



Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
A History in the Making
75th Anniversary Edition

GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH

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Janet A. Weber

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INDEX

FORWARD	3
GENERAL HISTORY	5
PEOPLE OF NOTE	38
CHURCH HOMES AND PROPERTY	45
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SOCIAL ACTION	68
FUNDRAISERS	79
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT	91
MINISTERS	98
ALLIANCE	122
MUSIC	125
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	135
APPENDIX	120
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS	139
BOARD PRESIDENTS	140
CHURCH SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATORS	141
DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	142
ALLIANCE PRESIDENTS	143
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND MEMORIALS	144
INVENTORY OF CORNERSTONE CONTENTS	145
TIMELINE OF GPUC HISTORY	146
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORY	149

UU HISTORY PROJECT, GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH

FOREWORD

When the UUA History and Heritage Prize announcement from the UU Historical Society made its way into the Historian's mailbox at the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church (GPUC) with its call to write at least a forty-page congregational history I threw it into the trash. But that request sparked the realization that our church congregation would be celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2014 and our church building would be fifty years old in the same year. After due consideration and the realization this was just the goad I needed, as church historian, to get prepared for these celebrations, I fished the announcement out of the garbage, brushed off the coffee grounds, reread the requirements and set to work.

Many thanks are due to many people for aiding me in making this report as accurate as I could make it. I thank all those members who recognized the value of keeping bits of church history for the future and passing them on to this historian for the past fifteen years. Much gratitude also goes to those who reviewed this effort, adding their knowledge, questioning and helping me form a different perspective on some of the events. They are Jane Hoey, Jean and Bob Dupuis, Veronica Smith, Russell Peebles, Joan Hines, and Rev. Emeritus John Corrado. A big thank you to Larry Peplin who gave of his knowledge and expertise with inserting pictures into the document, to Beth Whitney who brought new eyes with her discerning and painstaking final proof reading and to Candy Dunn, office administrator extraordinaire who always has my back.

Of course, I couldn't have done this as easily or well without my husband Bill Rutledge who spent many days editing, in addition to being my sounding board, cheerleader, history expert and counselor throughout this project.

Finally, a big thanks to the UU Historical Society for getting me started on this. It's been a much bigger and more demanding project than I anticipated, but well worth the effort.

NOTE: Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church will be referred to in this document as GPUC.

The smaller building known as the Annex was officially renamed the Olympia Brown Center in 2000. Old habits die hard however, and that name still seems to be used only in official announcements. Since it continues to be referred to as the Annex by most members and signage on the building still states it is the Annex, I will use that name throughout this document.

Finally, several women will only be known by their husband's name, since that was the social tradition well into the 1960's and throughout the Church archives, that is the only name by which they are referred. Even Lotta Backus, the early benefactress of our church, was always referred to as Mrs. Standish Backus. I never found her first name until researching her obituary for this document.

Janet Weber

May 2013





GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH HISTORY

GENERAL HISTORY

In his wonderful short history of our congregation written for a presentation in January 2005, our puckish fellow congregant Russell Peebles posited that its history might be said to have started 9,000 years ago when the glaciers started their retreat north and the Great Lakes, as well as our neighboring Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River were formed. In due time, abundant grasses, trees and flowers made a comeback. As wildlife flourished, Native Americans who probably made their way from the west settled in the area. In the mid fifteen hundreds Jacques Cartier, a Frenchman, sailed his ship down the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. He proclaimed the whole territory for France. Much later, July 24, 1701, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac established a fur trading post along “D’troit,” French for strait, on a bluff overlooking the waterway. A fort was established there, Fort Pontchartrain du D’troit. Today we refer to this strait as the Detroit River which connects Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie. More, mostly French settlers, came and the French government controlled the area until losing the French and Indian War in 1760. In came the British, who ruled until belatedly leaving after the American Revolution in 1790.

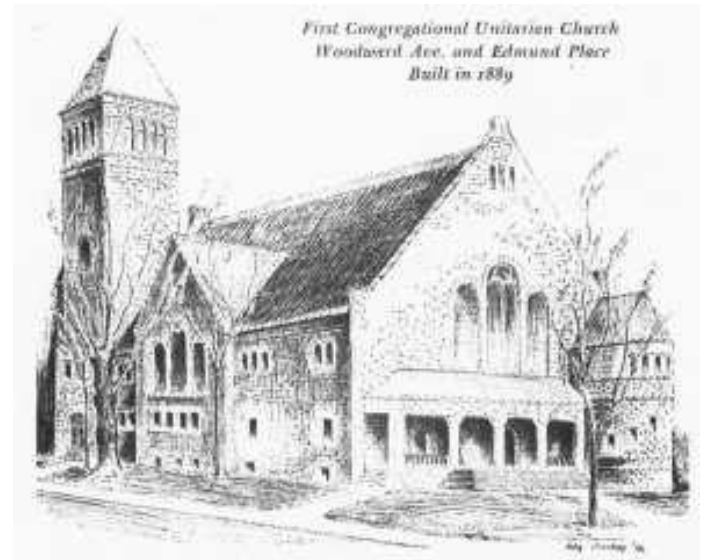
In 1805, a gigantic fire destroyed most of the buildings in Detroit. Judge Augustus Woodward was sent from Washington to restore the town. One of Judge Woodward's visions for the town was to give it wide streets and a grand main avenue. Yes, you guessed it, he named it Woodward Avenue. It was indeed wide but only up to Grand Circus Park. North of that, it was of ordinary street width. The relevance of this historical tidbit will become clear soon in this paper.

Now we're coming to the events leading up to the start of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church. In 1832, a corporation was formed by eastern investors to build a railroad from Detroit to Chicago. Bringing it into existence was a long, hard fight, not only against the obvious physical difficulties of building in the wilderness, but also against the hostility of many settlers who feared the negative effect of a new means of transportation upon certain established businesses such as river shipping, stage coaching and inn keeping. Tracks were willfully torn up. Trains were fired upon. Acts of violence against the railroad became so frequent that the New York Central, making a desperate effort to get the line finished, sent a number of energetic and determined promoters from the east to complete the enterprise. Some of these men were Boston Unitarians and Universalists who brought their families and came to stay. This was in 1846.

These Bostonians soon wanted their own place of worship so on October 6, 1850, the First Congregational Unitarian Society of Detroit was organized. Of the seventy-five men who signed the roster, thirty-five gave as their mailing addresses that of the Michigan Central office. So, the new religious body came to be known as the "Railroad Church." The Universalists among the group built a little classic church for themselves the next year on West Lafayette, opposite the site of our present Federal Building, and these churches became the church homes of Detroit's religious liberals for a long time.

In 1879 the Universalists formed their own separate body and incorporated, on January 17, 1880, as the First Universalist Society of Detroit. They built the Church of Our Father on Grand Circus Park at Bagley Avenue and made of it an outstanding cultural center. Lectures, musicals and art exhibits were frequent there while only occasional elsewhere in the city. They established in their building a free public reading room and stocked it with a generous supply of the best current periodicals and a library of fine books. This was one of the first adult education projects sponsored by a local church for the benefit of all who cared to take advantage of it. (Ed. Note - the People Mover passes over vacant lots on this corner in 2013.)

In 1890, the Unitarians built their new church on the southeast corner of Woodward Avenue at Edmund Place, a large, Romanesque Revival stone building facing Woodward. It was named the First Congregational Unitarian Church. (Ed. Note –This imposing building, which was on the National Register of Historic Places, stood empty, used only by the homeless for 15 years until May 10th, 2014, when it was burned to the ground.)



The two liberal ministers of these two churches, Unitarian and Universalist, were always closely associated. More and more they came to recognize their essential kinship as they worked together in this largely religiously fundamentalist community toward cooperation and friendship among Detroit's various religions. In 1902, Dr. Lee S. McCollester of the Universalist Church of Our Father, conceived the idea of a Community Interdenominational Thanksgiving Service, including on its program representatives of local Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations. It was said to be the first interdenominational service on so all-embracing a scale up to that time anywhere in the world. It was so well attended that it became an annual event for well over half a century.

For several years the Church of Our Father, described in their Visitor's Guide as "One of the most handsome churches in Detroit," was the last remaining place of worship south of Grand Circus Park in the downtown area. In 1913 this property was sold and the property at Cass Avenue and Prentis was acquired, along with some vacant land extending to Forest Avenue. There the present church building was erected and in April 1916 dedicated as the First Universalist Church (Church of Our Father.) The name was officially changed to First Unitarian Universalist Church in 1960.



The two liberal religious organizations might have continued indefinitely as close and affectionate neighbors but the growth of the city forced some unexpected decisions. The widening of Woodward Avenue necessitated cutting off the front of the first Congregational Unitarian Church building at Edmund Place. This so changed the size and appearance of the building that the congregation was most unhappy. By coincidence it happened that Dr. Frank D. Adams of the Church of Our Father was at this time accepting a call from Oak Park, Illinois. The two societies now agreed upon a mutually advantageous plan: the Unitarians would, for the time being, come to the Universalist Church and their minister, Dr. Augustus P. Reccord, would serve both parishes.

(Ed. note: The three stained glass windows by John LaFarge, a well-known contemporary and rival of Louis Comfort Tiffany, that were in the windows of the First Congregational Unitarian Church facing Woodward, were acquired by the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1959 and are now in the American Collection there, a gift of the Unitarian Church Trust).



The temporary union of the two churches worked so well that in June, 1934, scarcely a year and a half after the first joint service, a legal agreement was adopted, binding the two permanently, and the Church of Our Father (Unitarian-Universalist) came into existence. It prospered and within five years became the parent of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church.

In 1938, thirty-three families from Detroit's east side who were making a twenty mile round trip each Sunday to attend services at The Church of Our Father decided they would prefer to have a place to meet nearer to their homes. Two women, Mrs. James (Margaret) Watkins and Mrs. Ross (Evelyn) Wilkins, (women were known by their husbands names back then) with tremendous support and assistance from Dr. Reccord led the effort to make this dream a reality. Not only did these two women work tirelessly on the project but they documented every step in a wonderful notebook found in the GPUC archives. This book seems to contain copies of every letter and postcard sent and received. There is an almost daily entry. And so, we have a well-documented picture of those first efforts. To quote from the report read at a general meeting after church service on June 19, 1938:

On Feb. 17th, a letter was sent to 33 Unitarian and Universalist families in Grosse Pointe asking them to attend a meeting for the purpose of organizing church services in Grosse Pointe. The meeting was held at the home of Mrs. J. Watkins, on Feb. 25th, attended by 17 people. It was decided to hold monthly Sunday afternoon services at 4pm, conducted by Dr. Reccord in the Ladies Parlor at the Grosse Pointe Memorial Church. Dr. Fitt, Memorial's minister at that time welcomed and supported the nascent group, charging only the cost of janitor services. The first service was held on March 27, 1938. Notices were sent to 44 families. There were 63 people in attendance. The second service on April 24th was attended by 49 people. Notices were sent to 55 families.

The third service was held on May 15th. Notices were sent to 55 families. There were 40 people in attendance; some had come for the first time.

The fourth service on June 19th was attended by 32 people. Notices went out to 62 families. The mailing list of interested families has grown from 33 to 62. The average attendance at the four services has been 46 people.

The treasurer's report of June 20th, 1938 reveals that:

<u>Disbursements</u>		
Postal and printing	\$2.60	
Janitor	12.00	
Music	15.00	
Pastor	<u>80.00</u>	
		\$109.60
<u>Collections</u>		
March 27, 1938	\$31.28	
April 24, 1938	24.20	
May 15, 1938	20.80	
June 19, 1938	<u>16.20</u>	
		<u>\$92.48</u>
	Deficit	\$17.12

(Ed. note: A penciled notation on the report indicates that the deficit was made up by gifts.)

An undated letter also found in our archives addressed to "all interested in a liberal Church in Grosse Pointe," stated among other items, that "Mr. George G. Davis, Director of the Church Extension Department of the American Unitarian Association, following his recent visit to Detroit, stated that he feels that the Grosse Pointe movement, although just beginning, is one of the most promising in the field."

The group continued to meet and at the Christmas service of 1938, seventy-six people were invited and sixty-five adults and fifteen children attended.

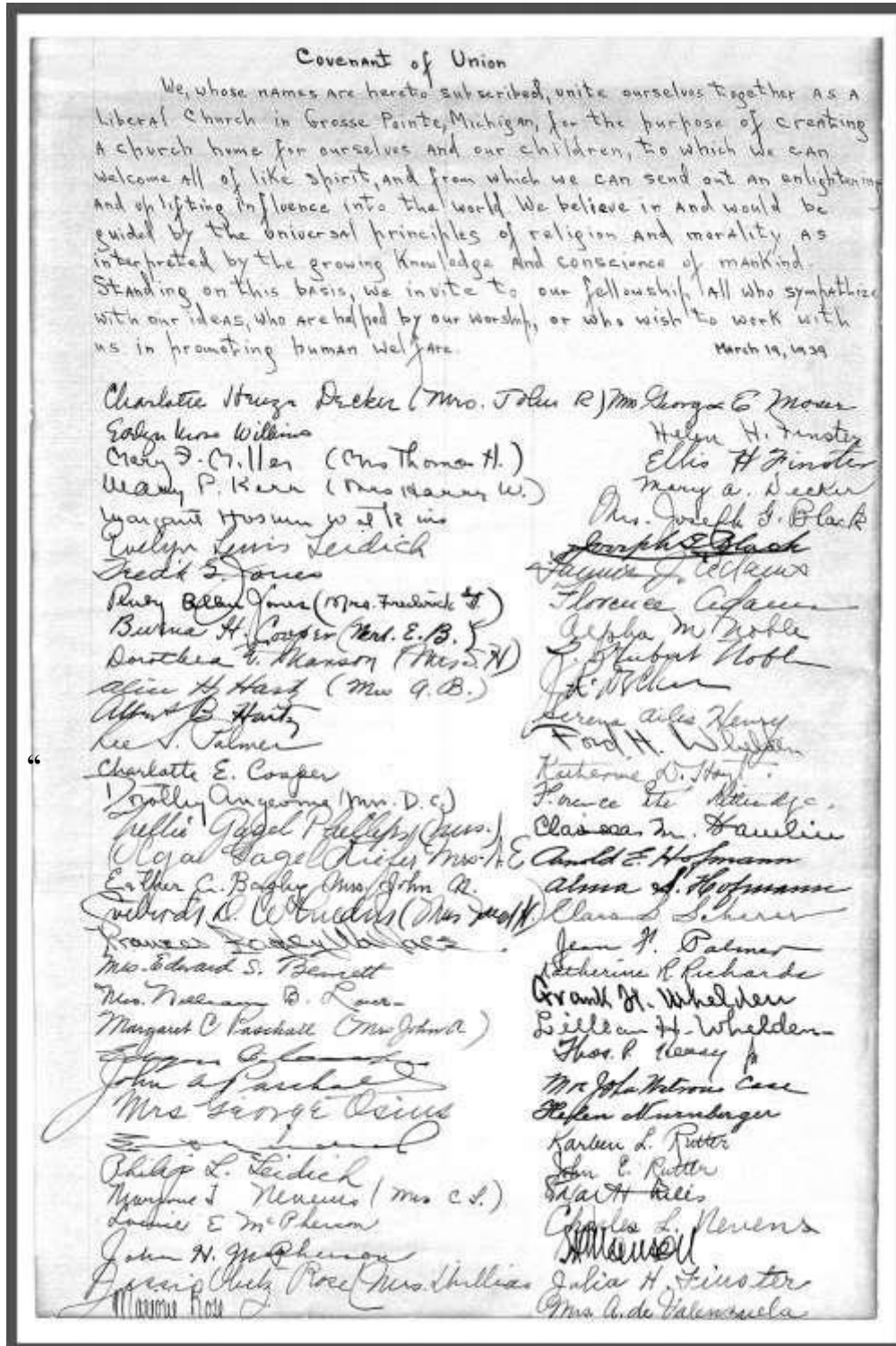
Rev. Ernest W. Kuebler, director of Religious Education of the American Unitarian Association, spoke at the Feb. 12, 1939 service and then met with thirty people who stayed for a discussion. The archived materials continue:

He recommended that we find a properly appointed center for our meeting place, with a real atmosphere of worship for children and adults, and that we secure a teaching staff with high standards. He felt that a private school would be more adaptable than a public one. He felt that we might be able to secure a young minister for between \$1500 and \$2000, and expressed the opinion that a young man might give up more at the moment for the future of this movement. He suggested we make a canvass of the Unitarians in this area and work out a plan whereby we could test our financial strength. He indicated that the budget of the A.U.A. was being made up now and voted on in May, and if we are to hope for any help from that source, we must determine our own position and make our request before that time... There was tremendous interest in Mr. Kuebler's suggestions and since it was desired to talk to him further, a group arranged a luncheon meeting with him for Monday, Feb 13th at the University Club.

Things then moved along very quickly. A four-page letter to the Grosse Pointers, dated February 14, 1939 was written by George G. Davis of the A.U.A. which detailed point by point what needed to be done and when and was very encouraging. A canvass was done of those interested and at a meeting on March 8th twenty-five pledges totaling \$1106.00 were collected and interest in a Sunday school for twenty-seven children was reported.

Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association met with the fledgling congregation on March 19, 1939. He was most enthusiastic in his remarks saying at one point that, "The movement was full of promise for the future, not only from a local aspect, but because other cities might be inspired by the example of Grosse Pointe." Financial and other support from the A.U.A. and the Universalist General Convention was promised. A budget was adopted for a total of \$2,800 with a \$1,800 salary for a minister. The official name of our church, Grosse Pointe Unitarian was chosen after rejecting Unitarian Universalist Society of Grosse Pointe and Grosse Pointe Community Church. It was at this meeting that the Chairman, Mr. Ford Whelden, presented our covenant which was signed by fifty-one people during the meeting and

ultimately by sixty-six founding members. The original document is below, and a printed version of the original handwritten statement follows.



“We, whose names are hereto subscribed, unite ourselves together as a liberal church in Grosse Pointe, Michigan 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 enlightening 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. Standing on this basis, 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.”

A constitution and by-laws were presented to a general meeting on Sunday, April 16, 1939, following the regular 4:00 pm service. After some discussion, and a few changes, both were adopted.

One of the candidates for minister, Rev. Robert Sewell Turner, preached on April 20th, and an undated and unidentified news clipping reported that he accepted the call. Something must have changed, because The Rev. Merrill Otis Bates of Laconia, New Hampshire preached at the May 14, 1939, service.

He accepted the call in June and in the fall of 1939 the congregation began meeting regularly at 11:00 am in the Alger Museum (now the Grosse Pointe War Memorial). An organ was purchased and the “well known” Mr. Malcolm John provided the music.



Several GPUC intra-mural organizations were already up and running.

According to the church directory of 1941-1942:

- The Young People's Religious Union, AKA The Pointers Club, organized in 1939 listed 14 members in 1939 and 21 members in 1941. They met in members' homes twice a month. The stated purpose:

To broaden religious conceptions.

To deepen interest in world problems.

In its first year of existence the Pointers devoted part of their time to visiting slums, housing projects, settlement houses and reformatories.

- The Women's Alliance

A notice in the Detroit News in 3/22/40 indicated that the Women's Organization of the GPUC hosted a speaker from The Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit; according to the Church Directory of 1941-42 the group had settled on the name "The Women's Alliance". First organized in 1940, it boasted sixty-three members. The first president of the group was Mrs. Gilbert S. Currie.

The stated purpose:

"To quicken the religious life of the denomination into closer acquaintance, co-operation and fellowship."

In its infancy this group managed to carry on intensive Red Cross work, interspersed with talks on maternal health, mental hygiene, and other similar topics.

- Grosse Pointe Unitarian Men's Club was organized in 1941 with nineteen members including the Rev. Bates and with Mr. John McPherson as president. The purpose:

"To promote religious, social and recreational activities among its members."

- The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church School organized in 1939 with eighteen students and led by Superintendent Mrs. Dorothy Angevine, met in the Grosse Pointe School for Little Folk on Notre Dame. By 1941 forty-six members were listed with nine "cradle roll" members in addition.

Mr. Paul Berlin was named the children’s choir leader. The school had moved to new quarters, the original Kerby School at 104 Kerby Road. Note: this school was located behind the current Grosse Pointe Farms police and Fire Department. Its purpose:

- To induct the children into that part of their heritage which is called “Religion.” To exercise control over the religious education of the child.*
- To develop a sense of appreciation of myths, nature and human nature.*
- To provide an opportunity for the child to set up tensions between what is and what ought to be.*
- To develop a sense of the significance of present conduct in its relation to the future of mankind.*

In an undated document, by unknown author probably written in 1941 or 1942, it is noted that the “...growing church school was supervised by a committee consisting of Clifton O. Page, headmaster of the Detroit University School, Clarence Messner, principal of three Grosse Pointe schools, and Mrs. Dean Draper, formerly connected with the Merrill Palmer School. The curricula are the best of the newest material available.” Mr. F. G. Jones was appointed by the Board of Trustees to serve as Chairman of the GPUC Music Committee and the church school. At the close of the 1939-1940 church year, the president noted that, “...The church school doubled in size and there was an increase of 43% in church attendance” with an increase in membership of 25%.” It was obvious that our church was growing by leaps and bounds and needed a permanent home.

The budget for 1941-42 is of interest:

Minister’s Salary	\$2,400
Rent	800
Music	350
Printing and Publicity	200
Membership dues in the AUA	35
Clerk	180
Miscellaneous	<u>315</u>
Total	\$4,500

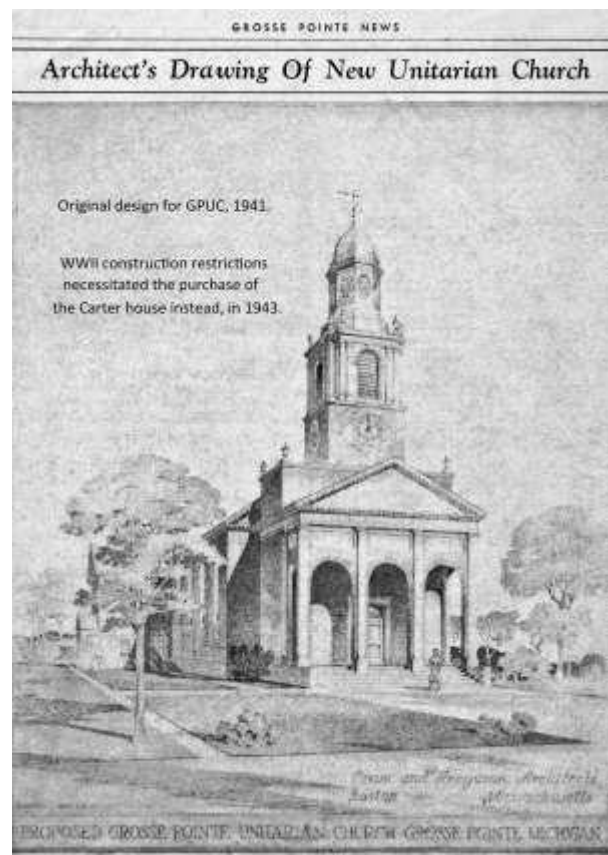
By this time the nascent congregation was meeting in the Lecture Hall of the Alger Museum (now known as the War Memorial) which at that time was an arm of the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). A contract dated 7/31/1940 with the DIA shows rent to be \$10.00 a month and a contract with the Grosse Pointe Public Schools indicates that rental of the Kerby School gym was \$7.00 per month and \$1.00 for every other room used.

The bill for printing and publicity is interesting in light of comments found in a board meeting report May 1941 that "... our church bulletin is classed by the A.U.A as one of the three best issued by its churches both as to content and get up." It was being sent to other churches as a sample of what could be done!

