


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

April 2016

Upcoming Services

April 3, 2016

10:30 AM

Catching Sight in the Storm: A Covenant of Risk for Today

Nic Cable

Janet Weber, Worship Associate

As Spring arrives, we are invited to explore how far we are willing to venture out into the world. Our faith calls us to be with one another and to nurture a wider vision of Beloved Community. Nic Cable will explore a vision of our shared covenant today, a vision that acknowledges the risk, the fear, and the uncertainty of life.

Nic Cable is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist from Milwaukee Wisconsin. He attended DePaul University and Chicago Theological Seminary in his preparation for UU ministry. In the past couple years, Nic has worked with the UUA in Stewardship and Development and the UU Church of Greater Lansing. He looks forward to moving with his wife this summer to Saint Paul, MN, where he will serve as a Ministerial Intern at Unity Church-Unitarian following his wife's completion of her law studies at MSU.

April 10, 2016

10:30 AM

Question Box Sermon

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Joseph Buttiglieri, Worship Associate

From time to time Dr. Riegel does a question box sermon, a common practice among UU ministers. This is your opportunity to ask Alex any question(s) you want (Of course, he has the option not to answer, which he has only exercised once in 25 years!). He will answer your question in 300 words or less. The only requirement is that you submit your question(s) ahead of time. If you have a question you would like to ask Dr. Riegel, or a topic on which you would like to hear him muse, please email him directly at drriegel@gpuc.us. Deadline for submitting question is Wednesday, April 6th.

April 17, 2016

10:30 AM

Shakespeare As Spiritual Guide

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Meghan Boomhower, Worship Associate

Shakespeare is among the most prolific and ingenious writers in the western world. While we all have some exposure to Shakespeare, Shakespeare's brilliance is generally not recognized for what it is. Indeed, Shakespeare's work could be the guidebook by which to live one's entire life! Join us as we delve into Shakespeare's work, revisiting some very familiar pieces and perhaps being exposed to Shakespearean wisdom that may be new to us.

April 24, 2016

10:30 AM

Inter-generational Earth Day Service: the Book of Nature

Dr. Alexander Riegel & Julie Artis

The "Book of Nature" is a religious and philosophical concept originating in the Middle Ages, which views nature as a book to be read for knowledge and understanding. Early theologians actually believed that the Book of Nature was a source of God's revelation to humankind, which could lead to knowledge of God himself. Unitarian Universalists have a somewhat different theology but we do share an understanding of the sacred depths (and importance) of nature for life. After all, our Seventh Principle speaks to this very thing: "respect for the interdependent web existence of which we are a part." Join us as we share in an inter-generational service designed to help us remember the sacred depths of nature and its importance for life!

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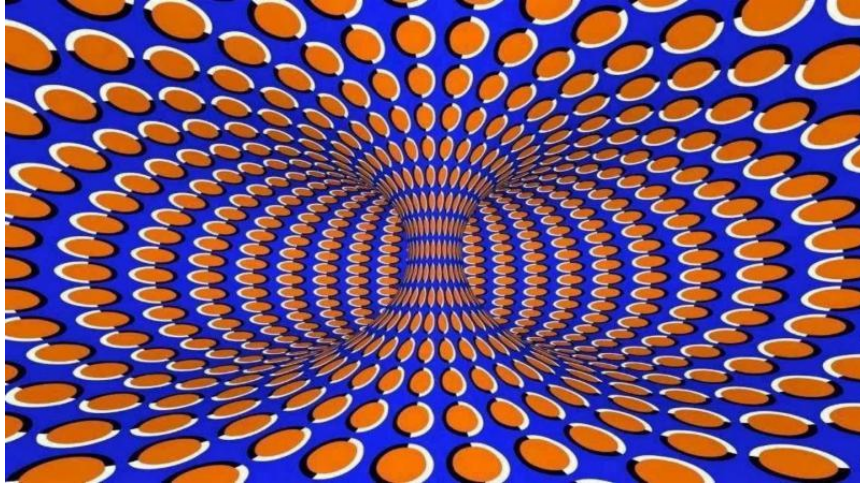
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Alexander's Meander

Directing Attention Determines Reality



During a recent Introduction to Meditation class I talked about the fact that by learning actively to direct one's attention (which is really what beginning meditation is all about (see the book, "The Attention Revolution," by Alan Wallace)) one can literally define one's reality.

