think is growing...



Beyond that, I want to run another gift idea by you. This gift idea actually arises out of my knowledge of organizational dynamics, which, as I've mentioned before, often has profound meaning for interpersonal relationships. We humans have a penchant for making assumptions and attributions regarding other people's motives and intentions. Rather than asking people directly what was their motive or intention for their behavior or speech, we presume to know what was their motive or intention. Sometimes we make positive assumptions and attributions, sometimes negative. With this in mind I want to suggest we alter this tendency and give another type of intangible gift, a most unexpected gift, namely, the benefit of a doubt. Giving people the benefit of a doubt, at least when we find ourselves making negative assumptions and attributions about people's motives and intentions, frees them of our preconceived notions about them and even further, can alter relationships for the better. This isn't to say that people's motives or intentions are never negative. Rather, it is to say that we owe it to one another to presume the best until we have concrete data indicating otherwise (*concrete data does not include assumptions and attributions*). So give it a try! During this season of gift giving, give the unexpected gift of the benefit of a doubt. You will definitely find yourself all the merrier for it!

Namaste,
Alex

Board of Trustees

Greetings from the GPUC Board of Trustees. We're launching this newsletter column to help keep all informed. The Board has been quite busy over the summer and Fall. We have been delighted to welcome Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel as our Consulting Minister. As is usual at GPUC, he is participating in our Board meetings, providing valuable counsel. In my opinion, we have a highly productive working relationship, and the Board is operating at full steam. We had a very successful Board Retreat on October 4th, culminating in several action items.

I am pleased to say that we've made headway on all of the items. Paul Rowady and Joseph Buttiglieri are serving as Canvass Chairs. Suzanne Ross has taken the open Membership Chair position. The newly invigorated Finance Committee has met twice and has planned a Congregational Meeting for December 7th to acquaint the membership with our current financial position and to discuss future concerns. The brand new Fundraising Committee has approx. 16 members and has met twice with some exciting ideas (more members are welcome). The Web Site is being updated and manned by Scott Sendra and Rudy Wedenoja with help from a committee looking at innovations. Laura Bartell has agreed to take the position of Assistant Treasurer and is receiving some training from Jean Ritok. Rev. Alex and Paul Rowady are beginning to look at our committee structure. A Marketing/Communications Committee is still in the planning stages, but many ideas are already being introduced by the Fundraising Committee.

Sadly, the Board will be looking for a new Secretary to take Ann Lipsitz's position. She has taken a job out of state and can no longer serve. We thank her for her earnest and capable service. Happily, we will still see Ann at church!

I'm looking forward to continuing this exciting and invigorating year with the Board. I'm seeing a lot of great energy for our beloved GPUC. Remember, everyone is welcome at Board meetings which take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. At other times, any Board member will be happy to answer questions or hear your concerns.

Regards,
Robin Ramsay
GPUC Board Vice President.

Announcements

Special Congregational Meeting

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 7 in the Annex following the service. Several Board members will present an overview of the GPUC 2015/2016 financial situation. Mark Franchett will review the budget forecast; Paul Rowady will cover the Canvass challenge and new opportunities and Robin Ramsay will discuss fundraising and other possibilities.

Opportunities for Holiday Giving

This year there are ten different ways that our members and friends can contribute to making the holidays better for the neediest families at the Detroit Merit Academy School on Alter Road. The varied opportunities range from donations of food baskets, books, mittens and money to service donations of muscles, shopping and transport. Our gifts are greatly appreciated by the recipients as well as by the principal, teachers and staff. Please contact the GPUC office if you did not get a signup sheet. Please return it to the GPUC office or email it to GPUC@gpuc.us.

Susie Boynton, Coordinator

Mental Health First Aid Training Course

(FREE @ GPUC due to a limited-time grant which WAIVES the normal charge of \$75/125 per person.)

LEARN HOW TO HELP PEOPLE DEVELOPING A MENTAL ILLNESS OR IN A CRISIS.

In this 2-part, 7-hour, in-person training course (2, 3.5-hour sessions)

learn the skills to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Mental Health First Aid teaches you:

- Signs of addictions and mental illnesses
- 5-step action plan to assess a situation and help
- Impact of mental and substance use disorders
- Local resources and where to turn for help

As class size is limited, please pre-register by signing the clipboard in the GPUC foyer. This class is also open to the public, so please feel free to bring friends!

