

Unconditional Love
Grosse Pointe
Unitarian Church
Radical Inclusivity



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 2016

Upcoming Services

October 30, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Annual Day of the Dead Service

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Cynthia Luce**

Loss is a part of life and its effect upon our lives gets short shrift. Together we will contemplate the place of loss in life and honor 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 to display our mementos and you will have an opportunity to take a moment, if you would like, to share your memory with us. The RE Youth will be Trick-or-Treating for **UNICEF** in the Sanctuary at the conclusion of the service.

November 6, 2016 **10:30 AM**

From Penitentiary to Prison:

Capitalism and the Rise of the Prison Industrial Complex

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Chuck Palmer**

"Back in the day," when someone did time for a crime committed they went to "the pen." Now one goes to prison. How did we get from "the pen" to the prison? The answer to this question includes a disturbing cultural sin of omission: the use of people as an ends to a means. Dr. Riegel will trace this development while the following Thursday evening, at 7pm, there will be a viewing and discussion of the film, *The Dharma Brothers*, in the church sanctuary.

November 13, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Interspirituality and our UU Future

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Cynthia Luce**

Following our wonderful weekend with Russill Paul, Russill will join Dr. Riegel in the pulpit to discuss the intersection of interspirituality and Unitarian Universalism. UUism has spent far too much effort defining itself on the basis of what it is not (in reaction to rejected belief systems) and not enough effort promoting a positive vision that compels people in a way other religions do not. Could interspirituality be UUism's compelling future vision? If so, maybe Thomas Jefferson's sentiment regarding our faith tradition will finally prove prophetic. In a letter to Dr. Thomas Cooper Jefferson said that Unitarianism "will, ere long, be the religion of the majority from north to south, I have no doubt."

November 20, 2016 **10:30 AM**

Giving Thanks and a Pumpkin Pie Communion!

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Maurya Kay**

This year we are shifting from our traditional Stone Soup service to a Thanksgiving Potluck. Join us as we give thanks for the bounties we share and share a meal together. Our service will be shorter than usual and following the meal, we will end with a "pumpkin pie" communion (rather like our chocolate communion but this time with pumpkin pie!). In the coming weeks we will have signup sheets so you can volunteer to bring one of our menu items.

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November 27, 2016

10:30 AM

The Attitude of Gratitude

Cynthia Luce

Worship Associate: Janet Weber

An attitude of gratitude means making it a habit to express thankfulness and appreciation in all parts of your life, on a regular basis, for both the big and the small things alike. If you concentrate on what you have, you'll always have more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you'll never have enough.

Alexander's Meander



Wow! It is a busy autumn at Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church! Unbelievably, November, and hence the holidays in very short order, are upon us! This just proves that age old adage: "Time flies when you are having fun." Indeed, fun abounds at GPUC because there is so much to do these days! Of course Sunday services are in full swing, as is the children's RE program (We are looking to have upward of 80 youth registered this year!). Adult Education opportunities regularly occur (I hope you have Russill Paul's Nov. 11 - 12 visit on your calendars?!). The Visionear Team continues it work to lead us toward a vision of our 3 - 5 year future. And of course, committees are gearing up for the year. These are all signs of a happy, productive, and lively congregation.

In that vein, I want to bring up two topics this month. First, I want to thank the Leadership Development committee for all the effort that went into the Committee Fair a few weeks back! Many people have signed up to volunteer and if you are one of them, you will soon hear from someone about the interest(s) you expressed (if you haven't already). In particular, I am very excited about the rejuvenation taking place around Social Justice. The committee met a few weeks ago and I am happy to report that we have about fifteen people sitting on the committee with many who have volunteered to help with one of the following areas of focus: LGBTQ issues, antiracism, and building bridges with the Muslim community. If you have an interest in sitting on this committee and/or working on of these areas of focus but haven't heard from me yet, please send me a quick email so I can get you connected. Social justice efforts are, after all, a vital part of what makes you a UU!

Second, I want to mention that the Visionear Team is in the process of digesting all the feedback it received from the survey many of you filled out a few weeks back. While the information will help guide the committee in creating a draft vision statement, as your minister I am also interested in the feedback we received about your perspective on the congregation right now. In general it seems as though the vast majority of folk are largely content (actually happy) with the ministry. At the same time, there was some feedback about what we as a congregation, and what I as your minister, could do better. THAT is the important stuff as pertains to the ministry right now. The problem is, due to our process and hence the nature of the survey, that feedback was too general to be informative enough for action. So, this is an invitation to you to feel free to send me an email or sit down with me and, if you feel the need, give some specific/examples of what you feel we as a congregation, or I as your minister, could do better. That feedback is important both to the leadership and myself because we can only best serve the congregation if we have concrete information, especially as regards improvements that might be made. More personally, that feedback is important in helping me be the best minister I can be!

Namaste,
Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

It's wonderful to see our efforts progressing, as some of the ideas from the Board's summer retreat begin to materialize.

- The Vision survey is complete and the Vision Task Force has held feedback sessions. Thanks to Chris Vadino and her whole team. We look forward to seeing a shared Vision for our future as it develops.

