

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*

January 26, 2015

Upcoming Services

February 1, 2015

10:30 AM

Silence and the Tyranny of the Discursive Mind

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Jim Moir, Worship Associate

As a meditation teacher I have often heard people decry silence. Indeed, I have heard many people decry even the two minutes of silence into which we invite them on a Sunday morning. I will explore why this is so and suggest that silence isn't actually what chagrins people. What chagrins people is what happens in the context of silence. (Obvious hint - the answer is in the sermon title.) Given this, I will suggest a way forward into silence so that we may discover the gift silence is, when we overcome the impediment to it. I will also suggest that what awaits us in silence is a treasure trove of subtle and delightful experiences!

February 8, 2015

10:30 AM

John 3.1415926535

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate

We've all seen it during NFL games, that John 3:16 sign that gets held up with every extra point and field goal attempt. "For God so loved the world..." It's the ultimate theological trump card and in its name Christianity has conquered most of the western world. To be honest, as a UU I am rather jealous of this trump card. People get in line with revelation! With UUs it is not so easy. We have no theological trump card in our tradition and we are deeply enmeshed in radical individualism. One symptom of this is perpetual discussion mistaken for action, a trend that plagues many UU congregations. The wheel can spin endlessly while getting nowhere (hence the number pi in the sermon title)... The antidote to this tendency is mission, which I will address in this sermon. Indeed, for UU congregations mission stands in lieu of John 3:16. It represents the collective will of the congregation and as such stands as our theological trump card.

February 15, 2015

10:30 AM

James Baldwin, 20th Century African American Novelist

Rev. Fran Dew

Cynthia Luce, Worship Associate

Rev. Dew's topic this morning will be James Baldwin, 20th century African American novelist, playwright, poet, and social critic.

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February 22, 2015

(non mystic) Poetry Slam

10:30 AM

[Resale Shop
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Upcoming Events

[Fri Jan 30 Book
Discussion](#)

[Tue Feb 10 Alliance
Luncheon](#)

[Sat Feb 14 Habitat
Build](#)

[Sun Feb 15
Understanding
Hospice](#)

[Thu Feb 19 Women's
Book Discussion](#)

[Fri Feb 27 Racism
Discussion Group](#)

[Sun Mar 1
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[Forward To A Friend](#)

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Janet Weber, Worship Associate

This Sunday we will step away from the mystic poets and explore the poetic talents, images, metaphors, and wisdom of numerous other masters of rhyme, from Lewis Carroll to Maya Angelou to William Wordsworth and others. Come! Bring your vorpal sword. Help us slay the Jabberwock!

March 1, 2015

*The Big Rock Candy Mountain: Thoughts on the Why and
Wherefore of Heaven*

10:30 AM

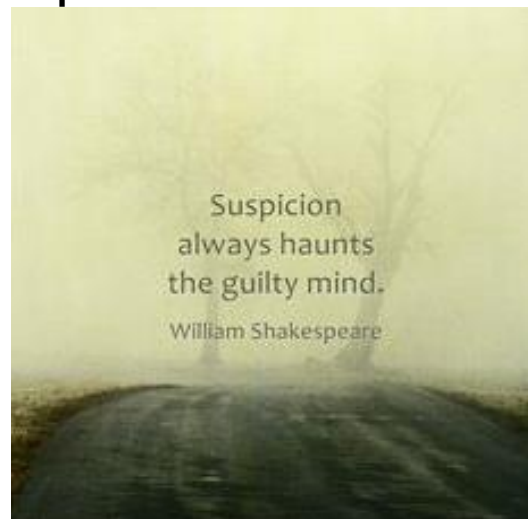
Dr. Alexander Riegel

Joseph Buttiglieri, Worship Associate

Is heaven for real? Or, is heaven simply an expression of wish fulfillment a la Sigmund Freud? In this sermon we will explore different notions of the afterlife, a belief that has attended almost all religious systems since the dawn of time, from the ancient shamans to the Egyptians to Christianity to New Ageism and even the increasing phenomenon of Near Death Experience. Why has nearly every religious tradition persisted in the belief in an afterlife? Further, does this persistence tell us anything meaningful about the matter? Finally, I invite you into a thought experiment between now and the time this sermon is delivered, namely, consider whether the manner in which you live your life would change if you knew life continued on indefinitely.

Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

Inquire First. Assume never.



In my December newsletter article, where I talked about giving the gift of doubt, I made a reference to assumptions and attributions. I'd like to expand those two concepts here and talk about balancing them with inquiry.

The making of assumptions and attributions are pervasive psychological tendencies we all share. To make an assumption is to believe something without checking the data. For instance: "I know Preston is skiing with his friends tonight because that's what he told me he would be doing." This is different than checking the data and therefore knowing that what one believes is in fact the case. For instance: "I know Preston is skiing with his friends tonight because I just drove to the slope and handed him his ski pants." Clearly, there is a great difference between "that's what he told me he would be doing" and "I just drove to the slope and handed him his ski pants." The former grounds an assumption. The latter grounds true knowledge.

To make an attribution is to project intent regarding another person's statement or actions. For instance: "You wouldn't have said (X) if you really cared about me." Or, "You don't work hard because you're lazy." The first instance involves an attribution about someone's feeling state, "You don't care about me." The second involves an attribution about someone's personal motivation, "You are lazy." You know where I'm going with this... in both instances we are looking at psychological projections that could be wrong. In the first instance, we need to consider the possibility that though someone might be critical toward us they may still love us. In the second instance, we need to consider the possibility that someone may appear to be lazy on the outside when in fact they are working hard on the inside (Perhaps they are simply beguiled by an undetected learning disability.).

Like I said, the making of assumptions and attributions are pervasive psychological tendencies we all share - and we do them all the time! However, because we view them from inside our own skin we often mistake our assumptions and attributions for true knowledge. This can be intensely problematic for interpersonal relationships, both organizationally and in the context of one's personal life.

I propose that a way out of the interpersonal morass that assumptions and attributions can cause is inquiry. If we can learn to catch ourselves making assumptions and attributions, no matter how accurate they seem to us, and test them with inquiry, we will go a long way toward solving interpersonal problems - both organizationally and in the context of one's personal life. I'll end by using one example from above, namely, "You wouldn't have said (X) if you really cared about me." How would such an attribution look different if it was tempered by inquiry? Here's one possibility. "You say that you care about me but the way you speak to me is critical. I have trouble reconciling criticism with positive regard. Can you explain how you can care about me and also be critical of me?" Of course, this needs to be a genuine, neutral inquiry if it is going to evoke a meaningful response.

Namaste,
Alex

GPUC President's Message

The GPUC Finance Committee met this month with the objective of creating a draft 2015/2016 budget. Assuming an increase in pledges for 2015/16, we were able to draft a reasonable budget with some cuts in expenditures.

For those not aware, Beaumont Hospital has been leasing our parking lot as overflow parking Monday through Friday. This lease arrangement has been in place for over 25 years. This annual lease is approximately \$30,000. As the hospital is constructing a new parking deck on site, they will terminate our parking lot lease sometime 2nd quarter 2016.

To help minimize the impact of this lost income, the Finance Committee has elected to only utilize 50% of the 2015/2016 hospital lease income in the 2015/2016 budget and then utilize the remaining 50% as income in the 2016/2017 budget.

The Finance Committee also drafted an initial review of projected GPUC budgets for the next 4 years to insure that we have an overall strategy that will provide reasonable financial security for GPUC.

The members of the GPUC Finance Committee are Joe Buttiglieri, Jean Ritok, Robin Ramsay, Paul Rowady and Mark Franchett. Please feel free to contact any of the members with comments, concerns or questions.

Thanks.

Mark Franchett
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

Announcements

Fellowship Dinner Save the Date - Saturday, March 21st, 2015

Further to feasting on fine food and favorable friendliness, this year's Fellowship Dinner is being designed as a launchpad for a new and revitalized generation in the life of GPUC. As such, the theme we are working on is "Re-Founding GPUC: Vision 2020", and it is sure to be provocative, illuminating and entertaining. Please mark your calendars for the evening of March 21, 2015. Details to follow.

Paul Rowady and Joe Buttiglieri, Canvass Co-Chairs

Membership - Newcomers' Circle

We had a newcomer circle on January 18 with 6 attendees. Newcomers' Circles are for those who have recently started attending GPUC and would like to know more about Unitarian Universalism or GPUC. The Circle meets with the minister in the library following a brief coffee hour. If you have been attending GPUC for a while and feel a sense of affinity with our congregation and the principles we uphold, this is a great opportunity to make a stronger commitment. Our plan is to have a Newcomers' Circle about every 6 weeks with the next one on Sunday, March 1.