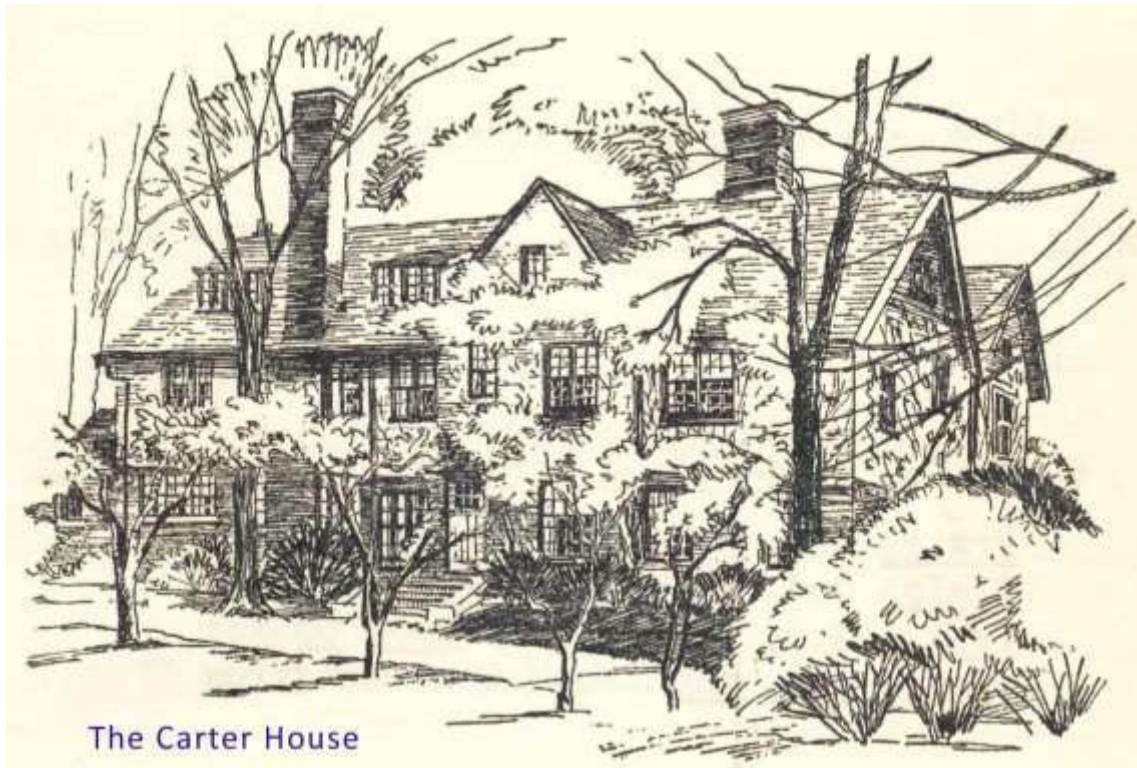
GPUC members Mr. and Mrs. Standish K. Backus donated a lot located next to their home at 725 Lake Shore Drive north of Lochmoor Blvd. for the planned new church. The building, designed by Architect Ralph Adams Cram, is seen at the right. At a board meeting on May 26, 1941, the Board approved paying Dr. Cram \$3000 for a full set of plans and specifications.

A vigorous building fund campaign ensued. Mrs. Standish Backus, (Lotta), gave impetus to the building fund with a gift of \$10,000. Approximately \$25,000 was raised. Seventy-two families made pledges. Church suppers, dances, bake sales, etc. all continued despite our Country's Declaration of War in

December 1941. It soon became apparent that due to restrictions on new building projects imposed by the war effort, a new church was not going to be built soon. So, an appropriate existing home was sought and found in the



David Carter estate at 17440 Jefferson (that house now faces Rathbone Place and the address is 14 Rathbone Place). According to a history written by Jean Herrmann, the purchase price was approximately \$15,000. We were able to borrow \$7,500 from the American Unitarian Association in Boston, interest free. The mortgage was signed with receipt of the seventy-five hundred dollars down payment on October 1, 1943.



On the afternoon of January 30, 1944, at a dedication ceremony, Dr. Frederick May Eliot of the American Unitarian Association gave an eloquent address. The Rev. Randall Hilton, Midwest regional director of the A.U.A. gave the prayer and the Rev Tracy M. Pullman, minister of the UU Church of Our Father, read from Scripture. Rev. Merrill O. Bates gave the invocation and benediction. About two hundred attended the special service. It was noted that at the morning service on that day, Mr. Hilton preached and Dr. Eliot christened Katherine Taylor Bates, second daughter of the minister. The Carter House, as it is affectionately referred to even today, served beautifully as temporary home to our congregation until it was outgrown in the 1950's and our current home was built in the early 1960's.

Over the next few years few new things were undertaken. The congregation's energy probably was channeled into the war effort. Very little can be found about its effects in our archives except for one telling notice listing thirty-seven (37) family members in service to our country found in the GPUC Member Directory 1944-45

HONOR ROLL

CHARLES K. BACKUS
STANDISH K. BACKUS,
JR. ALEXANDER J. BEHR
PRISCILLA BENNETT
ROBERT J. EADE
KENNETH M. FARR JOHN
FLETCHER ALEXANDER
K. GAGE ROBERT N.
GIBSON CARL GRUHZIT
HAROLD C. HEYM
KITTREDGE HAMLIN
CHARLES N. HOYT
STAVERT HUDSON
THEODORE A. JACOB
THOMAS NEWTON JONES
LAWRENCE G. KING
PHILIP L. LEIDICH
GEORGE A. McBRIDE

JOHN McPHERSON
WILLIAM McPHERSON
THOMAS H. MILLER
ALLEN F. MARKS
JOHN HAMILTON NEALE
LOUIS PASCHALL
WILLIAM PHELPS
JACK W. SAVAGE
RICHARD A. SAVAGE
JOHN PETER SELLAS
EDWARD D. SPALDING
R.P. TIDMAN
JAMES K. WATKINS, JR.
JOHN B. WATKINS
FORD H. WHELDEN
GEORGE B. WICHERHAM
GENE A. WHITE
CARTER ZELEZNIK

Board minute notes of January 21, 1946 state that three of them lost their lives in World War II: John McPherson, Jr., George B. Wicherham and Louis Paschall.

An annual church Christmas Fair was started in 1946 and the second Fair on November 14, 1947, included a children's carnival, a harvest dinner, booths featuring baby clothes, a white elephant sale, linens, aprons and pastry items. These Fairs served to involve almost everyone in the congregation. They morphed into the Holly Fair, which was held every year until 1994, when it was discontinued.

The first reference found in our archives to a musical program put on by our choir was in November of 1948. It is so reflective of the times it bears inclusion in this tome.

“ 'This is America' is the title of the theme around which all events will center....The program is made up of numbers ranging in variety from Negra [sic] Spirituals, and swing music to grand opera. There will be dancers, a Barber Shop Quartette and audience participation with prizes for the correct answers. Beautiful girls will sell refreshments between acts and the whole affair will take on the air of merriment and gaiety [sic] with balloons, confetti, popcorn and candied apples.”

Further details of the music programs can be found in the chapter on music.

Much effort, thought, money and time were put into building our present church building between 1955 and 1965. There were many ups and downs and in particular a legal battle that took its toll, but we finally ended with the erection of our beautiful, functional church. It was and remains a forceful statement of modern architecture in a very conservative community. Please see the chapter on this topic for more details.

In 1950, Rev. Bates was replaced as minister by Rev. William D. Hammond. Rev. Hammond was pastor up until the actual point of building our permanent church home and then he moved on to another position. Rev. Robert Wilde Lawson served as interim minister in 1965 until he was relieved by Dr. Harry Chamberlain Meserve who stayed for nine years. During his tenure our church hosted several controversial events as result of his liberal leadership. He championed open housing in a community that long was known to manage what houses were shown to what people. He came out strongly against the Vietnam War. As president of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, Dr. Meserve arranged to bring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the area just three weeks before King was assassinated in 1968. A core of members of GPUC did not support these more liberal activities and protested by withdrawing financial and other support.

Those members who stayed with the church speak of Rev. Meserve with affection and reverence.

He was followed by Rev. Fred Firth Campbell, one of the youngest and least experienced of the ministers called to serve GPUC. He served faithfully for seven years before his resignation was accepted by the Board of Trustees. Interim minister Mr. Brooks Robert Walker provided a needed break before the arrival of Rev. John Corrado who stayed with us for twenty-five years.

After Rev. Corrado retired, Rev. Mitra Rahnema, interim minister, introduced new trends, ideas and approaches during her two-year stint, and as a result, our congregation was ready to welcome our next settled minister, the Rev. Shelley Page, who resigned after 3 years with little advanced notice. In August 2014, we welcomed Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel, who began as our consulting minister. Rev. Dr. Riegel remained with us as our settled minister until this present day. This rapid romp through our ministers is told in greater detail in the chapter on Ministers.

After all the energy, time and money focused on the new church building in the early 1960's, GPUC barely had time to catch its collective breath before the tumults of the leadership of Rev. Harry Meserve, the 1967 Detroit Riot, the civil rights confrontations, marches, the Voting Rights act of 1965, the atrocities at Selma, Alabama and Martin Luther King's appearance in Grosse Pointe March 14, 1968, focused our attention on our Church's social responsibilities. Underlying all of this was a real concern about our financial situation. The congregation showed a deficit of \$9,000 at the end of the fiscal year 1966/67. The new roof leaked from the start. There was decorating and landscaping to be done and a kitchen to be built in the annex, along with keeping the usual church and social life going. Rev. Robert Wilde Lawson, interim minister between Rev. Campbell and Rev. Meserve, helped us to begin to broaden our focus beyond the problems and pride of building our church when he journeyed to Selma, Alabama from March 26 to April 2, 1965, to join the protests there. He must have experienced many anxious moments because he wrote in the annual report of 1965 that, "The unanimous support of the GPUC membership throughout this trying time was a great comfort to me."

Over the next several years, our church congregation stepped up in many ways, individually and collectively, to fight racial and other invidious discrimination and support our less fortunate Detroit area neighbors. As noted above, our minister, Rev. Harry Meserve, was able to bring Martin Luther King to Grosse Pointe, a most controversial move. And after the Detroit uprising in 1967, our annex served as the collection point for food and clothing to aid those who lost their homes and goods in the fires. See the section on Social Action for more details.

The fight for open housing in Grosse Pointe led by Rev. Meserve was a tough one for our membership. Not all supported him in this and some protested by withdrawing financial support causing a rift that took many years to heal. In short, what happened was this. As President of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, Meserve was able to bring Martin Luther King to speak in Grosse Pointe on March 14, 1968, just three weeks before King was killed. The situation was a volatile one. Seldom had King spoken to an all-white suburb, indoors. People protesting his appearance were present inside and out causing understandable concern. GPUC members still remember the day with a great deal of pride. A detailed description of the event can be found at the end of this document.



Rev. Harry Meserve

As mentioned above, the other area of concern we faced after building our new church was keeping up with the financial demands. After a hiatus of eight years, The Women's Alliance (now named "The Alliance") and others stepped up to produce a Holly Fair in 1965 which continued annually until 1994, providing significant financial support for the church.

Between 1960 and 1965, the Alliance also managed to raise over \$8,000 through rummage sales, the production and sale of cookbooks featuring favorite recipes of members, calendars, bridge parties and other fundraisers. The \$8,000 went to help pay for the Annex kitchen. Member Joan Hines remembers that the cookbook was assembled the day President Kennedy was assassinated, November 22, 1963.

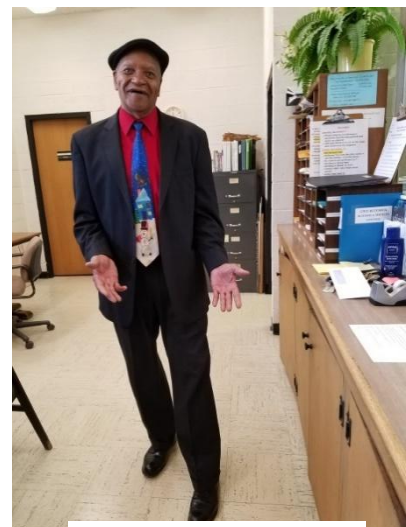
Rummage sales had been a popular and lucrative activity over the years and continued to be held twice a year for many years. In addition, Ethel Drake and Carrie Peebles came up with the idea that the Annex could be used as a permanent resale shop and on March 10, 1971, it was opened from 10am to 1pm, Wednesdays only. The shop soon expanded to three days a week and five years later was taking in about \$7,000. in sales per year. Currently it is open only two days a week and yet continues to be a reliable financial support for the Church operating fund, as well as paying for many items for the Annex and church facilities.

Several other stable money makers were added to help pay the bills. By 1992, \$45,000 was garnered yearly for church use through facility usage, mainly of our parking lot by nearby hospital employees and our RE classrooms by Grosse Pointe Pre-K School.

Our buildings were helping to pay for themselves!! More about fundraising will be found in a later chapter.

Up until 1975, the annual pledge drive was run by a professional company. That year a decision was made to try to do it ourselves to save money. The effort was deemed successful and the pledge campaign has continued to be run by members since then. By the time of our 50th Anniversary celebration (1989) then Board President Allen Freiwald was able to say that for the first time the church was financially solvent. We “...didn’t have to worry about money, about not having to put bills in a hat and pull out the one to pay this month.” We had a comfortable \$20,000 in the checking account.

We entered into a relatively peaceful, stable period spent refining, enhancing, standardizing, upgrading and maybe, just maybe, getting a little set in our ways. The stability was enhanced by having the same settled minister, Rev. John Corrado, for 25 years, and by hiring Mr. Willie Barber as custodian in 1976. He remains a most valued part of the team. Mr. Barber has kept up our property so well that two denomination officials who visited our church in 2000 commented that ours was, “...one of the cleanest churches in the country.



Willie Barber

Newsletters, usually two pages, sometimes three, legal size have been steadily produced by a number of different editors over time. Although early editions have not been uncovered as of this writing, other evidence indicates that the Minister or his wife may have produced and edited the newsletter until the 1960's. We do know that a new heading was designed in 1956 by artist member Gloria Freiwald. Rev. Hammond edited in 1964 and Kay Meserve in 1965.

After that, members from the congregation took on the responsibility: Pauline Roddy in 1967, Mrs. James Huntington in 1968, Helen Weiller in 1969, Myra Moeller in 1970, Mrs. Howard Bacon in 1971 and Beth Sanders in 1972. Bob Dupuis took on the task off and on until quite recently. He remembered in the 1960's that the newsletter was produced weekly and took up most of his Sunday as it had to be copied using the old mimeograph machine. The task has been made easier by the use of the computer and copier, publishing every other week, and all but about 30 copies can be delivered by email.

The task then was spread out among several editors each year. Jack Alden, Barbara Moran/Corrado, and Bob Dupuis shared the honors in the mid 2000's. Tom Roberts, Jenevieve Lilly and Vicky Keating were the editors from 2013-2014. Rudy Wedenoja was solo editor from 2015-2019 until Kathleen Ruhl took over. She has remained our editor until present.

Samples of newsletter headings through the years follow on the next page.

Newsletter Headers since 1964

1964



1968

1981



2012-13
(mailed)

2013
(e-mailed)



Marian Rawson started writing new member biographical articles for the Newsletter in 1990. She wrote over a hundred of them and was named Unsung Hero by the church in 2003.

Our congregation joined the computer age with discussions beginning in 1987 to evaluate the need and potential of such a move. It took until 1990 before we began to dip our toes in that water with our first computer. In 1997, we stepped up to install a “state of the art” computer, which has been tweaked, improved, replaced and upgraded on numerous occasions. A Tech Committee was established in 2000 with Sam Smith in the lead. Larry Peplin and his son, Christopher, our Webmaster, joined the task of keeping GPUC up to speed. With Christopher’s help we started our own website in 2003, and a complete redesign was performed in the fall of 2011. We began to send out the church newsletter by email in 2009, saving postage costs. All members using a computer also receive a weekly e-mail update with reminders, “This Weekend at GPUC”.

We are continually astonished by and proud of our “geeks”. The church web site has proven itself to be a key aspect of membership growth and community presence. It is a portal to virtually everything one might need to know about the church, such as location, time of services, current news and activities, recorded sermons and much more, plus numerous links to related Unitarian-Universalist web sites and blogs. It is an exceptionally busy, well-used site.

For example, Google Analytics shows that in the four-month period from January 1, 2012 through April 30, 2012, the site had 2,628 visitors. 1,683 of those were unique (not having been to the site previously), and 7,628 pages were viewed. 61% of the site visitors were first timers, never having opened the site before. Informal reports from the Membership Committee are indicating that the vast majority of our Sunday visitors (and subsequent new members) had gone to our web site before coming in person to the church.

Below is most of the tech information from the church annual report for 2011, with a few additions from the 2012 report:

- The GPUC Membership Directory was added in HTML format, enabling easy additions, changes and corrections. Result: the online Directory is always accurate and up to date.
- The UU chalice logo on the home page was changed to a UUA-approved rainbow version, signifying that we are now a Welcoming Congregation.
- The Ministerial Search Committee was able to make the entire GPUC Ministerial Packet available online in a password-protected section of the web site. This saved many hours of work producing fat binders of materials.
- The online church calendar can now be kept complete and up to date by our Administrator.
- Virtually all sermons, parts of Sunday services, and many memorial services are being digitally recorded and uploaded to the home page usually within a couple of hours of the end of the service. They can be listened to on any computer or downloaded to personal listening devices such as iPods.
- Hits (individual users clicking on pages on our site) are at an all-time high. In the calendar year of 2010, our site received 13,452-page requests.

In 2017, a YouTube page was created where Dr. Riegel's Sermons as well as other video content pertaining to the church can be found. As of recent, services can now be found on our website under "Virtual Services." Meeting restrictions demanded by the COVID-19 Pandemic were quickly solved with zoom virtual meetings throughout most of 2020 and 2021. Once most members were fully vaccinated, hybrid (in-person and virtual) services were offered.

Our congregation has stepped up to meet environmental concerns by buying "green" products and recycling whenever it can.

We're also working to meet the health needs of our congregation. In 1992 eight hearing devices were purchased to assist those with hearing difficulty. The Care Committee was

established in 2002 to provide support in time of grief or illness. There are about 20 members who can be called upon for assistance in time of need.

When new chairs were purchased in 2003, we made sure that some had arms to help those who find it hard to rise without assistance. Space for an ADA-compliant unisex restroom was carved out by a creative redesign of the women's restroom and was installed in the summer of 2010. That project was spearheaded by Janet and Larry Peplin. Beaumont Medical Transportation donated an AED (Automated external defibrillator which was installed in October 2010. Two training sessions were held that year, November 4 and November 8, with a total of thirty-one members attending. Another training class was held in January 2012, with six attending.

The AED was first used in 2012 when after a Memorial Service; one of the speakers leaving the parking lot suffered a heart attack. Two doctors from the congregation responded immediately, and the defibrillator was used. It was said that the AED probably saved his life, as the victim was already sitting up and talking before the ambulance arrived.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

An ad hoc committee was created by the Board in 2017/18 and scheduled to dissolve in 2019. The committee hosted two first aid workshops “Avoid/Defend/Deny” a presentation covering how to survive an active threat situation and practice in using first aid equipment.

The Committee also purchased first aid kits with trauma packs, fire blankets and signage for location of these items. Safety guidelines were produced for the greeters and ushers that covered location of exits, locations of medical equipment, emergency response, tornado, fire and belligerent visitors. A decision was made for the safety of the children in the RE that 10 minutes after the start of Sunday Service the RE doors be closed and they should lock automatically.

Although the Church Board approved the installation of air conditioning for the office and the minister’s study in 1999, it was finally accomplished in 2001. It was definitely worth the wait, as the coffee kitchen and the library could be added to the job at that time. Three years later the fellowship hall in the Annex also received air conditioning. Since lay summer services were begun in 1993 and have been successfully conducted and well attended with an average of forty attendees, we began to consider this same amenity for the Sanctuary. A/C was added to the sanctuary, gallery and foyer in 2015.

Speaking of lay services, church services were completely lay led in 1974-5 between Harry Meserve’s departure and Fred Campbell’s arrival thanks to the work of Dr. Eli Rubin. Lay services during the summer were a regular feature during Rev. Meserve’s ministry. Summer lay-led services then were started up again under Rev. Corrado’s tenure in 1994 as a regular feature between June and September. During the church year, September to June, we have also had them on a monthly basis, eight to nine a year except in 1998 when our minister, Rev. Corrado, was granted a month’s leave to travel to the Meadville/Lombard (UU) seminary to learn about its programs, faculty and students, and to interview ministerial intern prospects. That year there were twelve lay services and in 1999/2000, Adam Tierney, our first and only ministerial intern to date

took service responsibility and only two were lay led. While Rev. Mitra Rahnema was our interim minister, a worship committee was formed comprised of six Worship Associates, and continues to this day.

In 1992, by Congregation vote, Sunday services were started a half hour earlier, a change from 11am to 10:30. The trial was initiated because some parents suggested this was a more family friendly time. After a year the congregation voted to make the change permanent with but one dissenting vote.

Most years our minister and members attend, serve, and/or make presentations at many denominational affairs, meetings and conferences as well as giving financial support to the larger UU movement. GPUC has been a Fair Share member of the UUA and the Heartland UU District, formerly

UUDOM, for many years. Our minister and usually a few members attend the annual meetings. The General Assembly met in Lansing, Michigan in 1979 and GPUC members Russell and Carrie Peebles were the volunteer coordinators. Our choir sang there, led by Carol Reddick. It was said at the time that it was "...one of the most successful national conventions ever held." The very next year, in the fall of 1980, GPUC hosted the annual UUDOM meeting, with Joan Hines taking a lead role. Long-time members Carrie and Russell Peebles were nominated and selected for the Unsung Award by the UUDOM in 1977 and then placed in nomination for the National Unsung Award.



(Ed note: The district has been known by several names over the years. It began as UUCOM, Unitarian Universalist Council of Michigan in 1961, the same year the Universalists joined the Unitarians. Russell Peebles was the second president. After UUCOM it became UUDOM, Unitarian Universalist District of Michigan, then MOVADO, Michigan Ohio Valley District Organization. Russell Peebles was the Clerk of the Board at that time. The name was changed in 2000 to the Heartland District and in April of 2013, Heartland joined forces with the two neighboring districts to form the Mid-America Region.)

In recent years, our Minister Emeritus, Rev. John Corrado, was President of the Michigan Chapter of UU Ministers and as a “25-year man” he preached at the 1992 annual UU assembly. He was involved in the UU movement in many ways, writing, composing music and advising.

How GPUC ever got to 1990 without a policy manual is a mystery, but that was corrected when, at the request of Board President Rick Morshead, Jean Dupuis and Harriet Rubin gathered all the guidelines created by prior Boards and Congregations since the beginning of our church in 1939 and put them together in one place. The by-laws were re-written and updated around the same time. In 1999, The Board Manual was updated with current relevant information concerning Board structure and policies that address church operations. Also included were the recently developed building use contracts and event publicity guidelines. The Board also reviewed the church’s entire risk management program and established formal procedures for gifts of corporate stock made to the church. A new set of policy revisions and updates were completed in Nov. 2018. The bylaws had a total revision and were approved at the annual meeting in May 2019.

Perhaps some of this organizing and standardizing happened at this time because we celebrated our 50th year as a Congregation in 1989 and our sixtieth year in 1999. Landmark years such as these cause a certain amount of analysis: where have we been and where are we headed? To that end in 1998-99, Rev. Mrs. Charlotte Cowtan from the

UUDOM was invited to conduct a board retreat to help plan ways to grow our church. This meeting was followed by having Rev. Mr. Edwin C. Lynn, a consultant from the UUA, to help us plan how best to use our space to meet our goals. As result of these two consultations, the Board was inspired to purchase the house on Neff that borders our driveway. It turned out to be ill-considered as the house required costly upkeep and repairs. It didn't take long to realize it was a drain on the budget and time of our church members, and it was sold in 2002.

One essential concept this writer remembers from these consultations is that it will always be more challenging to grow our church by significant numbers since we only can draw from half a circle of population. The other half is Lake St. Clair, whose population is mostly fish!

A significant move toward expanding our Church's outreach occurred between February 7, 2010 and March 6, 2011. For the first time in its existence, the congregation was exposed to the concept of becoming a Welcoming Congregation. This is the UUA program aimed at helping congregations become better informed and accepting of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Queer members of our community and world. Chaired by Janet Peplin and assisted by her committee, twenty-four sessions were offered to our Congregation. The activities were varied and multidimensional to increase appeal and meet learning preferences. These included:

- 14 Workshops from "the Welcoming Congregation Handbook"
- 7 Guest Speaker Forums
- 1 Book Discussion Session
- 6 Movie showings
- 7 Social Justice Activities

Overall participation:

107 Adults members attended the workshops, (65% of adult members of GPUC)

13 RE juniors and seniors

31 Community members (not GPUC members)

26 Members participated in the voting process only but did not attend workshops. 80% of members participated in the process by attending workshops and/or voting.



