

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

March 2017

Upcoming Services

March 5, 2015

10:30 AM

Annual Poetry Service

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Meghan Boomhower**

Poets are masters of rhyme and dispensers of wisdom. However, they are often overlooked as guides for the path of life we all must tread. Indeed, it would behoove us all regularly to spend time contemplating their unique perspectives on life. Join us as Dr. Riegel shares from the poets: classical, mystical, and contemporary, and reflects upon the wisdom they offer us.

March 12, 2017

10:30 AM

Interspiritual Potpourri

Dr. Alexander Riegel **Worship Associate: Tonya Wells**

Within each of the world's various spiritual traditions there is great wisdom to be unearthed. In fact, we live in an unprecedented spiritual age in which we have access to a veritable encyclopedia of the wisdom of all the world's spiritual traditions. Recognizing this, the late Brother Wayne Teasdale spoke of "interspirituality," the ability to value wisdom from all of the world's different religious traditions without sacrificing one's own religious identity. In this spirit, Dr. Riegel will share and reflect upon wisdom from various spiritual traditions.

March 19, 2017

10:30 AM

Nietzsche as Spiritual Guide

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

The German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is probably the most misunderstood philosopher in history. Few people realize what a passionately religious soul he actually was and how his philosophy reflects this affirmative tendency (e.g., "I would believe only in a God who knew how to dance!"). Dr. Riegel will share with us some of Nietzsche's most profound and uplifting ideas for us to ponder as sources of wisdom for our own life journeys.

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Upcoming Events

[Sat Mar 4 Hinduism Retreat](#)

[Sun Mar 5 Food Sharing](#)

[Sat Mar 11 Piano Concert](#)

March 26, 2017

10:30 AM

Green Burials

Worship Leader: Wanda Moon **Worship Associate: Joseph Buttigieri**

Wanda Moon is a green burial advocate and will share with us the latest thoughts and trends about green burials. She takes what could be considered a rather morbid subject and demonstrates how a green approach to burial can turn one's mortality into a deeply meaningful philosophic and aesthetic statement. *Wanda will also conduct a forum from noon - 1pm (following coffee hour) for those who wish to explore this topic in more detail.*

[Wed Mar 15 Women's Book Discussion](#)

[Sat Mar 18 Fellowship Dinner](#)

[Tue Mar 21 UU Crafters](#)

[Tue Mar 28 Alliance Luncheon](#)

[Tue Mar 28 UU Crafters](#)

[Sat Apr 8 Cornel West](#)

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Alexander's Meander



The Golden Thread of Love

Since my arrival at GPUC only two and a half years ago there has been a series of devastating losses, the most recent while I was away on Study Break. Such losses are amongst the most difficult experiences a person can face, not to mention that they cut incredibly deep. As Khalil Gibran says:

*When love beckons to you, follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when he speaks to you believe in him,
Though his voice may shatter your dreams
as the north wind lays waste the garden.
For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you...*

Loving - and losing - can be indescribably painful. At these moments in our lives the tendency is to withdraw into the darkest recesses of one's soul, to flee the pain of loss and to avoid the constant reminders of loss we see in the eyes of those whose sympathy surrounds us. That is the tendency...

What is truly needed, however, is something counterintuitive. What is truly needed is to recognize the golden thread of love that stretches from heart to heart, binding us all in an interdependent web of love and drawing us toward one another, and the will to follow that thread of love back into community, where healing may occur. It is there - always - that golden thread...

Further, it is equally important to recognize that that golden thread of love, which stretches from heart to heart, is ALWAYS there, is ALWAYS present, is ALWAYS drawing us toward one another. This raises a question for me that I think worth pondering, which is truly more to the point of this Meander than what I have shared so far, namely, what would it mean for us to live our loves fully cognizant of the golden thread of love all the time? How would we then treat each other and ourselves? How might that alter our attitude toward life in general and what effect would that have on how we each live our lives?

In all loss there are lessons for living... more Gibran:

All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

I've been very heartened lately, seeing how our congregation cares for each other. Let's make sure to continue to support each other, to reach out to new faces at services, to help people feel involved and welcome. Let's also welcome back Alex as he returns from his study break and remember to thank our Committee Chairs for the wonderful work they're doing.

We're making progress on ongoing projects!

Implementing the Vision: The facilities team, headed by Chris Vadino, has a meeting scheduled soon. We are in the process of identifying a chair for the programming team.

