

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*

May 2016

Upcoming Services

May 1, 2016 **10:30 AM**
Lies We Tell Our Children (And Ourselves)
Joseph Buttigieri **Chuck Palmer, Worship**

Associate

In this sermon I will explore how we treat ourselves directly impacts the way we see the world and treat others. While self-awareness is a critical component of accountability, we are best served by looking at ourselves in the mirror with a gentle, forgiving light. I will share my own experiences as a reforming critic, and hope to encourage practices of kindness toward ourselves and others.

What do we tell our children and why? How do we acknowledge the truth and still raise healthy, confident children?

May 8, 2016 **10:30 AM**
Asherah and the Demise of the Divine Feminine
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Cynthia Luce**

Many scholars now believe that Jehova (the God of the Jewish people) had a consort (wife) named Asherah. We will explore this possibility in the context of the larger question, Whatever happened to the Divine Feminine?

May 15, 2016 **10:30 AM**
Question Box II
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Tonya Wells**

This will be the second (and final) of this year's Question Box sermon. If you feel you missed the opportunity to ask Dr. Riegel a question the first time round, you can still do so. Email him your question (drriegel@gpuc.us) and he will try to fit it in.

May 22, 2016 **10:30 AM**
www.impressionsarefood.xxx
Dr. Alexander Riegel **Janet Weber, Worship**

Associate

In health class we learned that "You are what you eat." In the spiritual traditions there is a similar saying, namely, "Impressions are food." Dr. Riegel will consider (actually suggest) that in our culture this spiritual principle is being ignored at the expense of our children's' developing psyches.

May 29, 2016 **10:30 AM**
TBD **To Be Announced**
Cynthia Luce, Worship Associate

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Last Sunday (April 17th) I delivered a sermon entitled "Shakespeare as Spiritual Guide." (By the way, the website is now updated in regard to audio recordings of my most recent sermons. If you've missed any since I came back from Study Break you may find them here: www.gpuuc.org/sermon-archive) In that sermon I reflected upon short sayings of Shakespeare, from a variety of his works. If memory serves me, I think the following is one I did not use, so I am reflecting on it here, largely because it is a great example of Shakespeare's wisdom as well as a great prescription for walking circumspectly through life:

"What's done cannot be undone." - Macbeth, Act V, sc. i

Metaphorically, this means that one cannot un-ring the bell. A deed done is, well - done! One can see this nugget of wisdom as an ethical prescription for living. Since a deed done cannot be undone, one should thoroughly contemplate one's actions before taking action. If we do this we greatly increase our positive effect on the world (and proportionately reduce our contribution to the negative). All that is required (notice how easily I say, "all that is required"!) is that we pause long enough to consider our next action before taking it, in other words, that we do not let the impulse of knee jerk reactions determine our behavior. Rather, have the patience to sift that knee jerk reaction through the heart and the mind first. Doing so, we find it easier to let love have jurisdiction within us.

See you soon!

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

What a meaningful Earth Day celebration today, with glorious sunshine in the Memorial Garden!

We hope that every one of you will attend the Annual Meeting on May 15th. This is the cornerstone of our democratic society where we elect board officers and trustees, the Committee on Ministry and the Leadership Development Committee. We will also vote on the proposed changes to the By-laws that you have received in the Weekend email Blast or by mail. In addition, the congregation will vote on whether to approve the Board's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2016-17.

We are hoping to have our projected pledge income for FY 2016-17 finalized before the Annual Meeting. If you haven't yet sent in your pledge decision, please contact Candy Dunn in the office, or the Canvass Chairs-- Paul Rowady and Joe Buttiglieri as quickly as you can. On May 1st, at the Congregational Budget Hearing, our treasurer, Laura Bartell, will explain each item of the proposed budget.

The Board is looking forward to a day-long retreat with our newly elected Trustees on June 4th. We will be outlining areas of focus for 2016-17. Also in the works, is a process for discovering our shared Vision for the future. You will be hearing more about this by next Fall. The HVAC task force is progressing with the goal of providing GPUC with air-conditioning this summer. After some initial difficulties finding someone, we have hired a consultant to recommend the best solution and oversee the project.

