

*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*

**April 2020**

**Upcoming Services**

In order to protect our congregation and do our part to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), all congregation events, worship services, OWL classes, committee meetings, and choir rehearsals are suspended until further notice. This includes the closure of the Resale Shop for the duration. The Church office is closed but Candy is working from home - please feel free to email [gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us) or leave a voicemail on the office phone 313-881-0420 ext. 10 as Candy is monitoring both.

**Worship services will be provided online using Zoom.**

It is recommended that you join early and use a laptop, desktop with a webcam or you may download the Zoom app on your tablet or smart phone via the App store. We also request when joining the online session limiting to one connection per household.

**The Sunday worship service Zoom link will be sent by email on Friday afternoons, April 3, 10, 17 & 24.**

**UNFAMILIAR WITH ZOOM? - DO THIS IN ADVANCE OF SUNDAY**

- If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, become acquainted with the technology - it is easy to use but going through these steps in advance will ensure you are ready.
- Click on the Zoom link that will be emailed on the Friday prior to the Sunday service at least 15 minutes before you plan to use it the first time. This will prompt an app to download onto your device. You may use a laptop, tablet, desktop or smartphone.
- You will then be asked whether you wish to join the "meeting" with your device audio and device camera.
  - If you do not want others to see what you are wearing at that moment, you can join without activating your camera.
  - Throughout the service, all participants besides the worship leaders will be muted to prevent background noises (barking dogs, ringing phones, etc.) from being included in the worship service.

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**April 5, 2020**

**Sermon:** *"Hope Alive - The Currency of the Vision in all of us"*

**Worship Leader:** John Artis  
**Worship Associate:** Chuck Palmer

In a world gone slightly mad, can I find signs of hope, new possibilities, and new opportunities to practice my craft? Yes!! Listen to an outline of hope.

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**Upcoming Events**

**April 12, 2020**

**Sermon:** *"Empty Tombs and Spiritual Deserts"*

**Worship Leader:** Rev. Mitra Rahnama

**Worship Associate:** Suzanne Ross

Being in the empty space and allowing ourselves to journey into the unknown can be devastating yet also an important spiritual process. In this time of both holy holidays of Passover and Easter let us honor the liminal space of our lives.

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**April 19, 2020**

**Sermon:** *"A Person, A People, A Planet"*

**Worship Leader:** Mary Ann Perrone

**Worship Associate:** Tonya Wells

In honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we will explore the intersection of earth justice as it intersects with the struggle for human rights, especially among the most vulnerable communities. Through her work on human rights and immigrant rights, Mary Anne Perrone will share with us some stories from across our borders that remind us how inextricably we are all connected with one another on planet earth.

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**April 26, 2020**

**Sermon:** *"TBD"*

**Worship Leader:** TBD

**Worship Associate:** TBD

Info to come.

## Dr. Riegel's Sabbatical



Photo by Andrew Neel on Unsplash

### Following Dr. Riegel During His Sabbatical

While away on Sabbatical, Dr. Riegel will be writing blog posts on a more regular basis, as well as developing video synopsis of some of his sermons for our own GPUC website and other video content for his own YouTube site (He might even offer a webinar in which you can participate, if the "spirit" moves him.). That is, he will be producing material that you can follow in his absence. If you are interested in being apprised of this material as it becomes available, you must sign up for his personal email distribution list. To do that, please send him an email ([alexriegel@post.harvard.edu](mailto:alexriegel@post.harvard.edu)) with "Distribution List Sign Up" in the subject line.