Air-Conditioning: We have air-conditioning! Veronica Smith says we are waiting for some warm weather for a true test.

Landscaping: Russ Chavey is working on more specific estimates for the initial stage of the plan -plantings. We are hoping to offer congregants the opportunity to contribute large trees to round out the plantings.

WIFI in the Annex: Thanks to Sabrina Biernat, the installation is scheduled and will be complete soon. We are hoping that Resale will soon have more volunteers to help with Ebay sales.

Communications/Marketing/Membership Part Time position: A contract has been signed with Linda Gobeski who attends the Northwest UU church. Please welcome her to our GPUC family!

Budget and Canvass: Laura Bartell has developed a beginning budget draft for FY 2017-18. She will soon be reaching out to committee chairs about their projected budgets for next year. The finance committee will consider several factors, including anticipated pledges, as they tweak the budget. They then will present a proposal to the Board in the Spring. Luckily, Beaumont will continue to contract with us for parking space. Thank you Mark Franchett for working on the contract with Beaumont. Thank you to Paul Rowady and Joe Buttiglieri, chairing Canvass, and thanks to Juli Moore, who is organizing the Fellowship Dinner. We are hoping most of the congregation will attend. This is a fun and moving evening. One of my favorite events of the year!

Social Justice Event: It is all of our responsibilities to help to publicize the speaking engagement by Cornel West on April 8th. Although we have already sold more than half of the tickets, we need to sell ALL the seats for this financial venture to break even. Let us continue to serve as a beacon of liberal thought on the East side!

Music Event: Please support the upcoming event sponsored by the Music Committee. Two highly

accomplished musicians, Carl Cafagna and Ron Pietrantoni, will provide a wonderful evening!

Robin Ramsay
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

GPUC Canvass Letter

Dear Members and Friends of GPUC:

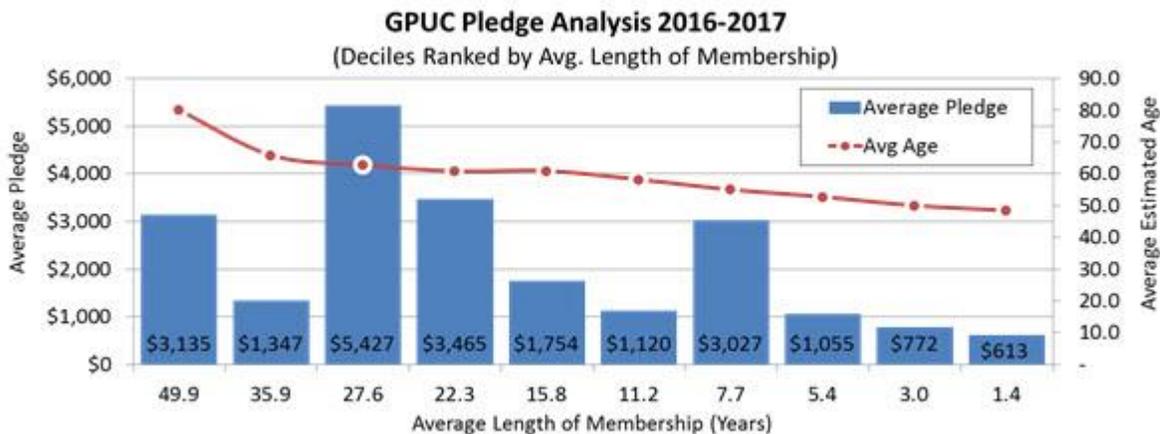
In preparation for the upcoming Annual Fellowship Dinner on Saturday, March 18 in the GPUC Sanctuary - and to officially kick off the 2017-2018 Pledge Campaign season- here's a sample of what we would like you to consider in advance (particularly, those of you who are new to GPUC and/or on the eve of attending your first Fellowship Dinner):

The past 3 years at GPUC have been marked by a consistent string of success stories and milestones that have been brought to life only through the love, dedication and precious resources of you and your fellow members and friends. Successful updating of the Mission and Vision statements; a stable - if not, thriving - religious education platform; revitalized Social Justice efforts; and cool, refreshing enhancements to our facilities (Yes, we will be experiencing climate-controlled events in the GPUC Sanctuary during Summer '17!) are really just a few of the highlights from a growing roster of achievements, both big and small. And, of course, Alex has been a wise and inspiring presence through all of it.

