

# 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*

October 2015

## Upcoming Services

October 4, 2015

10:30 AM

### Zen and the Art of Being a Dog

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Joseph Buttiglieri, Worship Associate

This service will be an intergenerational "animal blessing" service that will take place in the Memorial Garden Courtyard (barring rain, in which case we will postpone to a later date). We will recognize our animal companions, remind ourselves of the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part, and gain wisdom by contemplating life lessons our animal friends have to teach us. You are encouraged to bring your animal companion and introduce it to us but please, keep your animal companion under your control at all times and be prepared to do due diligence in the case of "emergency."

October 11, 2015

10:30 AM

### Why I Came Back

Alexandra Vriend

Cynthia Luce, Worship Associate

Detroit Public Schools Teacher

This sermon gives a picture of what it is like to teach in Detroit and busts some myths/stereotypes about the students that I have. The odds are stacked against students and teachers in low-income, typically urban schools and it is often difficult to find any kind of hope in that broken system. What I have learned through my experience teaching in Detroit is that when the situation is most hopeless, when it feels like we are working for a lost cause, those who continue to work for change ARE the very embodiment of hope.

October 18, 2015

10:30 AM

### Speaking of the Way That Cannot Be Spoken An Introduction to Taoism

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate

This year I will be doing sermons that touch upon each of the world's six major religious traditions, as well as paganism and Humanism. We begin with Taoism, probably the least familiar to us. Invoking such great Taoist sages as Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Li Po, and Winnie the Pooh, we will gain an understanding of that which cannot be thought - yes, this tradition is inherently mystical and loaded with paradox.

October 25, 2015

10:30 AM

### Masks

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Janet Weber, Worship Associate

As Halloween approaches and we are once again regaled by costume, we will consider the symbol of the mask. We will look at masks from the perspective of the Halloween tradition, mythology, and psychology. Children will be encouraged to dress up this year so what the heck, why don't we all join them?! Don your favorite hollowing digs - let the spirit in you come out and play!

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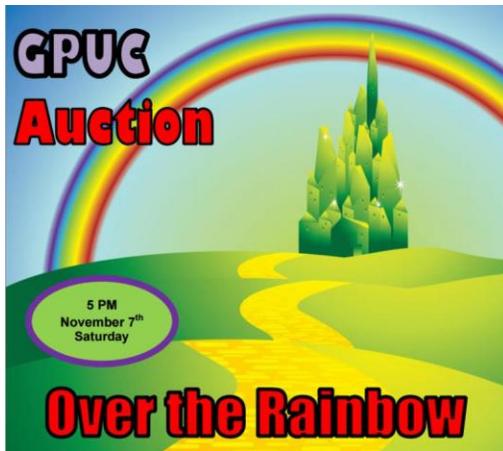
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## Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

*The falling leaves drift by the window*



*The autumn leaves of red and gold...*

- Nat King Cole

Autumn is my favorite time of year! It may portend icy cold days, but its soft sunlight still brings warmth to the skin while the cool nights can make one huddle - shivering. In autumn we are caught between extremes; there is a certain tension inherent in change.

There has been a lot of change at GPUC this past year. We have ridden a wave of incredible energy. Where we now find ourselves is in a very different place than the last time the leaves turned color and took their place upon the ground. It has been an exciting time!

That said, we are still in the midst of change, or perhaps still at the beginning... Yet already there is a palpably different atmosphere settling in at GPUC. The shift we might feel as that wave of incredible energy begins to ebb, as invariably it must, will reveal the challenges, and sometimes tensions, inherent in change. In short, we are shifting to the more pragmatic demands that change makes: day-to-day decision-making, day-to-day hard work, day-to-day relationship building, etc.

The more pragmatic demands that change makes tend to be more challenging than riding a wave of incredible energy. Change draws out from us the essence of who we are. For the best in us to emerge we must hold the work we do TOGETHER in a crucible of love, patience, and understanding. This is the hard and differently rewarding work of being in community.

Finally a piece of advice a la the Buddha... The essence of who we are emerges when we relinquish the mental maps of how things ought to be. Think of this when you think of the nature of relationships...

*But we own nothing, nothing is ours  
Not even love so fierce it burns like baby stars  
But this poverty is our greatest gift  
The weightlessness of us as things around begin to shift...*

*Everything in its own time  
Everything in its own time*

- The Indigo Girls

Namaste,

Alex

## Religious Education News

***We are our past and our tradition, as it meets the future.*** - Carl Scovel

Our church will be installing Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel on Sunday, September 27th at 4:00 p.m. This will be a meaningful ceremony for our students of the Religious Education Program to witness. We would like all families with their children to participate in this service. Our youth choir will be singing and the nursery will be open for our young UU's.