Along these lines, Dr. Riegel will seriously be curtailing his personal Facebook presence - you may already have noticed that he is less active these last few months. However, he plans to be more active on his No Mud - No Lotus Facebook page. If you would like to continue to follow his work there, you can also "Like" **AND** "Follow" that page (Following the page is more important from the point of view of making sure Facebook alerts you to content posted there.). To do so, simply go to this link:

[https://www.facebook.com/Alexander-Riegel-No-Mud-No-Lotus-1606544326135165/?modal=admin\\_todo\\_tour](https://www.facebook.com/Alexander-Riegel-No-Mud-No-Lotus-1606544326135165/?modal=admin_todo_tour)

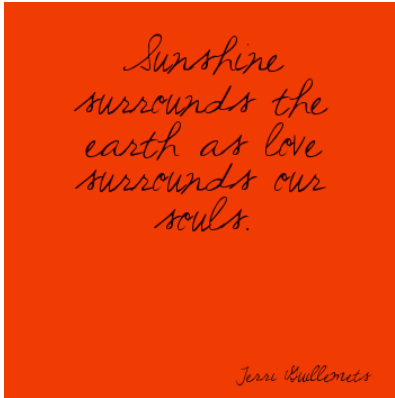
Once there, you can "Like" **AND** "Follow" this page by clicking the appropriate tabs underneath the header image.

**Note** - If you sign up for Dr. Riegel's personal email distribution list, you should check your spam filter from time to time to make sure that correspondence is not going into your spam file. Gmail users should periodically check the "Promotions" and "Social" tabs. Many people do not realize that email servers often filter out "suspicious" email on your behalf, thereby confusing distribution list emails intended for you as spam.

*Namaste,*

*Alex*

## Religious Education News



Dear Students and Parents,

I have been thinking about all of you so much these past two weeks. I have been calling you and posting on the GPUC Facebook pages. These experiences have created a whole new set of sacred work for all of us as staff and stay at home families.

SO, here's the most important thing. I want to tell you how very proud I am of each of you. You have had to deal with unexpected changes and have had to be flexible. I am sure many of you are feeling sad and confused. If you want to talk or write please call me at 313-590-2464 or email me at [julieartis@hotmail.com](mailto:julieartis@hotmail.com)

The second thing I want to tell you is to tune into our Sunday worship. You will be able to stream the services at home. I will also be sending lessons about Love to you weekly. The seniors will still be able to present their Statement of Faith projects on May 31st, either streaming or by person (we hope). We will carry on and be stronger. Please check our website [www.gpuuc.org](http://www.gpuuc.org) and our Facebook pages.

The third thing and really the most important message is Love is Surrounding Us from our UU Families. My heart is full of feelings. Big feelings and small feelings, loud feelings, quiet feelings, but the most important feeling is love. When I feel the love, I feel brave. When your heart is heavy, work back to love. With springtime here your heart will reach out more and feel hopeful. Share your love to all. Below is a new poem from one of my favorite authors Alexander McCall Smith. I hope you enjoy it.

### ***"In a time of distance"***

The unexpected always happens in the way  
The unexpected has always occurred:  
While we are doing something else,  
While we are thinking of altogether  
Different things - matters that events  
Then show to be every bit as unimportant  
As our human concerns so often are;  
And then, with the unexpected upon us,  
We look at one another with a sort of surprise;  
How could things possibly turn out this way  
When we are so competent, so pleased  
With the elaborate systems we've created -  
Networks and satellites, intelligent machines,  
Pills for every eventuality - except this one?  
And so we turn again to face one another  
And discover those things  
We had almost forgotten,  
But that, mercifully, are still there:  
Love and friendship, not just for those  
To whom we are closest, but also for those

Whom we do not know and of whom  
Perhaps we have in the past been frightened;  
The words brother and sister, powerful still,  
Are brought out, dusted down,  
Found to be still capable of expressing  
What we feel for others, that precise concern;  
Joined together in adversity  
We discover things we had put aside:  
Old board games with obscure rules,  
Books we had been meaning to read,  
Letters we had intended to write,  
Things we had thought we might say  
But for which we never found the time;  
And from these discoveries of self, of time,  
There comes a new realization  
That we have been in too much of hurry,  
That we have misused our fragile world,  
That we have forgotten the claims of others  
Who have been left behind;  
We find that out in our seclusion,  
In our silence; we commit ourselves afresh,  
We look for a few bars of song  
That we used to sing together,  
A long time ago; we give what we can,  
We wait, knowing that when this is over  
A lot of us - not all perhaps - but most,  
Will be slightly different people,  
And our world, though diminished,  
Will be much bigger, its beauty revealed afresh.