Most people do not realize that they do not actively direct their attention. Rather, environmental stimuli pull one's attention to various objects without one's assent. That is, attention is normally passive. Hence, one's "reality" is passively determined, meaning that whatever the environment offers to one becomes one's experience.

For instance, look at the image above. At first glance it seems to be spinning clockwise. This is because one's attention is passively absorbed by the entire image. But the truth of the matter is that this apparent clockwise spin is an illusion! That this is the case can be seen by actively directing one's attention to a single orange spot on the image, and keeping one's attention on that spot alone. When one does this, the illusion of the clockwise spin ceases and one sees the image as it truly is. This simple example demonstrates that by actively directing one's attention one determines one's reality.

This lesson in directing attention can change one's life. For instance, consider a difficult situation or individual with which/whom you struggle. Under normal circumstances your attention is passively pulled to those aspects of the situation/individual that you find difficult. But by actively directing your attention to a different part of the situation or aspect of the individual, your experience of that situation or individual will change. You will, without exaggeration, create a new reality for yourself. A situation will become less negative (or even positive) or the individual will be viewed less negatively (or even positively).

Take a moment and conduct this thought experiment. Think of a situation/individual that you experience negatively and then think about (actively direct your attention toward) something positive about that situation/individual (No situation or individual is all negative.). Then, after conducting this thought experiment, actually engage that situation/individual and put the lesson into practice. You will discover that the reality of that situation/individual is significantly different than how you have been perceiving it. In fact, you will likely experience that situation/individual positively. What a gift that would be, both for others and yourself!

"When a pickpocket meets the Pope, all he sees are the Pope's pockets."

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

Happy Spring to everyone! At this writing I'm looking forward to a lovely Easter morning with our GPUC community.

The Board is following through on several projects:

- The Finance Committee is making progress on next year's Budget. Although we have a tentative plan, we're waiting for the final total of congregational pledges. Your contributions decide what the church is able to spend on staff salaries, building maintenance and improvements, and programming. Thanks to all those who have already made their generous pledges! If you haven't yet sent in your pledge decision, please contact Candy Dunn in the office, or the Canvass Chairs-- Paul Rowady and Joe Buttiglieri. I am grateful to be part of such a mutually caring and involved community. With the final

totals, the Finance Committee will recommend a Budget for the Board's Approval. The proposed Budget will be presented to the congregation for discussion at a Budget Hearing on May 1, and then the congregation will vote on the proposed Budget at the Annual Meeting on May 15.

- A task force, headed by Veronica Smith, has been formed to obtain professional consultation on the air-conditioning project. We hope to have a consult soon with a definitive technical plan to follow. Then the task force will solicit bids and make recommendations to the Board. We'd all like to have air-conditioning this summer, but we want to be sure we have the most workable, efficient and cost-effective plan.
- Chris Vadino has agreed to head the task force devoted to developing a shared congregational Vision for our future. She is in the process of gathering other members who have experience and expertise in this area.
- Please note that we have a new, exciting fundraising opportunity through Amazon Smile. Meghan Boomhower brought this idea to the Board and has done the work to register GPUC with Amazon. Please read the instructions on signing up for this easy, cost-free method of gaining donations for GPUC every time you make a purchase through Amazon! Thanks, Meghan.
- The Board has been working on a church policy for handling investments and the Endowment Fund, and will probably vote at the April Board meeting.

Please remember that Board meetings are open to the congregation and take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Gallery. We also welcome your questions and feedback at the fireside after services on Sunday.