For more information visit: MentalHealthFirstAid.org.

What: 7-hour Mental Health First Aid class (2, 3.5-hour sessions. **Please commit to attending BOTH halves of this course.)

When: First half of course: Monday, December 1st, 6:30-9pm

Second half of course: Monday December 8th, 2014, 6:30-9pm

Where: GPUC Annex

More info: www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org

First Sunday Food Sharing December 7

It is the season of giving, please don't forget First Sunday Food Sharing. Thank you to everyone for your donations to Crossroads East. If you have enough to share, please do. Your donations are very much needed and appreciated!

Deadline to order SCRIP cards for Christmas is Monday, Dec. 8

RE is offering the SCRIP program for purchasing gift cards to raise funds for future Boston trips and other activities. Scrip simply means "substitute money" - in other words, scrip is gift cards from national and local retailers, and they're the same gift cards you buy at the store. Hundreds of familiar retailers participate in the scrip program. It's not too early to start thinking about the holidays!

Gift cards are perfect for teachers, babysitters, family and friends. Order forms are available for download from our website (www.gpuc.us) or in the GPUC foyer and office or may be emailed to you by contacting Candy Dunn in the church office. Drop your order in the church office at any time. Make checks payable to GPUC, with "scrip" in the memo line. If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Semanision, the Scrip Coordinator. Thank you in advance for your support of the GPUC RE Program!

Alliance Annual Christmas Luncheon and Concert

Begin your holiday season by attending the Alliance pot-luck luncheon and concert on Tuesday, December 9 at 11:00am. All church members and non-members are invited along with any guests they wish to invite. The North High School Choir will perform in the sanctuary followed by lunch in the gallery. Table decorations will be provided by the Resale Shop and are available for purchase. Where else can you hear beautiful Holiday music, enjoy a delicious lunch, shop for Christmas decorations and all you need to do is bring a favorite dish. For reservations please call Shirley Reeves.

Musical Notes

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS! And that's exactly what you'll experience with the Grosse Pointe Community Chorus, under the outstanding direction of our own Joseph Palazzolo, and with several GPUC friends in its ranks. They will be performing their 62nd Holiday Concert Sunday, December 14, 2014, 3:30 pm at First English Evangelical Lutheran Church, 800 Vernier Road, Grosse Pointe Woods. Tickets: Adults - \$12 advance, \$15 at door; Children - \$5 regardless when purchased Available from: Cindi Arfken, Birdi Hansen-Marr, Chris Vadino, Janet Weber or Joseph Palazzolo

- or -

Moehring Woods Florists, 20923 Mack Ave., Grosse Pointe Woods and Do, by hair co.,
15227 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe Park

WANTED: YOUTH to sing in GPUC's awesome Youth Choir! All children age 5-13 are welcome. Rehearsals are after RE classes 11:45 - 12:15, in room #2 the purple room. Please contact Joseph or Birdi Hansen-Marr if you are interested.

MCC Jazz Band Concert

John Corrado, GPUC Minister Emeritus, will be featured as performer and arranger at a concert by the Macomb Community College Jazz Lab Band. This big band performance will be held at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, December 17 at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$8.

Coffee Hour

Are you a fan of Coffee Hour after Sunday Service? Volunteers are needed to make coffee for Sundays during this year. "Sign up" is in the lobby, or email Sonja Franchett. Training and directions are happily provided! Thanks for your help and participation in building our church community.

GPUC Directories Available

The 2014-15 GPUC Phone Directories have been delivered. They are available for pick up in the foyer on Sundays or in the church office during the week. If you do not see a directory with your name on it - please contact the church office.

GPUC SIT AND STITCH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Sit and Stitch will meet on the second Tuesday of December (December 9th) in the Annex. We will not meet the fourth week of the month due to the holidays. We will resume our schedule of meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month in January. All are welcome to join us for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.). Please contact Ann Helm with any questions. Feel free to just drop in and join the group! Our next Sit and Stitch meeting is Tuesday, December 9 at 7pm.

Resale Shop News

Time to schedule Thursday evenings at the GPUC Resale shop. Work for two hours, 7 pm to 9 pm, approximately once every five to six weeks. It's easy, it's sociable, and it gives you an exclusive preview of our merchandise. Schedules are updated every three months. Give it a try! Call or text Suzanne Ross

Duplicate Bridge Lessons

Duplicate bridge lessons by Cynthia Luce. Please contact Cynthia if you are interested. It's a fun game that will keep your mind active. \$5.00 per person per lesson. If enough people sign-up, we will then decide on a date and time.