-- Alexander McCall Smith

Peace and love,  
*Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education*

#### Virtual Services

On Sunday, March 22nd we hosted our first ever virtual service. Those of you who missed it can watch it, listen to the audio or read the chat on our website under: WHO WE ARE - SUNDAY SERVICES - VIRTUAL SERVICES or click this link: <https://www.gpuuc.org/virtual-services.html>

We will continue to upload the weekly virtual services to the church website.

#### GPUC Annual Meeting

**Committee Annual Reports Due Friday, April 24.** Our GPUC Annual meeting will be held on Sunday, May 17th immediately after the worship service. All Committee Chairpersons are asked to submit a committee report for inclusion in the Annual report. Please **submit your report to Candy by email ([gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us)) no later than Friday, April 24th.** Each Committee's input will be compiled with the goal of completing the Annual report for distribution to the membership no later than Monday, May 11th.

#### From Our GPUC Board

##### Church Committees and Canvass

This is an unfortunate time for the church to be planning for next year, but here we are. As you know, we are doing our best to keep your church functioning and present in your lives. The needs of the church continue despite our isolation. At the March Board meeting a revised budget was approved anticipating a decrease in income of 7% (and I suspect it may be more than that). But, we will be able to balance the budget without reducing pay to any of our employees.

At present we are still planning to have the annual meeting on May 17 although it will likely be a virtual meeting (similar to our Sunday services which I hope many of you will attend) but with feedback from the congregation. At that meeting the Leadership Development committee will present a slate of officers and committee chairs to be voted upon. The Board will present a budget for the next year to be voted upon. So, if you have not returned your pledge sheet, please do so as we need to get a pledge commitment from everyone. We will need a few people to volunteer to chair a couple committees.

When you receive a call from someone on the Leadership Development committee, please give your serious consideration to stepping into a leadership role in the church. It really does not generally take any special expertise, just a passion for helping others and a very small amount of organizational effort. I

can promise you that the time and effort you put into it will be more than returned with a sense of gratitude and accomplishment.

So far we have pledges from 66 of approximately 114 pledgers. If you have ever served on the canvass committee you will know how wonderful it is when people respond BEFORE they get a call. I know some among us are having current or potential future financial uncertainty. It is very unfortunate that the church is in a position to be asking for pledges at this time. However, we must create a budget for the upcoming year and to do so, we need to know what level of support we will be able to count on from our members. So, make a pledge that is generous but one that you believe you can fulfill and let us know this week so that our canvass committee has fewer folks to reach out to in such a short time. Candy can get you a pledge card if you do not have one. This time of isolation and economic crisis will pass. Our church will continue to be here for all of us and those in our community who can "benefit from our ministry" as our founders said. So, let's continue to be present for each other and do what needs to be done to keep this worthwhile community available to all of us.

Namaste,  
Russell Chavey  
Board President

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### **Caring for one another**

At the March board meeting the suggestion was made and approved to develop a list of members and friends who are available to help those in our community who need assistance during this time of isolation. After the meeting I noticed that the same suggestion had been proffered on our church Facebook page. The idea is that there are likely folks among us who are struggling to cope with the difficulty of keeping adequate food supplies and other household needs while others have more than the usual amount of time due to work changes. There may be folks who are not able to drive and their usual sources of transportation are no longer available. There are certainly folks who are high risk and would be unwise to be visiting public places such as grocery stores. There may be folks who are suffering financially and have need for home repairs which could be handled by a handyman/woman among us.

So, if you are able to offer help please let us know. We will keep a list of those who have volunteered, along with what type of assistance and what days/times they could be available. Then, when someone lets us know they could use some help we can try to match them with an available volunteer. Send an email to [gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us) with the subject line "another wonderful volunteer." Include in the email your name, phone contact, a mention of what kinds of service you are willing/able to offer, the days of the week and times of day (morning/afternoon/evening) you are available.