Dates to remember:

Tuesday, April 12, 7pm

April Board Meeting

Sunday, May 1, 12 noon

Congregational Budget Hearing

Sunday, May 15, 12 noon

Annual Meeting

Robin Ramsay

President, GPUC Board of Trustees

Religious Education News

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." Ralph Waldo Emerson



My spirit is starting to soar and I believe it is because of the sunlight and also because the earth seems greener. It is the season of increasing light and this brings strength. Also, the month of April is National Volunteer Recognition Month. I know the RE Program wouldn't have the strength without our tireless volunteers. I want to thank all of you for donating all of your talents and time to the RE program. I believe that volunteering is one of the most satisfying things that I can do and I hope it is for you as well. It encourages me to look outward rather than inward and to understand that there are so many people in our world with problems much larger than mine. So, cheers to all our volunteers! The following is a partial list of the many jobs our volunteers fulfill for RE-curriculum writers, church pals, teachers, committee members, OWL teachers, cleaners, special event planners, social justice planners and purchasing food and supplies. Thank you again for all of your hours of love and devotion to our students and our church.

April is National Volunteer Month and it is estimated as a country, we collectively have more than 62 million Americans that volunteer in different organizations. This is a quarter of the adult population in the U.S. who give nearly 8 billion hours a year to the causes close to their heart. Researchers have stated that the evidence keeps mounting that volunteering is good for physical and mental health. So, call GPUC and ask what you can do, we need your help and love!

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 take the time to get to know each other.

Lower and Upper Elementary students will continue their studying on Unitarian Universalism. We will continue our study of Tolerance through our Golden Club. We are asking for donations of juice and snacks for our classes.

Junior students will continue their study of Unitarian Universalism. Students signed up for OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes will continue with their assigned dates. They will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the annex. Remember to bring empty cans and bottles in for the Boston Trip.

Senior High students will continue their assigned dates for their OWL classes. Mrs. Ottenhoff will email all students with dates and times of service projects. Seniors willing to help with the younger students can contact Mrs. Artis.

Dates to Remember:

April 10-Church Pal Brunch right after the church service
April 17-All students invited to Northwest UU Church visit at 10:00 a.m.
April 24-RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.
April 24-Church service for students & adults for Earth Day

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Thursday Lecture Series

Mark your calendars for the GPUC Adult Religious Education lecture series April 21st through May 26th. Lectures begin at 7:30pm in the church sanctuary.

Thursday, April 21
The Rev. Doctor Alexander Riegel
Sun of God: On the Astrological Structure of the Jesus Narrative

A lecture (part one of a two part series) on the astrological themes that structure the Jesus narrative. Why did early depictions of Jesus depict him with the image of the sun behind his head? Why were there 12 disciples? Who/what were the three kings that followed a star and what was that star? What did Jesus mean when he said "Lo, I will be with you until the end of the age"? These are just a few of the question about the Jesus narrative that have astrological answers. Join us as we explore just how astrologically grounded the Jesus narrative is. Then, in part two of this series ("The Mystical Jesus," May 26th) we will look at what remains of the Jesus narrative once the astrological structure is removed and ask ourselves, "Does the historical Jesus have any significance for modern spiritual seekers?" The answer may surprise you!

Thursday, April 28
Elaine Flowers, M.A., LMSW
Addressing Disparities in our Responses to Violence in the Communities of Color

The challenges facing young men of color has recently moved to the forefront of public discourse. Equality and opportunities are two primary reasons for the poverty and continued increases in incarcerations. Let's have a discussion on the history of this problem and how we can eradicate the increases.