We have our past and our tradition and Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel will continue our future as our new installed minister. Please join our GPUC church family on Sunday, September 27th at 4:00 p.m.

We work hard to empower our young UU's to care and then to act in our community and our world. One of the ways we encourage caring at GPUC Religious Education program is through our KIDS WHO GIVE project. We ask each child to donate some time in our community between September and June. The parents and students can find a chart on the bulletin board in the RE wing to keep track of their hours served and activity donated. Our suggested hours are as follow: ten hours for Senior and Juniors; eight hours for Upper Elementary students; and five hours for Lower Elementary Students. Students can change the world by tutoring at an after school program, visiting nursing homes, making cards for shut-ins, or doing the dishes for grandparents or a special friend. The students can bring in food and toiletries to our church. The goods are taken each month to Crossroads in Detroit. The students can help an older couple by raking their yard, carrying packages, or reading a favorite book to them. Who knows, they may get to enjoy an afternoon with milk and cookies. Service fosters empathy, understanding, and compassion. Our students who choose service can grow in confidence, responsibility and leadership. We are never too young to believe in our power to make a difference!

### **Religious Education Lessons**

All classes will be studying Unitarian Universalism for the coming year. The classes will begin with developing their class rules and setting the stage on how they will treat each other during the year.

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

### **Dates to Remember:**

Sunday, September 27 - Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel's installation  
Sunday, October 4 - An all Family Service-Pet Blessing  
Sunday, October 11 - RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.  
Sunday, October 25 - UNICEF Sunday collection

Julie Artis  
Director of Religious Education

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## Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

As the traditional church year gets into full swing, we are happily anticipating the installation of our new settled minister. Thanks to Pi Irwin and her dedicated team for all their hard work.

Everyone has probably noticed some cosmetic improvements over the past month. Russ Chavey has spent a great deal of time and effort coordinating the re-paving of the parking lot, surmounting several obstacles along the way. And, there is still more to do. Thank-you, Russ! Susan Hartz and her "Weeding Women" have made some big improvements in the Circle Garden and the Memorial Garden, preparing for the Installation. Thanks for their hard work! Mickie Verderbar, our new Coffee Coordinator, has been experimenting with some different venues for coffee hour. Thank-you, Mickie!

We've also had a number of changes in Committee Chairs in the last month:

- Sonja Franchett - Membership
- Veronica Smith - Committee on Ministry
- Tonya Wells - Worship Associates
- Mickie Verderbar - Coffee Coordination

Thanks to all for volunteering to serve, and thanks to our out-going chairs, Suzanne Ross, Karen Webb, Cynthia Luce and Sonja Franchett. I am constantly amazed at the generosity of our congregation!

The Board continues to look at potential capital improvements and financing strategies. We are in the process of soliciting input from committee chairs and interested others. Everyone's feedback is always welcome! We also continue to work toward a more streamlined committee structure and a revitalization of our social justice committee, fundraising activities and other concerns.

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

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## Thursday Evening Lecture Series

This October we bring to you our Thursday night lecture series. We intend to continue them next year in the spring. We have called on experts in all walks of life to give us insight into things of importance to us and some things that are just plain fun. The October slate contains three of our members/church attendees which is always a big draw. Please feel free to invite your friends and neighbors to these events. Most lectures will be

held in the church sanctuary. Afterwards there will be a question and answer time and an afterglow with wine and cheese. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jill Crane, Adult Religious Education Assistant

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**October 1, Christina Soliz, East Michigan Field Organizer  
Planned Parenthood Advocates & Affiliates of Michigan**

**The (Actual) Truth about Planned Parenthood**

Planned Parenthood is under attack. Anti-abortion extremists calling themselves the Center for Medical Progress have released a number of heavily edited videos attacking Planned Parenthood in order to deceive the public. Planned Parenthood is the most trusted women's health care provider in this country. They provide everything from birth control, to lifesaving cancer screenings, to safe abortion, and other high-quality health care for nearly 100 years. One in five American women reports having been to Planned Parenthood for care. Planned Parenthood's medical providers and staff are among the best in the country. Christina Soliz will discuss all of the services provided by Planned Parenthood both in the community and in the health centers.

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**October 8, Dr. John Artis presents:  
The Corporate effort to take control of American Public Schools**

**An Analysis by John Burl Artis, PhD**

Beginning in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, a scathing report of supposed failure of American public schools, the public schools and public school teachers have been under attack by the twin partners of Corporate America and national and state governments. This attack has led to a concerted takeover of curriculum, local control of teacher evaluation, testing of students to determine what should be learned, and a steady diet of school budget reductions and reallocation to Charter Schools and other alternative schooling schemes.

Audiences for this presentation will enjoy an opportunity to listen to an analysis of the thirty plus years of corporate and governmental assault on public education by Dr. Artis. They will also have an opportunity to engage in significant discussion about what steps could be taken to halt these attacks on our public schools.

