

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

February 23, 2015

Upcoming Services

March 1, 2015

10:30 AM

**The Big Rock Candy Mountain:
Thoughts on the Why and Wherefore of Heaven**

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Joseph Buttiglieri, Worship Associate

Is heaven for real? Or, is heaven simply an expression of wish fulfillment a la Sigmund Freud? In this sermon we will explore different notions of the afterlife, a belief that has attended almost all religious systems since the dawn of time, from the ancient shamans to the Egyptians to Christianity to New Ageism and even the increasing phenomenon of Near Death Experience. Why has nearly every religious tradition persisted in the belief in an afterlife? Further, does this persistence tell us anything meaningful about the matter? Finally, I invite you into a thought experiment between now and the time this sermon is delivered, namely, consider whether the manner in which you live your life would change if you knew life continued on indefinitely.

March 8, 2015

10:30 AM

"Character Is Destiny"

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Jim Moir, Worship Associate

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said that "character is destiny." We will consider the meaning of this phrase in light of certain philosophers, as well some of our own UU ilk who have given similar messages. This topic is especially important in our "postmodern" world, in which traditional religious beliefs (and the morality that they entail) have lost much of their force, giving way to materialism, relativism, and capitalism. The latter are not inherently evil but left unmoored, have, I will suggest, contributed to the loss of character as the stamp of an individual life. Is the possibility of the return of the sense of personal nobility even possible today?

March 15, 2015

10:30 AM

Wait-a-Minute-Vines and the Art of Being Nobody Special

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Dr. Alexander Riegel

Associate

The experience of wandering through the forest of life is replete with panoply of experiences. Sometimes the experience is exuberant. Sometimes it is harsh. Sometimes it is confusing. Sometimes it is saddening. It often seems as though we have no control over what our experiences will be. Blessings and challenges are often the result of forces external to us. But more often than we realize, we have significant effect on what our life experiences will be. Indeed, we have it within our power to experience life as a blessing most of the time. The key to this, I will suggest, is learning the art of being "nobody special."

Tonya Wells, Worship

March 22, 2015

10:30 AM

Are Ye the Light of the World?

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Janet Weber, Worship Associate

Jesus is reported to have said, "You are the light of the world." What did Jesus mean by this? Further, does this statement apply only to Christians? Can non-christians be the light of the world, or do believers hold the intellectual copyrights on this idea? What would it mean for a UU to stake this claim? Can UUs be light of the world? And, what would being the light of the world mean in a UU context?

March 29, 2015

10:30 AM

Emmon Scott as Beethoven Joseph Buttiglieri, Worship Associate

This Sunday Emmon Scott, of the Russell-Scott Project, will be our guest. He will be donning his alter ego, Ludwig van Beethoven. O, Freude!!!

[**Shoe Donations for DCC**](#)

[**Resale Shop & Clearance Corner**](#)

[**Newsletter Deadline**](#)

Upcoming Events

[**Sun Mar 1
Newcomers' Circle**](#)

[**Fri Mar 13 Racism Book Discussion**](#)

[**Sat Mar 14 Habitat Build**](#)

[**Sat Mar 14 Diversity Theatre**](#)

[**Tue Mar 17 Witty**](#)

[**Wed Mar 18 Soldiers Tale**](#)

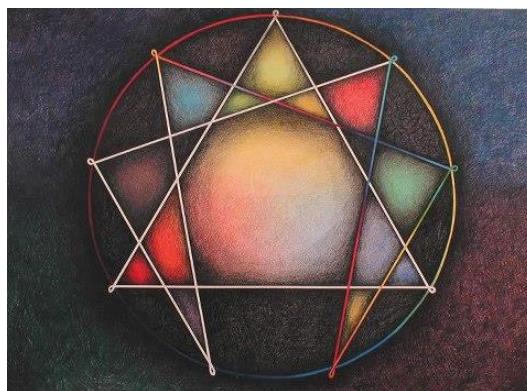
[**Thu Mar 19 Women's Book Discussion**](#)

[**Sat Mar 21 Fellowship Dinner**](#)

[**Forward To A Friend**](#)

Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

What You Are Is Where You Were When...