Suzanne Ross, Membership Chairman

Alliance News

On Tuesday, February 10, 2015 the Alliance will host Michele Hodges, president of the Belle Isle Conservancy who will discuss the history of Belle Isle, its current status, what has been accomplished so far, and what is hoped to accomplish in the future. Formed in the fall of 2011 through a merger of four existing nonprofits-Friends of Belle Isle, Belle Isle Botanical Society, Belle Isle Women's Committee and Friends of the Belle Isle Aquarium-the new conservancy, in partnership with the City of Detroit, will bring more private and public resources to this beautiful island park.

Lunch begins at noon, only \$7.00. Please call Shirley Reeves for reservations.

Widows/ers Helping Widows/ers

No one gets what it is like to re-start your life after the death of your spouse/life partner except someone else who has had to do the same thing. None of us expected to find ourselves in this strange situation, having to re-invent ourselves. We can't know where the road will take us, but we can know we're taking it together. Let's meet for conversation and have some fun since friends help make a rocky road a little smoother. We will be meeting on Tuesdays at 10:00am at the home of Jean Dupuis. Please contact Cynthia Luce if you would like to participate. A date for the first meeting will be set after we receive your response.

Tutoring

For the second half of the year at Detroit Merit Academy, GPUC will be sending five more tutors to join the group of five that started earlier in the year. The ten tutors are: Herb Levitt, Fran Burke, Ruth Orintas, John Owens, Mary Zahler, Dick Olson, Arlene Bradford, Patty Gotham, Suzanne Ross and Susie Boynton.

Principal Sandra Martin reported that three more teachers have requested tutors in Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade, if anyone wants to experience the rewards of helping students in reading or math in a well organized and interesting school. Teachers and staff appreciate their tutors very much and remind us of that frequently. Our own Sarah Neely who teaches second grade at Maire School said she would gladly accommodate the schedule of a tutor who wants to work with her. Please contact Susie Boynton for more information.

Interweave

Whoever you are, whomever you love, you are welcome here! GPUC is an official Welcoming Congregation. We have classes, discussions, and movies relating to LGBTQ issues. Our kids attend OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes. We have had a booth at Motor City Pride for the last two years. We have our rainbow flag and bumper stickers! The belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people is an important one to Unitarians! However, outside of the church, we live in a time and place that does not recognize LGBTQ folks as full citizens. The GPUC

Interweave group is a member of the larger Interweave Continental, an organization of LGBTQ people and their Allies dedicated to the spiritual, political, and social well-being of LGBTQ people. If this is something you would like to be a part of, please join us at our next meeting! We meet at the church on the first Sunday of the month at noon. Welcome, welcome, welcome!

Upon Further Reflection

Recently Dr. Riegel preached a sermon entitled "Strife Is the Perpetual Food of the Soul." A recent Quest magazine publication (a monthly UUA publication for CLF - Church of the Larger Fellowship) also tackled this difficult topic. If you would like to explore this topic further, visit:

www.questformeaning.org/quest-monthly/transformation/ for a number of additional resources.

Habitat for Humanity ~ Grosse Pointe Partners

Our Second Saturday Build will be **February 14, 2015**. If you are interested in joining us, please email or call me. At this time I do not know at which location we will be working, but I promise to keep you informed.

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 14, 2015**. This will be OUR turn (GPUC) to provide the majority of the labor as well as lunch for the Second Saturday Build workers. This is a great opportunity to show your support either physically or monetarily (for lunch supplies). You and your friends, as well as your children/grandchildren ages 16 and up are welcome as well. Helping our neighbors in need is a wonderful way to demonstrate our UU values. You will also meet some wonderful people from our area. Habitat for Humanity also provides a great "community outreach" and "mentoring" opportunity for all of us.

I am looking forward to your continued support!

Thank You.

George Gray

Upcoming Live Theater at GPUC

On Saturday March 14 GPUC will host "Diversity in Love" an evening of dramatic theater featuring original short scripts performed by the Rosedale Community Players. Including the play "Dear Me" by Dave Durham, it is a life comedy in one act that shows the many sides of love, and its power to form, strengthen, and heal families.

