

*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 2017**

**Upcoming Services**

**April 2, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**Our Universalist Heritage**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Worship Associate: Maurya Kay**

A while back I did the first of two sermons on our Unitarian Universalist heritage, when I spoke about our Unitarian heritage. This Sunday I will complete that miniseries by speaking on our Universalist heritage. Join us as I highlight certain Universalist historical figures and suggest why it is our Universalist theology, rather than our Unitarian theology, that is most relevant for the times in which we live.

**April 9, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**"Don't Shame Me and I Won't Shame You"**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Worship Associate: Janet Weber**

Shame may be perhaps the greatest human motivator. It sounds unlikely but it is true. Shame may motivate us more than love, fear, hatred, or anger. From blushing to averted eyes to social hide-n-seek, there are many ways that shame manifests in human relations. Come, join us as we muse on shame - and SHAME ON you if you don't! ;-)

**April 16, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**Revel without a Cause**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Worship Associate: Chuck Palmer**

This is Easter Sunday, the day the Christian world celebrates the resurrection of Jesus as their savior. It is a time of celebration of the victory over the dark forces that vie against God for the fate of human souls. But, does celebration require a reason? Is it possible to "revel without a cause"? Join us as we celebrate life, just "for the hell of it"!

**April 23, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**Earth Day**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Worship Associate: Tonya Wells**

Join us for our annual Earth Day celebration, which speaks to our seventh UU principle, "Respect for the interconnected web of existence of which we are a part." This will be a multigenerational, family friendly service.

**April 30, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**Senior High Service**

**Senior High Youth Group**

**Worship Associate: Dr. Riegel**

Our Senior High Youth Group will have free reign of the pulpit this Sunday, to share with us their thoughts, reflection, and wisdom. Themes range from Time to Stereotypes to LGBTQ+. Come, peer inside the teen heart and mind!

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Alexander's Meander



***"We have the power to hold no opinion about a thing and not to let it upset our state of mind - for things have no natural power to shape our judgments." - Marcus Aurelius - Meditations***

Those of you who have been following my recent blog posts on the wisdom of the Stoics know that I have had the ancient Greeks (and a few Romans) on my mind lately. Recently, I have been rolling around this piece of wisdom from Marcus Aurelius. Aurelius' suggestion that we not hold opinions runs counter to the very nature of the mind, for the mind's job is to gather information and draw conclusions based on that information. That mental ability is responsible for everything from our ancestors managing not to get eaten by tigers to our modern ability to send humans into space. Opinion making seems to be among the mind's primary duties...

So, can we manage not to hold opinions, as Aurelius' suggests? Well, it is very difficult, to say the least (Trust me. I've tried it many times!). It is very much like not breathing - eventually we are going to take that breath! Likewise, eventually we are going to form that opinion! So, here are a few tricks to help us out:

1. Remember that we almost always form opinions on the basis of partial data. That is, once we have enough data that corresponds to our personal predispositions, we feel satisfied that we have all the data we need to form an opinion. That is not necessarily (not even usually) the case. So, it would behoove us to remember to gather more data than we already have - ESPECIALLY data that might disconfirm our predispositions. This might mean rarely, if ever, being in a position to form an opinion.
2. Remember the piece of Taoist wisdom that I shared in my sermon on Taoism quite a ways back: "Do you have the patience to wait for the mud to settle and your vision to become clear?" That's a lot of patience, which in many circumstances may also mean rarely, if ever, being in a position to form an opinion.
3. The universe unfolds with a great deal more intelligence than we usually have to offer. Rather than form opinions, we should learn to discern what is unfolding naturally before us. That way we can take action in life by reading the signs of the times rather than molding life as we see fit based on our opinions.

Finally, is not having opinions really worth all that effort? The quick answer is, most often, yes, because not having opinions allows genuine truth eventually to emerge, not to mention that holding partial or false opinions, which most of our opinions are, can create a great deal of mental and emotional upset, robbing us of the innate joy of life.

So, now, I wonder, what is your opinion about my opinion about Aurelius' opinion about opinions?

Namaste!

Alex

### Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

As always, the Fellowship Dinner was a thoroughly enjoyable evening for us, and a terrific kickoff for our Canvass process! Thanks to all those involved, including Juli Moore, Joe Buttiglieri and Paul Rowady. The Board is in the middle of developing a budget for 2017-18. We need to hear from everyone in the congregation about pledges for next year. Please fill out your pledge card and return it, so that our Canvass committee can give us an idea of our income for next year. Soon, we will begin contacting those we haven't heard from. The church depends on donations from the membership to continue to provide the services you enjoy, and to serve as a beacon of liberal religion on the East Side. The Proposed Budget will be discussed with the congregation on May 7th prior to our Annual Meeting on May 21st. We hope to see everyone at the Annual Meeting to exercise our democratic process!