At the turn of the 20th century Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov became famous for demonstrating the role of conditioning in animal behavior (Surely you've heard of the famous experiments he did with his dogs and

such phrases as, "Drooling like a Pavlovian dog.") In the 1950s psychologist B.F. Skinner and his ilk popularized the role of conditioning in human psychological development. In the 1970s sociologist Dr. Morris Massey introduced his value analysis theory, in which he explained that we are all the result of the time and conditions into which we are born (Hence, we all hold relative values.). In short, through the work of modern day psychologists and sociologists, we have come to understand the relative and idiosyncratic nature of the "who" and "what" of who and what we are.

This understanding is actually not new, however. The mystical streams of the world's great religions discovered this fact about us millennia ago, in the forests of ancient India and in the Deserts of Africa and the Middle East. Further, their discovery of the role of conditioning in human development was not motivated by a curiosity regarding human nature but the spiritual agenda of encountering God within oneself. By understanding human psychology, they believed, they could overcome the one obstacle that stood between oneself and God, namely, oneself. As the Sufi mystic poet Hafez says,

"Between the lover and the Beloved there must be no veil.
Thou thyself art thine own veil, Hafez.
Get out of the way!"

In recent years an esoteric tool (the enneagram) has emerged that looks at this question of conditioning in human development, from both the psychological and spiritual vantage points. Psychologically speaking, it seeks to understand our conditioning in order to help us better negotiate our interpersonal relationships. Spiritually speaking, it seeks to understand how we ourselves stand in the way of deeper spiritual experience. In short, it is a savvy psychological system that integrates psychology with spiritual practice toward the end of personal transformation and making progress on the spiritual path (two agendas that actually cannot be separated from one another, to tell the truth).

As a personal testimony, I have found the enneagram to be one of the most powerful tools I have encountered. It has helped me immensely in my interpersonal relationships and I credit it as the source of my renewed understanding of the mystical streams of the world's great religions. Indeed, I have taught this system to hundreds of students throughout the years and they, too, often find it as compelling as I do (but like all teachings, not everyone lauds it so enthusiastically).

I will be teaching the enneagram at GPUC Saturday mornings, April 11, 25, and May 9, from 9am to noon. If you would like to take this course, please email me personally or sign up on the FB Event Page I have created: <https://www.facebook.com/events/352673181601147/?ref=22>

Looking forward to this phase of the journey!

Namaste,

Alex

GPUC President's Message

Decisions about the Minister's Contract: Your input is needed.

At the last 2 GPUC Board meetings, the Board discussed our minister contract options for the coming 2015-2016 church year. We have four options at this time: We can begin a search for a new interim minister; we can opt to have no minister and attempt a lay ministry; we can offer to extend our current contract with Dr. Alex Riegel as consulting minister for another year if he is willing and available; or we can invite Dr. Riegel to become our Settled Minister.

It is the experience of the recent GPUC Search Committees that Dr. Alex Riegel is a highly qualified candidate. He has also established excellent relations with our staff. The Board of Trustees has worked effectively with Dr. Riegel this year and has benefited from his leadership. It is the sense of the Board and the

Committee on Ministry that the congregation is also pleased with Dr. Riegel's ministry.

The Board would like to move forward with offering Dr. Alex Riegel a Settled Ministry position at GPUC. Dr. Riegel is also interested in becoming our settled minister. We present this to you as members of the congregation looking for your feedback. If there is general congregational support, we would call for a congregational meeting and vote, which is required by our Bylaws to make the offer of Settled Ministry to Dr. Alex Riegel.

The Board of Trustees and/or the Committee on Ministry need to hear your point of view. Members are listed below.

BOARD: Mark Franchett, Robin Ramsay, Ann Helm, Laura Bartell, Joe Buttiglieri, Ed Marck, Mary Morshead, Jean Ritok, Suzanne Ross, Paul Rowady, Christy Winder.

COM: Karen Webb, Mollie Fletcher, Cynthia Luce, Veronica Smith.

Mark Franchett
President, Board of Trustees

Announcements

Fellowship Dinner - Saturday, March 21st, 2015

To further feasting on fine food and favorable friendliness, this year's Fellowship Dinner is being designed as a launchpad for a new and revitalized generation in the life of GPUC. As such, the theme we are working on is "Re-Founding GPUC: Vision 2020", and it is sure to be provocative, illuminating and entertaining. Please mark your calendars for the evening of March 21, 2015. Details to follow.

Paul Rowady and Joe Buttiglieri, Canvass Co-Chairs

Annual Meeting: Sunday, May 17, 2015. Important Information About Voting.