ABOVE: The congregation votes to become officially recognized as “Welcoming.”

97 % of the congregation (108 members) voted on March 6, 2011 to become a Welcoming Congregation. GPUC was then officially recognized by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation on April 22, 2011. GPUC has always worked at being

accepting and welcoming to all people who come through our doors, but this action makes our position deliberate, open and official.



Left to right: John Owens, Sara Hassinger, Janet Peplin, Janice Gray, Emily Owens, Ann Helm, and the Rev. Mitra Rahnema

We continue the work to “keep open minds, helping hands and loving hearts” with the 2013 establishment of an Interweave Committee, which became the Social Justice Committee. This group continues the work of being actively welcoming to all, regardless of sexual orientation.

Several other innovations occurred in 2012. Our Sunday service became more inclusive of children with a youth choir, youth readers and the first teen worship associate. After a few years, the presence of the children in Sunday service has waned. The teen worship associate could not be maintained due to a lack of interested candidates. The Committee on Ministry has expanded to include Shared Ministry. The Nominating Committee has been re-cast as the Leadership Development Committee, charged with nurturing leaders throughout the year as well as developing a slate of nominees for election at the Annual Meeting. The Newcomers Circles have had a revision, and Pathways to Membership gatherings have been added.

Members are periodically surveyed to establish interest in volunteering. And in September 2016, the first annual committee fair was produced in an effort to increase committee membership/participation. New hymnals, *Singing the Journey*, were purchased to use in addition to *Singing the Living Tradition*, which has been in use by the congregation for some years.

The Care Committee was established in 2002 by Rev. Corrado to provide support in times of grief or illness. Initially, Rev. Corrado would pass on a name to Jill Crane or Mary Moreshead who would find someone in the congregation who could provide support. It became more of an official committee around 2013. Linda Lawrence took on the leadership until 2020. Carol Guither became committee chair in 2020 until 2022. Debbie Connelly is our current Lay Pastoral Chair. There are now 20 members who can be called upon to provide food, transportation, phone contacts and visits to those in need. Get well cards and sympathy cards are sent from the church by this committee and it provides ushers and greeters for memorial services.

A book table featuring books and pamphlets related to UU history, philosophy, etc. was a constant feature over time until 1985 when it was discontinued for lack of interest. It has been revived recently as a book cart organized and operated by member Suzanne Ross on the first and third Sunday of the month. The cart was designed and built by the team of George and Janice Gray. Again, it was discontinued for lack of interest.

After much work by an ad hoc committee and several drafts presented to the congregation, a mission and vision statement were both approved by the congregation in a special meeting Dec 4th, 2016.

Mission Statement – “We are a welcoming, compassionate community to learning, service and social justice, celebrating joy, diversity and integrity on our spiritual journey.” Approved 2/7/2016

**Vision Statement
of
Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church**

Preamble

We, the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church congregation, commit to creating a liberal religious presence in our community and beyond--a dynamic presence that enables us to "envision a life filled with compassion for all, shared in beloved community, and lived in a just world." *

Our vision statement reflects our congregational commitment to the future. It is based on the congregational responses to an anonymously administered survey followed by vigorous discussion shared in open, small groups.

The vision captures our congregational dreams for our spiritual and programmatic needs, outreach and social justice efforts, facility's needs, pastoral care, fellowship opportunities and fundraising efforts.

Vision Statement

We provide diverse and compelling ways for people of all ages to grow in spirit, conscience, and wisdom. Our worship services, lifelong educational programs, music, and service initiatives inspire children, youth, and adults to live with greater purpose, respect, and love. Through meaningful advocacy, outreach, and service we express our common commitment to social justice, peace, and compassion within and beyond our community.

As a welcoming and compassionate community, we recognize that the care of one another is our shared responsibility. We recognize the importance of deep and enduring relationships within our congregation. We respond kindly and generously to needs within our community. We strive to welcome and integrate newcomers effectively. We foster fellowship by offering a variety of opportunities for social interaction in large and small groups.

The architectural design of Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church and its grounds are a statement of hope for all to see. We will maintain and enhance our church grounds and facilities to meet the needs of our church family.

* UUA Vision Statement, February 22, 2012

We are committed to revisiting this process every five years.

December 4, 2016

Vision Facilities Committee 2019

GPUC had not undertaken a major building project since construction of the current building and renovation of the Annex were completed in 1965. By the mid-90s the complex was beginning to show its age and the congregation, though smaller than during the '60s, was feeling cramped. At the same, the church was contemplating what would be required to take it the next level of growth.

This issue had been considered at several points in time. In 1989/90, the church engaged Rev. Edwin Lynn, UU minister and architect to advise us on how to plan for anticipated growth. No follow-up was done at that time.

During Rev. Mitra Rahnema's tenure (2009-2012), the issue of expanding the foyer on the parking lot side similar to one of the suggestions of Rev. Lynn was raised and discussed. No action was taken.

In 2015, the Board again took up the consideration of space needs, prompted by the perception that coffee hour had become uncomfortably crowded. The Vision Facilities Committee was formed; previous suggestions were considered, congregation and staff were surveyed, usage of the facility was studied, repurposing of the RE rooms and the Annex considered. John Hill, a consulting architect, was engaged to work with the committee. Three congregation meetings and two small group meetings were held in 2018 and early 2019.

Three options were offered. The one receiving the most support from the congregation expands the lobby of the church building to the north and south, enlarges the library 60% and moves the kitchenette, coatroom, storage area and administrative office toward Maumee. The circle garden becomes an oval. The RE wing is remodeled by making a multi-purpose area of over 60 sq. ft. in the center and moving the DRE's office to the perimeter. One of the perimeters would be a lounge/class for the exclusive use of the RE Seniors. Cost range: \$1,359,655 to \$1,750,165.

PEOPLE OF NOTE at GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH

A church without people is just an empty building. It might be of interest to populate our church by mentioning a few members whose lives gained some fame or notoriety.

Up until 1972 articles in local publications were faithfully clipped and preserved by unnamed archivists and then this activity was mysteriously dropped. A few articles of special note have been collected over time, but we cannot fully recapture the time lost between 1972 and the appointment of this writer as current historian and archivist in 1995. Once again, articles of interest, programs, obituaries, etc., are being preserved for the future.

- Standish and Lotta Backus

Standish Backus (born January 12, 1875 in Detroit) was an attorney who graduated from the University of Michigan in 1898 with an engineering degree. Mr. Backus then graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1901, and joined the firm Stevenson, Carpenter, Butzel and Backus. He was active in the formation of the Cadillac Motor Car Co. and was general counsel for General Motors Corp. until 1920, when he accepted the Presidency of the

Burroughs Adding Machine Company and retained this post until his death on July 14, 1943. He and Lotta E. Boyer (of Detroit) were married January 16, 1907. They had five children, three girls and two boys, including their third child, Charles K. Backus, born March 29, 1917. His name will come up later in this history as the architect of our church.



Mrs. Standish (Lotta) Backus

Lotta's father, Joseph Boyer was head of the Burroughs Adding Machine Co. from 1902 until he retired in 1920 and handed the post over to his son-in-law Standish.

Although Lotta Boyer Backus was active and generous in the very early days of our Church, she was not an official founding member and did not sign the original Church Covenant. She did, however, give \$10,000 to begin the building fund in 1939 and in 1941 offered the lot next to her home on Lakeshore Drive, north of Lochmoor Blvd., to build the church. Over the next many years, until her death in 1966, a generous gift of Burroughs stock was anonymously given to the church each year at Christmas time.

- Alice Hammond (Mrs. John) received her private pilot's license in 1931 and won the first air race for women in Michigan in 1933. She joined GPUC in November 1939, a month too late to be a charter member.

During World War II Alice activated and commanded the first and largest women's flying squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, flying courier missions. Hammond competed in sixteen All Women's Transcontinental Air Races starting with the Transcontinental Air Race in July of 1953, which took off from Andover, MA, and finished in Long Beach California. She was inducted into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame in 1990.



- Gloria Whipple (the first Mrs. Allen Freiwald) won a woman's state roller skating championship in the 1940's and also a sixth-place spot in a national competition. She excelled as an artist and often used her talents in designs for the church. Her original drawing is currently hung in the hallway between the office and the minister's study.
- Mrs. John W. Carson won \$1000 for writing the winning jingle in a Pepsodent Toothpaste contest in May 1951. The Carson's were also newsworthy in 1961 as having a nuclear fallout shelter stocked and ready to use.
- Clarence Messner, principal of Richard School for twenty-six years, was appointed to the State Conservation Commission by Gov. G. Mennen Williams in 1958.
- Mrs. Frederick Schumann was president of the Metro Detroit YWCA in 1959.
- Jean Harris painted the Easter Cover for the Detroit News Pictorial in the late 1950's

- Otto O. Fisher was featured as a rare book collector in 1960.
- Sally Brown was given the “Woman of Conscience Award” by the National Council of Women, in March 1969. This award is given to women who have performed outstanding service for human rights. Brown was nominated because of her outstanding work as an organizer of the Grosse Pointe Committee for Open Housing, her service on the steering committee of “Homes by Christmas,” the emergency group which helped to relocate families burned out of their homes during the Detroit Riot of 1967 and her many other community activities to advance human rights.
- Edward Herrmann, son of Jean (GPUC president 1956/7) and John Herrmann (GPUC president 1964/5), is a busy Hollywood actor who was seen in the films “Paper Chase“, “Day of the Dolphins“, co-starred with Robert Redford in “The Great Waldo Pepper“, and played Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1977 TV production of “Eleanor and Franklin“. He has also narrated many History Channel documentaries.
- John Mogk received one of the National Jaycee Outstanding Young Men of 1973 Awards. He was honored at a dinner in Salt Lake City for his work to Push Back the Blight in the Jefferson/Chalmers Area. He also served Gov. Milliken and the State Board of Education as a consultant on bussing to end segregation.
- Carrie Peebles was named the Volunteer of the Week of October 22, 1962, honoring her 500 hours of service that year in the Receiving Hospital Service League. The League was formed in 1961 by Carrie who, while volunteering in the hospital with a group from GPUC realized that much more work needed to be done than could be done by the GPUC volunteers. She then contacted various religious and community organizations to help form the Service League. Mrs. Peebles was the first recording secretary and then stepped into the Presidency. Under her leadership the group grew to five times its original membership of thirty. Mrs. Peebles also served for two years as president of the Michigan Area Council of Liberal Churches, as a Brownie leader for three years, and as a Cub Scout Den Mother.
- Russell Peebles was a member of the Grosse Pointe Schools Board of Education 1963. He served as president of GPUC Board of Trustees twice and was Treasurer of the building fund for our church in the 1960’s.



Carrie Peebles

- G. Gordon Cook was Grosse Pointe City Councilman, 1961
- Jane Kohring and Mrs. John Herrmann were elected to the board of Planned Parenthood, Detroit in 1963.
- Henry Kohring, a travel representative for the Hamburg-American Lines, was standing on the tarmac in New Jersey on May 6, 1937, looking up at the Hindenburg when it exploded. He escaped unharmed.
- Creighton C. Lederer was named head of the Detroit Building and Safety Engineering Department April, 1971.
- Peter Blum invented the formulas for Stroh's Light and Stroh's Signature Beers and in retirement became the leading authority on Michigan brewing history and the Stroh Brewing Co. in particular. He wrote *Brewed in Detroit*, published in 1998.
- John Graves, a Detroit high school English teacher who was fluent in French, was hired by the State Department as a Public Affairs Officer and assigned to the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran. He was one of the large group of hostages taken by Iranian terrorists and was held for 444 days from November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981. They were finally released the day Ronald Reagan became president.
- Mary Beth Sanders Smith is the author of several books *Escape, June, Love Takes*, and many published articles. Her work has received many honors, including an award for fiction by PEN, The Detroit Free Press and The Detroit Public Library.
- Bob Dupuis wrote a biography of the legendary jazz trumpeter, Bunny Berigan. It was published in 1993 and entitled *Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz*. Bob also has written about our own famous pianist and composer, the late Bess Bonnier.
- Ms. Bess Bonnier was an exceptional jazz composer and professional jazz musician despite being severely vision impaired since birth. Her career spanned six decades and included regular appearances with vibraphonist Jack Brokensha at his jazz club in Detroit. She played at special events in Brussels, Spain, New York, and even a solo concert at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. She was a regular



Bess Bonnier

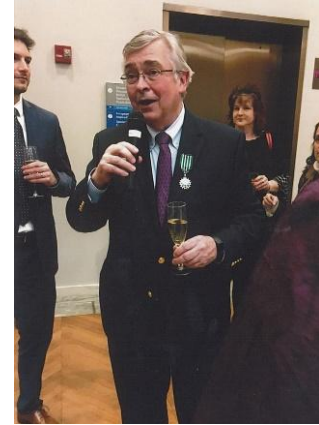
performer at the Monteux - Detroit Jazz Festival, a teacher at Cass Tech, and an artist in residence in the Grosse Pointe Schools. She received many awards and appeared on many recordings. Her last composition was "Suite William", a Jazz Cantata based on the works of William Shakespeare.

- Darrell Eubank wrote several musical services for our church. His "Walden", based on Henry David Thoreau's book of the same title, utilizes Thoreau's words and was first performed at GPUC Nov. 18, 1973. His "Unitarian Mass" (sic), based on the works of E.E. Cummings, (both of whose parents were Unitarians by the way), was performed at GPUC March 11, 1973. It was published and performed throughout the country. He also wrote and produced several of the popular Gaieties productions.
- Laurie Arora was elected to a four year term on the Grosse Pointe Park City Council in 2009 and re-elected to serve in 2017.
- Jane Hoey started the Race for the Cure in Detroit while employed by the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. Although Jane said she didn't even know what a 5K race was when she took the assignment, she soon got up to speed, assembled a stellar support system and astonished all by having 3000 participants the first year of the race, 1992. It grew exponentially from then and the year of her retirement, 2002, included 30,000 runners and made \$500,000 for cancer research.
- Barbara Moran Corrado was named State Teacher of the Year in Creative Writing in 1994.
- John Owens' documentary "The Rouge" won an Iris award from the National Association of TV Programming Executives in 1997. Owens, sadly in the wrong place at the wrong time, was shot by a mentally ill man in the lobby of TV station WDIV on April 15, 2005 and grievously injured. With the help of many surgeries, physical therapy, adaptive driving devices and pain medication he is back to work as of this writing in 2013.
- Stan Harr and Laura Bartell and family are frequently seen in active roles in Grosse Pointe Theater productions. Their children are often seen in school plays as well. Stan received the Clarence Award from the Grosse Pointe Theater in 2009 for his work as music director of "Miss Saigon".
- In 2002, Friends of the Grosse Pointe Library Board included four GPUC members, Mary Beth Sanders Smith, Shirley Reeves, Doris Cook and William Salot, M.D.
- Phyllis Reeve, on stage in local dramatic productions for thirty-five years, also played

Fairy Godmother at many children's gatherings. Phyllis wrote a book entitled *One for Sorrow, Two for Joy; A Story of a Girl, a Boy and a Horse Named Pegasus*, a novel for young adults published in 2002.

- Mark and Phyllis Reeve were founding members of the Grosse Pointe Theater.
- Lucy Beard was honored by the AAUW in 2009 for her contributions to that organization.
- Laura W. Spurr was the Tribal Chair of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi from 2003 to the day of her death in 2010. For her efforts in the development of Fire Keepers Casino she was honored in February 2009 as one of two Tribal Leaders of the Year by the Native American Finance Officers Association. She was known as a vigorous and outspoken advocate for her Tribe. Laura was active in religious education; for many years she took our senior youths every Sunday to COTS (Coalition On Temporary Shelters), a homeless shelter in Detroit. She was later recognized by COTS with an award for longstanding service.
- Dr. Russ Chavey climbed 19,341 foot Mt. Kilimanjaro in December 2010 to raise money for technology improvements in the Grosse Pointe School System.
- Ruth Cain accepted the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010 from the Society of Professional Journalists, Detroit Chapter, as matriarch of her family of journalists. Ruth, her husband and six of her seven children were or are journalists or work in writing careers. Ruth passed away unexpectedly in 2012.
- Sara Hassinger was honored with a Silver Circle Award from the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences 2013. Sara was recognized for her lasting contributions to the broadcast industry, especially in her role as the first woman director in the Detroit television market. Sara recently retired after a 32-year career at WDIV-TV directing daily newscasts, public affairs programming, and major events including the Easter Seals Telethon, the Freedom Festival Fireworks, and "America's Thanksgiving Day Parade." Sara won 3 Emmys for Multiple-Camera Field Directing during her career.
- Jessica Keyser – Grosse Pointe Library Director since 2016
- Cindy Brusilow became a member of Turning Pointe Board of Directors, 2019

- Alan Darr, Senior Curator of European Paintings, Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Detroit Institute of Arts, was presented the insignia of Chevalier De l'Ordre Des Arts et Des Lettres (**Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters**) by the French Cultural Ministry for his many years of contribution to French and Franco-American Cultural Programs, Exhibitions, Acquisitions and Events in February 2020.



Alan Darr



"Humans! They Just Don't Get it" –
Carol Guither 2021

- Carol Guither displayed her artistic talent with this watercolor entry in the GP Artists Appreciation exhibit in April 2021. It was titled “Humans! They just don’t get it.”
- Valarie St. John was elected to Grosse Pointe School Board November 2022.

Of course, there are many more who could or should be recognized but regretfully are not. We know our membership has included the wealthy, the well-known, and the notorious. Our congregation has included many doctors and lawyers, and even an Indian Chief. Many of our children have been recognized as scholars and scouts, dancers and singers, artists and athletes, making us all proud.

HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH HOMES AND PROPERTY

To recap what was presented in a previous chapter of our history, the first official service of our beginning congregation took place in the Grosse Pointe Memorial Church on March 27, 1938. Dr. Augustus P. Reccord of First Universalist, The Church of Our Father led this service and others on alternate Sundays at 4:00 pm until the fall of 1939, when Rev. Merrill Otis Bates took over the duties. Rev. Reccord was most supportive and encouraging of the little group, even making his way to Grosse Pointe once in a blinding snowstorm which kept most of the congregation at home. By the fall of 1939 the congregation was meeting at the Russell Alger Museum, currently known as the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, and continued to meet there while planning to build a very conventionally designed Church on property donated by Mrs. Standish (Lotta) Backus located near her home on Lakeshore Drive just north of Lochmoor. According to church member Charlotte Decker, by the time we were finally ready to build that permanent church, that lot had been rezoned and new churches were excluded from the area. Lotta Backus also donated \$10,000 to start a building fund. When the United States entered World War II, it became obvious that a new church was not in the cards any time soon. There were emergency Federal laws against any building not in support of the war effort, so the congregation began a search for a suitable existing building. A lovely big home was found on Jefferson Avenue (still there but the address is on Rathbone Place and instead of the large front and back yard of early days it is now book ended by several other homes.) The house had been owned by David S. Carter and became known affectionately as the Carter House. According to the *Book of Detroiters*, Mr. Carter was the Secretary and Treasurer of Larned, Carter and Company, manufacturers of overalls, one of the largest manufacturers of workers clothing in the country. They made Headlight Overalls, their motto - "A Smile of Satisfaction with Every Pair."

This building was a substantial house on a big lot. The main entrance was from Jefferson and from the street one had to climb several steps to get to a small porch and the front door. There was a library room, big enough to have board meetings, several smaller rooms, a living room and a dining room adjacent with an archway dividing the two

rooms. There was also a kitchen on the first floor. The second floor contained several bedrooms with baths. The basement was large enough to be divided into several Sunday



School rooms. An unusual feature of the basement was the existence of three walk-in security vaults. Purchase price was in the neighborhood of fifteen to sixteen thousand dollars and with a loan from the A.U.A., a down payment of seventy-five hundred dollars was made on Oct 1, 1943. Some furniture was purchased from the Carter family and is still in use in our church to this day.

The congregation continued to grow during the 1950's and filled the living room/chapel most Sunday mornings. The chapel area was enlarged by removing the archway between the living and dining rooms. A ventilating fan was installed in the chapel, and an exterior stairway was built. In September 1960, it was decided to begin having two services on Sunday. Although it did relieve the crowding, this expansion proved unsatisfactory as one part of the congregation didn't get to mix with the other. A coffee period between services didn't seem to help much. It was becoming apparent that we had to move on.

A special congregational meeting was held on February 27, 1956, at which time the mortgage for the Carter House was "burned", having been paid off in just thirteen years.

The congregation came prepared to discuss the topic “Where do we Go from Here?” After hearing presentations by several committees on the various aspects of the topic, it was decided to erect a building in back of the present one, to be primarily a new Chapel Hall, but limited to a capacity of between three and four hundred with a kitchen included. The architect who was hired, Charles Backus, just happened to be the son of one of the substantial contributors to the church, Mrs. Lotta Backus. Charles Backus was a seasoned architect but had never designed a church. His first proposal, in line with the group decision on Feb 27th was to keep the present building but to add a second building similar in looks to the Carter House, on the property to the east. The property was vacant, but the church did not own it.

It was necessary to get the approval of the City of Grosse Pointe Council to purchase the property as zoning ordinances had been enacted to make the desired property only permissible for residences. The church property, Carter House, as held, was “grandfathered” as a variance. Representatives of the church appeared before the Council and requested a variance on the available property, and, after a short consideration, the variance was granted by the Council. The church then purchased the available property for \$55,000. When the Church’s neighbors received news of this purchase, they requested a rehearing before the Council. The neighbors must have had strong influence, and were led by a Mr. Frank Donovan, attorney for Mrs. Edsel Ford, because the Council took the unusual step of rescinding their approval of the variance. Basically, this made the property that the church had just purchased unusable for church purposes.

Gordon Cook, a member of the church and chair of the Building Committee, offered a proposal to get out of this situation. He proposed that the church purchase vacant property in Harper Woods where the Belmont Nursing Home now sits and sell the property on Jefferson. The congregation rejected this proposal partly because it could no longer be called the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church, and it led to the resignation of Cook as Chair. He was replaced by Creighton Lederer.

This is the sanitized version of what went on. The “discussion” began on June 22, 1959, when the variance was approved, heated up September 8, 1959 when 35 residents signed a petition against the action, and a special Council meeting was called. Within two hours after exercising our option to buy the lot, we were told of the petition to rescind approval. It then went to an open hearing which 140 people attended, most of whom opposed the variance. January 21, 1960, the Grosse Pointe City Council revoked the resolution on the basis that the variance approval was contingent on satisfying the residents of the neighborhood as to the size of the structure, parking areas and the like. On June 2, 1960, almost a year later, GPUC took its feud with the City over expansion into Wayne County Circuit Court. They hired attorney Chris Youngjohn, who was not a member of the church, to represent them. He was assisted by a church member who was also an attorney, Fred Schumann. They had discussions with the city attorney, Mr. Charles Wright, who confidentially agreed with the church’s position but still represented the City. Among them they decided that a court battle would be costly and perhaps an out-of-court settlement could be found. This resulted in an offer to exchange the church’s enlarged property fronting on Jefferson for a “T” shaped piece of property owned by the city fronting on Maumee Avenue. The Maumee property was larger than the property on Jefferson, (it is about two acres) but many felt that the location was not as good. Nevertheless, the congregation accepted this exchange in December of 1961 and the court suit was dismissed.

Work now began planning an entirely new church to be built on the Maumee property. Charles Backus threw caution to the wind and proposed the contemporary building that we have today, and the congregation approved. Two small cinder block buildings housing the city offices and a post office were razed. A large building at the rear of the property was being used by the city to house and maintain their trucks. This rather unsightly building was first slated to be demolished, but our member builder, Allen Freiwald, saw the worth of the building with some interior alterations, and so we have our useable Annex Building.



The City garage, soon to become The GPUC “Annex”.