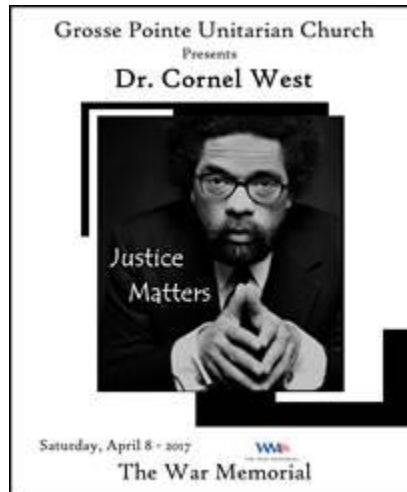
The Board continues to support landscaping improvements, and the continued implementation of improvements suggested through our Vision process. Chris Vadino is heading a task force looking at facility improvements, and we are in the process of forming a task force to address programming improvements.

Please remember that you are always welcome at our monthly Board Meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the church library. Feel free to contact any Board member with concerns or questions.

Robin Ramsay  
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

## Cornel West

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



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

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

## Religious Education News



### ***Hunger and Thirst***

*The body must be nourished, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We're spiritually starved in this culture-not underfed but undernourished.-Carol Hornig*

March 19, 1939 our GPUC Founding Statement reads:

We unite for the purpose of creating a church home for **ourselves**, and our **children**, to which we can welcome all of like spirit, and from which we can send out an enlightened and uplifting influence into the world.

We believe in and would be guided by the universal principles of religion and morality as interpreted by the growing knowledge and conscience of mankind.

We invite to our fellowship all who sympathize with our ideas, who are helped by our worship, or who wish to work with us in promoting human welfare.

I will be sharing these words with our students this Sunday. I will be telling the story about when church was started and why. Our founders were hungry and thirsty to have a church home to unite for themselves and their children. They sought out religious freedom and together with other UU's helped develop in their journey our seven principles.

Help your children with their hunger and thirst by attending church regularly. Help yourself by listening to

the sermons and then asking, "How can I be of service to GPUC?". We have a lot of jobs that need your help and hands. Ask yourself if you want this church to continue. Make a monetary pledge and teach your children how to give. Attend our workshops, help in RE by teaching, writing curriculum, buying snacks, cleaning the closets and meeting our new parents.

Realize that your hunger and thirst will be fed by connecting with others. You will start to see your deeper needs, your spirit soar when in fellowship with others. I found the UU church 38 years ago and it has fed my soul ever since!

### Religious Education Lessons

The **Nursery** will be open at 9:45 a.m. every Sunday morning. We have the same loving childcare workers to provide a safe and caring place for our young UU's. We also have a pot of coffee for parents to enjoy and get to know each other.

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

**Junior and Senior High** students and their parents have begun to make coffee each week for our church. Our students will continue their lesson on Islam. The juniors and their church pals just met at their Church Pal Brunch. The seniors will be providing the church service on April 30th. Mark your calendars for you don't want to miss what our seniors will have to share.

### Dates to remember:

April 2nd- RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m.

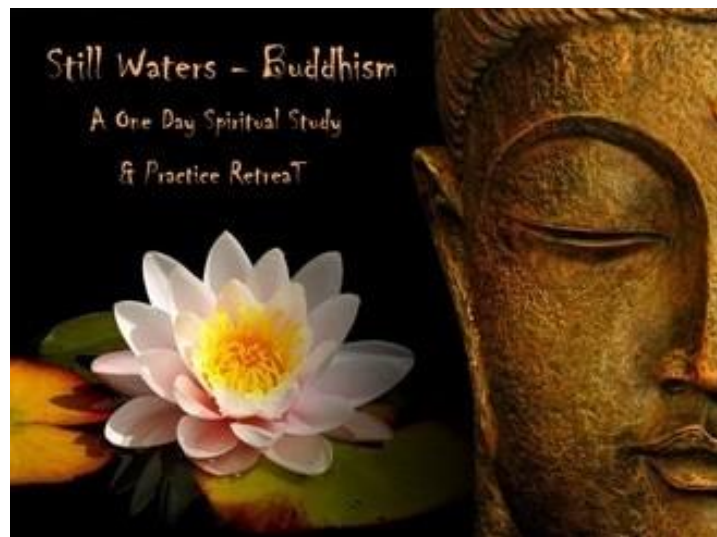
April 16th- Easter Sunday

April 30th- Youth led service

*"Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul"*

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

## Spiritual Retreat



### **Still Waters Buddhism: A One Day Spiritual Study and Practice Retreat**

This is the fourth of four retreats scheduled between now and May 2017. Each retreat focuses on one of four mystical traditions, within: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Each morning we examine the teachings from one of these mystical traditions. In the afternoon, Dr. Riegel provides guidance on a variety of spiritual practices, i.e., mantra, silent meditation, walking meditation, and turning exercises. Retreats run from 9am - 4pm (with a one and a half hour lunch break, off site or bring your own lunch).

