

# 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 2015

### Upcoming Services

**Nov. 1, 2015** **10:30 AM**

**Annual Day of the Dead Service**  
**Dr. Alexander Riegel** **Meghan Boomhower, Worship Associate**

We will dedicate this Sunday to honoring the lives of those we have lost. We invite you to bring a photo or other memento that represents a person(s) whose memory you would like to honor. Tables will be available and we will invite everyone to take a moment, if you would like, to share your memory with us.

**Nov. 8, 2015** **10:30 AM**

**The Gift of a Lifetime**  
**Dr. Alexander Riegel** **Cynthia Luce, Worship Associate**

The universe has been in the creative process for almost 14 billion years. Each of us stands as an aspect of the pinnacle of that nearly 14 billion year process. In other words, the universe has been working nearly 14 billion years to give us the "gift of a lifetime." Is the life you live worthy of all that effort? Like what would such a life look?

**Nov. 15, 2015** **10:30 AM**

**Stepping into the Same River Twice: Recapturing the Wisdom of the Presocratics**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel** **Tonya Wells, Worship Associate**  
It was Heraclitus who said, "You can not step into the same river twice." He was correct - almost! This Sunday we will step into the ancient river of the Presocratics and see how their philosophies might still apply to the human search for meaning.

**Nov. 22, 2015** **10:30 AM**

**Stone Soup Sunday**  
**Dr. Alexander Riegel** **Julie Artis, Worship Associate**

We will celebrate our annual Stone Soup Sunday. Returning to the theme that gave rise to the occasion, we will hear and reflect upon the stone soup story, among various other themes, and share a common meal together.

**Nov. 29, 2015** **10:30 AM**

**"What Happened to Thanksgiving."**  
**Cynthia Luce** **Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate**

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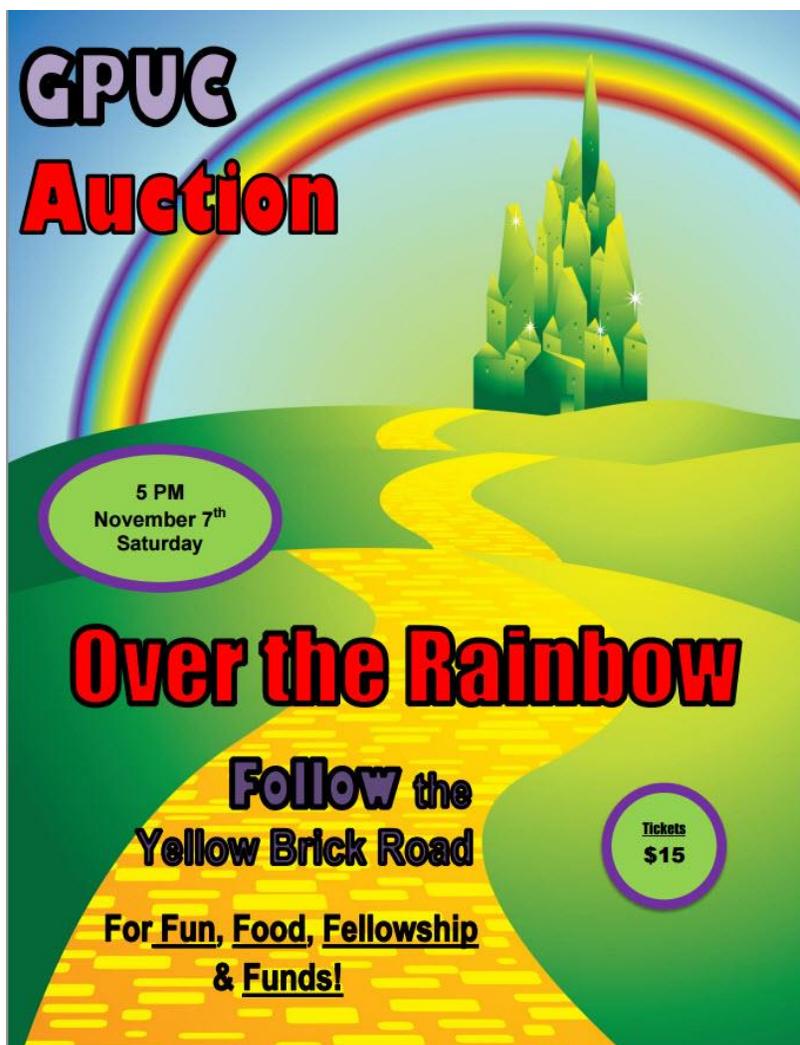
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Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

Applied Taoism



In a recent sermon I talked about the philosophy of Taoism. Taoism is an inherently paradoxical philosophy, e.g.: "There is no this without that," "act by not acting," etc. Some people loved the sermon and others were utterly baffled by it. This newsletter article is for those who fall in the latter category. So, I thought I would provide one simple example of applied Taoism. Specifically, let's consider one of Lao Tzu's sayings from "The Tao Te Ching":

*"Do you have the patience to wait until your mud settles and the water is clear?"*

What this simple metaphor is asking is whether we have the patience to sit through our tendency toward knee-jerk reactions to what bothers us? Somebody behaves toward us in a way that hurts us or makes us defensive and we are immediately flooded with defensive thoughts and emotions. Typically, these defensive thoughts and emotions are so overpowering we feel the impulse to act on them immediately. But to do so is to wade through muddy waters, so to speak.