I am hopeful that we can develop an effective list in the next few days and then let everyone know who the contact will be for matching those in need with our wonderful volunteers early next week.

Thank you in advance,  
Your Board

### **From Our Canvass Committee**

Dear GPUC members and friends,

We're off to an encouraging start in the annual GPUC Canvass. As of March 26, we have a total of 66 pledges in.

If you have not already sent in your pledge sheet, please either email it to our administrator Candy Dunn ([gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us)), send by regular mail, or drop it through the mail slot in the door on the Maumee side of the building. **We would appreciate receiving all of the pledge sheets as soon as possible.**

Thanks,  
The Canvass Committee  
Jerry Herron, Chuck Palmer, and Rudy Wedenoja

### **Fellowship News**

The Fellowship committee was planning a **Cinco de Mayo** luncheon on May 3rd. At this time it looks as though that luncheon will have to be postponed or cancelled. It's also possible the April meeting of the **Book Discussion Group** scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st, will be postponed. Get up to date information on both of these events by checking the weekly Blast from the church.

Looking forward to a return to our friendly church fellowship gatherings! *Give yourselves a hug! Juli*

### **Food Sharing**

### **Crossroads East Update**

This is an anxious time for all of us, but especially for people struggling to access life's basic necessities. If you are in a position to help, please consider bringing non-perishable food or toiletries to the church.



Candy has very kindly offered to collect donations, which will then be taken to Crossroads' main office on West Grand Blvd. (The east side location we normally donate to is closed for the time-being.) **The Church office is closed but Candy is working from home - to give her a heads up...please feel free to email [gpuc@gpuc.us](mailto:gpuc@gpuc.us) or leave a voicemail on the office phone 313-881-0420 ext. 10 as Candy is monitoring both.**

Thank you for your continued support of our community.

List of Sabbatical Speakers for 2020

Sabbatical Speakers		
Date	Worship Leader	Description
4/5/2020	John Artis	Congregant
4/12/2020	Rev. Mitra Rahnema	UU Minister, former interim minister at GPUC
4/19/2020	Mary Ann Perrone	Social Justice Activist
4/26/2020	Open	Open

Resale News



Resale shop news

**Do you have a bicycle or 2 you would like to donate to the GPUC Resale Shop?**

Here is a great opportunity to recycle that bike, clean out a spot in your garage and help GPUC. We are kicking off a bike drive this winter collecting bikes for resale this spring at the Resale Shop parking lot sale. We will take donated bikes in any shape, size or condition. Mark Franchett and Rudy Wedenoja will recondition and tune up the bikes prior to the sale. Please email, text or call Mark Franchett for pickup of your donated bike. ([mark.franchett@gmail.com](mailto:mark.franchett@gmail.com))

Auction News



Auction Update

The Roaring 20's auction party **has been rescheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2020.** If you have questions about the auction, email Robin Ramsay ([r Ramsay@comcast.net](mailto:r Ramsay@comcast.net)) or Christy Winder ([clwinder@gmail.com](mailto:clwinder@gmail.com)), or Kristen Foley ([smithk@umich.edu](mailto:smithk@umich.edu)).

GPUC Facebook page

This is a reminder to everyone that there is a **GPUC Facebook page**, administered by Julie Artis, Nikki Filippone and Rev. Alex (Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church - Members and Friends; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/647592795635301/>). This can be a place for church members and friends to keep up to date on:

- RE happenings,
- post about significant events in their family,
- link to events happening in the area that may be of general interest to our church family,
- give feedback to someone who has done something especially noteworthy to help the church community, etc.

If you have not visited the page or have not been there in a while, consider joining and checking it out periodically. This can be a way to stay in touch with our church family and to read positive messages of

hope and strength.

An example, there is a posted item about a church member whose family is suffering due to her unexpected medical issue.