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**October 15, Laura Wagner presents:  
The M1 Rail Project**

The M1 RAIL Project is 3.3 miles of embedded track, 22 stations and 2 bridge replacements. This uniquely funded project, with 60% private donations, consists of 2 segments. The City of Detroit Segment 1 is off-line, meaning no overhead wires, and is track with an asphalt overlay on the road. The MDOT portion is full reconstruct, meaning demolition of the existing road, sometimes removing old trolley tracks, track, sidewalk roadway, signals and street lighting. This project, employing mostly Detroiters, has already had an impact on the rebirth of this beautiful, diverse city, with overall positive feedback from the citizens. The presentation will be a visual tour of the project from one end to the other.

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**October 22, Jerry Herron presents:  
Living with Detroit: An All-Purpose History of America**

Detroit is the most American spot on Planet Earth. Everything that makes us who we are has gone further and faster here than anywhere else, for both good and ill, from the meteoric rise of this city in the twentieth century to its collapse in the following century. And now, there's the comeback. When America happens, Detroit is the result; it's not so much a city as a revelation. So our history as a people is the history of our trying to learn how to live with Detroit.

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**October 29, Jade Nabbouh presents:  
First World Problems - Leaving Islam**

This discussion aims to explore the experience of North American Muslims who leave the Islamic faith. Religious trauma is certainly an issue that is common to apostates of many religions; however, formerly practicing Muslims seldom openly share their experience or even identify themselves as converts or non-religious due to the social, cultural, and sometimes physical consequences that threatens them. This speaker will share his experience and that of others (anonymously) who have left Islam, and discuss the issues surrounding apostasy as well as the need for open criticism and advocacy from within the Muslim-American

(and apostate) community.

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## Sunday Adult Education Classes

Beginning in October Rev. Alex will hold adult education sessions at noon on the first, third and fourth Sundays of the month. Sessions will be held in the Sanctuary.

**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.

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## Announcements

### Come to the Auction Saturday November 7

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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### Alliance News

PSYCHIC CURIOUS? Join the Alliance on Tuesday, October 20th in the Annex at 7p.m. for a wine and cheese gathering featuring Janis Garan GPUC's very own professional Psychic Medium, Tarot reader and teacher. This is sure to be a fun, informative and interactive presentation. Reservations will be necessary so look for more information in the next few weeks. Mary Morshead

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### Register for Chalice Circles During September

Do you want to explore challenging spiritual themes in a confidential, small-group setting?

Chalice Circles provide that opportunity. Groups of 8-10 meet monthly and are led by trained facilitators.

This year we will be using a curriculum titled "Finding Balance: Living with Polarities" that was developed at the UU Church in Eugene, Oregon. Life involves many polarities and paradoxes, both within an individual and within groups. These polarities can be seen as differences and preferences to be recognized and managed, rather than problems to be solved. Each end of the polarity has its own advantages and value, as well as disadvantages and liabilities. In our sessions we will be sharing some of our attempts at finding balance living with polarities, embracing "both and", rather than "either/or".

Here are some examples of the polarities we will explore in our sessions this year:

- Individuality and Community
- Faith and Doubt
- Freedom and Accountability
- Leading and Following
- Tradition and Innovation
- Creating and Destroying
- Holding on and Letting Go

Stop by the Chalice Circles' table in the lobby to find out more.  
 Questions? Contact: Chris Vadino or Birdi Hansen-Marr

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### **Make a Difference in a Child's Life by Tutoring**

The Tutoring Program sponsored by The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church will begin with an orientation in early October at the Detroit Merit School on Alter near Jefferson. Mrs. Sandra Martin, the principal, will cover the philosophy and organizing ideas used to manage this effective and successful school as well as conduct a tour of the building. Tutors can choose from kindergarten through eighth grade students, the subject matter and the time that fits in your schedule.

If you have a talent or hobby to share with young people, the after school clubs may be your choice. Pat Gillis will be starting a photography club at Nichols School this year. Also, there are other tutoring opportunities for members and friends at Clark School on Berkshire or at Nichols School in Indian Village. Sarah Neely would welcome a tutor for her second graders at Maire in the Grosse Pointe School System. Please contact Susie Boynton to indicate your interest in making a difference in a child's life and letting her know what your preferences are.

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### **Art Mart**

**You've Gotta have Art** is coming to GPUC, this fall, Saturday, October 17, in the Annex. We need your donations. Reproductions, original works, paintings, watercolors, oil, multi-media, quality, pottery, and ceramics. No garage/house sale leftovers, please. All items in excellent to very good condition are welcome. Items accepted at the discretion of the ART MART committee.