Mark your calendar for our Annual Meeting in May, where we will hear a summary of the past year, vote for a new budget for 2015-2016, vote for Board of Trustees, Committee on Ministry, and Leadership Development Committees. According to our By-laws, there are some requirements that need to be met in order to vote at the meeting. Please read the relevant section of the By-laws below. If you believe you may not be able to vote, based on the provisions of the By-laws, you can discuss your situation with Rev. Dr. Riegel. He can make recommendations to the Board about waiving requirements under some circumstances. We are a democratic society, and hope as many people as possible will attend the meeting and will vote. As always, members of the Board are also happy to address your concerns.

ARTICLE X - VOTING

A. Voting and eligibility for elective office at any Annual or special meeting of the Society shall be limited to those Regular Members (defined previously in Article III) (a) who have been recorded as Members at a meeting of the Board of Trustees and (b) who have, as a matter of record on the books of the Society, contributed to the Society during the twelve (12) months completed before the month in which the meeting is held an amount sufficient to cover the current costs of membership in the Unitarian Universalist District of Michigan and the Unitarian Universalist Association. The requirement for a minimum monetary contribution may be waived by the Board upon the Minister's recommendation. Voting shall normally be by Members present at regularly or specially called meetings.

Newcomers' Circle - Sunday, March 1, 12 noon.

Newcomer's Circles are for those who have recently started attending Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church (GPUC) and would like to know more about Unitarian Universalism or GPUC. The Circle meets with Dr. Riegel in the library following a brief coffee hour. If you have been attending GPUC for a while and already feel a sense of affinity with our congregation and the principles we uphold this meeting is an opportunity to

begin the process of becoming a member. For more information please contact Suzanne Ross, Membership Chair.

Alliance News

Our next Alliance luncheon will be held on Tuesday, April 21st at noon in the Olympia Brown Center. Our speaker will be Carol Cain. Carol is an Emmy Award winning Senior Producer/Host of CBS Detroit's weekly show "Michigan Matters" and columnist at the Detroit Free Press. Carol who has worked for UPI, The Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, Toledo Blade and CBS, has carved a unique path during her career which has included print, TV, radio and digital. She has had numerous exclusive interviews with top local, national and international leaders, as well as the notorious.

She produces prime time TV specials for CBS on important issues such as healthcare, alternative energy, the City of Detroit and Michigan in transition. Carol has also focused on how women are faring in business, politics and society. She is the daughter of our late church member and program chairwoman Ruth Cain. Carol will share some of the behind-the-scenes stories of her interviews, as well as thoughts on how women are faring at the present time. She will talk about the road she has traveled and where women are going. You will not want to miss this interesting and informative afternoon.

For reservations call Shirley Reeves.

WITTY (Widows/ers In Their Transition Years):

Our first gathering was Tuesday, February 17th at the home of Jean Dupuis. There were 8 people in attendance. There does seem to be a need for a grief support group. Our next gathering will be March 17th at 10:00am at the home of Jean Dupuis in Grosse Pointe. You may call Cynthia Luce if you would like to join the group. Death takes a life not a relationship.

Send a Kid to Camp

The Schools Tutoring Committee will launch the campaign to send eight of the most academically improved sixth graders at Detroit Merit Academy to the Howell Nature Center for a week. GPUC members and friends have shown great heart in the past for supporting students who have worked hard to improve their achievements during a very important time in their schooling. The camp session previously chosen offers the students the chance to visit the Sleeping Bear Dunes park and experience outdoor activities in that beautiful part of Michigan. In the fourth year of this program at Merit, the Committee hopes to raise close to \$3,000 or close to \$375 each (with a discount from the Camp) to reward these hardworking students. Donations of any size are welcome. Please make checks out to GPUC and put "Camp" in the memo line. Susie Boynton

GPUC Building Security Reminders:

ALL members are asked to secure the building before leaving.

- * Turn off all the lights
- * Turn down the thermostats to 60F
- * Close & Lock all Doors:
 - o Entry doors: crash bars released, paddle locked in position
 - o Library, RE Wing, Office doors should be locked
- * Kitchen left clean and orderly:
 - o no dirty dishes in the sink
 - o counters cleared and wiped clean

If you are unsure of the entry door locking procedure ask a staff member for instruction.
As a congregation we share the responsibility of maintaining building security.