Another option is to wait for those defensive thoughts and emotions to subside. Believe it or not they do! It's just that we typically don't experience this because we don't have the patience to watch that occur. But if we can be still, and in that stillness find patience, we can experience the ebbing of defensive thoughts and emotions. We can watch the mud settle and the water become clear.

In this state, where the mud has settled and the water has become clear, right action becomes obvious. That is, we know how to act constructively in situations, rather than defensively, which keeps the waters stirred and the mud flowing.

As an example, this week I was accosted on the telephone by someone who themselves lacked patience and had made a host of false attributions about my motive (Don't worry, it wasn't any of my GPUC peeps!). Luckily, it came to me via voicemail, so when the defensive thoughts and emotions arose within me, there was no one on whom to act out immediately. That gave me the split second I needed to remember to let the mud settle and the water become clear - before acting. I waited several hours before calling this person back. That act of patience accomplished two important things that otherwise would not have occurred. In the first place, I was able to speak to this individual from a place of inner peace. In the second place, the other person's mud settled! That is, in the interim this person had come to his senses.

Had I not had remembered the importance of patience; had I not given the mud a chance to settle, who knows how that encounter would have gone? His impatience and false attributions would have commingled with my defensive thoughts and emotions and we probably would have ended up in conflict. Quite the opposite occurred. The matter was quickly resolved and what little amends necessary were made. That's applied Taoism. We can do this any time. We just have to remember, be patient and let the mud settle. Then, when the water is clear, act with right action.

Namaste,

Alex

## Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

Well, GPUC is a very busy place these days. I know I've enjoyed some fascinating Thursday night presentations, Sunday afternoon educational workshops, Friday book discussions and Alliance presentations. I hope others are enjoying all the offerings as much as I am.

The GPUC Board of Trustees is focusing attention on identifying some capital improvements, including the possibility of enlarging our gathering space. Chris Vadino and Veronica Smith have been doing some research on improvement plans that have been considered throughout our history, as well as potential costs of the projects. You will be hearing more from us soon, asking you to share your wish lists about our physical space. The Board is currently in the process of developing a method to collect your opinions. At the suggestion of Russ Chavey, our Grounds Chair, the Board will hire a landscape architect to draw up plans for improving our gardens, grounds and parking lot median. We are hoping to have a plan that we can implement in stages as funds are made available.

We have a new Coffee Coordinator, Jenny Marck! Thank you Jenny, for stepping up. Please help her by volunteering to make coffee. Thank you, Mickie Verderbar for filling the Coffee position when we needed someone this Fall.

Now, for a plug about the Auction. This is our biggest fundraiser that takes place every other year. It's important to our budget, AND it is also a wonderful opportunity for fellowship! Rudy and I were introduced to GPUC by coming to 2 of the auctions. Please come and have fun with your fellow congregants. There will be food and drink, wonderful donations, and I think you'll be surprised at the transformation of our church into the magical land of OZ. Hope to see you all there!

Please remember that we welcome your attendance at Board Meetings. 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm in the Gallery. We also welcome your questions and comments after church every Sunday at the Fireside.

Robin Ramsay  
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

## Religious Education News

The holiday season is beginning and the first of many holidays is Thanksgiving. This is my favorite holiday of the year. Thanksgiving is a time of gratitude, thanks, blessings and giving to others. I recently came across a post on Facebook from 12 Tomatoes that I would like to share with all the parents. A parent writes in a journal:



As a parent, I am grateful for.....

1. Early wakeups = Children to love.
2. House to clean = Safe place to Live.
3. Laundry = Clothes to wear.
4. Dishes to wash = Food to eat.
5. Crumbs under the table = Family meals.
6. Grocery shopping = \$ to provide for us.
7. Toilets to clean = Indoor plumbing.
8. Lots of noise = People in my life.
9. Endless questions about homework = Kid's brains growing.
10. Sore and tired in bed = I'm still alive!

AMEN

This DRE is Grateful for the students, parents, GPUC Board, Rev. Alex, congregation, staff members and my family and friends. May each one of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving of stories, family, friends and love and trust in your holiday season. Let it begin. Peace.