BELOW: The Olympia Brown Room in the current-day Annex

What happened to the Carter House and property on Jefferson? After the exchange, the city sold these properties and used the money received to build a new city hall at the rear of the fire station. Two houses have been built in the previous front yard and two new ones on the east facing Cameron



Place. One substantial house has been erected on the previous rear yard. The house and its three car garage still stand, and has reverted to being a residence. In 2008, it was offered for sale at a price of about \$1,500,000.

After the transfer of the properties and the decision to build the architect’s latest version, committees again began to allocate the space and the architect finalized his drawings.

According to some remarks written by member Helen Poxson for an address March 11, 1969, *“For the next three years plans for the new church were made and changed and made again. Three years gives a lot of time for changes to be made. Many of the women in the church spent countless hours in planning the needs of the new church and presenting these ideas and needs to the building committee. It is an understatement to*

say that much selling and “women-type” persuasion was used - and needed. Names of women active in this respect are almost too numerous to mention, but one name must be mentioned, that of Alice Hartz who lived “new church” for three years.”

Quoting liberally from a presentation written by Alice Hartz at a Founders Day service, 1969: A brief review of the nature of the approach to the building program reveals how democratic and open the decisions were made. We began with a thoughtful examination of ourselves asking “What do we really believe?” “What do we really stand for?”, “What do I want for my church?” We called large meetings and broke into small groups where every person spoke for himself, expressed his hopes and asked questions. All was recorded and all questions were answered. Letters carried the results to every member of the church. Often the ideas were not precise but the prevailing number asked for a flexible multi-purpose building for a working program which gave no undue emphasis to either minister, worship, church school or social action, but would be inclusive and truly balanced. Over and over the words “home like”, “friendly”, “informal” and “humanistic” were used. For some the traditional form of churches was dear, yet a secret ballot asked for chairs instead of pews. The architect was given a list of 53 regular functions of a church plus a long list of desirable functions of a church such as art works, pipe organ, bells, garden, etc. At all times Gordon Cook, Chair of the building committee encouraged us to ask for everything we could wish for, saying we can have it if we can pay for it.

“Eight plans were submitted over time, each costing more and including more. Plan H. included everything; a social hall and two floors for the Sunday school with a spiral staircase where the R.E. office is. We realized it all would cost more than we dared to spend and responsibly chose Plan G. In this plan, the social hall, kitchen, and additional Church school space would be housed in the Annex.

“These decisions were made by the whole congregation. Church plans went from square to round and finally to the present “binocular” also dubbed by some, the “Marilyn Monroe” and others the “dumbbell” plan. No one ever said Unitarians lacked a sense of humor. New plans, with the most striking feature of the church, a copper covered spire

soaring 60 feet into the air were approved by all at a large meeting. Bids were invited and the contract was let to the Couse Co., just in time to prevent a 20% increase in the costs. The final plan then is two circles joined by the lobby and administrative sections. It contains 15,000 square feet plus another 5,000 square feet in the annex behind the church.”



Many stories have been told about the spire. The 16 wooden beams were made in Minnesota and shipped by a special railroad car. The final leg of the journey was by truck. Because they were so big and curved at that, it was touch and go all the way. One story is that if they had been 1” longer they could not have passed through the streets.

A bit of hyperbole certainly but close to the truth. The curve, by the way, is referred to as a Catenary Curve. See more about our experiences over time with the roof and spire below.



On Sunday, April 12, 1964, the Groundbreaking ceremony took place. The architect was Mr. Charles Backus, the builder was the Walter L. Couse Co., Allen Freiwald was Church appointed representative on the building site during construction.

The church was to cost \$510,000. The cornerstone was laid on November 1, 1964 and the church was finished during the summer of 1965. (See appendix for inventory of the cornerstone box.)



Two endings accompanied this beginning. One was that Mr. Bill Hammond, the minister for 14 years, and a passionate supporter of the need for a new church, resigned effective October 1, 1964, to accept a position as executive secretary to the newly formed Michigan-Ohio Valley District of the Unitarian-Universalist Church. It seemed a shame that Hammond had to leave before all he had worked toward in a new church was realized. The other ending was much more tragic. The church dedication ceremony was scheduled for October 3, 1965. In August, five weeks before the dedication service, and before his final inspection was completed, the architect, Charles Backus, was killed when his horse fell upon him in a practice hunt one early morning.

An article written by member Shirley Erickson that appeared in the Grosse Pointe News at the time of the church dedication extensively quoted Backus as to the philosophy of his design.

The circle is not only the UU symbol, but is also symbolic of unity, friendship, and the very basic forms of our own universe, the planets and stars. The form of the building, like the Unitarian religion itself, is fresh and modern and yet rooted in the past. While this may appear as a new or even futuristic approach, the circle is actually one of the oldest and most revered forms of architectural devices. Notable examples are Stonehenge near Salisbury, England, which probably dates back to the Neolithic age and the Pantheon in Rome which was built in A.D. 120 and has influenced many buildings since, including our nation's Capital.(We) view the upswept roof as a symbol of man's continuing need to reach beyond himself."

Shirley Erickson goes on to so perfectly and lovingly describe the interior of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church that it bears repeating in this history. Our church today looks pretty much as she describes it although the artwork is occasionally moved, as is the furniture.

The chapel hall, accommodating about 200 adults, features a large fireplace in a gallery at the rear. The fireplace with its associations of warmth and friendship was given a prominent place in the church. Large expanses of glass around the side of the hall look out onto a landscaped garden with a serpentine-walled courtyard outside the building. This area is graced by a large wind chime sculpture which gently gongs when touched by a strong gust of wind.



Colors of nature, soft greens and charcoal browns have been used in the furnishings to complement the natural brick and the weathered cedar of the interior. The art and furnishings were selected by a committee headed by Mrs. A. Boynton Hartz. Members include Mrs. John Herrman, Miss Jean Harris, Mrs. Allen Freiwald and Mrs. Henry Kohring.

Old furniture from the Carter House harmonizes with the newly purchased modern furniture. An eye-catching old table and chair made of ebony oak stand at the main entrance, along with a 14th century Italian painting of a Madonna.

All these items represent man's religious search from many different times and places throughout the history of the world.



This religious search is also symbolized in the delicate, hand-fashioned aluminum screen which is a focal point of the altar. It was designed by John W. Carson, a member of the church. Backus approved the design but never lived to see the screen completed.

Incorporated into the screen are religious symbols from all over the world such as the Lotus from India and the Star of David. Also on the screen is the circle taken from the poem by Edwin Markham:

“He drew a circle that shut me out –
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!”



Over the years the church has owned four houses in Grosse Pointe. The first one at 769 Notre Dame was purchased as a parsonage for the use of Rev. William Hammond and his family of two children. When a third child was born, the Hammonds prevailed on the church to purchase a larger home at 1575 Grayton which became known as The Manse. It was purchased in 1956 for \$28,000 with \$1500 down. The church then paid \$1764 for the mortgage and insurance policy every year until it was sold in 1964, the year the Rev. Hammond left our church for another position. The Grayton property was then purchased by GPUC

Members, Charles and Mindy Fossati, for \$24,000. A decision was made at that time not to own a parsonage but to include a housing allowance as part of the minister's salary package.

In 1962 another house at 448 St. Clair was purchased from Mr. Stapleton for \$17,000 with a mortgage payment of \$1764. It was rented out for several years but soon the board realized it was in need of constant repairs and the rent didn't begin to cover the cost of maintaining it. In 1967, the decision was made to tear it down and add the lot to the church property. This accounts for the pleasant curve in the church driveway from St Clair.

As noted previously, in 1999, the Board was inspired to spearhead a campaign to purchase the house on Neff that borders our east driveway. It turned out to be an ill-considered purchase as the house required costly upkeep and repairs. It didn't take long to realize it was a drain on the budget and time of our church members and we were fortunate to be able to sell it in 2002. The money went to decrease the church mortgage. All houses, whether small or large, private or public require upkeep, repair and refreshing as time goes on. And so, it is with our church and grounds. Suffice it to say much time and money have gone into keeping them up. The carpet in the Sanctuary and Gallery was cleaned when needed and was replaced in 1995 for the first time. The most recent carpet replacement was in 2018/19 thanks to the generosity of John and Anne Roberts. Curtains have been cleaned or replaced, upholstery renewed, new kitchen appliances replaced old as needed and all the windows at the back and south side of the Annex replaced with glass block, further improving energy efficiency and security. In the church year of 1983-84, a gate was installed in the interest of safety at the top of the very long stairs to the church basement. The cost was \$140.00. Much of this was paid for with the money raised by the Alliance, Holly Fair, The Resale Shop and Clearance Corner, as well as an occasional anonymous or known donor.

In 2001 gas logs were installed in the gallery fireplace to replace natural wood fuel. Although wood fires are charming and there are lovely stories about Christmas parties around the fireplace, it did produce an outpouring of smoke which was unpleasant and also stained the brick. The gas logs are a welcome remedy. A/C was installed in the sanctuary, gallery and foyer in 2017.



The parking lot has to be repaved periodically, most recently in the summer of 2017, and storm drains rebuilt. Lighting inside and out has been updated and repaired. We rely on our wonderful Custodian, Willie Barber and his son Jay, who report problems they cannot resolve themselves. Often church members step up to volunteer to take care of an issue.

Jim Kelly and Wally Freisen addressed the extensive need for tuck pointing in the memorial garden and the annex walls. For many years Patty Mogk, Mindy Fossati, and Joan Hines kept the circle garden in good shape. Currently, in the early 2020's, Joan Hines, Connie Roberts, Susan Hartz, and Susan Boynton were continuing to keep the garden looking wonderful. In 2018, an asphalt walkway in the parking lot was removed and replaced with a concrete walkway. In 2019, 15 new trees were planted and several dead or dying trees were removed. It is so well planned and planted that there are things to delight the eye in any season.

Yard maintenance can be a major expense. Early on, our custodian or a member would cut the lawn using a commercial size power mower. A story was told that for a while the mower was stored in the foyer of our church. Rev. Campbell had the notion that doing this would shame the congregation into building a storage shed to solve the problem. After due consideration, the solution was to sell the mower and hire a service to do the job. The cost of lawn cutting has remained pretty stable for some years, and for the past

several years the congregation has volunteered twice a year, spring and fall, to do cleanup, so we have not had to hire an outside service for this.

In 1986, a grounds beautification committee, working with a consultant on the Maumee Ave. side of the church building planned ...“an American woodland, low maintenance with emphasis on spring and fall color.” Lining the enclosed garden, the flowering crabs and forsythia provide eye candy in the spring and cool greenery all summer and fall.

The quiet beauty of the Memorial Garden was several years in the planning. In 1978, a



committee, chaired by Helen Poxson decided to have only a common cremains scattering area in a corner of the walled garden. The cost of the garden, including the installation of a gate designed by Poxson, and a large bronze tablet on an exterior column of the church

plus landscaping, was \$4,850. The money came from the Memorial and Friendship Fund. Later, three wooden benches were added to the perimeter of the area. This landscaped area is about 25×30 feet and consists of a large boulder, a wood chip central area, a dwarf Japanese maple and surrounding ivy. Internments began shortly after completion of the garden. A small bronze plaque giving the name, birth year and year of death is attached with others to the tablet on the column. Individual records of those interred are also kept in our church office.

Eventually, after 135 cremains had been scattered within the area, a decision was made to enlarge the area. So, in September, 2019, a larger area was marked out and defined by a low stone wall. A layer of soil was spread over the existing cremains. The large boulder remains within as does the large central tree and Japanese maple.

Also, around the end of the 1970's, the gate from the walled garden to the east (Neff Road) was installed. The Maumee Road gate into the walled garden was installed at a later date.

The circle garden was started soon after the church was built and has been improved through the years. Most recently, 18 memorial trees were planted (2019).

Two major building problems and financial burdens bear mentioning in length. Those are the chapel roof and spire, and the boiler.

It is said that all church roofs leak. GPUC's is no different. The wonderful, iconic beacon of liberal religion, our church spire and chapel roof has leaked since our church was built in 1965. Initially the beautiful, curved wood beams on the spire were open to the weather. The church received money from the estate of the deceased architect to pay for early repairs and the beams were covered with copper in the late 1960's, but this did not stop the leaks.

In 1977, "after six years of talk" about the leaking, a fund drive was undertaken which raised \$3,000 of the needed \$8,000 to install copper flashing to cap the perimeter of the flat roof. This solved some of the more serious water leakage problems. Leaks remained in the spire, however.

Later, one of the 16 sections between the beams at the lower part of the roof was raised to give a positive pitch to that lower portion of the roof. It was fairly expensive but did not result in stopping the leaks in that area.

In 1986, the lower, flat area of the copper roof was removed by the Bobson Company and replaced with a rubber-like roof material. The leaks continued, and Bobson returned on numerous occasions to repair the section they had installed. Finally, they applied a special material to the entire area designed to seal the repaired area against any permeation of moisture through the roofing material.

Alas, the leaks continued. At that point, Bobson Co. flooded the area they repaired and sealed, and no leaking occurred.



The original interlocking seams in the copper roof had not been soldered so another approach was tried there. In 1989, the Wm. H. Kelly Co. was hired to tape and seal the seams on the 16 beams. This did not stop the leaks. In fact, in 1989, when the new church organ was being dedicated, the roof suddenly developed a new leak right over the organist, Dr. Dave Wagner, a local celebrity of radio station WRCJ. He was forced to complete his program under an umbrella!

In 1992 the decision was made to hire a roof consultant, NTH consultants, Ltd. They were paid \$5,000. for a report that the exposed copper roof was “sound” and that the round bubble at the top of the roof might be leaking and the repair made by Bobson was the culprit in the leaking problems. Again, water tests were done (i.e., flooding different areas of the roof.) There was no change or improvement. The William Kelly Co. sealed the horizontal seams in the copper roof, repaired the seals as necessary on the 16 beams and made necessary repairs on the “bubble” for the sum of \$3,850 This completed the sealing of all the seams on the roof, plus all seams on the top of the spire. The leaks persisted!



In 1995-96, a roof replacement capital fund drive resulted in \$105,000 being pledged and a second mortgage on our property was taken to pay for the roof replacement. By the start of services in September, '96, member Allen Freiwald, who had seen this whole project through over many years, rejoiced that there were no leaks, we're dry! What fools we mortals be. Less than ten years later we started seeing leaks again, and repairs were needed to stop leaks in the flat portions of the RE wing of the church. By 2010 it was noted that the roof of the main church building continues to leak periodically. Numerous repairs have been made as the leaks were reported.

Thank goodness, our trusted custodian, Willie Barber hung on to the large plastic containers we had lining the gallery for years to catch the water. A major replacement of the Church's flat roof occurred in 2019 but the flat roof sections of the upper steeple roof continued to have small leaks. A plan was made to cover the flat roof sections of the steeple with rubber layers similar to that which is currently on the church flat roof. This plan, estimated to cost approximately \$105,000, was approved at the annual meeting in May 2022.

When one adds up the expense of the roof and spire repair, the repair, cleaning and painting of damage to the interior ceiling, walls and flooring, as well as the time and money spent in analysis of the problem and possible solutions, our church spire continues to be that ubiquitous Unitarian mix of joy and woe. So it goes.

CHURCH BOILER

In 2009 it was realized that the boiler, installed in 1965 was due to be replaced. Our consulting engineer Daniel Dunaj, upon analyzing our energy needs discovered that the original boiler had almost double the capacity needed. It was originally intended that a second floor would be added above the RE wing, and the boiler would have been able to heat that area without increasing capacity. However, our energy costs have been higher all these years because of the over-sized boiler. Installation of a 95% efficient boiler was approved. The materials surrounding the pipes in the basement were tested for asbestos and fortunately, none was found.

Maitlyn Mechanical was selected to install a Lochinvar System. The installation was done in two stages and completed in late spring of 2010. The final total cost, including payments to the consulting engineer, was \$65,791. An analysis of the heating bills for the 2010-2011 winter season showed a reduction in usage of about 35% compared with the 2009-2010 season, corrected for temperature differences. Thanks go to Veronica Smith for seeing this project through and for the above information.

CHURCH ART

To end on a positive note when writing about church property, our church has been home to several artists and generous art donors. The Arts Committee was established in 1973. Members of this committee are responsible for the upkeep and repair of our current art objects as well as approving future gifts and purchases.



A big project undertaken by the arts committee in the mid 1980's was to catalog, value and describe what we own. Our church is graced by an assortment of

modern and traditional art and furniture. About half of the furniture is Jacobean in style, purchased from the estate when we bought the Carter House in 1942 and transferred to our current church home. Although some might say it is out of sync with the contemporary architecture style of the building, these pieces are beautiful, sentimental reminders of our history. Several contemporary buffets and tables have been added.

We have two items made by artist and member Alden Smith. One is a mixed wood stand for the pewter "Flaming Chalice" which he donated in 1985.

The other is a Coromandal wood and metal sculpture. The 10-foot piece is entitled "Quartet 4" and is made from an exotic wood called granadilla, similar to ebony. The wood comes from the Coromandal Coast of Southeastern India.

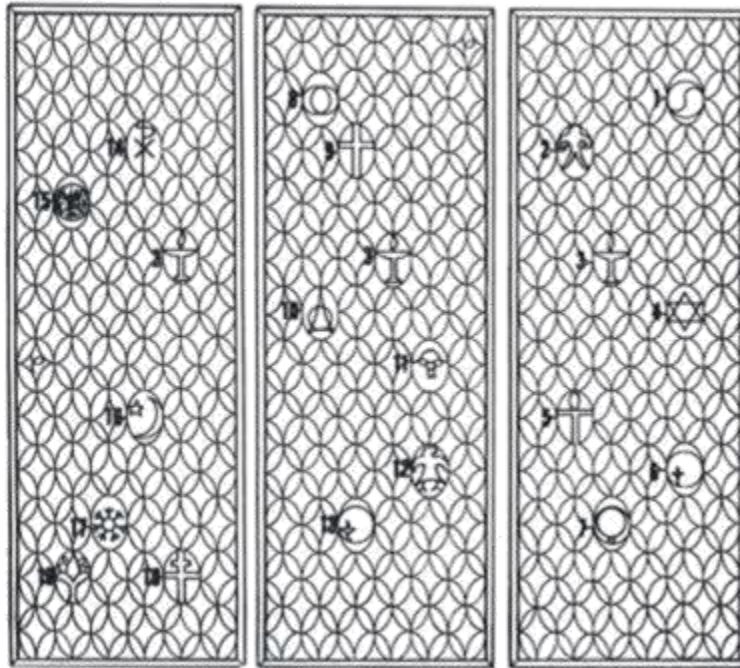
Professor Alden was a well-known artist who was chairperson of Wayne State University's Art and Art History department from 1960-1977.



Smith was given a one-man show at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1969 after winning the coveted Founders Society award in the museum's 56th Exhibition for Michigan Artists. His last major exhibit was in 1984 at the Detroit Focus Gallery.



The beautiful triptych screen that graces the podium of our chapel was fashioned by church member, John "Jay" Carson. It was presented to the church by him about the time of the dedication of the church in October 1965, and was formed after consulting with the church architect. The screen is three-sectioned, nine by nine foot aluminum with intertwining ovals. Mortised onto the screen are 19 various symbols, some religious, some philosophical. Of the symbols shown, only the Flaming Chalice of Unitarianism is repeated, once on each panel.



1. YANG and YIN
2. MAN - India
3. FLAMING CHALICE
Unitarian
4. STAR of DAVID
Judaism
5. CHUK ANSATA
Egyptian
6. OFF-CENTER CROSS
Universalist
7. E. Matthews's poem
"Outwitted" - "He
drew a circle and
left me out --"
8. OVERLAPPING CIRCLES
Unitarian
9. CHRISTIAN CROSS
Universalist
10. STUDENT RELIGIOUS LIBERALS
Unitarian-Universalist
11. MANITO - Great Spirit
Algonquin Indians
12. THUNDERBOLT
Navaho Indians
13. OFF-CENTER CHALICE
Unitarian-Universalist
14. CHRISOGRAM
Lutheran - Catholic
15. UNITED NATIONS
Islam
16. CRESCENT and STAR
Islam
17. FIRE or SUN WHEEL
Stone age Scandinavia
18. PATRIARCHAL CROSS
Unitarian
19. LOTUS
Buddhist

John Carson is well known as the creator and manufacturer of the UU jewelry that has been sold for many years to benefit the denomination. Carson was honored by the denomination at the General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, in 1984 for his work. Contained in the Survey of Art manual in the GPUC library is a letter written by Mr. Carson in 1983 detailing the circumstances leading up to starting the business of making the jewelry. He credits Rev. William D. Hammond, minister of our church, as the one who made the first request for an emblem Hammond used on a tie chain. As others saw the piece requests for more came and soon Carson had more than he could handle. Eventually the production was turned over to a commercial jewelry maker, but Carson continued to respond to special requests.

Note: Historian Janet Weber developed a booklet containing descriptions and meanings of all the symbols on the screen in 2018.

Just a few remarks will be made here about some of the other artwork seen in the church and hallways. Additional information can be found in a bound volume in the church library.



- The stunning metal chalice sculpture that became our new welcoming sign in the foyer was created by Michigan artist Joshua Andres in 2011.

- The 15th century Madonna and Child in a gilded arched frame was on loan to the church from Mr. and Mrs. Albert Boynton Hartz until it was purchased in 1973 as a memorial to John Smith Foley with funds contributed in his memory to the Church’s Memorial and Friendship Fund by Mr. Foley’s family and friends. See a photo of this art on page 54.

- The needle worked image of St. Rock with angel and lamb has been cut from a larger original piece and the remaining depiction has been placed on linen. It was purchased specifically for the church by the Erik and Pat Ericson family while in England and dedicated to the children of our church by the family on Children’s Day in 1970.
- The two brown and cream runners that serve to protect the gallery tables were hand woven by church member Virginia Davis.
- The pewter “Flaming Chalice” was given in memory of W. Doric Wismer by his wife Dorothy and his sister Carrie Peebles.



- The wind gong art in the garden near the pulpit windows was made by an Oregon metal sculptor, Lewis Needham. It was commissioned by Helen and Elijah Poxson for their own garden in 1972. When they moved out of Michigan, Helen said “...Being as involved as I had been in the memorial garden completion, I felt it [GPUC] a proper place to leave the gong.

- The Flaming Chalice stained glass window was created by Detroit Artist, Michael Caudle, of the Franklin Stained Glass Works in Franklin Michigan from a design created by Darrell Eubank with Michael's help. It was part of a triptych donated to GPUC on November 30, 1981 by Eubank.
- A tapestry showing three white, two black and one green sheep in an exotic and colorful woodland is a handwoven, wool tapestry from Harrania, Egypt . It was purchased by Edith E. Hakken while in Egypt and purchased by the church from her for \$300 in 1977.
- Two woodcarvings, one of Gandhi and the other of our church were donated by the artist Tom Omalev in 1968.
- The contemporary image of white sail boats on a blue/green ground, oil and paper, framed, was given in memory of Alfred Engelhardt 1903-1965.
- The large Pewabic blue vase was given by the Alliance and friends in memory of Ruth Gauerke, 1983.
- Two similar pot metal (zinc, tin, copper, lead, and other base metals) urns with raised design that are usually found on the gallery tables. One was given by the Alliance in memory of Rena R. Spaulding and one was given by Marlene Harle in memory of her mother.
- The Della Robbia relief is one of ten or twelve owned by Versailles (Indiana) Universalist Church attended by the family of GPUC member Dick Abbott. After having this sculpture cleaned and professionally mounted, Abbott donated it to GPUC in memory of his mother.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH / SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMS

GPUC's Outreach Committee has received an allocation from the church budget for many years that it has distributed to various worthy causes. Outright donations have been made to child camperships via the Guyton Committee, Habitat for Humanity/Grosse Pointe Partners, Ravendale Community Center, SOC (Services to Older Citizens), Dominican Literacy Council, Gleaners, and many others. This model is changing in September of 2014, and an entirely new approach to community activism is planned.

Crossroads/ First Sunday Food Sharing (FSFS)

FSFS was handled by Carrie and Russell Peebles for many years. As early as 1981, their goal was a ton of food every year and most years that goal was achieved. Our more recent captains of this program, Janet and Larry Peplin, have expanded it and collect perishables as well with money donated by the congregation as can be seen in their report of service for the year 2012.