The Art Mart is both fundraiser and community event. It will be marketed to the five Grosse Pointes and its neighbors: Detroit, Eastpointe, Roseville, and St. Clair Shores. It's a great way to meet and greet our neighbors.

We will accept donations from Sunday, September 13th until Sunday October 11th. Bring your donations to the foyer before services, 9:30a.m. until 10:15a.m., or after services, 11:30a.m. until 12 noon. For home pickup, call Suzanne Ross. Questions? email Suzanne Ross, or call.

ART MART Committee: Juli Moore, Margo Bishop, Suzanne Ross

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### **Sit and Stitch, Coloring Club and UU Crafters**

These are all new names being considered for the twice a month, Tuesday meetings of the already in place Sit and Stitch group. In addition to knitting, crocheting and other artful handiwork the folks who meet on the Sit and Stitch evenings have expanded to other things. Adult coloring books are the new way to de-stress say many experts, so grab your colored pencils or markers and prepare to enjoy an evening with friends in the GPUC annex. If you have any other small art projects you would like to work on, feel free to bring them. We have lots of table space. This is a very relaxing way to meet and chat with our members. Drop in anytime, no need to sign-up.

Tuesday meetings take place on:  
 September 22 - NO Sit and Stitch.  
 October 13 - 4:30 - 6:30 pm,  
 October 27 - 7-9 pm  
 November 10 - 4:30 - 6:30 pm.  
 November 24 - NO Sit and Stitch

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### Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church's Inaugural, Benefit Concert Series

The leadoff act of our concert series will be **Matthew Ball**, aka The Boogie Woogie Kid, he has been described as "MICHIGAN's BEST" in Ragtime, Boogie & Blues. Performing piano favorites from the SWING DANCING DAYS of the 20s,30s, & 40s. Don't miss this special toe-tappin' program of FAMILY piano fun with classics like Swanee River, Over the Rainbow, Amazing Grace, Waltzing Matilda, The Entertainer, Side by Side, In the Mood, Chopsticks Boogie, and the Bumble Boogie.

**Saturday, October 10 at 7:30 pm at GPUC.** Tickets are general admission \$15, 18 & under \$10. They are available in the office or after services on Sunday.



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### Book Discussion, *10% Happier* by Dan Harris, 7:00pm Friday, October 16 and 23 in the church library

As co-anchor of Nightline and weekend editions of Good Morning America, ABC newsman Dan Harris is proud to call himself a professional skeptic. Meditation was one of the things he used to be skeptical about. "I always thought meditation was uniquely ridiculous and annoying. It was for people who live in yurts or collect crystals or listen to Cat Stevens," he says. "I am definitely not cut from that cloth." And yet, after a years-long quest that took him to self-help gurus, spiritual leaders and brain scientists, Harris took up meditation. He's now written a book extolling its life-changing power. It's called *10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help that Actually Works - A True Story*. The discussion will be led by Ed Marck

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### WOMEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP 2015-2106

We Welcome New Participants! Meetings are usually held the third Thursday of the month at 6PM in the GPUC Annex. At each meeting we collect a \$3 donation per person which goes towards refreshments.

Next meeting is October 22, 2015, 6PM (Fourth Thursday this month only)

The October book is *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande

In *Being Mortal*, bestselling author Atul Gawande tackles the hardest challenge of his profession: how medicine cannot only improve life but also the process of its ending.

Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming birth, injury, and infectious disease from harrowing to manageable. But in the inevitable condition of aging and death, the goals of medicine seem too frequently to run counter to the interest of the human spirit. Nursing homes, preoccupied with safety, pin patients into railed beds and wheelchairs. Hospitals isolate the dying, checking for vital signs long after the goals of cure have become moot. Doctors, committed to extending life, continue to carry out devastating procedures that in the end extends suffering.

Discussion Leader, Mary Zahler

Refreshment Assistant, Pi Irwin

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### Think Scrip This Fall!

As we all get back into the swing of things, consider taking advantage of our scrip program to purchase gift cards to use as gifts or for your everyday needs. In case you're not yet familiar with it, scrip is a terrific fundraising program that allows you to purchase gift cards from companies who return anywhere from 2 to 16% of the amount you spend back to GPUC RE. Follow this link for more details and to learn how to use this program: [Scrip Link](#)

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### Newsletter Deadline

This month's deadline is Friday October 23, 2015 at noon. Please submit your contributions to [newsletter@GPUC.US](mailto:newsletter@GPUC.US).

Rudy Wedenoja, Editor

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### Contact Information

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church  
17150 Maumee Ave., Grosse Pointe, MI 48230

Phone: 313-881-0420 Fax: 313-881-6430

Email: [gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us)

Website:

[www.gpuc.us](http://www.gpuc.us)

Editor: Rudy Wedenoja [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us)