## Religious Education Lessons

All classes are continuing with our Unitarian Universalism curriculum for this year. The students are asked on

November 8th to start in the church and then come back to their classes. November 22nd we will all meet in the church for our Sustenance service for the Thanksgiving holiday. Please bring something to add to our Stone Soup. You may place the items in the GPUC lobby on the table.

Permission sheets have been sent out for your student to participate in our holiday pageant. It will be presented on Sunday, December 13 at 10:30 a.m. This year our pageant is How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss, who was a UU!!!

The GPUC nursery will be open at 9:30 a.m. every week for our very young UU's.

### **Dates to Remember**

Saturday, November 7 - Auction, junior and seniors help for service hours

Sunday, November 8 - start in the church

Sunday, November 15 - RE Committee meeting, 9:15 a.m.

Sunday, November 22 - Sustenance Service, All Family

Julie Artis

Director of Religious Education

## Adult Religious Education

### **Thursday Night Lecture Series**

Thanks to everyone for coming out to the newly implemented Thursday Night Lecture Series at the church. We would like to thank all of the people who were kind enough to donate their time and efforts to put on these very interesting programs, Christina Soliz from Planned Parenthood, John Artis, who spoke about the corporate takeover of our educational system, Laura Wager, whose talk on the M1 Rail in downtown Detroit was most interesting and fun, and Jerry Herron, whose summary of the book he is writing about Detroit gave us new insights into Detroit as the all American city.

As of this writing, Jade Nabbouh had not given his talk on Leaving Islam, but it promises to be very thought provoking.

The Thursday Night Lectures will continue in the spring.

**First Sundays at noon - Mystic Poet Workshops:** In these workshops we will 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.

**Third Sundays at noon - Meditation:** This is an introduction to meditation course 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.

**Fourth Sundays (excluding November and December) at noon - Philosopher's Club:** In this class we will do Philosophy on par with an introductory college level class. Our first study will be "The Consolation of Philosophy," by Boethius (Penguin Classics is the recommended version). Following that we will explore "Flatland," by Edwin Abbot, "Teddy," by J. D. Salinger, The Myth of Sisyphus, by Albert Camus, and many other Philosophical works.

**Women's Book Discussion Group, November 19, 2015, 6PM, Annex**

#### **One Summer, America 1927**

by Bill Bryson

It was the summer - if one allows "summer" to occasionally include parts of both spring and fall - that Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs, much of the country was engulfed by a catastrophic flood, Jack Dempsey lost the famous "long count" fight to Gene Tunney, Calvin Coolidge announced he wouldn't run for another term, the world's leading bankers made the policy adjustment that would do so much to bring down Wall Street in 1929, "The Jazz Singer" was released, radio and tabloid culture came into their own, an American audience got its first public demonstration of television, work started on Mount Rushmore, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, and Henry Ford stopped making Model T's. And oh, yes, most of the world went mad over a 25-year-old prodigy named Charles Lindbergh, who flew a flimsy plane to Paris from New York.

Discussion leader, Randi Borys

Refreshment assistant, Janice Stemmler

## Announcements

### **Come to the Auction Saturday November 7, 5:00 pm**

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to a Wonderful Evening

There'll be food, drinks, and our own Over the Rainbow brand of entertainment.

Come as you are, or dress as your favorite OZ character, or just wear your Emerald City Green!

Just a taste of the out-of-this-world donations that will be up for bid!

- Beautiful items such as hand-woven table runners and hand-picked gift baskets
- Services ranging from massage to handyman help to face-painting to airport transportation
- Adventures-Tour of the M1 project, trips in Michigan and Florida
- Social evenings filled with great meals (Hungarian, Indian, German, Italian to name a few)
- Parties filled with music - Name that tune, Gershwin sing-along, Corrado at the Keyboard
- Tickets to plays, concerts, Red Wings, Tigers!
- Gift certificates to dozens of restaurants and stores
- Tasty treats from soup to cookies

Click your heels. THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE OUR GPUC HOME

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### **Early Opportunities for Holiday Giving**

By popular demand from those who like to shop early, we are publishing the many ways our members can volunteer to help the neediest families during the holidays. We hope to receive about 30 decorated baskets, boxes or tubs on December 13 filled with items listed on the [attached form](#). Monetary donations will provide each family with spiral-sliced and glazed hams as well as fresh fruit, bread and colorful napkins. Others may wish to donate their time to the project by transporting gently used books and sturdy mittens, gloves, hats and scarves along with baskets that are matched to the size of the family. The project will be announced in church on November 8, and the special collection will occur during the Stone Soup service before Thanksgiving. We welcome participation from all ages and sizes and think there are enough ways for everyone to find some way to contribute to Holiday Giving. Please leave your volunteer form with the ushers or the office administrator or contact Susie Boynton at 313.885.0824 for further information.