This play is a LGBT themed original script, being rehearsed and prepared for AACTFEST, a competition conducted by the American Association of Community Theaters. RCP won State Championships in 2005 and 2007, and took runner up in 2013.

A talk back will take place after this piece, offering an open dialogue between the author, the performers, and the audience.

Stravinsky's The Soldier's Tale

Grosse Pointe War Memorial

Wednesday, March 18, 2015, 7:00PM

Did you know that Dr. Riegel will be narrating the part of the devil in the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra's (BBSO) rendition of Stravinsky's The Soldier's Tale? If you are free Wednesday evening, March 18, come take in dinner and the performance!

Tickets are still available: <http://www.bbsso.org/activek/2014-2015-c21>



Musical Notes

WANTED: Kids to Sing in GPUC's Youth Choir

Come join the fun and sing for our very appreciative congregation. Youth choir sings about twice a month. Weekly rehearsals are held immediately after RE classes in the Purple Room. Hope to see some new smiling faces!

Birth Announcement

April and John Pasquarelli are happy to announce the birth of their son, Jacob, born Dec 28, 2014 (7lbs, 15 ounces, 21.5 inches). Says April, their "cuddly little bundle, our new baby boy has arrived. He brought us all the joy we know and truly touched our lives." Jacob's happy siblings are Kyle, Cody, Aubryonna, Gracie, Gianni, and Azaryiah



GPUC Sit and Stitch New Time

Sit and Stitch is changing its schedule to meeting on the second Tuesday of the month from 4:30 to 6:30pm. We will continue to meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. We will meet January 27 and February 24 at 7pm and February 10 at 4:30. All meetings are in the Annex. This change is because Ann has accepted the vacancy for Board of Trustees Secretary and Sit and Stitch conflicted with the Board meetings. All are welcome to join us for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.). Please contact Ann Helm with any questions. Feel free to just drop in and join the group!

Circle-Circle Dinner and Mini-Auction: Thanks!

Thanks to Julie Artis and her team for organizing a wonderful night of fellowship, and entertainment! It was a terrific venue for our little Mini-Auction, which turned out to be a big success. The Auction exceeded expectations, earning \$7,755! I'm constantly impressed by the generosity of GPUCers. Thanks to all who donated trips, fun outings and valuable items. Thanks to all who bid on them. Thanks for the awesome auctioneers (Joe and Sara), and the awesome bookkeeping/organizing (Veronica). Thanks for the donated food, the laughs and the drumming!

Robin Ramsay

Resale Shop News

Time to schedule Thursday evenings at the GPUC Resale Shop. Work for two hours, 7 pm to 9 pm, approximately once every five to six weeks. It's easy, it's sociable, it gives you an exclusive preview of our merchandise. Schedules are updated every three months. Give it a try. Call or text Suzanne Ross.

Wanted--Large Paper Grocery Bags

The Clearance Corner, a separate part of the Resale Shop, is having great success with the end of the month Bag Day sales, and they are running out of large paper bags with handles. You may donate bags to the Clearance Corner on Wednesdays, 10am-3pm, or Thursdays, 7-9 pm. You may also leave them on the top shelves of the cloak room; the staff will pick them up. (Don't forget to shop at the Resale Shop while you're there--lots of interesting bargains!)

Jean Dupuis

Holiday Giving 2014

We met our goals and more! Thanks to the generosity of members and friends, we collected 31.5 Christmas Baskets, and \$1,278.11 for spiral cut hams, fresh fruit, Pepperidge Farms bread and holiday napkins. Donations of books, gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and socks were sufficient for all the children in the families. Over 21 volunteers worked on the Holiday Giving program for families at the Detroit Merit Academy. Not many members and friends missed the opportunity to help the neediest families with 92 children and 49 parents at Detroit Merit (families were chosen by the school social worker, Tameka Arnold). The volunteers and contributors are too numerous to mention. It was a great showing of the generosity of GPUC.

Susie Boynton

Scrip Update

A big THANK YOU to the following families for making our holiday scrip order (and profit) the largest ever - Biernat, Boynton, Chavey/Winder, Dunn, Franchett, Helm, Hosey, Ottenhoff and Semanision!!

