

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 2020

Upcoming Services

March 1, 2020

Sermon: *"Dancing With Shame"*

Worship Leader: Marsha Zeller
Worship Associate: Chuck Palmer

"Shame derives its power from being unspeakable." -- Brené Brown

Grab your galoshes and wade in with me as we take a lighthearted look at the life changing super powers just waiting for us on the other side of understanding, unlocking and dismantling shame.

March 8, 2020

Sermon: *"Towards Sacred Activism"*

Worship Leader: Dawud Walid
Worship Associate: Meghan Boomhower

Towards Sacred Activism is an attempt at providing concise, general guidance regarding engagement in social justice activism from an Islamic perspective. Mr. Walid presents some general parameters and reminders based upon fundamental aspects of Islam drawn from our rich tradition which focus on building and supporting model life for all of Allah's creation, fellow humans being the priority.

Dawud Walid is an imam in the Metropolitan Detroit area and is a senior fellow at the Auburn Seminary based in New York City. In addition to his book *"Towards Sacred Activism,"* he is also co-author of the book *"Centering Black Narrative: Black Muslim Nobles Among the Early Pious Muslims."*

March 15, 2020

Sermon: *"What Will You Be Called?"*

Worship Leader: Rev. Mitra Rahnema
Worship Associate: Tonya Wells

Naming things, people, and experiences is about centering the stories that define who we are. Yet we often surrender this powerful act to others. Today we explore ways we can reclaim our stories and in doing so reclaim our authenticity.

March 22, 2020

Sermon: *"Happy All The Time?"*

Worship Leader: Jerry Herron

In This Issue

- [Upcoming Services](#)
- [Dr. Riegel's Sabbatical](#)
- [Religious Education](#)
- [Fellowship News](#)
- [Canvass Committee](#)
- [Adult Religious Education](#)
- [Food Sharing Sunday](#)
- [Sabbatical Speakers](#)
- [Resale Shop News](#)
- [GPUC Auction 2020](#)
- [Flowers for the Sanctuary](#)

Upcoming Events

- [Sat March 7th Fellowship Dinner](#)
- [Sun March 15th ARE Book Discussion](#)
- [Tue March 17th Book Group Discussion](#)
- [Sun March 22nd RE Pool Party](#)

Worship Associate: Suzanne Ross

The "happiness industry" is booming (to use William Davies' term). Meanwhile, Americans are growing less and less happy, statistically speaking. Which leads to some important questions-about what happiness means, and whether we are entitled to be happy, especially in difficult times. I want to make a case for happiness, and I'll try with a little help from my friends-poets and novelists and philosophers, musicians and, of course, Bullwinkle J. Moose.

March 29, 2020

Sermon: *"Listening - There Is More To It Than Meets The Ear"*

Worship Leader: Tonya Wells
Worship Associate: Maurya Kay

Your intentions, attention and intuition have so much to do with the ability to really listen to another human being and form meaningful connection. Come to consider how we can listen better in order to generate more love in our intertwined world.

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) 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

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



*'Tis a gift to be simple,
'Tis a gift to be free,
"Tis a gift to come down
Where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves'
In the place that's right
"Twill be in the the valley
Of love and delight.*

-- Nineteenth-Century Shaker Hymn

Once we take stock of our lives we realize how much we have. We may feel the urge to pare down, get back to basics, and learn what is essential for our happiness. We learn to realize what is important for our family. Is it important to work overtime to buy your new table or do your children need to be at their sport on a Sunday morning? Perhaps you could go to a resale shop for a table. Perhaps church school would be more important to teach your children about mindfulness than a Sunday morning sport? Your choices are part of simplifying your lives. Welcome your simple choices. They will become a part of an authentic journey.

I have heard parents saying that simplicity sometimes implies doing without. I think true simplicity is a conscious life choice which illuminates our lives from within. Less can mean more at times.

Each day offers us simple gifts when we are willing to search our hearts and minds for the place that's right for each one of us. I hope Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church becomes one of your simple but more important choices!

Religious Education Lessons

The **nursery** will be open at 10 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, Upper and Junior students are continuing their lessons on Abrahamic Faith-Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Junior OWL classes have started with Kathy and Andy Konwiak. If you need more information, please contact Kathy.

Senior High students meet with Erica Phardel, please contact her with any questions. All seniors are asked to help at our fellowship dinner, Saturday, March 7.

Dates to Remember

March 7-Fellowship Dinner-Nursery open

March 15-RE Committee Meeting-Nursery open at 9:15 a.m.