Robin Ramsay,
President, GPUC

Religious Education News

It's hard to believe that our church school year is winding down so quickly! With just a few weeks left, we'll wrap up our year of Unitarian Universalism and continue to place into context our Unitarian Universalist perspectives. Sunday, June 5, 2016 is our Religious Education Sunday. Please mark your calendars and join us to share our celebration of learning this past year.

In our religious education classes we share our "spirit of good." Each of us, like a seed, has the potential to grow into something amazing and wonderful. If you cut a seed in half, there is nothing inside to see. Our human spirit, like the potential inside a seed, cannot be seen, but if we nurture it, we will grow into something wonderful and special.

Talk with your family about ways in which you can nurture your own spirit and theirs: through nature, music, art, gifts of kindness, service and other creative ways. Help your child look at a leaf and see the veins, look at the seeds in an apple, make a meal for another family or send a card to brighten someone's else's day. Create one minute or more each day to nurture your spirit.

One practice I have incorporated into my day for my spirit is practicing mindfulness. I try to be aware and

pay attention to what I am doing. I sometimes stop and just notice my breath. We have shared this breathing practice in church and in our RE classes. The breathing exercise is simple and easy. You may sit and close your eyes and repeat these words:

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out. Breathing in, I feel my breath grow deep. Breathing out, I feel my breath grow slow. Breathing in, I dwell in the present moment. Breathing out, I know that this is a wonderful moment. ---By Thich Nhat Hanh

Religious Education Lessons

The **Nursery** will be open at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. We have the same loving childcare workers to provide a safe and caring place for our young UU's. We also have a pot of coffee for parents to enjoy and take the time to get to know each other.

Lower and Upper Elementary students will continue their study on Unitarian Universalism. We will start to prepare and practice for our Sunday, June 5th RE Sunday. We ask for you to bring in donations of juice and healthy snacks for our classes.

Junior students will continue their study of Unitarian Universalism. Students will start to prepare for the Sunday, June 5th RE Sunday. Students signed up for OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes will continue with their assigned dates. They will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the annex. Remember to bring empty cans and bottles in for the Boston Trip.

Senior High students will continue their assigned dates for their OWL classes. Mrs. Ottenhoff will email all students with dates and times of other events. Seniors are always welcome to help with the younger students, please contact Mrs. Artis.

Dates to Remember:

May 1-Historic Elmwood Cemetery tour at 1:30 p.m.

May 15-Senior High picnic at 5:00 p.m. at the Grosse Pointe Park Park

May 29-No classes

June 5-RE Sunday

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Thursday Evening Lecture Series

The GPUC Adult Religious Education lecture series continues through May 26th. The remaining lecture schedule is below. Classes begin at 7:30pm in the church sanctuary.

Thursday, May 5

Suzanne Ross, Community Activist for Political and Social Justice Issues Compassion and Choices

Death is easy. It's dying that's hard - especially because no one really wants to talk about dying. It's difficult admitting that someday we will die: you, me... everyone. We don't have a choice about death, not yet anyhow. But when illness and disease come knocking, we often have choices about how we die, from using every treatment to sustain life, until the body just quits, or opting to forgo treatments that ravage the body and mind, and choose palliative treatments instead. And there's another choice, namely, choosing when and how to die. The road to death is fraught with choices we don't know how to make and don't want to make. In this lecture we will talk about dying. It's a gift we can give to ourselves and others.

Thursday, May 12

Jeanette Pierce Getting the Scoop on Detroit

The themes that are shaping Detroit right now are community, collaboration, and opportunity. During this presentation you will hear how those themes are woven throughout the city. The talk will give an overview of what's happening around the city, including unique small businesses, art projects, specialty restaurants, and bars as well as large scale commercial and residential projects. Whether you've been in Detroit a day or a lifetime this talk will give you a better understanding of where Detroit has come from, what's happening now, and where it's headed in the future.