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### **FALL YARD CLEANUP**

This year we are planning to change the fall yard cleanup from one long (4 hour) day to two shorter days. That way even more people will have an opportunity to participate in the fun!

The planned cleanup this past Saturday was washed out, so we will plan to be out there with rakes and tarps on Saturday, October 31 and Saturday November 14 from 9 am until approximately 11 am. If there is rain on either Saturday, we will have the following Sunday after church as rain dates.

There are sign-up sheets available in the foyer after service, please consider coming to your church on one or two Saturday mornings for some very light yard work. Bring gardening gloves, a rake and perhaps a tarp. Children are very helpful to drag tarps to the curb, so they can be involved as well. See you out there.

Russ Chavey for the Grounds Committee

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### **Scrip for the Holidays!**

It's not too early to start thinking about holiday gift giving! Gift cards are perfect for teachers, babysitters, family and friends. And as always, you can put your household shopping dollars to work too. Just spend your regular shopping dollars with scrip at stores that participate in the program!

Please note that the deadline to order cards for the holidays is Wednesday, December 2nd. Follow this link for an order form and for more details about this fabulous fundraising program! [GPUC Website](#)

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### **Thanks to the Art Market Volunteers**

We couldn't have done it without all of our volunteers from GPUC members and friends. Hats off to you all! Sabrina Biernat, Mollie Fletcher, Carolyn Foreman, Mary Kay Freeman, Laura Gant, Karin Garrett, Carol Ghesquiere, Jeri Grover, Birdi Hansen-Marr, Susan Hartz, Carolyn Hemmen, Carole Hindle, Joan Hines, Pi Irwin, Judith Ligosky, Jenny Marck, Mary Morshead, Patricia Ott, Bill Rehahn, Lynn Rehahn, Helen Reynolds, Pam Roelans, Laura Wagner, Milena Wagner, Janet Weber, Zsombor, Zoltan.

Thanks, also, to those who donated their treasures to the Market. Your generosity is much appreciated.  
The Art Market Committee: Margo Bishop, Juli Moore, Suzanne Ross

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### **Newsletter Deadline**

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, November 20 at noon. They should be sent to [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us).

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## **HOLIDAY GIVING OPPORTUNITIES 2015**

GPUC commits to donate about 30 Christmas food baskets for the neediest families with children at Detroit Merit Academy School. If you are able to assist, please mark your donation below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribute one or more whole baskets containing all items from both columns one & two.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribute one half-basket with all items from column one.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribute one half-basket with all items from column two.

\*list of requested food items below\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribute money to purchase hams, fresh fruit and bread for the Christmas baskets.  
Please write "Christmas Baskets" on the memo line of your check, or contribute cash.

\_\_\_\_\_ Donate sturdy new gloves and mittens, scarves, hats or socks to decorate the Mitten Tree for Detroit Merit Academy's children. Our goal is 100 items for the school.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bring new or gently used children's books (grades K-8) to put under the Mitten Tree.  
Each child receives the gift of a book.

\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer to receive and move the Christmas baskets to the Church Library as members bringing them to church on Sunday, December 13.

\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer to shop for the Christmas baskets with the donated funds for hams, fresh fruit and bread on December 14-16.

\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer to check and tag the Christmas baskets on Tuesday, December 15.

\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer to load and deliver the baskets to Detroit Merit Academy for distribution on Thursday, December 17.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

----- CUT HERE AND PLACE TOP SECTION IN BASKET IN THE CHURCH FOYER -----

**Christmas Baskets for Detroit Merit Academy Food Contribution**

Please provide the following items for a family of six - each column represents a half basket

**Column #1**

- Canned yams or instant potatoes
- Canned vegetables
- Split peas or dried soup
- Canned or dried fruit
- Macaroni and cheese
- Peanut butter
- Jam or Jelly

**Column #2**

- Box of cereal
- Instant coffee or tea bags
- Creamer
- Instant cocoa
- Stuffing or pasta
- Mustard
- Holiday cookies, candy or treats

Please bring your food to church on Sunday, December 13th. A decorated box, bag, or container is appreciated.

My contribution is: \_\_\_\_\_  
for donor reference

<p><b>Contact Information</b>  <b>Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church</b>  17150 Maumee Ave., Grosse Pointe, MI 48230  Phone: 313-881-0420 Fax: 313-881-6430  Email: <a href="mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us">gpuc@gpuc.us</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.gpuc.us">www.gpuc.us</a>  Editor: Rudy Wedenoja <a href="mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us">newsletter@gpuc.us</a></p>
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