The Holy Longing

Saturday, Jan. 17th, 7:30pm

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church

Join Dr. Alexander Riegel and the Russell-Scott Project for a special evening of mystic poetry set to music. Dr. Riegel will recite from the works of Rumi, Hafez, Kabir, Rabia, Mary Oliver, and Goethe. The Russell-Scott Project, known for their fusion of contemporary and classical music, will provide the backdrop for the evening with their special talent and numerous original pieces. This performance is open to the public. A donation of \$10 is requested but not required. Refreshments will be served.



Adult Religious Education

The Return of Movie Night!!!

Friday, December 12 at 6 o'clock in the Annex

This is a fun evening with dinner, dessert, and a lively discussion of the movie "I Am" led by John Artis and Joe Buttiglieri. You won't want to miss this!



Please view the film, I AM, at home. It is available on Netflix and there is a copy at the Grosse Pointe Library. Perhaps you could get a small group together to preview the film.

The movie, I AM, is the true story of successful Hollywood director, Tom Shadyac (*Liar Liar*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Bruce Almighty*). After a 2007 bicycle accident, he experienced a life threatening head injury, and decided to explore "the nature of humanity" and "the world's ever-growing addiction to materialism." On his ensuing journey he tried to answer two very basic questions: *What is wrong with the world and what can we do about it?*

With a film crew of four, Tom visits some of today's great minds, including authors, poets, teachers, religious leaders, and scientists (Howard Zinn, Lynn McTaggart, Desmond Tutu, Thom Harman, Coleman Barks) searching for the fundamental endemic problem that causes all of the other problems, while simultaneously reflecting on his own life choices of excess, greed and eventual healing. He started by asking what's wrong with the world, and ended up discovering what's right with it.

\$10 per person. **Please sign up in the foyer!**

Upcoming Book Discussions

On Fridays, January 23 and 30 John Artis will lead a two part discussion on the book, The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege by Robert Jensen This short , but powerful book attempts to rearrange the Race question from one dealing with racial minorities to one dealing with whites and white privilege as the Problem facing our country. The author examines personal experience, data, and theory and uses them for examining race and racism in America.

On Fridays, February 27 and March 6 the discussion continues with, Reproducing Racism by Daria Roithmayer. This powerful book examines how everyday choices we make without any intention of doing so lock in white advantage in America. She examines the locked in system beginning with Jim Crow and demonstrates how it is now a self-reinforcing and perhaps troubling permanent economic class system in America.

Religious Education News

"First we have to believe, and then we believe." -G. C. Lichtenberg

Our winter holiday program is *The Tailor of Gloucester* written by Beatrix Potter. Beatrix Potter was a Unitarian! The students of Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church will present their holiday program on Sunday, December 14 at 10:30 a.m.



The Tailor of Gloucester was declared by Beatrix Potter to be her personal favorite of all the books she wrote. Beatrix privately printed the book in 1902, and published it in trade edition in October 1903. Come and find out what will happen with animals that can speak on Christmas Eve and a Christmas wedding.

The Tailor of Gloucester sends his cat Simpkin to buy food and cherry-colored silk to complete a waistcoat commissioned by the Mayor for his daughter's wedding on Christmas Day. The tailor falls ill and the cat and mice finish the waistcoat. We will also have singing BATS!

Please join our students as they present their program to our congregation, family and friends. If you would also like to donate cookies, fruit or cheese and crackers, please contact the Religious Education Program at julie@gpuc.us.

Dates to Remember:

- November 30 at 10:30 a.m. practice for the holiday program. Seniors will also meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Ottenhoff home to study Hinduism.
- December 7 at 10:30 a.m. practice for the holiday program. We will also practice right after the church service in the sanctuary for one hour.
- December 14 at 9:15 a.m. for all students to report to the sanctuary to practice before the church service. Holiday program presented at 10:30 a.m.
- December 21 and 28 may attend the church service and enjoy holiday crafts during class time.
- The nursery will be open every Sunday to care for our young students.

Holiday Wishes

I wish you all the happiest of holidays and ask you to think on these special words below.

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."-John Wesley (1703-1791)

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

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