Thursday, May 5
Suzanne Ross, Community Activist for Political and Social Justice Issues
Compassion and Choices

Death is easy. It's dying that's hard - especially because no one really wants to talk about dying. It's difficult admitting that someday we will die: you, me... everyone. We don't have a choice about death, not yet anyhow. But when illness and disease come knocking, we often have choices about how we die, from using every treatment to sustain life, until the body just quits, or opting to forgo treatments that ravage the body and mind, and choose palliative treatments instead. And there's another choice, namely, choosing when and how to die. The road to death is fraught with choices we don't know how to make and don't want to make. In this lecture we will talk about dying. It's a gift we can give to ourselves and others.

Thursday, May 12
Jeanette Pierce
Getting the Scoop on Detroit

The themes that are shaping Detroit right now are community, collaboration, and opportunity. During this presentation you will hear how those themes are woven throughout the city. The talk will give an overview of what's happening around the city, including unique small businesses, art projects, specialty restaurants, and bars as well as large scale commercial and residential projects. Whether you've been in Detroit a day or a lifetime this talk will give you a better understanding of where Detroit has come from, what's happening now, and where it's headed in the future.

Thursday, May 19
Dr. Cindi Arfken, Professor at Wayne State University Specializing in Drug Abuse Epidemiology
Ghada Abdallah, Pharmacist and Owner of Park Pharmacy
Opioids: What You Need to Know and What You Can Do

The heroin and prescription opioid epidemic have impacted individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live through a devastating increase in addiction and overdoses, especially among our youth. In this talk, given jointly by a drug abuse epidemiologist and pharmacist, we will review basic information about opioids and the current epidemic challenges. We will also cover how Michigan and other states are responding to the epidemic. We will conclude with concrete steps of what you can do to reduce the devastation of this epidemic.

Thursday, May 26
The Rev. Doctor Alexander Riegel
The Mystical Jesus:
On the Psychodynamics of Jesus' Life and Teaching for Modern Spiritual Seekers

A lecture (part two of a two part series) on the psychodynamics of Jesus' life and teaching for the modern spiritual seeker. From the famous story of the adulteress, whom Jesus spared from the judgmental Pharisees, to the parable of the lilies of the field, we often miss the significance of Jesus' life and teaching because we do not fully understand the psychodynamics involved therein. Join us as we explore Jesus' life and teaching from the psychodynamic point of view. What we will discover is that Jesus presented us with profound ethical challenges and a deep mystical theology. The Jesus we encounter in this lecture will cast the Jesus narrative in a whole new light and demonstrate his continued significance for modern spiritual seekers.

Sunday Workshops

First Sunday - Mystic Poet Workshop (April 3, May 1, June 5)

In these workshops we utilize a method of dream interpretation in order to use mystic poetry as a tool for personal and spiritual growth. In small group settings we examine one poem per month, collectively sharing our personal insights into the possible meanings of these poems. Poets include the likes of Rumi, Hafiz, Mary Oliver, Goethe, Kabir, Lalla, etc.

Third Sundays - Introduction to Meditation (April 17, May 15, June 19)

This is an introduction to meditation course with mini lectures, Q & A, an introduction to various meditation techniques, and 30 minutes of silent meditation per class. We will begin by working with the book "The Attention Revolution: Unlocking the Power of the Focused Mind," by Alan Wallace.

Fourth Sundays - Philosopher's Club (April 24, May 22, No June meeting)

In this class we do Philosophy on par with an introductory college level class. Our first study will be "The Consolation of Philosophy," by Boethius (Penguin Classics is the recommended version). For the April meeting we will be discussing Book V. Following Boethius we will explore "Flatland," by Edwin Abbot, "Teddy," by J. D. Salinger, The Myth of Sisyphus, by Albert Camus, and many other Philosophical works. Please note - Reading Required. Out of respect for the other participants, please make sure that you have read the material before attending class.