However, since many of these victories are foundational in nature, they could serve as an effective springboard into a broad array of new achievements and opportunities. I say "could" because these new opportunities are by no means guaranteed. Yes, there are some awesome developments in our near future. The Cornel West event on April 8 and the first implementation phase of enhanced design plans for the Memorial Garden are just a couple of the developments that we can all look forward to in the very near future. Of course, these achievements and more to come required continued generous donations of your time and precious resources. At the end of the day, it's really all on us, together, to create whatever it is that we envision...

With that in mind, here are a few guidelines: The biggest component of GPUC's revenue by far is pledges. And, yet, they still only cover about 70% of our annual budget of about \$365,000. Through continued generosity of the current membership - and platform enhancements to attract new members - we hope to improve this dynamic in the coming years.

For the current fiscal year (2016-17) the average of 114 individual family pledges was about \$2,300 (or less than \$200/month). These figures start from a top pledge of \$20,000 and go from there. All pledges - no matter the amount - are gratefully accepted. Beyond that, I took some time to look a little closer at the pledge portfolio this year, with some fascinating results (below).



Certainly, the willingness and ability to give seems to be correlated to stage of life. And, since we are a small congregation, the numbers above in each decile can be swayed significantly by one or two pledges. That said, two observations come to mind: 1) We all need to realize that the congregation is leaning on its senior members to carry a disproportionate share of its financial responsibilities, and 2) We collectively need to do a better job of communicating financial awareness to new(er) members. True, some can afford to carry more of the financial burdens of GPUC than others - but everyone should be aware of where we stand, the challenges we face, and the opportunities that are uniquely ours to harvest.

Lastly, those in attendance at the Fellowship Dinner will receive a hardcopy of the pledge form. For those who will miss the always fun and entertaining Fellowship Dinner, pledge forms will be emailed (or mailed) directly. For all who are open to being a bit more proactive, we will gratefully receive indications of your 2017-2018 pledge by contacting us at any of the email addresses below. This will help enable the formation of next year's budget prior to the Annual Meeting in May. In addition to pledge commitments, please do not hesitate to forward any other questions and comments to any of us.

Warmest regards,

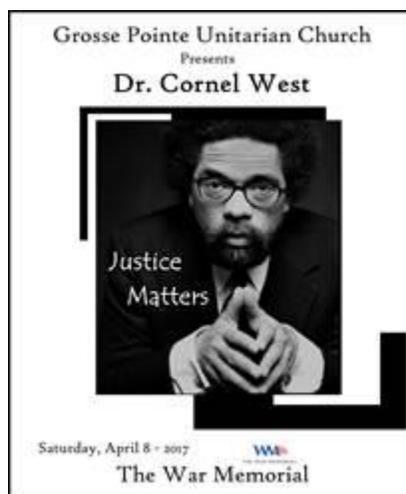
Paul Rowady, Canvass Co-Chair
eprowady@gmail.com

Joe Buttiglieri, Canvass Co-Chair
jbuttiglieri@yahoo.com

Chuck Palmer, Canvass Intern
Chaz313@sbcglobal.net

Cornel West

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is excited to announce that Dr. Cornel West will be appearing at The War Memorial in Grosse Pointe, MI, on Saturday, April 8, 2017.



Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is excited to announce that Dr. Cornel West will be our special guest at The War Memorial in Grosse Pointe on Saturday, April 8, 2017. Dr. West will be speaking on the theme, "Justice Matters," at 2pm, preceded by a V.I.P. reception at 12:30pm. Tickets may be purchased at the following link: www.warmemorial.org/cornelwest.

Cornel West is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. He is a Professor of Philosophy and Christian Practice at Union Theological Seminary and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University. He has also taught at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. Cornel West graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard in three years and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy at Princeton. He has written over 20 books and has edited 13. Though he is best known for his classics, *Race Matters* and *Democracy Matters*, and for his memoir, *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*, his most recent releases, *Black Prophetic Fire* and *Radical King*, were received with critical acclaim.



Do you know the story *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst? It is a simple story that reminds adults and students they are never truly alone. The mother in the story explains to her child, "People who love each other are always connected by a very special string made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart and know that you are always connected to the ones you love." The book is written to calm the children's fear of being apart from the ones they love. This "Invisible String" is for all of us. We have the string with our family, with friends and with our church. In today's uncertain times, all of us look for reassurance and affirmation of the transcendent power of love to connect, bind and comfort us in our day to day life and times of extreme discomfort.