March 22-Pool Party at Warren Community Center at 1:00 p.m., must sign up ahead of time

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Email Scam Alert

Email Scams Continue Targeting Church Congregations

Some GPUC members and friends once again are receiving suspicious email messages, appearing to be from Dr. Alex Riegel, asking for gift cards. These emails were not sent by Dr. Riegel. **Please delete and do not reply to any suspicious message you may have received, appearing to be from Dr. Riegel, asking for money or gift cards.**

This is a widespread scam that has been targeting church congregations all across the country. *UU World*, the magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Association, published an article in July, "[Gift Card Scammers Targeting Congregations](#)," which has a helpful and detailed explanation of the problem.

If you or anyone you know receives any messages like this, the most important thing to remember is that **Dr. Riegel would never ask congregants for money or to buy gift cards in this manner.**

You can identify scam messages by looking at the sender's email address. Suspicious messages may have Dr. Riegel's name on them, but the email address will be some variation of his official address, which is alexgpuc@gmail.com. Any message that does not come from that address is not from Dr. Riegel.

Fellowship News

Chinese New Year Lunch a HUGE Success!

Thanks to all who attended the luncheon on February 2nd! Over 100 guests enjoyed spring rolls, vegetarian fried rice, ginger/scallion chicken, triple mushroom/mixed vegetables, fortune cookies and mandarin oranges, brought to you by the Golden Chopsticks Restaurant and the GPUC Fellowship Committee. Mark your calendars for the Committee's next luncheon on **Sunday, May 3rd** celebrating Cinco de Mayo!

Fellowship Dinner, March 7th, 6:00 p.m.

The Annual Fellowship Dinner kicks off our pledge drive for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Our theme this year is, "What We Can Do, Depends on You," recognizing that what we can do in our church programs is a direct result of what our members financially pledge to the church.

Childcare will be provided with advance notice to Julie Artis (julie@gpuc.us).

We look forward to seeing you on March 7th!
The Canvass Committee

March Book Group Discussion

The Book Group will meet on **Tuesday, March 17th at 5:30 p.m.** in the church Annex. Susan Boynton will lead the discussion of Barbara Shapiro's novel, "*The Muralist*." Everyone is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

A Message From Your Canvass Committee

Dear GPUC Members,

Last Sunday our former interim minister, Rev. Mitra Rahnema, gave a timely sermon, entitled, "Take Me to Church." She talked about how coming to church is a combination of liberation, redemption, and renewal. She talked about how church communities are not only special places for spiritual growth and renewal, but that churches save lives, and can positively impact their communities. She talked about how people make the church, not the other way around.

These ideas resonate with our Canvass theme of "What We Can Do, Depends on You." Your individual financial pledge of support for the next fiscal year will determine what we are able to do. As we are reminded frequently, by the good we do for each other, *we are the church, and we are a church not defined by any one person, but by who we are, all of us together-a beloved community*. The extent of your generosity will determine what our church community will be able to do next year.

There are several good ideas under consideration for what we could add:

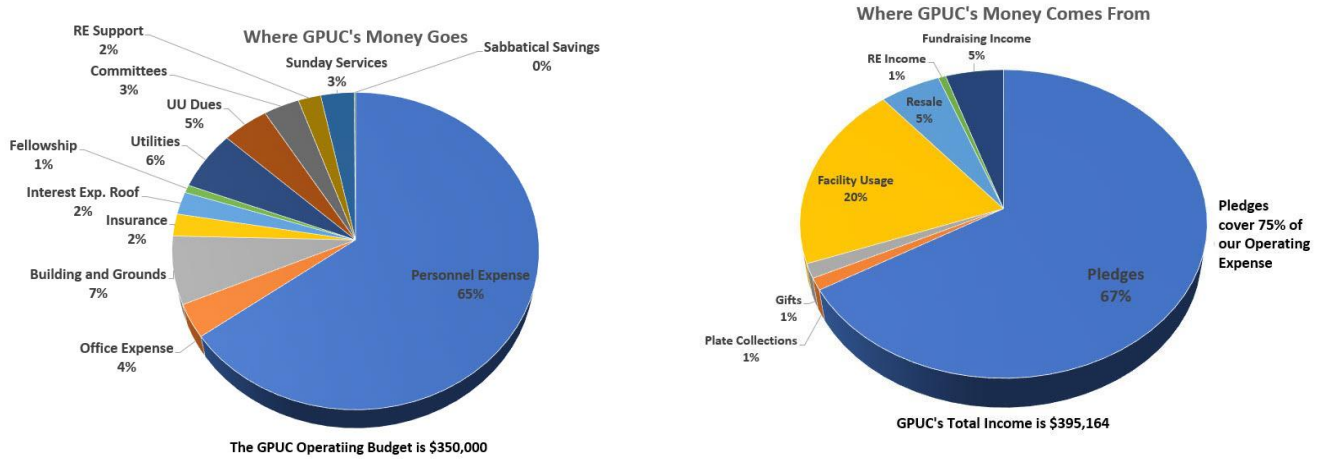
- Developing PR tools, publications, banners and gear for our members to take to social justice events in our community,
- Working on PR strategies for spreading the word about our church as the liberal religious community on the east side,
- Providing child care for *all* church events,
- Bringing nationally known speakers to our community.