As a reminder, the scrip gift card fundraising program is ongoing, and you can place an order anytime. If you've never participated before, it's easy! Order forms which list the hundreds of familiar participating retailers are available on our website (www.gpuc.us) and in the church office and foyer. Drop off your completed form, along with your check made payable to GPUC (scrip in the memo line), to the office. Orders are placed every two weeks or so, and cards are distributed to you upon their arrival.

If you would like additional information or have questions about the scrip program, please contact Jennifer Semanison, the Scrip Coordinator. Thank you in advance for your support of the GPUC RE Program!

Coffee Hour

Are you a fan of Coffee Hour after Sunday Service? Volunteers are needed to make coffee for Sundays during this year. "Sign up" is in the lobby, or email Sonja Franchett. Training and directions are happily provided! Thanks for your help and participation in building our church community.

Newsletter Deadline

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

Adult Religious Education

Attending Adult Religious Education events enlightens us and broadens our sense of fellowship



Chalice Circles continue at their appointed times.

Please mark your calendars for these upcoming events

Movie Night

We are looking for movie suggestions and volunteers to lead movie night discussions.

If you have an idea please email Jill Crane at jill@gpuc.us Movies should be readily available either on Netflix or from the local video stores or libraries. Looking forward to hearing your suggestions.

Understanding Hospice

Please join us on Sunday, February 15 at noon in the chapel for this informative program given by Laura Pogue, a hospice provider from The Great Lakes Caring Centers. She will respond to the many misconceptions about hospice care.

Women's Book Discussion Group - Thursday, February 19th, 6pm, GPUC Annex

Barbara Moran will present her poetry discussion this month instead of April. Poetry booklets for previewing are available in the office between 10 and 3 on weekdays and on Sundays from Jill Crane.

Revised book discussion lists are available in the church foyer.

Upcoming Book Discussions

On Friday, January 30 John Artis will lead the second of a two part discussion on the book, The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege by Robert Jensen This short, but powerful book attempts to rearrange the Race question from one dealing with racial minorities to one dealing with whites and white privilege as the Problem facing our country. The author examines personal experience, data, and theory and uses them for examining race and racism in America.

On Fridays, February 27 and March 6 the discussion continues with, Reproducing Racism by Daria Roithmayr. This powerful book examines how everyday choices we make without any intention of doing so lock in white advantage in America. She examines the locked in system beginning with Jim Crow and demonstrates how it is now a self-reinforcing and perhaps troubling permanent economic class system in America. Please sign up in the foyer after the service.

Jill Crane
Director, Adult Religious Education

Religious Education News

"Too often we under estimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." -Leo Buscaglia



As February arrives cold, wet and gray, it also brings Valentine's Day!!! This day helps us think of what and who we really love. It should be straightforward, knowing what and who we love. Is it family, job, community and our church? Many times we let the media, magazines, friends, and the news influence us. Many times, that influence brings to us not love but fear and even loathing. This week, try coming to church and having your children come to their RE classes to learn about their religion and other religions with an open and loving heart. Your children will share the moments they see or hear what and who they love. Together in our RE classes, we will explore other religions and ideas about faith to come to an appreciation of not only those faiths, but also our own Unitarian Universalist faith.

As Reverend Alex expressed last week, GPUC is the best kept secret on the East side. GPUC is the place that intrigues us and encourages us to volunteer to make our church a place for all to come. We are a church built on love. One of my favorite authors, Willa Cather quotes, "Where there is great love there are always miracles." GPUC has great LOVE!

Religious Education Lessons

Nursery and Preschool is always opens at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning.

Lower and Upper Elementary and Junior students will continue their studies on World Religions. The month of February they will study Hinduism. The junior students will also start their Church Pal program beginning February 1st. The students will continue to meet first in the church on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and then proceed to class. On the other Sundays, they will go directly to class.

Senior high students on Sunday, February 1 are asked to attend church with their family. On Saturday, February 7th they will meet for Gleaners Community Service from 9:00-11:30 a.m. Please RSVP to Ann Ottenhoff. On Sunday, February 15th, they will meet at GPUC at 1:30 p.m. to proceed to the Sugar Hill Studio for a service project to make bowls for the Empty Bowls service project. On Sunday, February 22nd, they will meet at the Ottenhoff home at 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Happy Valentine's Day!
Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

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.gpuc.us
Editor: Rudy Wedenoja newsletter@gpuc.us