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 14, 2015**. This will be OUR turn (GPUC) to provide the majority of the labor as well as lunch for the Second Saturday Build workers. This is a great opportunity to show your support either physically or monetarily (for lunch supplies). You and your friends, as well as your children/grandchildren ages 16 and up are welcome as well. Helping our neighbors in need is a wonderful way to demonstrate our UU values. You will also meet some wonderful people from our area. Habitat for Humanity also provides a great "community outreach" and "mentoring" opportunity for all of us.

I am looking forward to your continued support!

Thank You.

George Gray

Live Theater at Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church - "Diversity in Love" Saturday, March 14th at 7:30pm

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church (GPUC) hosts a night of dramatic theater and readings featuring original short scripts performed by the Rosedale Community Players. "Diversity of Love" is the theme of the evening and will include a performance of "Dear Me" by local playwright and actor David Durham. The one-act play is a life comedy that shows the many sides of love, and its power to form, strengthen, and heal families. Audiences will be able to preview this powerful story before the play is performed at AACTFEST, a state competition conducted by the American Association of Community Theaters. The author and the actors will have an open dialogue following the performance.

The Rosedale Community Players (RCP) is a volunteer group who produces a wide variety of plays each and every year and draws members and patrons from the entire Greater Metro Detroit Area. Based out of the Peace Lutheran Church in Southfield, RCP has won AACTFEST state championships in 2005, 2007, and took runner-up honors in 2013.

TICKETS: \$10 (Seniors & Students) \$15 (General Admission) \$30 (Patron)
AVAILABLE AT: www.gpuc.us , www.eventbrite.com , or at the door.

For more information please contact Sara Hassinger or Mickie Verderbar.

Stravinsky's The Soldier's Tale

Grosse Pointe War Memorial

Wednesday, March 18, 2015, 7:00PM

Did you know that Dr. Riegel will be narrating the part of the devil in the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra's (BBSO) rendition of Stravinsky's The Soldier's Tale? If you are free Wednesday evening, March 18, come take in dinner and the performance!

Tickets are still available: <http://www.bbso.org/activek/2014-2015-c21>



Shoe Donations

Do you have any extra shoes in your closet that you would like to donate to a worthy cause?

The Detroit Concert Choir (DCC) is conducting a shoe collection drive now through April 2015. (GPUC members who belong to DCC are Sam and Veronica Smith and Stan Harr.) You can help us raise funds by donating your new or gently worn used shoes. The DCC will earn money based on the number of pairs collected. They will be distributed by Funds2Orgs, who will purchase all of the donated shoes. All shoes will then be redistributed throughout the Funds2Orgs network of micro-enterprise partners in developing nations to help impoverished people start, maintain and grow businesses in Central America and Africa.

Please help us spread the word and let us know if you have shoes to donate and we will make arrangements to get them from you. For more information please contact Veronica or Sam Smith or the Detroit Concert Choir office at (313) 882-0118. Thank you for your support! We look forward to hearing from you!

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, it gives you an exclusive preview of our merchandise. Schedules are updated every three months. Give it a try. Call or text Suzanne Ross.

Wanted--Large Paper Grocery Bags

The Clearance Corner, a separate part of the Resale Shop, is having great success with the end of the month Bag Day sales, and they are running out of large paper bags with handles. You may donate bags to the Clearance Corner on Wednesdays, 10am-3pm, or Thursdays, 7-9 pm. You may also leave them on the top shelves of the cloak room; the staff will pick them up. (Don't forget to shop at the Resale Shop while you're there--lots of interesting bargains!)

Jean Dupuis

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.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, March 20 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

Adult Religious Education

Attending Adult Religious Education events enlightens us and broadens our sense of fellowship



Chalice Circles continue at their appointed times.

Movie Night Friday, April 24th at 6 pm

John Artis and Joe Buttiglieri have again volunteered to lead the movie night discussion. The tentative date for the next movie night is Friday, April 24th at 6 pm in the Annex. Continuing our discussions on racism, this discussion will center on the movie, **Selma**. Please see the film at the movie theater. A sign-up sheet will be available soon in the foyer. \$10 per person...includes dinner and wine, a lively discussion and a chance for members to get to know each other. Please pay on the night of the discussion.