We have set a new record for the 7th year in a row by delivering 14,160 pounds (7.08 Tons) of food to Crossroads East Food Bank in calendar 2012. This topped our 2011 total of 13,204 pounds, for an increase of 7.5%.

Here are a few highlights:

We continue to be the largest supplier of fresh protein-rich foods, delivering 329 dozen eggs and 270 gallons of milk this year. Our weekly bread pick-ups from the Village Kroger on Saturdays (48 trips in all) brought in 4,345 pounds of slightly outdated breads and baked goods. One 'special collection' held by the Grosse Pointe Music Academy at their spring concert in our chapel brought in another 120 pounds of canned goods.

An increase in the giving spirit at GPUC overcame the notable rise in food costs. Thus, we were able to provide more foods despite disconcerting price increases. Individual monetary contributions played a huge role in making this possible. Our

buying power was given an additional boost by the generous and compassionate team at the Resale Shop with their generous monthly contributions from Shop sales proceeds.

When Crossroads shut down for a time during the COVID-19 Pandemic, food donations were delivered to Community Treehouse Center Detroit. Extra unwanted food from a senior living center was passed on to crossroads through the efforts of our church member, Kathleen Ruhl. 500 pounds of food were delivered in just one month in 2020.

The move of Crossroads East facilities to Salem Memorial Lutheran Church on Moross has enabled them to double the number of clients they service, with many more families now being seen. Their New Center area office traffic is also up, by approximately 24%.

Our donations have made GPUC a major player in keeping many east side families (and especially children) from going hungry.

GPUC's packet "First Sunday Food Sharing: Increasing Your Congregation's Harvest for Your Local Food Bank" written by Larry and Janet Peplin in 2011 became a model that received statewide recognition when it was distributed to all UU Congregations in Michigan. Jenny Marck took on the position in 2015 and continues as the church's Crossroads liaison.

Total amounts of food delivered to Crossroads East over the past seven years and money donated:

- 2015 = 10,470 (5 tons!!) - \$4850
- 2016 = 8,958 lbs - \$3462
- 2017 = 9,289 lbs - \$2,748
- 2018 = 7,677 lbs - \$2099
- 2019 = ? - \$1,828
- 2020 = COVID-19 Hiatus
- 2021 = 1,363 lbs - \$576

SOCIAL JUSTICE

GPUC hosted a forum on “Diversity in the Grosse Pointe Community” in 2014 followed by a panel discussion “How Far We’ve Come,” a reflection on the changes that have or still must happen, to encourage and allow for diversity. Two evenings of theater were offered to the Grosse Pointe Community “Diversity in Love” by the Rosedale Players and “White People” by Puzzle Piece Theater.

Rev. Riegel, as a member of the executive committee of the Grosse Pointes-Harper Woods NAACP Branch, worked to bring social justice issues to the forefront. A series of presentations building awareness of racial and cultural issues within our various institutions was planned. The first session held on September 20th, 2019, focused on race and housing. It began with a look at housing discrepancy. A film documentary titled “13th”, traced the history and challenges of the African American community since the 13th Amendment was passed. Breakout sessions following the film allowed people to reflect on its message. Dr. John Artis presented a lecture on the theme a week later. Both events took place at GPUC.

The second theme, presented in January 2020, used the book “What Truth Sounds Like” by Michael Eric Dyson to look at the behavior of our American social institutions with an emphasis on education. Dr. John Artis led the discussion. A third theme planned for later in the spring was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In the Spirit of Harriet Tubman” written and performed by Leslie McCurdy was the program for the Circle Circle Dinner in January 2020 and served to continue the years focus on the Social Justice theme.

PFLAG (Parents, Family, Friends of Lesbians and Gays), a local chapter of this organization was organized and launched in March 2017 by the Social Justice Committee. It continues to meet monthly at our church.

The Social Justice Committee organized a panel discussion “A Look at Immigration Policy through a Local Lens, the Human and Economic Impact” on 3/14/17.

GPUC helped to bring nationally known speaker Cornell West to speak at the War Memorial on Justice Matters April 8th, 2017.

A Subgroup, Racial Equity Task Force, was formed in 2020. This group of 25 members overlaps membership in Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods branch of the NAACP to monitor and liaise with local law enforcement.

Social Justice Members continue to respond to community causes; for example when a neighbor hung a KKK flag facing the house of a family of color, this committee took out ads and participated in a rally in support of the family. The committee has hosted book discussions focusing on racial equity, a presentation of African America art at the DIA, movies and discussion groups.

WORLD MEDICAL RELIEF

For many years medical supplies were collected by Russell and Carrie Peebles and donated to World Medical Relief.

RAVENDALE

GPUC has had a sponsoring relationship with Ravendale Community Center called Partnership for Change. It was started in 2010 by Jean Ritok and continued under Colin Gillis. Ravendale struggled to survive the loss of a grant that had been sustaining their operations and eventually had to close. Volunteers from GPUC had assisted with programming at Ravendale, which included job training and referral, after school programming for school-age kids, seniors programs and personal development.

GROSSE POINTE MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

Starting with Harry Meserve, our ministers have all been active in this group. Besides joint initiatives, social action efforts and articles in the local press, this has led to a networking of all faiths in the Grosse Pointes

GUYTON SCHOOL, CLARK SCHOOL, MERIT ACADEMY

On January 22, 1991, as part of a larger area group named PIFU (People in Faith United) GPUC members began to provide tutoring and other support to this Detroit elementary school. Our church quickly found many other ways to help this struggling neighbor school, as can be seen in the summary chart below. Many were saddened when the school was closed in one of the latest rounds of economy by the Detroit school Board. Our help was then offered to the CLARK SCHOOL. That school did not seem able to put our volunteers to use so in September 2011, a contact was made with the DETROIT MERIT ACADEMY which was eager and ready to use our help. Over the years, as many as nine (9) church members and friends have tutored, most at Detroit Merit, one or two at Clark and Bunche Schools in Detroit. Books and materials no longer in use in several Grosse Pointe Schools have been collected and donated to Detroit Merit Academy.

Our “Mitten Tree” collects lots of scarves, hats, and mittens in December which are immediately distributed by the Merit School secretary to those most in need of such items. New and slightly used children’s books are also donated by the congregation at the time and distributed appropriately by school librarians. GPUC members put together 25 Christmas baskets overflowing with food, which are distributed to the neediest families at Detroit Merit Academy. During the COVID-19 pandemic years church members donated money for Kroger gift cards to replace Christmas food baskets. GPUC members also fund up to 20 camperships for 6th graders who have shown the most progress and improvement in academic achievement that year.

The following page is a projects list from the years that GPUC volunteers assisted at Guyton .

GPUC Guyton School Projects List

1995-1996	Tutors Maps painted on school playground: \$500 Landscaping for front of school: \$800 Christmas Baskets and Mitten Tree
1996-1997	Tutors Camp program begins: 15 campers sent to Camp Westminster Christmas Baskets and Mitten Tree
1997-1998	Tutors 23 campers sent to Camp Westminster Bridges East idea for joint choir explored Christmas Baskets
1998-1999	Tutors 18 Campers sent to Camp Westminster Three Big Sister/Little Sister matches made UDOM article on Church School partnerships
1999-2000	11 Tutors and first tutors' dinner 15 campers sent to Camp Westminster Hard copy and CD encyclopedias: \$1,400 Computer education screen: \$2,900 Book purchase: \$800
2000-2001	19 tutors and tutors' dinner 14 campers sent to Camp Westminster After school theater workshop: \$480 Book club for advanced readers; bookes for school: \$935 Spring used book drive for Guyton by the RE Program
2001-2002	18 tutors and tutors' dinner 12 campers sent to Camp Westminster Book club for advanced readers Digital camera: \$840 DVD/CD player & battery charger for the Science room: \$450 Play equipment for kindergarten room: \$200 Classroom enrichment supplies: \$1,450
2002-2003	14 tutors and orientation dinner 27 campers sent to Howell Nature Center Kente cloth weaving project for 5th graders: Fletcher, Weber, Hindle, Moore Scanner, printer, copier for computer lab plus headphones, mice: \$1,000 Classroom enrichment supplies (Head Start & African American books, listening centers, Scholastic subscriptions, dictionaries, thesauri, reading quizzes): \$2,748
2003-2004	10 tutors and orientation dinner 13 campers sent to Howell Nature Center Computer screen projector and viewing screen: \$1,670
2004-2005	12 tutors and orientation dinner 12 campers sent to Howell Nature Center Pre-MEAP Test school dance with DJ Barber: \$200 Snack pack project with Gleaners (600 lbs. per month): \$100 Four after school sessions with Pewabic Pottery: \$536

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVES have been held at GPUC since 1956. Pat Freiwald served as the liaison for many years until 2013. No further church participation since then.

CROP HUNGER WALK

First mentioned in 1985/6 when we raised \$500 with ten walkers. Jud Cole took on this fundraiser in 1989 and has continued his role ever since as well as Chair of the Outreach Committee.

In 1989, the walk was in the western Pointes, and GPUC was a rest stop. Walkers were recruited from our church, and we ran the rest stop. More recently the walk has moved over to the eastern part of the cities, and we have not been needed as a rest stop. GPUC formerly had a sizable contingent of walkers, but that number has shrunk over the past few years. The CROP Walk (and walks are held all over the country) is a program of Church World Services, an interfaith relief organization. They do disaster relief work, both in the US and abroad, as well as long term projects that tend to be focused overseas. One of their big projects in recent years has been getting water wells in areas that don't have one, so that folks don't have to walk long distances for fresh water; hence the slogan, "We Walk Because They Walk". Disaster relief work is funded by special appeals; CROP helps fund the long term projects. A little less than 1/3 of their funds come from Walks.

Our participation in CROP ended in 2013 as the organizers were not notifying participant supporters enough in advance for planning and the date of the walk was moved to a less convenient time.

COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter). Laura Spurr, who was active in religious education at GPUC for many years, took our senior youths every Sunday to work with COTS, a homeless shelter in Detroit. She was later recognized with an award for longstanding service to COTS.

INTERFAITH CENTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Starting in 1972, GPUC supported this organization with money and volunteers. As the name implies, its focus was to promote racial justice. Education and Housing task forces were formed to address community issues as they arose, for example opposing the cul-de-sac plans for Grosse Pointe streets and the many other often subtle perceived forms of institutional racism. The office moved into the Annex in 1980 and eventually closed its doors in 1995.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION COUNCIL (FLEC)

CENTER POINTE, a crisis intervention center sponsored by FLEC was headquartered in the Annex in 1977. It included drop-in medical, legal, drug help and counseling, education and a phone help line for teens. It was noted in the following year that grill work was installed on windows of the fellowship hall due to frequent break-ins. And in 1980 Center Pointe moved out and the Interfaith Center for Racial Justice (see above) moved in.

COFFEE HOUSE

This was an outgrowth of FLEC (see above) and an effort by our church to give young people in the community a place to socialize, something to do of a Friday night. It began in July 1970, was staffed by young people and chaperoned by adults from the church membership and a few other friends. From five to eight adults were on hand every night. When the Coffee House first began, the church provided some money to subsidize its operation. Money for this purpose was raised at a church dinner held during that summer. However, soon the popularity of the Coffee House made it generally self-supporting, and, on many nights, proceeds exceeded expenditures. As soon as this happened, the Coffee House began paying the church \$25 for each night it was in operation.

PEOPLE IN FAITH UNITED (PIFU)

Besides our work with the Guyton School, which was started with our membership in PIFU, we also aided in rehabilitating houses on the East Side of Detroit. This organization closed its doors in 1995.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (GROSSE POINTE PARTNERS)

Habitat for Humanity picked up where PIFU left off and counts on GPUC particularly for hands on home building and renovations, most recently at a large housing renewal area in Detroit, near our church. Sam Smith represented our church for many years and now George Gray has taken that position. He resigned in 2016 and GPUC participation ended.

THE FUNERAL CONSUMERS INFORMATION SOCIETY (formerly known as The Greater Detroit Memorial Society)

This organization is affiliated with the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies, which consists of over 100 societies throughout the United States and Canada. The local organization has served the Detroit area since 1960. It is a non-profit which encourages simple, pre-planned memorial services, prompt cremation or private burial at minimum expense; the donation of bodies to individual research; and the contribution of memorial funds to worthy purposes. GPUC was one of the founding organizations. Members such as Carrie Peebles, Ray Scott and John Carik have been active in serving this organization and Russell Peebles served as treasurer for twenty-seven years. It has called our Annex home base since 1993/4. They gave up their office space in the Annex effective September 1st, 2016. The organization became home based.

FRANKLIN-WRIGHT LIBRARY SERVICE PROJECT

In 1967 The Women's Alliance began the Franklin-Wright Library Service Project, which was dedicated to improving the book collection and encouraging better reading habits of underprivileged children. Joan Hines remembers that the 'library' was not used at all until this project was begun. Many books were added and catalogued by our volunteers. Hines also remembers volunteering in the day care one day a week.

WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In 1967, eerily anticipating the riot that tore Detroit apart that summer, GPUC sponsored a district workshop on the topic of Social Responsibility. Sixty people attended from Michigan and the Ohio Valley district. As result, we sponsored a series of meetings on freedom of access to housing which led to forming the Grosse Pointe Committee on Open Housing. This group consisted of members from other churches and those with no affiliation to work on this issue.

The annex became the community emergency relief center for the collection of clothes and food for those displaced by the uprising in Detroit. Donations came from the entire Grosse Pointe area and the food larder continued into the mid 1970's.

MENTAL HEALTH

From 1952 on the Service committee of our church has worked to provide direct services for the mentally ill and provide extras beyond the scope of hospital personnel resources. For seven years they gave monthly parties for 100 male patients at Northville State Hospital, providing them with home-made refreshments, entertainment, and friendship. It was discontinued in 1959 for lack of volunteers.

In its place, at the suggestion of GPUC member Dr. Eli Rubin, on staff at Lafayette Clinic, holiday parties for in-patient emotionally disturbed children were substituted.

In 1959, through Dr. James Graves, Chief of Psychiatry at Detroit Receiving Hospital, the group was made aware of the need for assistance at the Hospital. A day room for women psychiatric patients was an urgent need. The church group converted a storage room into a comfortable lounge which received such constant usage, it needed refurbishing a year later.

While working on this small project, the group realized there was need for much more help than they could provide, not only in the Psychiatric Department, but the hospital in general. Through the efforts of this devoted group, an inter-denominational, inter-racial group as formed. Started by Florence Feldman, The

Service League and continued by the efforts of Carrie Peebles. The Service League continues to serve Detroit Receiving Hospital to this day. Lots of men's clothing was transported from the GPUC resale shop to the Hospital by Carrie for the men who had no clothes to go home in.

The annual report of 1960 gives an idea of what was being provided:

Lafayette Clinic - five holiday parties, sleigh ride at Belle Isle, Christmas gifts, dancing classes for adolescents conducted by the Lee Smiths, swimming pool party. Four parties were given for the children at Lafayette each year for many years.

Northville State Hospital Christmas visit and candy distributed to L Building patients. Receiving Hospital - Day room furnished and decorated. Room decorated at Christmas, candy provided, Two teas given for women psychiatric patients, donated one F.M. radio and 3 television sets. Children's toys were given to the Children's Ward through a collection made at Barnes School (Grosse Pointe). Easter baskets distributed in the Children's Ward through Marquette School Cub Scout Pack (Detroit). Flower arranging classes were given for women psychiatric patients.

A devastating tornado ripped through Flint Michigan in 1953. Our church stepped up to support a student needing help for college expenses as result of the damage and loss of family. We provided over \$500 over two years for her education.

Finally, one community service that is included here more as an astonishing historical tid-bit than anything else is from the Grosse Pointe News of February 25, 1954.

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church committee...on two occasions in March will provide refreshments following USO entertainment of servicemen at Grosse Pointe Anti-Aircraft bases. An array of sandwiches and cakes will be taken out to the men at the Chalfonte Avenue base on March 3 when the USO is putting on a dance for the group. On March 17, the same will be done for men at the Three Mile Drive location.

Ed. Note - the Chalfonte Anti-Aircraft base was located at the current site of Brownell Middle School and the other site was at the foot of Three Mile Drive.

FUNDRAISERS

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is situated in a Detroit suburb that has long had the reputation of being wealthy. It would be easy to presume then, that we sailed a smooth financial course. The truth of the matter is that this church has had its financial ups and downs. We have gone through years where we held our heads above water only through judicial loans, re-mortgaging of our church and one year we made it through the summer only because one of the biggest pledging units pre-paid their entire year pledge. In fact, in 1966, a year after our new church opened, there were real concerns about imminent financial collapse. We had a deficit of almost \$9,000. And in 1970, we note “no cash reserves” in the annual budget report. Two years later Rev. Meserve observed that “Our financial struggle continues to be demanding but we have managed to make it for eight years and more than half the life of our mortgage which has been reduced by more than \$125,000.” As a result, our congregation has come up with dependable fundraisers that have provided the extra income needed over and beyond what is pledged every year to meet the basic bills and even at times to provide some extras. Three organizations, all separate but very intertwined, deserve notice. Alliance, Holly Fair and Re-Sale Shop all have provided continued budget support for many years, a significant contribution to the endowment fund and improvements to the Annex. There is some overlap of fund raisers and social activities as you will see but if the activity makes money, it is listed here.

KROGER REBATE CARDS

This fundraiser was started in December 2006, to replace the Entertainment books. The church made over \$3000 each year in the first two years. In April 2009 Kroger changed the program to limit the amount each organization could make. The participant is required to sign up for the Kroger Plus Shoppers Card and then enroll in the reward program. Money is returned to GPUC based on a percentage of the purchases made by the participants. In 2022, there were 35 participants. The church has received as much as \$1,000 a year and as little as \$364 from this fundraiser.

HAND TO HAND AUCTIONS

These auctions started with the charge to our congregation to offer items that are personal. This led to some very interesting offerings such as sailboat rides, musical evenings, monthly soup delivery, use of cottages and condos in warm climates, handmade jewelry, gun safety classes, landscape design and photography sessions to name just a few. It was started as a replacement fund raiser for the Holly Fair which had run its course.

AUCTIONS

The auctions have been produced semi-annually since 1996 and include dinner and lots of wine. The auction in 2014 netted \$24,000 for the church. Beginning in 2015, mini auctions in conjunction with the Circle Circle dinner or on-line auctions have been held in the off years. The 2015 mini auction raised \$7,755. The 2017 mini



auction \$7,000. The main auction scheduled for April 18, 2020, with the theme “The Roaring 20’s” was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With pandemic restrictions in mind, GPUC held an all virtual auction on May 1st, 2021 emceed by GPUC members Jerry Herron

and Carol Guither. The event was the conclusion of a 2-Week silent auction. Over \$20,000 was raised for the church.

In 2022, a 2-Week Mini Auction titled “Spring Forward,” was held entirely online from May 1st-May 16th. A total of \$10,755 was raised.

FLEA MARKET

When the series of Holly Fair events ended, a plan was made to replace it with the Hand to Hand Auction, alternating years with a flea market. Two have been produced, in 2003 and 2005, called “Treasures and Trifles”. \$6,900 was made from the second for church use. This was run by the Alliance and due to declining membership was discontinued. In 2015 GPUC held an Art Market, which called for members to donate unused unappreciated fine art for sale to the community. This proved to also be an effective way to sell some of the better items from resale and was repeated in 2017 and 2018.

ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOKS

Sales began in the fall of 1987 by Jean Dupuis and later taken on by Janet Weber. At its peak 149 books were sold in 1992. The numbers began to decline until in 2005 only thirty-seven were sold and it was decided to put efforts in a different direction.

ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISERS

Other ongoing fundraisers include:

- Empty ink and toner cartridges returned to staples. Every 20 ink cartridges earns the church a \$40 staples credit.
- RE Juniors and Seniors collect empty returnable cans and bottles to help with costs for field trips and their spring trip to Boston.
- Gift cards purchased through the SCRIP Program also help raise funds for RE Students annual spring trip.
- Amazon’s Smile Program gives GPUC .5% of every purchase made.
- Goodshop and Good Search donate a portion of participating store purchases to GPUC.
- Kroger Community Rewards: a percentage of the purchases made is returned to GPUC.

SYMPHONY OF TABLES



An activity that draws on the creativity of our congregation, tables are assigned to one or two women and are decorated according to a musical theme. Each table captain interprets a song of her choice in the table décor. There is dinner and entertainment as well. Three have been held, the latest in 2013. The event usually raises \$6,000. – \$7,000.

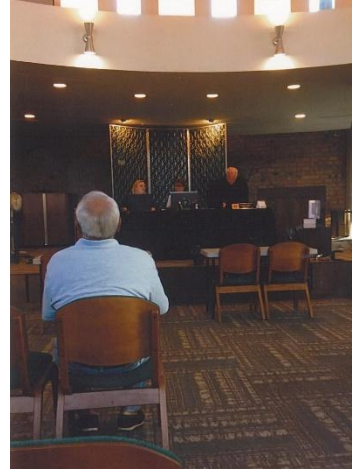
FACILITIES RENTALS

The church has rented out our parking lot for use by nearby Beaumont/Bon Secours hospital staff. There is a small bus that shuttles employees back and forth. The first mention of this use was in the 1975/76 Annual Report and the rental of our parking lot continues to this writing. Rev. Fred Campbell was instrumental in setting up this cooperative venture. This has proven to be quite advantageous to GPUC providing unanticipated benefits through the years. For example, a large hill of dirt and rubble existed beyond the Annex, a left over from the previous owner. This hill was an irresistible draw for kids with bikes, and something of a safety hazard for them with the increased traffic the hospital employees brought. Bon Secours removed the pile at its expense. And in 1981 the hospital paid to upgrade surface and lighting in the same area to add 26 parking spaces. Another bonus is the regular snow removal and salting the hospital provides for the parking lot. As early as 1992 the church board realized we could not count on these several renters forever and had set a goal to eliminate the financial dependency on facility usage funds for the annual operating expenses by increasing income from pledging and other fundraising events. In 2014 the church was informed the hospital was enlarging its parking facility and soon would no longer need our parking lot for overflow parking. Here was the wake-up call reminding us we should not be dependent on this rental. The cutoff date was set for June 2015. Fortunately, Beaumont/ Bon Secours has continued its rental agreement through 2022 and the rent is now being added to the Capital Reserve.

- Grosse Pointe Pre-K has been another ongoing rental client going back to at least 1984. In the summer of 1966, several church members arranged and conducted a very successful intercultural nursery school which included nine “Unitarian children, four Detroit Negro children



and three American Indian children”. The next March, the Neighborhood Club was granted permission to use GPUC facilities for an experimental afternoon nursery school and NE Wayne County Child Guidance Clinic used the facilities for its Pre-School Child Development Center. There were no further references to preschool programs until 1972 when two Pre-School programs were mentioned. By 1982, the Grosse Pointe Pre-K was signing three-year contracts and continued to until the fall of 2020 when the COVID-19 Pandemic forced a permanent closing. Soon, ceilings were painted and new lighting was added to the area to welcome our new tenant Wild Child Playschool that opened for business on June 21st, 2021.



- In 1995, The City of Grosse Pointe council meetings and the Municipal Court were held in our facility for several months. Again, beginning in March 2019, the Grosse Pointe City Municipal Court began holding two sessions a month in the GPUC sanctuary while the new court chambers were being built. This brought in a substantial rental income. A walk-through metal detector was established at the Maumee entrance. A

wooden walkway was created so the preschool attendees could enter the RE wing on court days without encountering the scofflaws. The final session occurred March 20, 2021.

Grosse Pointe Municipal Court Set Up

- Other regular tenants over the years have been Beth Barr’s Dance Classes, Ace Driving School, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Grosse Pointe Democrats, Racial Justice Center of Grosse Pointe and the Jazz Forum. The Greater Detroit Memorial Society has been a regular tenant since 1993/4. YWCA, an investment club, Parents without Partners can be added to the growing list. A note in the annual report of 1991/2 states that our church facilities are almost completely filled with evening activities. GPUC can proudly state that at that time, both Jewish and Muslim communities were meeting in our chapel and the Grosse Pointe Jewish Council continued to meet here for many years.
- The Jazz Forum has used the GPUC facility for more than twenty years producing an average of six concerts a year. The Chamber music group, part of the Scarab Club

program, regularly uses the GPUC venue twice a year. The Great Lakes Music Fest, a summer chamber music program has offered two performances for several summers.