Thursday, May 19

Dr. Cindi Arfken, Professor at Wayne State University Specializing in Drug Abuse Epidemiology Ghada Abdallah, Pharmacist and Owner of Park Pharmacy Opioids: What You Need to Know and What You Can Do

The heroin and prescription opioid epidemic have impacted individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live through a devastating increase in addiction and overdoses, especially among our youth. In this talk, given jointly by a drug abuse epidemiologist and pharmacist, we will review basic information about opioids and the current epidemic challenges. We will also cover how Michigan and

other states are responding to the epidemic. We will conclude with concrete steps of what you can do to reduce the devastation of this epidemic.

Thursday, May 26
the Rev. Doctor Alexander Riegel
The Mystical Jesus:
On the Psychodynamics of Jesus' Life and Teaching for Modern Spiritual Seekers

A lecture (part two of a two part series) on the psychodynamics of Jesus' life and teaching for the modern spiritual seeker. From the famous story of the adulteress, whom Jesus spared from the judgmental Pharisees, to the parable of the lilies of the field, we often miss the significance of Jesus' life and teaching because we do not fully understand the psychodynamics involved therein. Join us as we explore Jesus' life and teaching from the psychodynamic point of view. What we will discover is that Jesus presented us with profound ethical challenges and a deep mystical theology. The Jesus we encounter in this lecture will cast the Jesus narrative in a whole new light and demonstrate his continued significance for modern spiritual seekers.

Sunday Workshops

[Note, due to the congregation's budget hearing and annual meeting there will be no adult ed classes following services on May 1 and May 15.]

First Sunday - Mystic Poet Workshop (June 5)

In these workshops we 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 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 - Introduction to Meditation (June 19)

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 - Philosopher's Club (May 22)

In this class we 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). For the March meeting we will be discussing Book IV. Following Boethius we will explore "Flatland," by Edwin Abbot, "Teddy," by J. D. Salinger, The Myth of Sisyphus, by Albert Camus, and many other Philosophical works. Please note - Reading Required. Out of respect for the other participants, please make sure that you have read the material before attending class.

Adult Religious Education

Writing Workshop - Second and Fourth Mondays [meets in church library]

Please feel free to join the Writing Group on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Bring your writings and listen as others read theirs, and join in the discussions regarding the selections. The next meetings will be held on May 9 and 23. Please contact Patty Gillis for more information.

UU Crafters

We are happy to announce that this congenial group is growing. Stop by and join in the fun. The UU Crafters will meet the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Annex, from 7-9pm. The next meetings will be May 17 and 24. All are welcome to join in for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.) and other small crafts. Also, if you like to color and haven't tried the new adult coloring books there are books and markers for anyone who would like to give it a try. Please contact Ann Helm with any questions.

Women's Book Discussion Group

Annual Pot Luck Supper - Thursday, June 2nd at 6pm at the home of Jill Crane

This is the meeting where we choose our books for the coming year. Come with your suggestions and your willingness to lead a discussion. We have guidelines for you which make it very easy. Please bring your calendars as we also ask for volunteers to help set up the annex for the refreshments that we partake of during the meetings. For the past two summers we held discussions at members' homes, which were very nice; we are hoping to continue this for the coming summer. There is a potluck sign-up sheet on the sign-up table in the church foyer. New members are always welcome!

Announcements

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church will take place on

Sunday, May 15, 2016, immediately following the service.

We invite you to attend the annual meeting to:

- Vote on the proposed annual budget
- Elect new Board Members, Officers, Committee on Ministry and Leadership Development Committee
- Vote on By-Law changes
- Update on HVAC project
- Consider any other business that may properly be brought to the membership

All members in good-standing are urged to attend this important meeting.

Respectfully,

Ann Helm
Secretary, Board of Trustees

Description of proposed by-law changes to be voted on at the annual meeting.