To do more than maintain the status quo, our members need to pledge more. If you look at the pie charts on the reverse of this letter, you will see that current pledges of \$273,500 provide only 67% of our \$395,000 budget. With the loss of the City of Grosse Pointe rental income next fiscal year, increasing our pledge income becomes even more important. Our goal for next year is to increase total pledges 15%, to a total of \$314,500. If GPUC were a restaurant, don't you think we'd merit a nice tip?

We are a voluntary organization that relies on the generosity of our members. We can't compel you to give generously, we don't intend to shame you into giving more, we can only ask that you support our community to the fullest extent possible. What we can do next year, depends entirely on you. We hope to see you at the **Fellowship Dinner, Saturday March 7th**. Members at the dinner will have the opportunity to make their pledges there. We will then be following up with the rest of our members in the following weeks.

Sincerely,
The Canvass Committee

Jerry Herron, Chuck Palmer, & Rudy Wedenoja



Adult Religious Education

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church Adult Religious Education Committee presents

AN AFTERNOON WITH JESUS:
A REVIEW OF THE FIRST 80 YEARS FOR HIS FOLLOWERS WHO EVENTUALLY ARE CALLED CHRISTIAN

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020
12:00 NOON - 1:15PM

Dr. John Artis will facilitate an exploration of what Jesus really said and how the followers of Jesus spread his message throughout the ancient world. As a reference, John will use the book *Jesus and After: The First Eighty Years* by E. Bruce Brooks. The book is an easy read and is available through Amazon or through Beacon Press.

Light refreshments will be available afterwards.

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
17150 Maumee Ave.
Grosse Pointe, MI 48230
For additional information call **313-881-0420**

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church **Adult Religious Education Committee** is sponsoring a **March 15, 2020** discussion. For all church members and friends of GPUC. The discussion is entitled "An afternoon with Jesus and a review of the first 80 years for his followers who eventually are called Christian" During the discussion Dr. John Artis will facilitate an exploration of what Jesus really said and how the followers of Jesus spread his message throughout the ancient world. John will use as a reference the book "*Jesus and After: The First Eighty Years*" by E. Bruce Brooks. The book is an easy read and is available through Amazon or through Beacon Press. We will start at **12:00 noon** and finish no later than 1:15 p.m. Light refreshments will be available.

Food Sharing

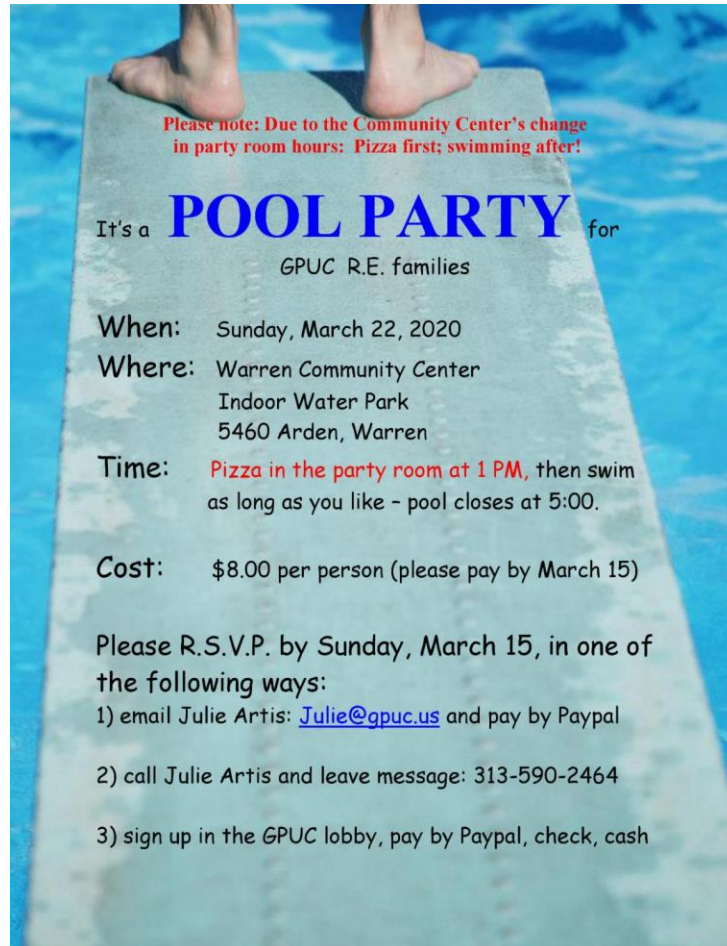
Next Food Sharing Sunday, MARCH 8th. GPUC helps stock the food pantry at Crossroads East on Moross. We deliver non-perishables once a month, as well as bread, fruits and veggies, milk, and eggs several times a month. Please consider bringing a can or box of non-perishable food to church with you on March 8th. We also gladly accept cash and check donations. Many thanks for your continued support of this local resource!