## Things To Do



During this time I wanted to give you some resources of activities you can find online for all ages to

nurture the mind, body and soul. Creating art (see my art above) is one of the things that is great therapy for me. Knitting, reading, gardening, sewing, home decorating, woodworking, washing the car...all can be therapeutic...calming and a means to get into a positive zone. Enjoy these links and know that the world is a big and wonderful place and..."this too shall pass".

*GPUC newsletter editor -- Kathleen Ruhl*

Peabody Essex Museum: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/peabody-essex-museum>

Virtual concerts, plays, museums:

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/what-to-do-at-home-streaming-art-museums-concerts-coronavirus-trnd/index.html>

Russia's Hermitage Museum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49YeFsx1rlw>

Explore With Googles Arts & Culture: <https://artsandculture.google.com>

Especially for the kids...Storyline Online: <https://www.storylineonline.net>

The Metropolitan Opera: <https://www.metopera.org>

BroadwayHD: <https://www.broadwayhd.com>

Claudio Constantini Music: <https://www.youtube.com/user/consclau>

Detroit Zoo | Virtual Vitamin Z: <https://detroitzoo.org/virtual-vitamin-z>

Zoos Victoria: <https://www.zoo.org.au/animal-house>

YouTube Livestreaming

Animals: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=live+streaming+animals](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=live+streaming+animals)

This American Life: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org>

Stitcher Podcasts: <https://www.stitcher.com>

Skillshare online classes | Creativity, Business, Technology, Lifestyle: <https://www.skillshare.com>

Lynda.com FREE online learning (Grosse Pointe library card residents only)

Business, Software, Technology and Creative Skills:

<https://www.lynda.com/portal/patron?org=gp.lib.mi.us>

## Volunteer Offering

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting

**Carol Guither will lead a 60 minute gentle yoga session via Zoom.**

If you have a mat, blocks and a strap (or neck tie) that is helpful but you don't need anything except a clean space to lie, sit and stand on. Feel free to use a chair instead of the floor.

Please make sure you are honoring your own level of activity and flexibility. Make any adjustments you need. The yoga "mantra" always is "honor your own body". If it's not comfortable, don't do it.



Photo by Avrielle Suleiman on Unsplash

**Topic: Gentle Yoga for GPUC**

**Time: Wednesday April 1, 2020 at 11:00 AM Detroit**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/7407914681>**

## Healing Clinic and Meditation

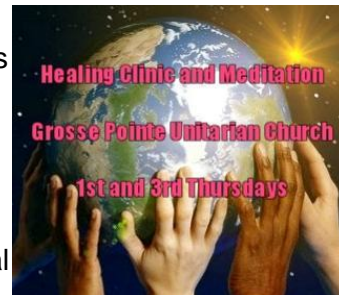
**Now online...Pranic Healing Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month**

**7:00 p.m. April 2nd and April 16th**

Join us for this online Zoom community event offering Pranic Healing sessions and Meditation on Twin Hearts.

Pranic Healing is an advanced system of energy medicine that utilizes prana or chi to cleanse and harmonize the body's energy system.

The healing clinic begins with a beautiful guided meditation using the universal Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Then Pranic Healers offer mini healing sessions for relief from physical and/or emotional issues.



*Donations welcome.*

Venmo

<https://venmo.com/Carrie-Viviano>

Cash App

[https://cash.app/\\$CarrieViviano](https://cash.app/$CarrieViviano)

Paypal

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/carrieviviano>

Must be 16 yrs old to participate in the meditation. All ages welcome for healing.

**To receive Zoom event scheduling info via email or for questions please contact: Carrie Viviano, Pranic Healer/Intro Leader, [carrie@pranichealing.com](mailto:carrie@pranichealing.com) or 586-943-4404**

## Newsletter Deadline

### Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by **Friday, April 17th at noon.**

Submit items to the newsletter email address: [newslettergpuc@gmail.com](mailto:newslettergpuc@gmail.com)

### Contact Information

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