- Both the main building and the Annex are rented out for other activities such as weddings, memorial services and the like as well as occasional other uses.

RESALE SHOP

From early on in our history, the Women's Alliance held rummage sales twice a year. There was a lot of work for the women as donations were accumulated in the church basement and hauled up the steps to be taken to the Annex by carloads. However, these sales were also quite lucrative. In 1970, discussion began about trying a permanent resale shop in the Annex instead, and with encouragement from then Board President Ruben Van Leeuwen it opened March 10, 1971.

The shop made \$1000 for the church that first year and was run by Carrie Peebles and Ethel Drake as co-chairs. Two years later, Drake was replaced by Betty Care. The first year it was open one day a week and subsequently expanded to three days a week. By 1977 it was making \$7000 and after expenses was able to add about \$3000 to church income annually. At that time, the state informed us that state taxes needed to be paid on sales. Adjustments were made and it has continued through the years to contribute substantial money to the church. In 2018/19, the Resale Shop took in \$31,767. \$21,000 went directly into the church operating fund. Some of the rest was used for upgrades in the Annex and other extras for the church and other church programs.

The Resale shop was closed for most of 2020 and 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The shop was open by appointment only and the shops e-bay account was kept active and selling. Donated bicycles were repaired and sold with the proceeds donated to the shop.

Resale was able to re-open July 2021 only to close again due to COVID-19 in January and February of 2022. The second reopening occurred March 2nd, 2022. In

early 2022, the GPUC Alliance disbanded and after many years of running the Alliance Clearance Corner, it was turned over to the management of the Resale Shop.

Since three of the rooms are named after members who were honored because they worked many years and many hours this seems a good place to identify them. These women are:

- **GRETA ENGELHARDT (Mrs. Alfred)**

Born 1904 in Cincinnati, died 12/9/97 in St. Clair Shores.

Greta lived in Cincinnati and worked as a nurse at the Jewish Hospital there. She and her husband moved to Detroit in 1936 and joined our church shortly after it was founded. They had two daughters (Margo and Ruth) and moved to a home on Hawthorne. Their daughter, Margo (Bishop) remembers that her parents were both very active in the church, teaching RE, participating in choir, etc. In 1951 they moved again, this time to “the farm” in Armada MI where they kept in touch with friends from GPUC by hosting the Alliance spring luncheons and the Men’s Club picnics.

When her husband died in 1961, Greta moved to St. Clair Shores to allow her to again be involved with GPUC. She threw herself wholeheartedly into supporting the resale shop which opened around 1970. Greta is remembered “being a charming greeter to one and all as she worked with the cashier each Wednesday, wrapping purchases. She also took great pride in keeping this room in good order; it was her favorite room to work in resale and so it is named for her.

- **THELMA E. POLLARD (Mrs. Matthew) Born 7/28/1919 - Died 10/29/2005**

Thelma and Mathew Pollard had three daughters: Leslee, Thelma and Lana and one son, Christopher.

Thelma was involved with the Resale Shop right from the start in the 1970’s. She became the Chair of Resale and as such was the final arbiter of prices, directed room arrangements and the one who decided when things were to be pulled because they had been there too long. She arrived early and pulled out the carts loaded with

merchandise. She assigned other volunteers to mark merchandise or move items out to the rooms for hanging. Thelma said that being at the Resale Shop was the highlight of the week for her, and actually her only social activity toward the end of her life.

- **HELEN POXSON (Mrs. Elijah)**

Helen and her sister Betty Froelund were both enthusiastic supporters of the Resale shop. She had 2 daughters, Ann and Judy. This kitchen is named for her because she designed it and then oversaw the installation. Helen also worked with others in planning the memorial garden. When Mr. and Mrs. Poxson moved to California, they donated the wind gong that is in the corner of the garden outside the church windows.

EARLIER FUNDRAISERS

BRIDGE CLUB

There was a Bridge Club and end of the year tournament at our church for many years. The archive contains records from 1972 but our annual reports show the first reference 9/26/1961. At one time there were enough members to have five or six tables and there was an afternoon bridge group and an evening one. Membership was mostly from the church but there were a few non-church bridge players along the way as well. The Bridge club was headed up by the Peebles and Pat Freiwald from at least 1985. The games were played in members' homes, one table per home with an end of the year party. This popular activity netted from \$300 to \$700 per year after expenses and prizes. This money was contributed to the church. Membership and interest dropped, although five couples were still playing in 2008.

SQUARE DANCES

Wes and Julie Rea, members of GPUC donated their "calling" services starting in 1953 and continued monthly into the 1960's It was a very popular activity, having to move its location several times to accommodate a growing group of enthusiasts. They began at

the Kerby School on Kerby Road and soon moved to Monteith School on Cook Road. Julie Rae had a reputation for making wonderful costumes for herself and her husband to wear to the dances and Wes was referred to as the “dreamiest” of callers. Oddly, it is only mentioned as a line-item income of \$679 in the annual report of 1956/7 and never as a specific reference again. Ads for the activity appear in local papers and reference GPUC as the sponsor. A typical publicity flyer follows:

SQUARE DANCE SAMPLER

GROSSE POINTE UNITARIANS
ARE HAVING
A

"JUNKET"

(AN OLD NEW ENGLAND TERM - MEANING
AN OLD FASHIONED COMMUNITY SQUARE
DANCE PARTY.)

DECEMBER 5, 1953
AT
MONTEITH SCHOOL
(Cook Road at Chalfonte)
WESTERN CALLS AS USUAL
BY
WES AND JULIE RAE

AND! WE'RE GOING TO LEARN A 'CONTRA' ✂
WE HEAR THEY'RE FUN ✂ SO JOIN US ON
SATURDAY DEC. 5 ✂ WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR
→ YOU

OTHER DANCE DATES:
FEB. 6 MAY 1
MARCH 6 JUNE 5
APRIL 3

DONATION: \$1.00 PER PERSON

CHRISTMAS FAIR/HOLLY FAIR

The Christmas Fair was begun in 1946 and continued annually until 1957 when it seems to have gone on hiatus of eight years. After the move to the new church building, it was started up again in 1965 with a mini fair and then a full fair in 1969. The fair was an important fund raiser for many years. It seems to have alternated from mini fair to full fair for quite a few years and then just one fair every year. The Holly Fair usually included handmade items, Christmas décor and baked goods. A group of women would get together once a week throughout the church year to make the hand-crafted items to be sold at the fairs. For many years it was offered on Monday with a spaghetti dinner option which was produced and served by RE, and Tuesday lunch was available for purchase. Beginning in 1991, Sunday evening Champagne and appetizers were served for a church member only preview. It called upon much of the church membership for support although in the later years the burden of the work seemed to fall mainly on the Alliance which was experiencing dwindling membership. Due to declining support in producing the Fair this dependable money maker was brought to an end in 1994 on a high note. That fair made \$11,793, the highest profit in Holly Fair history.

PLAYS AND OTHER ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

- **CANADIAN PLAYERS TROUPE (Stratford, Ontario)**

The church sponsored the Canadian Players Troupe twice. The first play was presented at the Ford Auditorium on 12/6/1959. The play was *The Taming of the Shrew*. 2,245 tickets were sold. It made the church \$6000 which was said to be the largest amount ever raised in a single project by any Unitarian Church.

The second play was *Julius Caesar* which was performed at the Masonic Temple in 1960.

- **SECOND CITY**

In 1967, A group from church attended a performance by the Second City and \$800 went back to the church.

- Dorothy Ashby Trio (popular Detroit jazz harpist in Detroit with a national reputation) was featured at the church in 1968. This resulted in \$780.

- The Jack Brokenshaw Quartet came to GPUC in 1971 Brokenshaw was a jazz vibraphonist who worked as percussionist for Motown records, one of the few white musicians hired by Berry Gordie, he was a popular entertainer for years around Detroit.
- Member Joan Hines remembers when she and her husband were in charge of some of the musical events of the time. She remembers Don on the phone encouraging people to buy tickets saying, “if you don’t like it, we’ll return your money!” One event was unfortunately scheduled for Super Bowl Sunday, unbeknownst to them. Although a hard sell, it was a successful fund raiser in the end. Bess Bonnier, famed jazz pianist and composer and also a member of our church was often featured at Sunday Services and other gatherings, sometimes as a fundraiser.

GAIETIES

A musical extravaganza with costumes, extra singers and musicians, often featuring popular composers, started in 1968. It required the talents of many church members to produce. The last Gaieties was performed in 1993. The nucleus of performers was the members of the church choir. The shows made anywhere from \$1,500 to \$4,170 and averaged \$3,000. See further information in the chapter on music.

Gaieties photos:

Back row, left to right: Jean Rhian, Nancy Cole, Joyce Sanders, Jill Crane
Front row, left to right: Veronica Smith, Kris Pierce, Lois Scott, Marion Rawson.



Bob Dupuis & Creighton Lederer



Joyce Sanders, Veronica Smith, Connie Roberts

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT

This topic includes many potlucks over the years, of course, since what kind of a church would we be with no potlucks!! Potlucks seem to have declined in popularity as of late. There had been potlucks after Christmas Eve Service but that was eliminated in 2013. The Fellowship dinner was a potluck until 2019. The “stone soup” lunch on the Sunday before Thanksgiving was changed into a popular potluck in 2017. The Fellowship committee, newly formed in 2014, has continued producing the very popular hot dog and potluck lunch in June and has offered a number of other “fellowship around food” activities with a hiatus during COVID-19. Sunday Soup Socials, Friendship dinners, a pancake breakfast, a soup and grilled cheese lunch, a Chinese luncheon, a vegan lunch, coffee and music evening have all been well attended events. During the COVID-19 shutdowns, this committee produced some innovative offerings such as a drive by chili supper and a curbside soup social. Some of these activities were co-sponsored with other committees. The annual Potluck Picnic was held in June 2022 for the first time since the shutdowns.

In the fall of 2022, the Fellowship Committee planned the following activities:

- Welcome Back Sunday with Donuts
- Red, White & Blue Sunday with Patriotic Cookies
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- A group tour to the DIA for the Van Gogh Exhibit

In 1977, the Adult Programming Committee was formed as an umbrella for such activities as circle dinners, theater parties and informational forums “in the hope that the church can become a cultural, intellectual and spiritual focal point in Grosse Pointe.” In fact, we have served the larger community with our popular lecture series by Rabbi Sherwin Wine and our many musical events which bring in the whole community. Although these earn money for church use and some are noted above as fundraisers, they bear listing here as well. With such jazz headliners through the years as Dorothy Ashby, Jack Brokenshaw and our own Bess Bonnier, plus wonderful music by retired minister Rev. John Corrado, and our current music director and composer, Joseph Palazzolo,

GPUC has become rather well known as a music haven. Two folk-oriented concerts were produced and hosted in 2012 and 2013.

In 1992 the Adult Programming Committee was reformulated under the Director of Adult Religious Enrichment (DARE) a paid part-time position. Anne Roberts held the DARE position from 1992 to 1997 followed by Julie Moore. Lorraine St. John Krawetz followed for the year 1999/2000 and Jill Crane served as DARE until 2014 when the committees split into Adult Religious Enrichment and the Fellowship Committee. Following the split, the DARE chair would no longer receive a salary.

Adult Religious Education newly formed in 2014 has challenged the congregation with a number of interesting programs: a series focusing on various other religions; a series focusing on the U.S. Constitution; book discussion (“A Chosen Faith,” “A History of God,” etc.) as well as various lectures.

The newly revived Adult Religious Education Committee offered 5 events in 2018/19:

- Ballot box recap
- Civics 101
- Stuck in Traffic: Modern Day Slavery in Michigan
- Reversing Runaway Inequality
- Don’t Wait, Vaccinate by member Dr. Brusilow
- Judaism by member Paul Lipsitz – Growing up Jewish in Detroit

In 2019, there was:

- A Labyrinth Workshop facilitated by Kathy Igoe
- The Enneagram, a psycho-spiritual tool explained by Dr. Riegel. A 3 Part series
- Stilling the Mind: a half day Workshop including yoga, meditation, mantra, sacred texts and ethics

- OWL- Our Whole Lives: Sexual Education for Adults focused on communication skills, sexual diversity values and experiences. A 7-Part series co-sponsored by GPUC and NWUC

In 2022, there was:

- New Years Toast held via Zoom on January 7, 2022
 - Reversing Runaway Inequality Workshop - a solutions-oriented guide to the wide-ranging problems associated with economic inequality in the U.S.
 - 6-Week Fall Speaker Series with various speakers made up of church members to our Minister, Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel. Topics ranged from the meaning of Life, Science vs Mysticism, Water Art, Literature and a discussion of officials listed on our ballot for the 2022 November Elections led by Sue Acton, President of the League of Women Voters.
-
- *Circle Dinners* began in 1965 as monthly gatherings at five or six host homes and eight to ten people at each home. This was quite a popular twist on potlucks, allowing for a smaller group to get to know each other. Circle dinners were planned monthly for a while and by 1985 down to three a year. Twelve people met in 1991/2 at least once. Two dinners were arranged in 1993 and 1994 and it seems to have been on hiatus since then.
 - *Ceiling 70* a social fellowship for young couples and singles; *Singles Landing* was open to the entire community with wine, cheese and a speaker monthly. Started up in 1977 and died soon after; 1987 *Not so Young Fellowship Folks* monthly meetings tried. Also, in 1988/9 a *Singles Sunday Brunch* outing. None of these seems to have caught on.
 - *Mama's and Papa's* had four meetings in 1994/5 and 3 meetings in 1995/6 and several get-togethers over the next five years. There are no further records.
 - *Empty Nesters* met once in 1994/5 and a few times a year after that until 1998
 - BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP was first mentioned in 1966 with a discussion of three books and one play reading ("State of Siege," by Camus). At that time Rev. Meserve chose the books to be discussed and charged \$10.00 for the series of six book discussions. In more recent times suggestions for books come from the group itself and

there is no charge to participate. This has been a popular activity for women through the years with just two discussions a year in the 1980's and early 1990's with about ten members climbing to six discussions in 95/6. Currently, as many as twenty women meet in the church library monthly, from October to May. The meetings switched to zoom during COVID-19 lock down mandates. A men's book discussion group has come and gone several times over the years. It was started up again in 2003. The last year it met was 2009/10 when nine discussions were planned and a disappointing turnout of two to five participants was reported.

- MEN'S CLUB was formed in 1959 and had fifteen members. That first year they had two dinners at Stouffers Eastland Restaurant. Now there's a trip down memory lane! In subsequent years they met for dinner at Perinis Restaurant and had a theater party at the War Memorial Fries Auditorium. Each year the group planned a "Layman's Sunday" at which they provided the worship service. They also had one or two picnics a year that were very popular. The group seemed to have become inactive by 1965. A men's group was started again in 1994/5, met for a few years and faded.

FORUMS

Forums have been a strong, often very popular offering usually on Sunday mornings although various ones have been offered in the evenings on different days. The forum programs of 1959/60 were particularly impressive with seventeen programs offered.

Anywhere from eight to fifty-five attended. There was often a theme for the programs as in 1961 it was "the Problems of the Twentieth Century - What Can I do About Them?" And in the spring, it was "An Introduction to World Religions."

Rabbi Wine, a "humanist/agnostic" popular speaker in the area for many years gave his first talk in 1964 to an overflow audience on his religious beliefs. Rev. Lawson and two Wayne State University students were on the agenda in 1965. They shared their experiences in Selma, Alabama.

Forum topics often reflect the times as the fall theme for the 1967-68 forum was "Detroit is Still Burning." And in the spring two forums were offered to improve communication and discussion in response to a growing rift brought about by the very liberal agenda of Dr.

Harry Meserve. Not all GPUC members were supportive of his open housing campaign and bringing Martin Luther King to Grosse Pointe.

Later in the 1980's AIDS was a forum topic. A popular, well attended forum in 2003/4 featured a discussion of the controversial Patriot Act by speakers from the US Attorney's Office and the ACLU. Seventy people from the community and our church attended. Several forums through the years have dealt with emotional issues such as dealing with grief and depression.

Our ministers, especially Rev. Emeritus John Corrado contributed many seminars and workshops to forums. Topics included: A Rapid Romp Through Unitarian-Universalist History, Aging with Grace and Grit, Four ways to Faith and the Sacraments, Rites and Passages, The Perennial Philosophy by Aldous Huxley.

- The first lecture series by Rabbi Sherwin Wine was begun in 1989/90. They continued, a series of 3 or 4 each spring and fall with a particular topic each time until he died in 2007. Rabbi Wine was a very popular speaker who attracted members of the community as well as church members.
- Monthly Sunday movie nights were initiated in 1971, stopped after a few years and then were revived in 1987 and continued until 2010. Participants were expected to see the movie in advance. Rev. John Corrado led the discussions until he retired and Rev. Rahnama continued the practice during her interim ministry.
- Tuesday evening folk dancing club started in 1985 and continued for about five years in the Annex. Although not much is written about it, it is fondly remembered by several women in the congregation.
- Lunch Bunch started in 1989/90 with up to 20 participants meeting after Sunday Service at various area restaurants and once even a boat ride that included lunch. Up to six outings a year were planned by Ward and Lucy Beard. Last mentioned in 1997/8
- 2010/11 saw the startup of regular lectures on Buddhism, weekly yoga classes and a Sunday meditation group. Even a weekly scrap booking club started up. Most of these activities were short - lived but the meditation workshop continued to meet an hour before the Sunday Services until pandemic restrictions were put into place.

- Chalice Circles initiated and facilitated by Rev. Page were monthly meetings of small groups sharing personal experiences and spiritual exercises based on monthly spiritual themes. Over 40 participants.
- UU Crafters, a group of women who meet weekly to socialize while knitting, crocheting, etc.
- Mary Beth Smith and Patricia Gillis started a writing group in February 2012. Open to a wider community, the group met twice a month giving the writers deadlines to push them to focus on their craft and in May of 2018 unveiled a book produced and edited by Patricia Gillis. The book entitled “Kaleidoscope”, showcases the best writings of members of this group.

Rev. Alex Riegel brought a fresh and interesting take to Adult Religious Enrichment.

In 2015 and 2016 there was:

- A tour of the Arab American Museum in Dearborn, MI
- Sufi Forum with whirling dervish demonstration
- Psychological Enneagram, three-part workshop
- Mystic Poet Circle
- Beginning Meditation Class
- Philosophers Club
- “Love, Mysticism and the Divine Feminism” a 2 Day Event
- Aramaic Interpretation of Jesus Teaching a Workshop conducted by Russell Paul

Also, in 2017 Dr. Riegel presented “Empowering Young Women: A Public Conversation about Sexual Safety in an Overly Permissive World” and four retreats focusing on of the four mystical traditions: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Each was a half day of spiritual study and a half day guidance of such spiritual practices as mantra, meditation and turning exercises, Dr. Riegel met the COVID-19 pandemic challenge head on with many offerings via zoom; movie and book discussions, an Intro to Logic class, to name a few.

With the help of our IT wizards, most of the Sunday Services are recorded and available on the church website.

OUR MINISTERS

To date there have been nine ministers who have served our church, six permanent ministers and three interim, plus the Rev. Dr. Reccord, who was so instrumental in the formation of our congregation.

The Reverend Dr. Augustus Phineas Reccord was the minister of First Unitarian Church at Woodward and Edmond Place. Since this is our “parent” church, a bit about it. In 1913, the house at Cass Ave and Prentis was purchased with land extending to Forest Ave. and in 1916 the present building was dedicated as the First Universalist Church (Church of Our Father). The Unitarian Church members who met at Woodward and Edmund Place were displaced due to widening of Woodward and as a temporary measure they began to meet with the Universalists and Dr. Augustus P. Reccord, the Universalist Minister. What luck that the Unitarian minister had been called to another church right around that time, so this move worked out for all concerned and in 1934, a year and a half after the first joint service, the two churches were joined permanently and the First Unitarian/Universalist Church came into being.

NOTE: The specific biographical data for each minister was obtained from the UUA archives.

Augustus Phineas Reccord

Born Acushnet MA 2/14/1870

Ordained Chelsea MA 10/9/1895

Died Springfield MA 10/4/1946

STB Harvard Divinity School 1926

Served:

Chelsea MA 1895-97

Cambridge MA (Second Church) 1897-1902

Newport RI (Channing Memorial) 1902-05

Springfield MA (Unity Church) 1905-19

Detroit MI (Church of Our Father) 1919-39

Grosse Pointe MI 1939 [no second date]

Louisville, KY 1942 [no second date]

Named Emeritus at Grosse Pointe [no date given]



Evidently several families from Grosse Pointe and the east side of Detroit were attending the First (U/U) during this time and decided they needed a place to meet on the east side. Dr. Reccord became the consultant who gave them tremendous support and assistance in working toward this goal. He met with the committee many times, helped with the paperwork, came to Grosse Pointe two Sundays a month to provide Sunday service in various locations until the Grosse Pointe congregation was able to hire a permanent minister.

Dr. Reccord was born in Acushnet, Massachusetts, on 14 February 1870. After graduating from Brown University and the Harvard Divinity School, Reccord was ordained and served in several churches in Massachusetts before coming to Detroit. Reccord was Minister Emeritus in Grosse Pointe. He served in the active Unitarian ministry for 44 years after which he served informally with parishes in Montreal and Louisville, Kentucky. He was active in denominational affairs and in broadcasting. He died in Springfield MA on 10/4/46. A Hammond organ was purchased for our church in his name from a memorial fund which raised \$1550.

Merrill Otis Bates

Born Clinton MA 3/19/1909

Ordained Laconia NH 11/15/1936

Died [no location] 2/12/1987

BD Pacific School for the Ministry 1934

Received fellowship 11/2/1936



Served:

Laconia NH 1936-39

Grosse Pointe MI 1939-50

Birmingham MI 1952-53

Moved to associate fellowship 1977

Retired 12/31/1985

The Reverend Mr. Bates was the first permanent minister hired by the GPUC. He served our church from September 1939 until June 1950. Bates was a progressive who seems to have been actively involved in community action from shortly after he arrived in Grosse Pointe. In 1942 he took a stand against the Detroit Council of Churches use of the word “Evangelical” in the By Laws defining membership requirements. Rev. Bates argued that this effectively barred membership of LDS, UU’s, Christian Scientists and others. After much controversy and discussion, Bates applied for membership on behalf of GPUC to force the issue.

Rev. Bates was credited with being the organizer and chairman of the Committee to Maintain the Separation of Church and State formed in Detroit in 1942. He was later (1947) appointed to the National Committee on Church and State Separation.

He was a member of the Michigan Chapter of the American Christian Palestine Committee. An article in an unnamed paper in the GPUC archives shows him as part of a group “affirming their stand in favor of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Bates, a handsome man with a wealthy fiancée, arrived in town in a sporty convertible with tennis rackets displayed among the luggage. Before he married Barbara Traub in January 1941, the men of our church gave him a bachelor party. The Bates had three daughters: Sarah Drinkwater Bates born 2/4/1942, Katherine Taylor Bates, born 11/9/1943 and Lucy Merrill Bates born 8/4/1947. Katherine was christened January 1944 by Frederick M. Elliot at the dedication of the Carter House church. We have several articles in the archives which show Rev. Bates and his wife attending artistic performances and one article of them hosting an afternoon reception at the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club.