List of Sabbatical Speakers for 2020

Sabbatical Speakers		
Date	Worship Leader	Description
3/1/2020	Masha Zeller	Congregant
3/8/2020	Dawud Walid	Prayer leader, lecturer & author on the Islamic faith and social justice activism.
3/15/2020	Rev. Mitra Rahnema	UU Minister, former interim minister at GPUC
3/22/2020	Jerry Herron	Congregant

3/29/2020	Tonya Wells	Congregant
4/5/2020	Judith Levy	United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan
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	Bill Moore	Congregant

R.E. Family Pool Party!



Please note: Due to the Community Center's change in party room hours: Pizza first; swimming after!

It's a **POOL PARTY** for
GPUC R.E. families

When: Sunday, March 22, 2020
Where: Warren Community Center
Indoor Water Park
5460 Arden, Warren
Time: Pizza in the party room at 1 PM, then swim as long as you like - pool closes at 5:00.
Cost: \$8.00 per person (please pay by March 15)

Please R.S.V.P. by Sunday, March 15, in one of the following ways:

- 1) email Julie Artis: Julie@gpuc.us and pay by Paypal
- 2) call Julie Artis and leave message: 313-590-2464
- 3) sign up in the GPUC lobby, pay by Paypal, check, cash

Music News

Youth Choir rehearsals continue with enthusiastic kids singing at the top of their lungs in the Purple Room after RE classes--Come and join along! We're ramping up to sing in church in April and in May.

Adult Choir continues to rehearse on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and sing twice-monthly for services.

JOSEPH PALAZZOLO ANNUAL PIANO CONCERT entitled *Composers of Color* will present gorgeous music and fascinating stories of Black and Latino composers whom you may never have heard of. World-Class violinist and 2-time Grammy Winner **John McLaughlin-Williams** will be joining me, along with Narrator **James Rose, Jr.**, African-American singer and musician who is a fellow member of Tuesday Musicale of Detroit. **Saturday, May 9th at 4:00 p.m. at our very own GPUC.**

Tickets will be on sale in a few weeks.

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)

Auction News



Calling all GPUC Roaring 20s Auction Congregants!

Have you ever been lucky enough to receive a "behind the scenes" personalized tour of the Detroit Institute of Arts? How about a long weekend in a cozy condo at Boyne Highlands? By attending our **GPUC Auction on April 25th**, these items will be available for your bidding. There are also excellent donations by our members for babysitting services, hand-made quilts, monthly Bundt cakes, and even a "Fowling" party. (Wait - what is that?? Google it.) Don't miss out on all the fun! Mark your calendar and plan to attend the auction. Tickets will be sold closer to the event. Delicious food and drink will be provided, along with child care. Dressing up adds to the fun, but is certainly not required. If you have questions about the auction, email Robin Ramsay (rjramsay@comcast.net) or Christy Winder (clwinder@gmail.com).

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 up to date on significant events involving our church family that might otherwise be shared in "milestones," something we used to do during service but was too time consuming to continue. *As an example, I have just posted an item about a church member whose family is suffering due to her unexpected medical issue.*

Healing Clinic and Meditation

Healing Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month

7:00 p.m. March 5th and March 19th at GPUC

Join us for this 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. Must be 16 yrs old to participate in the meditation. All ages welcome for healing. We will gather in the Church Gallery at **7:00 p.m.**

For More Information or Questions please contact: Carrie Viviano, Pranic Healer/Intro Leader carrie@pranichealing.com .



Daylight Savings Time

Turn your clocks ahead for Daylight Savings Time March 8th
A gentle reminder to Spring Ahead.

Flower Donations

Donate Flowers for the Sanctuary Please consider donating fresh flowers for the Sanctuary in recognition, in honor of someone dear or to celebrate or commemorate a special occasion. Flowers add significantly to the ambience on Sunday mornings. Please use the yellow insert in the Sunday order of service or contact the church office to sign-up for a Sunday or two.

You may bring your own arrangement or provide a check (minimum cost \$25) for Susan Hartz (our talented flower chairperson) to purchase and arrange the flowers. After the worship service you may take your flowers home to enjoy the rest of the week. If you have questions, please feel free to email or call the church office at gpuc@gpuc.us or (313) 881-0420. Thank you for sharing your remembrances of special occasions and important people in your life.

Newsletter Deadline

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by **Wednesday, March 18th at noon**. Submit items to the newsletter email address: newslettergpuc@gmail.com

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 Website: www.gpuuc.org
Editor: Kathleen Ruhl newslettergpuc@gmail.com