- The air conditioning project is moving forward since the congregation voted to augment the funds authorized. Thanks to Veronica Smith and her team for all of their hard work.
- Russ Chavey is currently arranging to pave the center island walkway in the parking lot. We have considered several options, and have chosen a lower-cost solution.
- Many of our committees received lists of volunteers at the recent Committee Fair. Thanks to Karen Webb and the committee, and everyone who signed up.
- In our efforts to streamline our committee structure, at least two Committee Clusters have met and discussed possibilities for mutual support: Member Care and Marketing/Communications. I'm hoping additional coordination will be useful. Thanks to Suzanne Ross, Rudy Wedenoja and the committee chairs.
- Twelve interested people attended the New U class on Oct. 16th, Sonja Franchett and Suzanne Ross are planning these educational sessions quarterly.
- Christine Whitwell and I have begun acquiring donations for an Online Mini-Auction to be held after Thanksgiving. We're trying a new high-tech approach to fund-raising, and hoping everyone will enjoy a little change of pace!

We are currently searching for replacements for two important chairs. Zsombor Zoltan very graciously stepped in to temporarily cover coffee coordination, but he winters in Arizona. Thanks, Zsombor for your service! Chris Vadino is stepping down as Fellowship Dinner Coordinator after years in that position. Thanks, Chris, for the delightful evenings you arranged! IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN FILLING ONE OF THESE POSITIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ME OR ANY MEMBER OF THE BOARD OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Robin Ramsay
President

Online Mini-Auction



**Look for an email, coming soon.
All will be explained!**

ONLINE MINI-AUCTION

—NOVEMBER 27- DECEMBER 12—

From the comfort of your own home,
use your phone or computer to
BID ON SOME FABULOUS DONATIONS!

Just to name a few:

- Vacation homes
- Lunch and Dinner Parties
- Detroit tours
- Beautiful, tasty Gift Baskets
- Wines and Spirits
- Theater tickets
- Restaurants and shops
- Red Wings tickets
- Services like airport transportation, computer help, interior design
- Beautiful textiles and jewelry

Religious Education News

*Good Friends, Good
Food, Good Times*

"Dinner is better when we eat it together"

Do you know what happens when you eat a dinner together with family and friends? Well, sharing food together is authentic and normal. Great relationships happen when you begin with breaking bread and sharing the same dish. This is why potlucks have endured and why people love to eat out of waxy white boxes of Chinese take-out. We consider this togetherness. When we share a dinner, it is possible the future of our relationships will go on.

Well you have a chance to share dinner with your GPUC friends and family on Sunday, November 6 at 5:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. at our Spaghetti Dinner. Our junior high students will be cooking and serving their annual Spaghetti Dinner in the fellowship hall/annex. Tickets can be purchased in the foyer before and after church or at the door on Sunday, November 6th. The dinner includes a salad bar, spaghetti, (meat or veggie sauce), garlic bread, dessert, coffee and tea, all served with a smile by our junior class students. The tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students, 10 and under. You won't want to miss this wonderful meal and fellowship. The junior students are looking for sponsors! We want to start the meal with zero debt. If you would like to sponsor, the dinner you can help by sending a check to cover the Salad Materials for \$130, the Sauce for \$100, and Bread & Pasta for \$60, and Beverages for \$40 and Dessert for \$40.

Remember the church that eats together stays together!!

Religious Education Lessons

All classes will be studying **Abrahamic Faiths** for this church year. The classes have developed their class rules and have set the stage on how they will treat each other during the church year. Mark Sunday, December 11 for our holiday program, "A Charlie Brown Christmas-UU style".

The GPUC nursery will be open at 9:30 a.m. every week for our young UUs. Remember there is always a pot of coffee at 9:30 a.m. for the parents, if you want to come in and chat.

Dates to Remember:

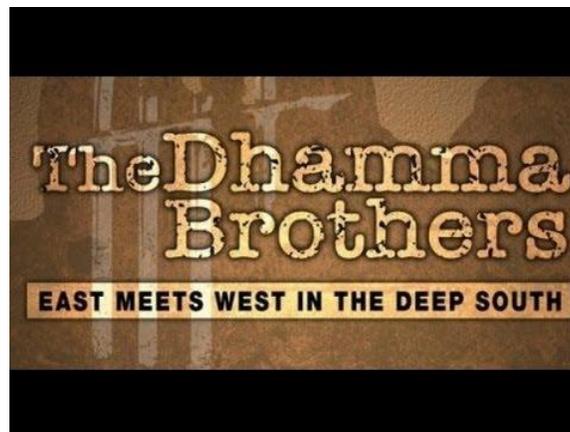
Sunday, Oct. 30 - UNICEF Trick-or-Treat, Halloween Parties

Sunday, Nov. 6 - Spaghetti Dinner, all families are invited

Sunday, Nov. 13 - RE Committee meeting at 9:15 a.m. in Room 7

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Documentary



On Thursday, November 10 at 7pm in the sanctuary, we will be viewing and discussing a powerful documentary on the efforts (and results) of two Buddhist meditation practitioners who take their spiritual practice into the Alabama prison system. What happens as a result of their work is powerful and moving! Join Dr. Riegel as we view and discuss this film. Event is free of charge... (For more information on the film, visit www.dhammabrothers.com)