Announcements

Women's Book Discussion Group - Thursday, April 28 - [meets in the annex at 6pm]

"All the Light We Cannot See," by Anthony Doerr:

Marie Laure lives with her father in Paris within walking distance of the Museum of Natural History where he works as the master of the locks (there are thousands of locks in the museum). When she is six, she goes blind, and her father builds her a model of their neighborhood, every house, every manhole, so she can memorize it with her fingers and navigate the real streets with her feet and cane. When the Germans occupy Paris, father and daughter flee to Saint-Malo on the Brittany coast, where Marie-Laure's agoraphobic great uncle lives in a tall, narrow house by the sea wall. In another world in Germany, an orphan boy, Werner, grows up with his younger sister, Jutta, both enchanted by a crude radio Werner finds. He becomes a master at building and fixing radios, a talent that wins him a place at an elite and brutal military academy and, ultimately, makes him a highly specialized tracker of the Resistance. Werner travels through the heart of Hitler Youth to the far-flung outskirts of Russia, and finally into Saint-Malo, where his path converges with Marie-Laure. Doerr's gorgeous combination of soaring imagination with observation is electric. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

Book Discussion Leader: Julie Artis

Attention new members or upcoming potential new members:

Are you interested in learning more about GPUC? Do you have questions you would like answered in an informal and comfortable setting? Would you like to have conversations with other new members? Do you want to meet some new people at our church?

Please plan on attending a **"New U Gathering" on April 10**. We will meet in the library right after church. There will be coffee, conversation, and fellowship. Please contact Sonja Franchett or the GPUC office with any questions, or to confirm that you would like to attend.

Chamber Music at the Scarab Club Concert

Noble Dog, Berio Folk Songs and the Lacombe Quartet at The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church Sunday, April 17 at 4pm. Hear an eclectic mix of works by Berio, Lacombe and Close in the perfect acoustical setting for chamber music. As always, each piece will be introduced by one of the musicians and the performance will be followed by a delicious and friendly reception. Special ticket pricing for GPUC members: \$16 for adults, \$10 for students. Tickets may be purchased at the door. For more information - 248-474-8930 or chambermusic@scarabclub.org

Committee Annual Reports

To All GPUC Committee Chairs, Spring is here and our GPUC Annual meeting is fast approaching. The Annual Meeting will be held after the worship service on Sunday, May 15. Please complete a committee report for inclusion in the Annual report. Please submit your report no later than Thursday, April 28th to Candy either by email (gpuc@gpuc.us) or in writing. Candy will compile each Committee's input with the goal of completing the Annual report for distribution on Monday, May 9.

Spring Yard Cleanup

As you can all see by the daffodils poking up through the ground, spring is well on its way. At GPUC that means spring yard cleanup! This year, we will plan to gather for some light yard work (raking, trimming and a couple other improvement projects) on Saturday, April 23 at 9:30am, with April 30 as a rain date. The wonderful folks from the Chalice Circles have again graciously offered to provide drinks and snacks for those of us doing the work. So, find your rakes, gloves, tarps, hedge trimmers, etc. and join your fellow GPUC'ers for an hour or two of outdoor camaraderie on Saturday morning, April 23.

Russ Chavey, Grounds Committee

UU Crafters

We are happy to announce that this congenial group is growing. Stop by and join in the fun. The UU Crafters will meet the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Annex, from 7-9pm. The next meetings will be April 19th and 26th. 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.

Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, April 3.

April 3 will be our next First Sunday Food Sharing. Our donations are taken to Crossroads East on Moross, just east of I-94. This location is close to our church home and has a food pantry, clothing closet, provides job assistance, and counseling. We will be collecting non-perishables such as cereal, noodles, rice, canned fruits, veggies, soups, and sauces. If you prefer to donate monetarily, your money is used to buy items such as eggs, milk, meat, produce, and bread. Our donations are greatly appreciated and really help keep the shelves, fridge, and freezer stocked. Our donations are always gladly received! Through the 29th of March, GPUC has provided 2,051 pounds of food and toiletries to Crossroads East! Many, many thanks!

MUSICAL NOTES

Joseph Palazzolo in Concert Saturday, April 16, 2016, 7:30 pm

For what is certain to be an exhilarating piano performance by our very own, talented JOSEPH PALAZZOLO!