We can "tug" that string with our family and friends. When we tug we can hurt or love. The choice is always up to us. So, where does your string go? Use it wisely!

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 get to know each other.

Lower and Upper Elementary students in March will be continuing their lessons on Islam. They will also continue their study of Tolerance through our Golden Club.

Junior and Senior High students and their parents have begun to make coffee each week for our church. Our students will continue their lesson on Christianity. The juniors have started their Church Pal program. The seniors continue to provide service to Gleaners.

Dates to remember:

March 5th- RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.

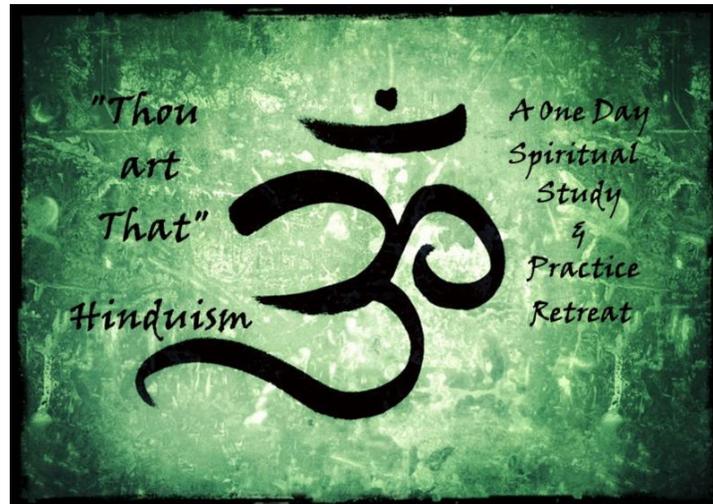
March 5th-RE Juniors Field Trip at 10:30 a.m. to Cranbrook Art Museum

March 12th-Pool Party at Warren Community Center at 1:00 p.m.

March 19th-Church Pal brunch right after church in annex

"Do not think that love, in order to be genuine, has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired." - Mother Teresa

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education



"Thou Art That" - Hinduism: A One Day Spiritual Study and Practice Retreat

This is the third of four retreats scheduled between now and May 2017. Each retreat focuses on one of four mystical traditions, within: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Each morning we examine the teachings from one of these mystical traditions. In the afternoon, Dr. Riegel provides guidance on a variety of spiritual practices, i.e., mantra, silent meditation, walking meditation, and turning exercises.

Retreats run from 9am - 4pm (with a one and a half hour lunch break, off site or bring your own lunch)

Date: Saturday, March 4th, 2017

Cost: \$30 at the door or \$31 via PayPal (to cover fees) on the church website - see link below

More information about these and other events may be found at: www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events

***Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church Concert Series
"Saturdays at 7:30"***

Presents

CARL CAFAGNA IN CONCERT WITH RON PIETRANTONI

Saturday, March 11, 2017, 7:30 pm

17150 Maumee Avenue

Grosse Pointe, MI 48230

(313) 881 – 0420 www.gpuuc.org



An all-around musician, **Carl Cafagna** (*cah-FAH-nyah*) sings, plays sax and other winds like nobody else. He has performed with Mel Torme, Natalie Cole, The Temptations, Martha Reeves, among others. He has toured the U.S., sung in the Church of The Madeleine in Paris, in London's Westminster Cathedral, and in New York's Carnegie Hall.



Pianist **Ron Pietrantoni**, who has performed with the Sun Messengers, is currently accompanist for the Grosse Pointe Community Chorus, and Grace Community Church of Detroit, plays for many high schools and in pit orchestras for musicals throughout Southeastern Michigan.

Together they will take you on a musical journey through time and space to another dimension. Classical, Pop, Jazz, Rock, Blues...

TICKETS: Presale – Adults \$15, Seniors (60+) & Students \$12

At Door – Adults \$20, Seniors (60+) & Students \$15

➔ Go to: www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events.html and buy tickets with **PayPal or buy them through church office during business hours, (313) 881-0420.**

www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events.html and buy tickets with **PayPal**

Fellowship Dinner

*O did you hear the news, my friends, the church is going
Green!
Your pledges and donations surely put you on our team.
It starts with food and Fellowship at church on March 18,
So join our crowd and give some love by the Sharing of your Green!*

*Soon you will appreciate the coolness of AC,
And all because you made it so by the Sharing of your Green.
There's more to do to meet our goals and realize our dreams.
You'll hear much more about it when you come on March 18!*

*O the Sharing o' the Green,
Yes, the Sharing o' the Green!
So join our crowd and give some love with the Sharing of your Green!*

What's this all about? THE Annual Fellowship Dinner!