William D. Hammond

Born Kalamazoo MI 12/17/1915

Ordained Boone Co. MO 5/7/1939

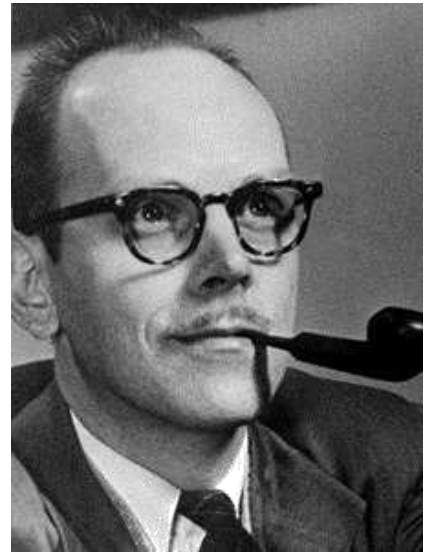
Died Littleton MA 11/17/2005

BA University of Missouri

Attended the University of Chicago Divinity

School and Meadville Lombard Theological School

Received fellowship 1946



Served:

Boone Co. MO 1939-40

Calloway Co. MO 1939-40

Rush Hill MO 1939-40 [presumably all part-time]

NY Society for Ethical Culture 1942-45

St. Louis MO Society for Ethical Culture 1943-45

Chicago IL Society for Ethical Culture 1945-46

Chicago IL (Unitarian) 1946-50

Grosse Pointe MI 1950-64

Fort Wayne IN (Mich-Ohio District Exec.) 1964-70

Wayzata MN 1970-74

Asheville NC 1974-83

Retired 1983

Named Minister Emeritus, Asheville NC, 1983

The Reverend William D. Hammond served our church from 1950 to 1964. He was born in Kalamazoo, MI but was raised in Columbia MO where his father was a professor of physics at the University of Missouri, Rev. Hammond's own alma mater.

He and his wife Carol and their two children, Judy and Thomas, came to Grosse Pointe and lived first at 769 Notre Dame and then, when the family expanded with the arrival of two more children, Donald and then Gail, Rev. Hammond prevailed upon the Church to purchase a larger home at 1575 Grayton which became known as “The Manse.” (Interesting note – members Chuck and Mindy Fossati bought the house when the church decided to sell it and the Fossatti's lived there for thirteen years.)

By all accounts, the Rev. Hammond was the right person at the right time for GPUUC. The Congregation was meeting in the Carter House on Rathbone and Jefferson when he arrived. His inspirational and thoughtful sermons and caring ministry grew the Church membership to 260 in 1958. Even though the chapel at Carter House was enlarged by the removal of an archway, there was still too little room for the attendees and two services were provided. Rev. Hammond saw the membership through the trials of building a new church, our current home, to handle the crowds. During his tenure, our church was advertised as providing “Religion for the Modern Thinker” One story told of how firmly in charge he was. He would meet with the organist before starting the Sunday service and synchronize watches!

Mr. Hammond invited the teens in RE regularly to his home for Sunday dinner where he encouraged lively discussion of many topics. Several members (in their seventies) fondly recall that effort as pivotal in their development into the adults they have become.

Rev. Hammond was a man of many interests. He had a great interest in astronomy and semantics and taught both subjects in the adult education section of the Grosse Pointe Public Schools. He was one of the founders of the Greater Detroit Memorial Society, which addressed unfair funeral practices. He was also one of the founders of the Michigan Area Council of Liberal Churches, a predecessor of the Unitarian Universalist District of Michigan. With the assistance of friends, he built finely crafted furniture, and many remember the mailboxes designed and built by Hammond which were in use in the church office for many years.

Sadly, Rev. Hammond broke the trust of the congregation and left GPUC under a cloud. It came to light that he and the RE Director were having an affair and both were either asked to leave or left of their own accord. No written record of the incident could be found so this information is based on interviews with several sages of the church. Hammond's wife, Carol, stayed at GPUC with their children. She remained active in our church for many years.

Hammond wrote Ecology of the Human Spirit (14 discourses in Reverential Naturalism) published in 1996.

Rev. John Corrado, perhaps referencing this publication noted that in a paper Hammond wrote in his late seventies he told of how he had changed his mind about some of his beliefs. He seemed to become more open to the more inspirational side of religion and changed from atheist to a belief in a greater being. He continued to grow even late in life.

At the time of his death, Mr. Hammond was survived by his wife Grace Lindquist and his three children, Donald Curtis Hammond, born 2/6/1953 and Thomas Hammond residing in Michigan and Gail Elizabeth Hammond-Stone, born 1/26/1957, residing in Arkansas.

Robert Wilde Lawson

Served:

Buffalo NY 1939-40

Reading MA 1940-43

US Navy (Chaplain) 1945-46

Pittsburgh PA 1946-49

Dayton OH 1949-52

Wollaston MA 1954-57

Portsmouth NH 1964,

Grosse Pointe MI 1965

Norwell MA 1958-59

Winchendon MA 1959

Weston MA 1959

E. Bridgewater MA 1962

Hingham MA 1963

Norwell MA 1964

Portsmouth NH 1964-70

Named Minister Emeritus, Pittsburgh PA, 12/8/1969 Resigned from fellowship 6/4/1977

The Reverend Mr. Robert Lawson served as interim minister to GPUC in 1965.

Herewith are some remarks from Rev. Robert W. Lawson for the annual report of 1964-1965. They seem to reveal the character of the man and so are included here.

[I] made many parish calls but not nearly enough, have attended several minister's meetings and other conferences, - in short, I have done everything that liberal ministers usually do, plus several unique experiences that do not fit into any conventional classification.

Two of these unique experiences stand out in my mind. First, there has been the steady stream of phone calls from strangers asking for information about liberal religion. In every



case, the response to the information I gave was enthusiastic approval. Here are some typical reactions:

“That’s what I’ve been searching for all these years!”

“You mean Unitarians really let you THINK about religion? Seems too good to be true!”

“I thought all religions were crazy; how wonderful to find one that isn’t”.

“I’ve been a Unitarian all my life, but I just now discovered it!”

Second, there was my trip to Selma, which covered the period from March 26 to April 2, approximately. The unanimous support of the membership throughout this trying time was a great comfort to me.

In September, you will start out afresh with a new minister and a new church. From here on in, everything connected with the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church is on the plus side of the ledger. You are moving ahead from an honorable and excellent past into an even greater future. In the words of Browning, “The best is yet to be.”

Rev. Robert Wilde Lawson helped church members begin to look beyond the problems and pride of building of the church when from March 26 to April 2, 1965, he journeyed to Selma Alabama, the site where just three weeks before, the infamous bloody Sunday march occurred in support of the civil rights/voting rights acts. Local police attacked the peaceful marchers with clubs, whips and tear gas. Sixteen were hospitalized. This all played out before national media and the nation was horrified. The next Tuesday, a second march was attempted. James Reeb, a UU minister from Boston, was attacked that night and beaten with clubs. Selma’s public hospital refused treatment and he had to be taken to Birmingham’s University Hospital two hours away. He died just two days later.

Lawson participated in the third march made safer by the presence of 2000 soldiers of the U.S. Army, 1900 members of the Alabama National Guard under Federal command and many FBI agents and Federal Marshals. Rev. Lawson must have experienced some anxious

moments as he wrote that “the unanimous support of the membership throughout this trying time was a great comfort to me.” Another local UU footnote to this awful time is that Viola Liuzzo, a white mother of five, was killed by KKK members for ferrying black marchers back to Selma from Montgomery in her station wagon after the march. Liuzzo was a member of First UU in Detroit.

Harry Chamberlain Meserve

Born Rye NY 9/7/1914

Died Southwest Harbor ME 11/8/2000

Educated at Phillips Academy, Andover Mass.

BA, Haverford College

Batchelor of Theology, Harvard Divinity School

Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, Meadville

Theological School, Chicago

Ordained Cohasset MA 10/5/1938

Received fellowship 3/24/1938



Rev. Meserve

Served:

Cohasset MA 1938-42, Buffalo NY 1942-49,

San Francisco CA 1949-57

Rockefeller Foundation 1957-60, Mt. Kisco NY 1958

Academy of Religion and Mental Health 1960-65

Grosse Pointe MI 1965-74

Ellsworth ME 1974-80

Named Minister Emeritus Ellsworth ME 1/1/1980 Retired 1/1/1981

The Reverend Dr. Harry Meserve served our church for nine years from 1965 to 1974. He and his new wife Kay (Mann Briner) were married June 10, 1965. They had five grown children between them, three Meserve (Mrs. Melvin Wright, Harry and Peter) and two Briner, (Winifred and David). Harry and his wife Kay lived on Moran during the time they were in Grosse Pointe. An interesting side note, the minister's salary in 1969 was reported as being \$12,350.

Dr. Meserve had worked on both east and west coasts and in and out of the ministry. As result he brought a cosmopolitan ministry to Grosse Pointe at a time of change. He

championed open housing and came out strongly against the Viet Nam war. Church members who were around at that time proudly remember that as President of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, Meserve was able to bring Martin Luther King to the area just three weeks before he was killed. Donald Lobsinger and his Breakthrough group picketed outside the High School during King's talk.

Although hard to believe today, there were a core of members of GPUC who did not support these more liberal activities, and they protested by not supporting church activities financially. However, they did finance the cost of creating the Circle Garden (in the driveway.)

While at GPUC, Dr. Meserve was also a member of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Detroit American Civil Liberties Union, the Detroit Urban League and was a member of the executive committee of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association.

GPUC was fortunate to have such a fine minister who at one time was probably in line to become president of the UUA. However, in the late 1950's he divorced, which in that era was scandalous, especially a minister. Knowing this, he dropped out of the ministry and worked for the Academy of Religion and Mental Health in New York. When the call came from GPUC he evidently decided to try again.

Meserve was a prolific writer, having published at least 5 books Faith in the Making published in 1946, No Peace of Mind published in 1959, The Practical Meditator, published 1981, About Community published 1998, Views from the Cove, finished and published posthumously 2005, plus articles, editorials and reviews in the Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Review and numerous religious publications. He was the editor and consultant of the Journal of Religion and Health, published by the Academy of Religion and Mental Health in New York.

Dr. Meserve has been described as tall, articulate, intelligent, a charming, good guy. Often seen with pipe in hand Dr. Meserve was fond of hiking, tennis and sailing and took an interest in the areas of ecology and nature. He traveled extensively, often in conjunction with his ministry. He had been to the Middle East in the 1950's with a group invited by the

Jewish community and government to observe conditions in Israel. He also visited South America and traveled through Hawaii, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia conducting seminars for Army Chaplains on Pastoral Counseling and Psychology while doing private study in Buddhist Culture.

Upon retiring from the Ministry, Dr. Meserve moved to Mount Desert Island, a large island off the coast of Maine that contains most of Acadia National Park. He continued to write a newsletter received and read with interest by many members of GPUC. He was active on the Island Library Board of Trustees for twenty-five years serving in many executive positions. He also served on the towns Conservation Commission, on its Comprehensive Planning Committee and with the MDI Historical Society.

A letter written on the 60th anniversary of GPUC, 1999 – by Harry Meserve

I first heard about GPUC from Frederick May Eliot, then president of the American Unitarian Association, which assisted in GPUC's founding. Eliot spoke glowingly of the courage and vision of the founders. I was impressed by his enthusiasm, but I must confess that for the next twenty-five years I didn't think much about Grosse Pointe and its Unitarian Church. I was busy with other concerns and places. But in 1965 I decided I wanted once more to be a parish minister. The UUA arranged for me to visit GPUC. I went to Grosse Pointe for a busy weekend and was called to its ministry by the congregation.

Returning from Grosse Pointe to my New York apartment, I turned on the TV. The show was Rowan and Martin's "Laugh In". The skit showed an eager woman sitting at a table with a sign that read, "Homes for Bigots." A big, blustery man was talking to the woman and saying: "I hate niggers; I hate Jews; I hate foreigners; I hate liberals; I hate everybody." The woman smiled and pulled a card from the box in front of her. We have just the place for you, sir. It won the bigotry award last year – Grosse Pointe, Michigan." I thought "You fool, what have you done now, planning to go to a place like that?"

But I went and have never regretted it. My wife Kay and I went and found some bigotry.

But we found also a lot of courage, a lot of warmth, a lot of social concern and liberalism, and many good friends with whom we are still in touch. We remain unrepentant liberals, and the church and its people helped us to remain so.

Since then, we have watched with interest the church's growth in numbers, support, and usefulness in the community. On our last visit, in 1988, I had a kind of religious experience. A single sentence kept repeating itself in my head: "something very good has been happening here."

I wish we could be present for the anniversary service. We remain young in heart but somewhat older in other ways. As they say in the Society of Friends, we hold GPUC and its people in the light.

Fred Firth Campbell

Born Houston TX 10/31/1936

Ordained Tulsa OK 6/15/1967

AB Earlham College 1959, BD

Meadville Lombard 1967

Received fellowship 6/6/1967



Served:

Little Rock AR 1967-75,

Grosse Pointe MI 1975-82, Indianapolis IN 1982-84

Overland Park KS 1984-85, Rochester MN 1985-90,

Fort Collins CO 1990-91, Atlanta GA 1991-92,

Schenectady NY 1992-94, St. Louis MO 1994-95

Kalamazoo MI 1995-97, Lincoln NE 1997-98

Retired 8/30/1998

Presently living in Williamston MI (per 2008 UUA Directory)

The Reverend Mr. Fred Campbell served our church for seven years. Although he struggled with some administrative issues, his warm, caring personality was appreciated by the many members he counseled on a one-on-one basis. He is remembered as being especially good at extending his ministry to those who were hospitalized or homebound. He worked with his interfaith colleagues to establish resources for needy families. He enjoyed working with his hands and fashioned the wood chalice with the green background which still graces our church.



He also built the folding wooden ramp along the staircase to the church basement which facilitated bringing large items up from storage. He loved our church facility and kept his

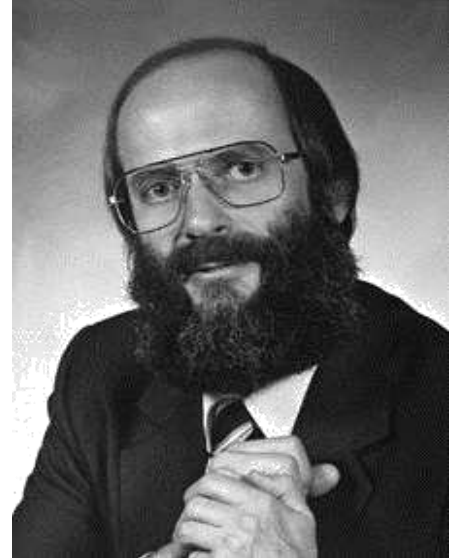
carpentry tools at hand to make any little necessary repairs to the church, often taking on tasks others were able and willing to do. This and his unpolished style led to some conflict. He and the board agreed on a “negotiated leave-taking.”

Mr. Campbell became an experienced interim minister after he resigned from GPUC in 1982.

Rev. Campbell’s wife Ann worked at Karmanos Hospital while they lived in Michigan. They have two children, a boy and a girl.

Brooks Robert Walker

Born Gunnison CO 1/2/1935
Ordained Plandome NY 1/10/1960
Died Chicago IL. 8/30/1986 BA
Univ. of Colorado 1956, MDiv
Harvard University 1959 Received
fellowship 6/1/1959



Served:

Plandome NY 1959-60,
Canoga Park CA 1960-65,
Mt. Kisco NY 1965-68,
Providence RI 1968-74,
Los Angeles CA 1976-77,
Cleveland OH 1977-78 Miami FL 1978-79,
Denver CO 1979-81, Flint MI 1981-82,
Grosse Pointe MI 1982-84,
Chicago IL 1984-85, Kalamazoo MI 1985-86

The Reverend Mr. Brooks Walker seems to have brought a breath of fresh air as interim minister to GPUC. He was respected, appreciated, and did his job well. He was a good manager and recognized that “interim is what I do, what I enjoy”. He told John Corrado jokingly, that his avocation was the ministry, and his vocation was music. He enjoyed learning to play a wide variety of instruments, and one surviving order of service from May 4, 1986, features Walker playing the autoharp and referencing his great grandmother, Peggy Kelly Walker.

According to Veronica Smith, Board President shortly after Rev. Walker left, he led the church in a very comprehensive, year-long project to develop a long-range plan. This had the effect of not only developing an excellent plan, but also went a long way toward bringing the congregation together in a very healthy way.

John Corrado

Born Bedford OH 12/11/1940

Ordained Charleston WV 10/16/1966

AB John Carroll University 1963, BD Starr King 1966

Received fellowship 2/14/1966

Served:

Charleston WV 1966-68, Camp Springs MD 1968-76,

Albany NY 1976-84

Grosse Pointe MI 1984-2009



Rev. Corrado became the virtual definition of a Unitarian minister to many while at GPUC, since serving this congregation for twenty-five years made him the only sitting minister many had ever known. He was the church to many, and the church was him. Much like a father figure, he masterfully guided us through the trials, tribulations and joys that any congregation experiences as it matures. Rev. Corrado's love of music permeated his ministry. The members of and visitors to GPUC during Rev. Corrado's extraordinary ministry were often treated to music written and performed by him. "Voice Still and Small," "We Will Keep a Place for You", and "Weaving", for examples, all became familiar parts of services and can be found in the denomination hymnal. While at GPUC he arranged and performed an original composition, "Lament for Langston," with the Grosse Pointe Symphony as part of a fund-raiser.

Corrado started developing his musical skills early on and he was performing with combos and big bands on accordion and piano by the time he was in the ninth grade. He had started to write arrangements even before that. In an interview (see tapes in GPUC archives) conducted in March of 2008 John Corrado fondly recalled the hectic days when he was writing orchestrations for TV specials in Cleveland. His talents were in demand for arrangements for popular music such as "Isn't it Romantic" and "Almost Like Being In Love". At the age of twenty-two, married with one child, John was invited to be a first call musician for a TV studio in Cleveland and played with the likes of Peter Nero,

Nelson Riddle and the Buffalo Bills quartet in the Music Man. He was “ghost writer” for ice shows, and speaking of ice, he remembered being so tired, trying to keep up with marriage, University work and his music that he would sit in a tub of cold water to keep awake while writing his musical arrangements.

Besides music, Rev. Corrado hoped to bring some other salient experiences from each of his previous ministries to bear in his service to GPUC. He received a gubernatorial citation for his work in coordinating efforts that got civil rights legislation in West Virginia. While in the Washington D.C. area he served on an interfaith think tank out of which came the Shalem Institute for spiritual Growth, The Alban Institute (a renowned educational resourced for church development) and the Inter-Met Theological School, where he served as a board member. In Albany he received commendations from the gay community for his support and for celebrating gay and lesbian unions. In the middle seventies, Rev. Paul Carnes, then President of the UUA appointed him to the Commission on Common Worship. That appointment led to his leading workshops on worship across the U.S. including one at a Michigan District meeting one week before the GPUC Search Committee asked him to be its candidate.

John has two children, Kari (born 1960) and Justin (born 1968) from a previous marriage. He divorced early in his service to GPUC and several years later married church member Barbara Moran. He credits GPUC member Sam Smith for encouraging him to court Barbara - a gift of encouragement for which he is eternally grateful.

He was named “Minister Emeritus” upon his retirement in 2009.

Barbara Moran, a L'Anse Creuse High School English teacher, joined GPUC in 1973 and was married here to Roger Moran in 1975. Although the marriage ended in 1984, Barbara continued to attend and brought her daughter Lauren to the Religious Education program. In 1987 she and Rev. Corrado met; in 1991 they were married. Barbara Moran was honored as the outstanding Creative Writing Teacher of 1994 by the State of Michigan.

Mitra Rahnema

Born Ventura, CA

BA Religious studies Lewis and Clark

College, Portland, OR

MDiv Starr King School for the Ministry 2007

Ordained May 2008 by All Souls, Kansas City



Served:

Tapestry: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation,
Mission Viejo, CA as interim

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church, MI 2009 - 2011 as
interim

Long Beach California Unitarian Universalist Church 2011

The Rev. Mitra Rahnema served as Interim Minister from September 2009 to June 2011.

The Rev. Mitra is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist who grew up in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, California. She earned a Bachelors of Arts in Religious Studies, with an emphasis in Biblical Interpretation at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She remained in Portland for ten years where she began a career in social research at the University of Oregon, focusing on parenting, adolescent transitions, peer relationships, and family development. She continued this social research work at the University of California, Berkeley working on couple relationships in families with small children while also attending Starr King School for the Ministry where she earned her Masters of Divinity.

Mitra's volunteer work is often supporting groups that create communities of social change and maintain a living power analysis. The Rev. Mitra's Unitarian Universalist activities have included serving as Vice President of DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) in 2004-2006, serving as a JUUST Change Consultant for Unitarian Universalist Association, also serving on the UUWF (Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation) grants panel.

Shelley Page

Born October 31, 1954, Rochester, NY

Preparation/Degree

Parish Ministry

M Div, Colgate Rochester Divinity School

M Div, Starr King School for the Ministry 2008 BS

in Human Ecology and Communications Cornell

University, 1976 Date of Fellowship 2010

Ordained 2010 UU Church of Canandaigua, NY.



Served:

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church, Grosse Pointe MI

2011 to June 2014

UU Church of Flint, Michigan 2010-2011 Interim Minister

Membership/Growth Chair, UU Church of Canandaigua, NY 2000-2001

President/Chair, UU Church of Canandaigua 1999-2000

Rev. Page came to Grosse Pointe with thirty years of Unitarian Universalist lay and ministerial leadership experience. She joined GPUC from her position as Interim Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, Michigan and has served congregations in Delaware and New York. Rev. Page was ordained by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua, New York, the congregation she helped to found 17 years earlier in 1993. The Canandaigua Church has given her the title of “Founding Mother.”

Prior to entering the ministry, Shelley Page had a career in marketing and communications management in corporate and not-for-profit organizations. She has a long history of leadership in social justice work on behalf of women’s rights, reproductive rights, civil rights and environmental conservation. Rev. Page has received numerous honors, among them the Creative Social Justice Award from the University

of San Francisco Law School in 2006, and the Joseph Priestley District Racial Justice Sermon Award in 2009.

Rev. Page shares her life with Rev. Myron Andes, her partner and fiancé. She has two daughters Petra (29 in 2013) and Greta (26 in 2013).

While serving at GPUC, Rev. Page was elected to the first official Board of the MUUSJN (Michigan UU Social Justice Network) in 2013.

Sadly, over time complaints about Rev. Page's ministry began to come to the church board from several directions. The church staff complained of micromanagement, trust and other human relations issues; long time members stopped attending services stating the sermons were not hitting the mark, some even deeded their pledges, various other members of the congregation also expressed dissatisfaction. In response to this general unrest, the church board along with the Committee on Ministry, brought these problems to Shelley along with suggestions on what changes needed to happen. Better oversight and more frequent feedback were given over ministry, Rev. Page, unknown to anyone began to make plans to move on. She informed the congregation and Board President, Mark Franchett, of her decision to accept a position at the UU Church in Ogden, Utah giving only a two week notice as of the end of May 2014. Two weeks later she was gone. The short notice created confusion and stress which was quickly mitigated by members of the Board and the congregation coming together to pick up the pieces. A committee was assembled to start the search for a replacement. Also, realizing that there were raw feelings among the congregation, other Board members reached out to explain, reassure and support those having difficulty understanding and accepting Rev. Page's resignation.

Serendipitously, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel was not only available but living in the tri-county area. He stepped up to serve as interim minister in September of 2014 and after a year he accepted the call as our settled minister.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel

BA Philosophy University of Michigan, 1988

Masters of Divinity; M. Div

Harvard Divinity School, 1991

Masters of Theological Studies; ThM

Harvard Divinity School, 1995

D. Min Andover Newton Theological School, 2006



Served:

Ministerial Internship – First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor, MI, 1991-92

Minister – First Parish Unitarian Universalist Canton, MA, 1993-96

Assistant Minister – First Church in Boston (Formerly First and Second Church)
Boston, MA, 1996-99

Interim Minister – Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport
Stratford, CT, 2000-01

Minister – Unitarian Universalist Church of Farmington; Farmington Hills, MI, 2001-2013

Minister – Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church Grosse Pointe, MI, 2014-2023

Continuing Education/Professional Development

2000-Present: Ongoing Enneagram Studies through the Enneagram in the Narrative Tradition

1999-2000: Organizational Communication Studies (Action Science)

1998: Mediation Training and Certification through Sam Leonard (Executive Director
of the Institute for Mediation and Training)

1994: Conflict Management Training through the Alban Institute

1991: Clinical Pastoral Education, Mott Children's Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI

The Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel came to Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church to serve as our Consulting Minister in August 2014. The match between the minister and the congregation

was very strong so in May of 2015, the congregation called Dr. Riegel as our settled minister and an installation celebration occurred on 9/24/2015.