**Date:** Saturday, May 6th, 2017

**Cost:** \$30 at the door (lunch not included) or via PayPal on GPUC website.  
(<http://www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events.html>).

Tickets will not be sold directly through the church office.

*If paying via PayPal, we will keep your name at the event ticket desk for check in upon arrival. No tickets will be otherwise issued so please bring a copy of your PayPal email receipt as proof of purchase.*



## Dixon's Violin Concert



### **Dixon's Violin**

You've never heard violin like this! The world's premier violinist, Dixon's life mission is to inspire people - and he has done so across North America, including three Ted talks/performances, ten years at Burning Man, plus radio, TV, and film appearances.

Based on his classically-trained violin mastery, Dixon now improvises on a 5-string electronic violin with a looper to create an all-live one-man symphony. Guided by his remarkable personal story of life transformation, he shows the beauty of doing something seemingly impossible. Dixon's passionate energy will enchant, mesmerize, and inspire you!

**Venue:** Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church  
**Date:** Thursday, April 20th, 2017  
**Cost:** \$18 at the door or \$15 via PayPal option on the GPUC website

(<http://www.gpuuc.org/upcoming-events.html>). If paying via PayPal, we will keep your name at the event ticket desk for check in upon arrival. No tickets will be otherwise issued so please bring a copy of your PayPal email receipt as proof of purchase.

## Announcements

### **Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, April 2 .**

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

January through March 13, our donations to Crossroads East totaled 2,228pounds. This represents the food and toiletry items donated on our FSFS Sundays, as well as the grocery items, deodorant, and toothpaste purchased with your monetary donations, which totaled \$826.

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

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

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### **Soup Sunday - April 9**

Join us in the Annex April 9th right after church. We will offer two soups for your enjoyment, chicken noodle and tomato rice and a chance for casual conversation with friends. Just a "buck-a-bowl" - such a deal! Bring the entire family. The Resale Shop will be open for your shopping pleasure. See you there!

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### **Women's Book Discussion Group Wednesday, April 19th, 5:30pm, GPUC Library**

Our last book of the season is *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this

singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose. We welcome new participants!

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### **SPRING GROUNDS CLEANUP**

This year's spring grounds cleanup event will be **Saturday, April 22 from 9 until 11am**. We have had a small but committed group who has turned out once or twice a year for this but we would like to welcome some newcomers. We gather at 9 am, bringing rakes, tarps and gloves if you have them. Then spend a couple hours clearing out the nooks and crannies of the church grounds to prepare for the first lawn cutting. Even if you don't want to rake, we can always use help putting leaves into lawn bags, dragging bags to the curb, picking up sticks or supporting workers with a water or witty banter. There will be signup sheets available after service on the 2nd and the 9th. Please consider joining us for a pleasant couple of hours outdoors at the church on a Saturday. Weather is always guaranteed.

Russ Chavey  
Grounds Committee

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### **Friendship Dinner - Saturday, April 22**

Everyone agreed that the first Friendship Dinner was a hit, so we decided to have another one. Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 22nd. Please let **Jill Crane** know if you could host from 4 to 8 people in your home. It's a potluck, so you won't be responsible for the meal...the guests bring most of it. Sign-up sheets available in the foyer starting Sunday, April 2nd.

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### **GPUC Social Justice Committee News - Volunteer Grant Writers Needed!**

At our last meeting, Elaine Flowers, Congregant and VOCA Specialist, (Victims of Crime Act) introduced us to Citizens Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending (CAPP) and their work reducing incarceration, creating safer, healthier communities and guiding public spending. She is assembling a data base of experienced grant writers from our church willing to donate their time to established organizations in need of funding. Please contact her through the GPUC office for immediate volunteer opportunities.

Nancy Kouayara, GPUC Social Justice Committee

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### **UU Crafters**

UU Crafters usually meet on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. In April we will NOT meet on April 18. **Our next meeting takes place on Tuesday, April 25**, in the Annex, from 7-9pm. All are welcome to join in for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.) and other small crafts. Also, if you like to color and haven't tried the new adult coloring books there are books and markers for anyone who would like to give it a try. Please contact Ann Helm with any questions.

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### **Resale Shop News**

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

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**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! 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. New participants are able to join the program at any time.

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

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

### **GREAT NEWS! Kroger no longer requires each person to re-enroll in the program every year.**

Our office administrator, Candy Dunn is glad to help with your enrollment, call her if you encounter trouble or can't access the internet. 313-881-0420

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## Regional Assembly - Register Now!

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



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### Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, April 21st at noon. They should be sent to [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us).

#### Contact Information

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