When? Saturday, March 18th - SAVE THE DATE!

Where? GPUC

Why? To celebrate our wonderful church and pledge to support it!

All members and friends of GPUC are invited to attend. Please R.S.V.P. by Friday, March 3rd to Amy Thelen. Any questions about the dinner, please contact Juli Moore. Childcare will be provided with advance notice.

Announcements

Effective immediately, Dr. Riegel has a new email address: alexgpuc@gmail.com

If you haven't already, please update your address book, this is the only email address that you should use for Dr. Riegel.

Regional Assembly - Register Now!

Registration for the 2017 MidAmerica Regional Assembly is now open! This year's theme is "Finding Our Partners: Faith in Action." In spite of our small numbers in the national religious scene, Unitarian Universalists have been at the forefront of every significant social change in our nation's history. Now, more than ever, we need to work with partners to have an impact in our cities, states and country. Join us at the Chicago Oak Brook Marriott in Oak Brook, Illinois, April 28-30 for an exciting weekend celebrating Unitarian Universalism in the MidAmerica Region. You can find out more at www.midamericauua.org/ra Register now for the 2017 MidAmerica Regional Assembly and receive the early bird rate.



Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, March 5.

Please bring boxed, canned, or bagged donations for our contribution to the Crossroads East food pantry. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, your contributions are used to purchase eggs, milk, produce, bread, and lunch meat for the pantry on a (most) weekly basis.

January through Feb 6, our donations to Crossroads East totaled 1,256 pounds. This represents the food and toiletry items donated on our FSFS Sundays, as well as the grocery items, deodorant, and toothpaste purchased with your monetary donations, which totaled \$615.

The clients at Crossroads East, located at Salem Memorial Lutheran Church, are assisted with social services needs, supplemental food, transportation, and clothing.

Our donations are always greatly appreciated! Thank you!!!

Alliance News

The Alliance luncheon and program will be held on Tuesday, March 28th at Noon in the Olympia Brown Center. Deborah Leidel, Executive Director of The Family Center will be our featured speaker. The Family Center is located in Grosse Pointe and serves as a resource guide to families, individuals and professionals. Join us for a pizza and salad lunch and learn about the extensive range of services they have available to the community. The cost of the lunch is \$7.00. For reservations call Mary Morshead.

Women's Book Discussion Group - Wednesday, March 15th, 5:30pm, Church library

Marcelo in the Real World by Francisco X. Stork

Marcelo Sandoval hears music no one else can hear--part of the autism-like impairment no doctor has been able to identify--and he's always attended a special school where his differences have been protected. But the summer after his junior year, his father demands that Marcelo work in his law firm's mailroom in order to experience "the real world." There Marcelo meets Jasmine, his beautiful and surprising coworker, and Wendell, the son of another partner in the firm.

Discussion Leader: Lynn Baker Hunter

We welcome new participants. Please feel free to join us. Contact Jill Crane for information.

SAVE THE DATE

Please mark your calendars and "save the date" for this year's **spring grounds cleanup**; Saturday April 22, Earth Day.

Russ Chavey, Grounds Committee

Resale Shop News

Are you looking for something to do on Wednesdays with a great group of people? Learn a new skill, share a few laughs, and have lunch with us. The GPUC Resale Shop is looking for a volunteer who would like to help/learn merchandising on the internet. Wednesday daytime hours. Flexible time schedule, but approximately 9-3 PM. Writing skills a plus. Contact Amy through the Church office 313-881-0420.

UU Crafters

UU Crafters meet on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Our next meetings take place on Tuesdays, March 21 and 28, in the Annex, from 7-9pm. 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.

Fellowship Committee News

The first of the newly named, **Friendship Dinners** were held on February 25th. The committee wishes to thank Linda Lawrence, Joe and Joy Buttiglieri, Juli and Bill Moore along with Carol Hindle, Julie and John Artis, Susan and Jonathon Hartz and Jill Crane for offering their homes to the over 40 people who signed up for the dinners. Our next scheduled **Friendship Dinner will be on Saturday, April 22nd**. Mark your calendars. We will be looking for more folks to volunteer their homes for a group of GPUC members.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, March 24 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

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