Russill Paul November 11 and 12



Russill Paul is a Sounds True artist and interspiritual teacher. Using music as a vehicle for inner experience, combined with an incredible breadth of interspiritual knowledge and a decades long spiritual practice, Russill will teach us about love mysticism and the Divine Feminine, lead us in a variety of spiritual practices, e.g., mantra and meditation, and introduce us to the sacred depth both of ancient Indian music as well as his own compositions. Join us for the entirety of the weekend's events (Friday evening Nov. 11 - Saturday evening Nov. 12) or for select events:

Date: Nov. 11th - 12th

Friday Evening (7:30pm - 9:30pm): Rise of the Urban Mystic - This will be an evening of dialogue and music. Russill Paul and Dr. Riegel will converse and take questions about a variety of topics but especially about the place (and importance) of mysticism in the modern world. Russill will also play his music and lead us in a group chant or two. - \$15

Saturday Day (9am - 4pm): Love Mysticism and the Divine Feminine - This day long workshop is a wonderful opportunity to get to know Russill Paul more intimately as he shares his personal story with us, reads from sacred texts, imparts spiritual wisdom for our lives, leads us in spiritual practices, and plays for us his exquisite music. Come, take advantage of this rare opportunity to deepen your spiritual journey! - \$95

Saturday Evening (7:30pm - 9:30pm): Mystic Heart - This evening we will delve into the mystic heart via sacred music, chant, and select readings from the mystic poets. We will also participate kirtan, call and response chants lead by Russill Paul. - \$15

Cost: When purchased separately, the cost of all three events totals \$125. If you plan to attend all three events you may save \$15 (the equivalent of one of the evening events) if you purchase the entire weekend package by selecting the Love Mysticism and the Divine Feminine Package when paying via PayPal on the church website: www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events. ***NOTE - REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR SATURDAY'S WORKSHOP:** Your PayPal receipt verifies your registration however, if you plan to pay at the door you MUST email the church office to register for Saturday's workshop: gpuc@gpuc.us

Announcements

First Sunday Food Sharing

Sunday, November 6 will be our next First Sunday Food Sharing. Our donations are taken to Crossroads East on Moross, just east of I-94. This location is close to our church home and has a food pantry, clothing closet, provides job assistance, and counseling. We will be collecting non-perishables such as cereal, noodles, rice, canned fruits, veggies, soups, and sauces. If you prefer to donate monetarily, your check or cash donations are used to buy items such as eggs, milk, meat, produce, and bread. Fresh items such as these are especially appreciated by Crossroads. Our donations are greatly appreciated and really help keep the shelves, fridge, and freezer stocked. Our donations are always gratefully received! From this January through October 17th, GPUC has provided 5,472 pounds of food and toiletries to Crossroads East! Many, many thanks!

Tutoring Orientation and Assignments

The eight tutors who signed up to work at Detroit Merit Academy met for the orientation and tour on October 17. Mr. Juan Ferreiro, middle school dean, answered questions and gave a brief overview of the school's philosophy and standards for students. Tutors are being assigned to teachers who requested assistance for the coming year, and the parties will work out a mutually satisfactory day and time to meet. Some tutors will begin later in December or January. Colin Gillis will return to Nichols School, and Julie Panizzi is located at Clark Academy. If you are interested in this rewarding way to help students improve in reading and/or math or have a hobby to share, please contact Susie Boynton.

Fellowship Event: The Return of Circle Dinners!

Please mark your calendars for these special gathering!

Circle Dinners

Circle Dinners are a tradition from years back and a great way for seasoned members and newer members of the church to get to know one another in a small group setting, a member's home. Our first Circle Dinner will be held on Saturday, December 10th. Please consider joining us and also offering your home!

Here's how the Circle Dinners work: A sign-up sheet will be available in November. You may indicate if you would like to join the dinner and if you wish to host the event in your home. On average eight people go to each home, if you can accommodate only 6 or 10 or more that is great. The participants will be assigned to the host homes. The host will contact you to give you a food assignment. The host supplies the home; the guests bring the food and wine!

The dead line to sign-up is Sunday, December 4th. Looking forward to a great kick-off to the holiday season!

Circle Dinners are not to be confused with the RE Circle Circle Dinner hosted in January by the Religious Education Department of the church.

Jill Crane, Fellowship Chair

UU Crafters

UU Crafters meet in the Annex from 7-9pm. We will meet November 15 and then take a break until January. 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

The Women's Book Discussion Group meets on a new day and time this year...the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm, in the church library. Hope to see new and "old" members there! We serve wine and cheese and divide up the cost between the members present.

Wednesday, November 16th, 5:30pm, Church library

The Illuminator by Brenda Rickman Vantrease

Historical fiction taking place in England in the late 14th century. Lady Kathryn of Blackingham hopes to safeguard her manor by taking in an illuminator, Finn and his pretty young daughter. He is secretly working on forbidden English translations of the Bible. She and Finn soon have a passionate alliance, but not without problems.

Discussion Leader, Mary Zahler

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, November 18 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

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