The Psychological Enneagram Intensive Workshop Part I - Saturday mornings: April 11, 25, and May 9 from 9am SHARP - noon at Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
Cost: \$90 for non GPUC members; GPUC members and supporting friends attend free of charge. Coffee, tea, bagels, and donuts included.

The Enneagram is a psycho-spiritual tool that combines an exquisite psychological system with traditional spiritual practices in order to bring about personal transformation and spiritual advancement.

In The Psychological Enneagram Intensive Workshop Part 1 you will gain the knowledge necessary to determine your enneagram type. Through lecture, video, and discussion we will explore: 1) each type's mental and emotional habits; 2) each type's strengths and weaknesses; 3) each type's perspective bias and how this affects the way that a given type interacts with the world, including its tendencies in interpersonal relationships. For further information go to: www.enneagramworldwide.com

Register (or ask questions) by emailing Rev. Alex personally at: drriegel@gpuc.us or by signing up in the foyer. Indicate if you need child care.

NOTE - due to space constraints class size is limited so please do not register unless you can attend all three sessions.

Women's Book Discussion Group - March 19th 6pm GPUC Annex

"Living With a Wild God" by Barbara Ehrenreich

In Living with a Wild God, Ehrenreich reconstructs her childhood mission, bringing an older woman's wry and erudite perspective to a young girl's impassioned obsession with the questions that, at one point or another, torment us all. The result is both deeply personal and cosmically sweeping-a searing memoir and a profound reflection on science, religion, and the human condition. With her signature combination of intellectual rigor and uninhibited imagination, Ehrenreich offers a true literary achievement-a work that has the power not only to entertain but amaze.

Discussion Leader: Anyone interested in leading this discussion please contact Jill Crane.

Racism Book Discussions

Please join us on Fridays, February 27 and March 13 (new date)

at 7 pm when John Artis will continue the discussion on racism with the book, Reproducing Racism by Daria Roithmayr. 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 troublingly permanent economic class system in America. Amazon.com offers both new and used copies of the book and Kindle versions. Please sign up in up in the foyer for the Friday evening book series discussions.

Jill Crane
Director, Adult Religious Education

Religious Education News

This year we are exploring world religions in the Religious Education Program. We are now at midyear with the 2014-15 curriculum. Our lessons are designed to learn about other faith traditions and practices of other religious groups in our community and the world. By studying other religions this will help our students grow in their Unitarian Universalist faith. Students are asked to examine differing answers to common questions of faith and meaning. The students are asked to consider the similarities and the differences between the answers provided by the world religions and Unitarian Universalism. The following list illustrates what is discussed for each world religion.



1. Name of Faith Community
2. Symbol of each religion
3. Source of Authority in each religion
4. Holy Book for each religion
5. Idea of God for each religion
6. Prophets or leader for each religion
7. Holy Days
8. Sample Beliefs or practices
8. Social Action or Service encouraged for each religion

We hope our students will reflect upon their learning experiences to express their personal system of meaning and understanding of the Unitarian Universalist living tradition.

We hope our students find a few secrets for themselves in their lessons as quoted in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, "The greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places."

Religious Education Lessons

Nursery is open at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday for children 5 and under.

Lower Elementary students for the month of March will be studying Buddhism.

Upper Elementary students will be finishing Buddhism and beginning Chinese traditional religion.

Junior students will be studying Buddhism in the month of March. The junior students have also started their Church Pal program. The juniors will be holding a Sunday brunch for their Church Pals immediately after church on March 29 in the annex.

Senior students Sunday, March 1 will meet at the Ottenhoff home at 7:00 p.m. They will have a lesson on Sikhism. Sunday, March 8 the seniors will meet with Rev. Alex at 12:30 p.m. in the church library. The topic will be Eastern Mysticism. Saturday, March 14, senior students 16 and older are asked to join the GPUC Habitat Build Day. Sunday, March 15 a service project is scheduled at the Empty Bowls event at the Assumption Community Center. Sunday, March 22 they will meet at the Ottenhoff home at 7:00 p.m. The lesson will be Chinese Folk. Sunday, March 29 they will meet at the Ottenhoff home at 7:00 p.m. The lesson will be Bahá'í.

Swim Party

The RE Program is sponsoring a Swim Party on Sunday, March 22 at 1:00 p.m. Please join us at the Warren Community Center at 5460 Arden, Warren, Michigan. The cost is \$5.00 per person. Please sign up in the GPUC foyer.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

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