The proposed changes to the by-laws fall into three basic categories:

1. All references to the "Nominating Committee" are being changed to the "Leadership Development Committee." The committee changed its name to reflect the additional duties it has assumed (in addition to finding candidates for nomination in connection with the Annual Meeting).
2. Some of the language needed to be corrected, either to be made more comprehensible, or to comply with our current practices. For example, our Treasurer is not bonded, we do not get a report at Board meetings from the "Religious Education Department," the minister's initial salary is not determined by a written 2/3 vote of the Congregation, our Summer Sunday services are no longer "informal," we do not read the minutes of the last annual meeting of the Congregation at annual meetings, we do not maintain a corporate seal, etc.
3. The major substantive change is to reduce the size of the Board. Historically, the President of the Alliance has sat on the Board. Last year the President of the Alliance informed the Board that she did not wish to sit on the Board and believed that it was no longer appropriate for the Alliance to have automatic Board representation. After removing the President of the Alliance from the Board, we would have had 10 voting members of the Board -- the Chairperson of Religious Education, five elected Trustees and the four executive positions. The Board believes it is better to have an uneven number on the Board to avoid tie votes. In addition, reducing the number of Trustees is consistent with Rev. Alex's recommendation to the Congregation to reduce administrative positions at the Church to free up the time of active members to spend on other matters. Therefore, the proposal would not only eliminate Alliance representation on the Board, but would also reduce the number of elected Trustees to four. That would mean that the Board would have nine members, instead of the current eleven.

2016-17 Ballot Slate

Due to the proposed changes to the GPUC Bylaws, the 2015-2016 Leadership Development Committee presents two alternative slates of Officers, Trustees, Committee on Ministry members, and Leadership Development Committee members to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting:

Slate One includes Nominees to fill positions consistent with our current Bylaws:

Board of Trustees

Officers:

Robin Ramsay President
Joseph Buttiglieri Vice President
Paul Rowady Secretary
Laura Bartell Treasurer

Trustees:

Christine Whitwell Continuing, to 2019
Lynn Rehahn Continuing, to 2019

Christy Winder Continuing, to 2017
Chris Vadino 3-year term, to 2018
Jud Cole 3-year term, to 2018

Auditor:

Mark O'Keefe

Committee On Ministry

Roberta Hansen-Marr 3 year term, to 2019
Veronica Smith Continuing, to 2017
Lynn Baker-Hunter 2-year term, to 2017
Wally Friesen 3-year term, to 2018

Leadership Development Committee

Kathy Konwiak Continuing, to 2017
Jeff Marotzke Continuing, to 2017
Scott Sendra Continuing, to 2017
Sabrina Biernat 3-year term, to 2018
Karen Webb, Chair 3-year term, to 2018

Slate Two:

If the proposed bylaw changes are adopted there is 1 less Board of Trustees member, that slate is:

Trustees:

Christine Whitwell Continuing, to 2019
Christy Winder Continuing, to 2017
Chris Vadino 3-year term, to 2018
Jud Cole 3-year term, to 2018

The Officers, Committee on Ministry, and Leadership Development Committee nominees remain the same.

GPUC Leadership Development Committee
April 19, 2016

ANNUAL MEETING: Sunday, May 15, 2016. 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 2016-2017, vote for Board of Trustees, Committee on Ministry, and Leadership Development Committees. According to our Bylaws, 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.

Send a Kid to Camp

The Schools Tutoring Committee has launched the campaign to send nine 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 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 fifth year of this program at Merit, the Committee hopes to raise close to \$3,200 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

Alliance News

The Alliance has traditionally had a day trip as our May program. Arrangements have been made to tour the facilities at Services for Older Citizens and learn about the many programs they provide to older members of our Grosse Pointe Community. The tour has been scheduled for **Monday, May 16th at 11:00am**. After the tour lunch will be available for a \$4.00 donation for those who wish to stay. Reservations for lunch are necessary and must be made by Wednesday, May 11th. Call Mary Morshead for reservations. There will also be a sign up sheet on the table in the foyer. Those who wish to car pool should meet in the church parking lot at 10:30am.

TCBY FOR BOSTON - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Join your fellow GPUC'ers as they raise funds in the frostiest of ways! 10% of all sales, and 50% of the tip jar will go to help fund the Boston Trip.

Here are the details:

WHO: ALL GPUC'ers & FRIENDS
WHAT: TCBY BOSTON TRIP FUNDRAISER
WHEN: **Tuesday, May 17 7-10pm**
WHERE: TCBY IN THE VILLAGE, 17045 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe, MI 48236
WHY: Fun! Fellowship! Frosties! & Fundraising!

See You There!!!

Newsletter Deadline

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

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