Joseph will be performing a variety of beautiful piano selections by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, as well as Kitten on the Keys, a tango, and Clair de Lune!

TICKETS: \$15 adults in advance, \$10 students & seniors in advance, \$20/\$15 at the door
Reserve tickets from church office - call 313.881.0420

Consider Camp Unirondack

Unirondack is a special place; it is a UU camp nestled at the base of the Adirondack Mountains in New York.

My family has been going to family camp there for the last three years. They also have a whole summer of kid camps. The staff makes a point to hear the voices of all and to plan wonderful programming from juggling, to climbing cliffs. Spending a week in natural paradise with like-minded folk and no cooking is...well, paradise!

Check it out! <http://www.unirondack.org/>

If you have questions about the camp. Contact Sarah Neely

4 Ways to help GPUC earn money

1. Kroger Community Rewards Program: GPUC members have been participating in the Kroger Community Rewards Program since 2009. This program returns money to the participating organization based on a percentage of the purchases made by the members of the organization who have enrolled. About \$1000 has been earned by GPUC annually since the program began. GPUC has received a check for \$250.00 as result of members using their Kroger Plus card in the past 3 months and \$1,067.68 over this fiscal year. Many thanks to all who are enrolled in this program! Have you signed up to participate? If not, please consider doing it as every little bit helps! Once enrolled - all you have to do is shop at Kroger.

To participate: Sign up at a Kroger store for the Kroger Plus Shopper's Card.

Go to kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow and follow the prompts remembering to check the church name. You will need to use this code: 83283.

Reminder: Kroger requires each person to re-enroll between April 1 and May 1.

Our office administrator, Candy Dunn is glad to help, call her if you encounter trouble or can't access the internet. The enrollment and re-enrollment process has gotten easier every year!

2. Amazon Smile Program: Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is now an official organization on Amazon Smile. The Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible Amazon Smile purchases.

To shop at Amazon Smile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at Amazon Smile.

In the Search box of what organization you want to support type in "Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church" - set this to your default. Every time you shop - use smile.amazon.com as the site address in your browser. This will donate money to the church- no strings attached - similar to the Kroger Card and Scripts programs. If you have trouble setting up your account- please contact Meghan Boomhower for help

3. SCRIP is a terrific fundraising program that allows you to purchase gift cards from companies who return an average of 5% of the amount you spend to GPUC RE. Scrip simply means "substitute money" - in other words, scrip is gift cards from national and local retailers, and they're the same gift cards that you buy at the store. Hundreds of familiar retailers participate in the scrip program.

Gift cards are perfect for graduates, teachers, family and friends. Even better, you can put your everyday household shopping dollars to work by shopping with scrip at stores that participate in the program! Scrip can be used for many purchases including dining out, clothing, gasoline and entertainment. You can support GPUC's RE students all year!

Order forms are available in the foyer and in the church office or they can be emailed to you by contacting Candy Dunn in the church office. You may turn in your order after church on Sundays or drop it in the office. Orders will be placed every two weeks or so, and will be distributed to you upon arrival. Please make checks payable to GPUC, with "scrip" in the memo line.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Semanision, the Scrip Coordinator. The proceeds from SCRIP are used to help defray costs of the June 2016 Junior/Senior trip to Boston.

4. Staples Ink Cartridge Recycling Program: GPUC recycles empty ink and toner cartridges at Staples to earn store credit towards the purchase of office supplies. In 2015 we received \$366 in store credit. Many thanks to those that have contributed their empty cartridges! Please drop off your empty ink and toner cartridges in the office; every little bit helps!

-- Candy Dunn, Office Administrator

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, April 22 at noon. They should be sent to newsletter@gpuc.us.

*"We are a welcoming, compassionate community,
committed to learning, service and social justice,
celebrating joy, diversity and integrity on our spiritual journey."*

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