Dr. Riegel's passion for Unitarian Universalist (UU) ministry is rooted in the UU affirmation that truth and wisdom are to be found in all of the world's religions and philosophies, and in the commitment to social justice that such truth and wisdom entails. Specifically, Dr. Riegel grounds us as we walk our spiritual paths, e.g.: the unconditional love inherent in Christianity, the compassion inherent in Buddhism, the sense of Divine justice inherent in Islam... the realization of our Divinity inherent in the teachings of the Vedas. Further he holds that beyond what these traditions offer us personally is a universal call to make these virtues a reality in the world.

Through Social Justice efforts, grounded in these virtues, we help create the conditions of radical inclusivity, in which the inherent worth and dignity of all people is both recognized and expressed. Our world, he suggests, most closely approximates the Divine intention when we come to value the unity in our diversity.

Preaching, teaching pastoral care, and administration are the strengths of Dr. Riegel's ministry because he is passionate about these particular ministerial skills. In addition to these skills, Dr. Riegel conducts workshops, retreats and performs readings of the mystic poets set to music. He is empowered by the UU "free pulpit" tradition, which means that those invited to speak from our pulpits may do so according to conscience and without fear of censorship. He carries on the centuries long UU tradition of lifelong religious education, which encourages "cradle to grave" spiritual study and practice. He finds deep meaning and humility in being allowed to minister to people during those pastoral moments that mark life's struggles and rights of passages. And, he takes a vested interest in organizational dynamics, the structuring and functioning of church life behind the scenes that are required for a congregation effectively to live out its vision.

AN ALLIANCE HISTORY

by Mary Moreshead

Alliance President (2013)

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church Women's Alliance was formed in 1940. Its objective was "to bring into closer relationship the women of the church for the purpose of promoting the welfare and well-being of our religious fellowship." Officers consisted of President, Vice-President for Program, Vice President for Membership, Vice-President for Funding, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary. Committees were established to oversee the numerous activities of the organization. Committees were Housekeeping, Luncheons, Flowers, Rummage, and Publicity etc. As the activities of the organization changed committees were added and/or eliminated. Membership meetings were held the second Tuesday of the month from September through June. The Alliance board met the first Tuesday of the month and included all officers and committee chairs. During the early years monthly meetings consisted of informational programs on topics such as "The Visiting Nurse", "Old Detroit" and book reviews by a reviewer from the J.L. Hudson Co. Meetings also included bridge parties, musical performances, teas and day trips to points of interest around Detroit. At this time the church was located in its temporary home, the Carter House, on E. Jefferson. One of the important objectives of the Women's Alliance was to raise money to help equip a new kitchen for the church they hoped to build in the near future. Fundraising activities included semi-annual rummage sales, bridge parties, church suppers, dances and bake sales. A biennial Autumn Fair was a major fund-raising event consisting of booths with hand-made items such as aprons, baked goods, dolls, holiday decorations, infant wear and white elephants. There was an area set aside for the children with a magician, clown, popcorn, lemonade and cookies. In the evening a Harvest Dinner was served. During this time the Alliance assumed an active role in helping to meet the many needs of the church. They assumed responsibility for maintaining the church kitchen, arranged flowers for Sunday services, instituted the Sunday Coffee Hour and helped with the many church housekeeping needs.

Over the years the Alliance has met its objectives of providing service to church and community as well as promoting religious fellowship among women in many ways. †

In 1965, the congregation moved into their new church. The biennial fair became an annual event, and the name was changed to the Holly Fair. While the Fair had its own chairperson, treasurer and budget, the majority of participants were Alliance members. During the 60's the Alliance belonged to several community groups such as the YWCA, Receiving Hospital Service League and the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. A service committee was added, and projects included making cancer pads, sewing slippers for Receiving Hospital patients and making articles for World Medical Relief. Rummage sales, bridge parties, teas and suppers continued and funds from these events purchased the kitchen equipment for both the Annex (the Olympia Brown Center) and coffee kitchens. It is impossible to mention all of the purchases and contributions the Alliance has made to the church over the years. Here are just a few: repair of the roof, contributions to the Boston Trip, donations to the Memorial Fund, iron gate and bench for the garden, desk, tables, renovation of paintings, a door for the Annex, reupholstered love seats in the gallery, the front porch railing, a refrigerator for the coffee kitchen and the Guyton School camp fund. Programs reflected the changing times and included speakers on abortion laws, sexism, women and credit, ERA amendment, mental health and human sexuality to name just a few.

At the present time the Alliance, like many other organizations, is facing a decrease in membership, resulting in a difficulty enlisting people to assume leadership roles. As a result, programs and activities have had to be curtailed or eliminated. The Holly Fair was discontinued due to competition from other fairs in the community along with fewer volunteers to make items needed for the sale. Until Spring 2022, The Alliance ran the Clearance Corner in the Resale Shop which was a major source of income for our group. We have had several Flea Markets from 2004 to 2009 and each one generated approximately \$5000-\$6000 with all profits donated to the church. We were committed to using funds from the Clearance Corner to purchase items for the church.

Recent donations (2019) to the church have included \$1,000 to the Endowment Fund and a donation of \$350 for the Boston Trip was given to the Religious Education. Charitable donations were given to the following organizations: GPUC Campership, GPUC Crossroads, Belle Isle Conservancy, Family Center, Planned Parenthood of Michigan, The Helm, Grosse Pointe/Harper Woods NAACP and UU Service Committee.

Declining membership has led to a curtailment of the regular monthly lunch and program. The June luncheon potluck in appreciation for all the church member and the many non-church members who work in the Resale Shop and Clearance Corner and the December luncheon and concert continued until COVID-19 mandates forced a shutdown of such activities. The Alliance did not meet during 2020 and 2021 and sadly disbanded early in 2022.

MUSIC CHOIR AND GAIETIES

By Jean Dupuis

There are few remaining records available before our congregation moved to the Carter House on Jefferson in 1943. Only scattered references in the archives are made about a children's choir in 1941 led by Mr. Paul Berlin, an organist, and various music centered evenings. In 1941 there was \$350 budgeted for music. Our first memories of there being a "choir" at the Carter house are in the early to mid-1950s. A small group dressed in maroon robes in the front rows rose and turned to help the congregation sing the hymns. At times Helen Leuzinger (Anthony) played the piano. This group was loosely organized and did not have scheduled, if any, rehearsals.

Myra Mac Donald (Moeller) recalls that she, Bill and Carol Reddick (Sollenberger), and John and Bonnie Graves, all left the Christ Methodist Church and joined our Unitarian Church in 1956.

In 1962, William J. Reddick was hired as the music director. He came with an impressive resume. He was a composer, organist, pianist, conductor, teacher and vocal coach in New York City. From 1936-1946, here in Detroit, he was the musical director for the Detroit Symphony's radio show, "The Ford Sunday Evening Hour." Bill was a perfectionist who provided wonderful music for our Sunday services. Many Sunday mornings we were treated to beautiful organ and piano duets. Bill played the organ while his wife Carol, who was an accomplished pianist, played the piano. This piano and organ were later moved to the Maumee church.

The first semi-organized choir was formed during the church year of 1963-64. Mr. Reddick required that members should be able to read music. The choir rehearsed every Saturday afternoon to reach his high standards. Finally, he seemed to be satisfied and the choir was "allowed" to sing at two services near the end of the church year. Some of the remembered early participants were George Clifford, Doug Drake, Bob and

Jean Dupuis, Mindy Fossati, Bonnie Graves, Creighton Lederer, Russell Peebles, Lois Mangus (Scott), and Pauline Roddy.

Our Congregation was saddened when Bill Reddick died suddenly in the summer of 1965. In the fall of 1965 with the grand opening of our new church on Maumee, Kenneth Cook became the new organist and the choir director. In the September 28, 1965, issue of the church newsletter, Ken Cook posted a plea for more choir members explaining that one didn't have to read notes or be an experienced singer, just be someone who could carry a tune and loved to sing. Carol Reddick's name was also listed as an additional person to contact. In 1966 or '67, as the church and choir grew in number, the Board and Congregation voted enough money to hire both an organist and a choir director (\$1200 for the organist and \$1000 for the choir director). This began the long-standing musical team of Ken Cook and Carol Reddick Solenberger.

Now our church had an organized choir which rehearsed every Thursday evening and sang an anthem at least every third Sunday. Choir members wore the same maroon gowns from the Carter House, processed and recessed, and moved from front row chairs to the dais or steps to sing. Later the maroon robes were replaced with heavy gold robes purchased with money from the Alliance. When the choir grew larger than the number of robes, they performed in normal Sunday attire. At one time they stood on risers at the window side of the church. These risers were donated by Mary Miller. Since the risers were very heavy to move and were perilous to stand on, the choir settled on the present-day arrangement, chairs by the garden windows. At some point the processionals and recessionals were discontinued.

The musical team of Cook and Solenberger eventually gave way to Doris Eubank who led the choir from 1974 to 1988. Her death led to the choir needing to adjust to four music directors in five years (Doris Eubank, Mary Holmes 1988, Rob Lappa 1989 and Roy Trombley 1990). The situation changed for the better when Mr. Larry La Rue was hired in 1991. Our choir flourished under his direction with twenty-four members. In 1994, Ms. Anna Speck was hired as choir director and Mr. LaRue continued on as music

director. Anna Speck resigned in 2003 and Mr. Joseph Palazzolo was hired as choir director in her place. Then, after Larry LaRue's untimely death in 2007, Joseph Palazzolo assumed the dual roles of Choir Director and Music Director without - ahem - missing a beat. Our Sunday music program was soon enriched by the talents of youngsters from our Church School after Palazzolo added a Youth Choir to his duties. Palazzolo resigned the positions of Adult Choir Director and Youth Choir Director, effective January 6th, 2021, but continues as Music Director.



Anna Speck



Lawrence LaRue



Joseph Palazzolo

Over the years the choir has made important contributions to our church life. Besides providing music for the Sunday services, the choir enthusiastically provides appropriate entertainment for fellowship dinners, farewell parties and memorial services. Their presentations of songs, sing-a-longs, comedy skits, jokes and parodies on standard tunes, always spark any gathering.

In 1979, the choir joined other UU choirs for an afternoon program of music for the UUA General Assembly in East Lansing, Michigan. They also continue to participate in the yearly concert sponsored by local UU Churches. In the 1970's the choir combined with a Detroit area church for several exchange concerts. For over twenty-five years the choir performed a musical extravaganza known as the Gaieties.

This closely knit group has become a supportive extended family for its members. After

most rehearsals it is customary for several members to share a pizza at a local restaurant. The traditional end of the year choir pot-luck picnic is a pleasant coda for a year filled with music.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Musical instruments have been a constant in our church, starting with references to an organ used even before moving into the Carter House. In 1947 a Hammond organ was purchased for our church with the \$1550 that was raised in memory of Dr. Reccord who was so - ahem - instrumental in getting our church off the ground. That organ was replaced in 1965. A Mason and Hamlin piano which was produced in 1934 was purchased for church use in 1980 and sold in 2001 for \$4500. A beautiful new Yamaha piano was purchased the same year after a pledge drive promised \$22,710.

Bill Salot, Chair of the Music committee during the late 1980's shared this story. He realized that the organ purchased in 1965 was in pretty bad shape. Dr. Salot had four daughters and he wanted them to be able to be married with organ music playing them down the aisle. He was working with the Detroit Institute for Children, across the street from Smiley Brothers Piano Company on Woodward and he would make the occasional visit to Smiley's to gather information about organs. When a social worker at the Children's Institute understood his purpose and the paucity of funds available for such a purchase, a suggestion was made to apply for a grant. Several applications were made and in 1989 a grant for \$15,000 from the Katherine Tuck Foundation was received by the church. This, along with additional funds from the congregation allowed for the purchase of an Allen Digital Computer Organ with two manual keyboards. The new organ plus a piano keyboard that was added at the same time, not only enhanced our Church music program, but also the church and its instruments came into demand among local musicians and teachers as a recital hall.

GPUC GAIETIES 1968-1994

For nearly twenty-five years, the choir and many other church members, as well as a few community members, staged a yearly evening musical and a dinner or an afterglow. The first two such programs (1968 and 1969) were planned mostly by our Choir Director, Carol Reddick (later Solenberger). Carol had correctly detected that there was a split in the Congregation about several issues described elsewhere, and that a dinner and some music would be in order. Mostly Gay Nineties songs from the choir in various configurations and some sing-alongs by the audience made up the program.

A dinner was elegantly served by the Congregation's most stylish women, dressed appropriately for the musical era presented in the show. Both the dinner and the music were regarded as a big success and achieved at least some healing of feelings. This program was called a "Gallimaufry," (from the French, meaning stew, hash, hodgepodge) a descriptive name Carol dug up. The response was so positive that plans for a similar show for 1969 began to take form. In 1972 it is noted that the Gallimaufry made \$3000.

After those first two, a routine evolved, "Well, it's September, so it must be time to start thinking about a show." A few early performances had been held as early as February or March but eventually the planning started in September and the show was produced in April or May. The new name was also Carol's idea, a slight mutation of the famous "Broadway Garrick Gaieties." A core committee, made up almost exclusively of choir members, was formed and began meeting at Lois Mangus Scott's home. Lois had a pile of popular music, some in choir arrangements, and programs from several shows done by the Guyton School chorus in which both she and Ray had performed.

The first order of business was to decide upon a theme. In 1970 we used the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein, including many songs from "South Pacific" and "Oklahoma!" Other shows revolved around the music and life of popular composers such as Gershwin, Warren, Porter, Kern, Berlin and Mercer. The Gaieties evolved from having a few,

simple costumes to more elaborate ones; from little or no scenery to some that was eye-catching; from simple “scripts” to fuller ones, from footlights, to spotlights, enhanced audio and slides projected on a screen above the stage. Several sections of heavy platforms were built by Darrell Eubank to augment the stage area. As scenery, costumes and other equipment increased it was stored in the basement. While we originally relied on only



regular choir members, we later began to seek out “ringers,” friends who were neither choir nor church members, but who could contribute musically or in some other way.

Once a theme was selected the search for music began, often at least partially filled by Lois’s endless storehouse, sometimes requiring borrowing from the library, schools or other sources. Performers volunteered to do solo or smaller ensemble numbers as the program developed. Skits, dancers and a narrator added to the production. In the early years our music director and/or pianist provided the

accompaniment. Later we also hired a professional bassist and drummer for several shows.

The music directors who were most instrumental in the success of the GPUC Gaieties were Carol Reddick Solenberger, Ken Cook, Doris Eubank and Larry LaRue. Ken Cook, an organist and arranger, accompanied early shows, then member Betty Sue Campbell was our volunteer accompanist for several years. An amazing, versatile pianist, she gave unstintingly of her time and talents, often leading solo and small ensembles in rehearsals at her home. Among the main “script” writers were Bill and Mary Ellen Aurelius, Darrell Eubank, Carrie and Russell Peebles, Lois Scott, Jill Crane and Bob Dupuis. Allen

Freiwald, among others, provided lighting and scenery services for many years. Ministers Harry Meserve and John Corrado each performed in the shows. The Church Archives contain printed programs for almost all of the shows, revealing the large number of people who were eventually involved. Many scripts, stage directions and video tapes of the Gaieties can also be found in the archives.

This show became entrenched in our church year and became a standard fund raiser, netting anywhere from \$1500 to \$4000 a show, averaging \$3000. We had the nerve to charge admission and to require the audience contribute to a potluck dinner. It worked! In about 1980 the Gaieties were performed on two evenings and one year it ran for three performances. However, it became evident that the time and energy demanded by the Gaieties was taking many key people away from other church activities, principally from the choir's singing for Sunday services. The last performance was in 1994 and was presented with the addition of Noteworthy, a "No fella a cappella" Grosse Pointe vocal jazz group.





Following is a list of current members who participated in the production of the Gaities either as singers, dancers, actors or stage crew. In addition to these listed are myriad members who organized the dinners or afterglows and were setter-uppers and taker-downers. Thanks to all who made these fun evenings possible.



Current Church Members who participated directly in Gaieties:

WALLY FRIESEN

KARIN GARRETT

MARLENE HARLE

SUSAN HARTZ

CAROL HINDLE

JULIE MOORE

ANNE ROBERTS

CONNIE ROBERTS

TOM ROBERTS

VERONICA SMITH

CHRISTINA VADINO

KAREN WEBB

JANET WEBER

Saturday Concert Series

Church Music Director, Joseph Palazzolo initiated a Saturdays at 7:30P Concert series in 2015 with two concerts a year. The first concert featured Mather Ball on October 2015 followed by Joseph Palazzolo at the piano in April, 2016. Mather Ball returned in October 2016 as the Boogie Woogie Kid at the piano.

March 2017 featured Carl Cafagna, a multitalented musician playing Saxophone, Clarinet, Flute with Ron Pietrantoni, Pianist.

May 2017 **Music of Rebellion, the Gnarly Side of Classical** featuring Joseph Palazzolo

October 2017 **Dueling Pianos** featuring talented church member, Anne Roberts and Palazzolo on Piano

March 2018 **Dearing Concert Duo**, an evening of voice, flute and classical guitar

May 2018 **From Inner to Outer Space**, Joseph Palazzolo, piano

October 2018 **An American in Paris** Anne Roberts and Joseph Palazzolo on Piano

May 2019 **Warsaw Concerto** Sonia Lee, violin and Joseph Palazzolo

Note: This concert was reprised in November the Detroit Institute of Arts

May 2019 **Deeper than the Skin** featured musical duo Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway

October 2019 **Double the Pleasure, Dueling Pianos III** Anne Roberts and Joseph Palazzolo

May 2020 a concert was planned **Composers of Color**. It was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

October 2020 **Dueling Pianos** Anne Roberts and Joseph Palazzolo; This concert was offered virtually from Anne's Living Room via Zoom. 100 Tickets Sold!

October 2021 **Dueling Pianos** Anne Roberts and Joseph Palazzolo; offered In Person and Virtually via Zoom.

April 2022 **Happy Island: JP's Favorites** Joseph Palazzolo; offered In Person and Virtually via Zoom.

October 2022 **Dueling Pianos** Anne Roberts and Joseph Palazzolo; offered In Person and Virtually via zoom.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT GPUC



One of our earliest R.E. class groups while we were using the Carter House

Recollections of JoAnn Kelly, RE director 1973 to 1978

The mid-seventies were a time of new stability and growth in our Religious Education Program. Several of the traditions we continue to celebrate in the 21st Century began in these dynamic years. Our children began Trick or Treating for UNICEF in their neighborhoods and at church. Hundreds of dollars were sent to UNICEF each year. This practice continues today.

When the Rev. Harry Meserve retired, the church decided to have a year of lay-lead services. For coordination purposes, the Religious Education Director sat in on sessions of the committee planning Sunday morning services and, at one point, reported that RE planned to do a traditional Seder Service and meal involving even our youngest children to be held in our Annex Building the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The committee proposed that the Seder meal and program be moved to the Chapel and that the entire congregation participate. Highchairs in the chapel were deemed manageable and our traditional Thanksgiving Brunch Service was born. For many years, the food and service were planned by Religious Education. This has morphed into a stone-soup meal and a service planned by the minister, but nearly forty-five years later the Thanksgiving Brunch remains a regular part of the church calendar.

Our tradition of a Mitten Tree at Christmastime was born in the mid-seventies. Each year children and adults bring warm outer apparel to go to children in need as they face our cold Michigan winters. By the Sunday before Christmas our Mitten Tree is laden with scarves, hats, mittens and gloves. Boots and some books and games are found under the tree. All this shared warmth is delivered to a school or shelter in nearby Detroit, usually one with whom we have a relationship. Nearly forty-five years later we treasure introducing our younger children to meaningful traditions that have become part of who we are at Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church.

Raising money with a Spaghetti Dinner for a Senior Youth Group trip to Boston was done in the late seventies or early eighties. Actually, that spaghetti dinner was the dinner part of an auction event the kids organized for the whole church. While not quite as large as we've done recently, the idea was the same--contributions of services and talents, gift certificates etc. by church members. The kids raised a lot of money for their trip and a large group went to Boston. For years afterwards, RE protected the auction idea for the kids, thinking another group of them would want to do the same. Eventually, it was evident that was not to happen and the adults took it over.

Recollections of Chris Vadino, RE Chair 1997-2003

Chris Vadino served as RE Committee Chair from 1997-2000, then passed the gavel to Ann Helm who served until 2003. Enrollment averaged 75 children during this period.

Children in all classes received instruction in the rotating curricula of World Religions, Unitarian-Universalism and Religion in Everyday Life. For the first time, the program hired a teacher for the pre-school class. Thanks to a Frank Gentile grant in 1997, RE was able to offer additional programming in peace and conflict studies that year. Part of "Project Peace" was the installation of a "Peace Pole" on the church grounds. Our Whole Lives (OWL) was offered to the Senior High class in 2000 and 2003. The Seniors also participated in a coming-of-age ceremony and developed statements of faith with the help of an adult mentor. The Junior and Senior classes delved into U-U and American history (and had an unforgettable time) during their Boston trip in June 1999.

Community service was a significant focus during this period. As part of "Project Peace" all age levels gathered "books that make me feel peaceful" for donation to a women's shelter and an adolescent psychiatric hospital. The Seniors visited the COTS shelter one Sunday each month. RE families participated in the annual CROP walk and UNICEF drives, collected toiletries for shelter residents and entertained at nursing homes.

Established traditions such as Secret Pals, Circle-Circle Dinner and Spaghetti Dinner thrived during these years thanks to strong support by the congregation. New traditions were developed, including an annual fall retreat for the Juniors and an annual Christmas pageant for the congregation.

Recollections of Julie Artis, DRE, 2006-Present

Julie Artis became DRE in 2006. Joy Buttiglieri served as RE Committee Chair until 2010 and Kathy Konwiak took over until present, 2013. Enrollment averaged 52 to 72 students. Children in all classes received instruction in the Pillars Curriculum of World Religions, Unitarian-Universalism and Judeo-Christianity. The program also encouraged a spirit of giving with our "Kids that Give" program. Religious Education offered additional programming in Our Whole Lives (OWL) to Senior High Class in 2007 and 2013 and in 2014 an OWL Program for Juniors was piloted. The Seniors took part in a coming-of-age ceremony and developed statements of faith with the help of an adult mentor.

Our major activities for the years have included a field trip to Friends Church, Detroit Zen Center, Metro Park, Camping at the Pinery, Pool Party, COTS, annual spaghetti dinner, Church Pal program for juniors, Catholic churches, Gleaners Food Bank, Forgotten Harvest, Empty Bowls, Camp Howell, Circle Circle Dinner, Belle Isle cleanup, a LGBTQ workshop by Dr. Fran Brown, UNICEF, Guest at Your Table, a mitten and book collection at Christmastime, Climb up for Aids event, making blanket for project Linus, Pennies for Peace, bowling nights and Seder dinners.

We began multi-generational services in 2010, and Rev. Mitra introduced “A Time for All Ages” in the Sunday Service. We also produced an annual Holiday Pageant each year including *The Quiltmaker’s Gift*, *The Polar Express*, *The Spirit of the Christmas Tree*, *Festival of Light*, *The Christmas Carol*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and *One World, One Light*. In 2018, a beautiful, colorful and informative advent calendar was produced and sold for \$5.

Our RE program was remarkably active throughout the COVID-19 shutdowns as detailed in the annual report 2020/21:

This year we provided a year devoted to staying connected. We gave every student that registered a charm necklace to wear and added a charm each month. We encouraged continuing to work on their meditation at home during this difficult year and worked on this in person and zoom classes. We held some zoom classes and began in person classes when we started back in church in person for each level, K-5th grade, 6-7th grade, and 9-12th grade.

We were able to hold our 9-12th grade OWL classes (Our Whole Lives). We held two Message for All Ages readings per month on zoom and in person. We also added a UU Quiz for two Sundays per month. We held a Holiday Program Service in December 2021. Activity bags with lessons and crafts were given out to the students to continue learning about UU and stay connected.

Outside events were scheduled to provide safety, such as Fire pits at members’ homes for the 6-12th graders. We had a nature field trip to Metro Beach for all students lead by Shawn Grose. We also helped with the outside grounds clean up. All students have been encouraged to bring in food each month for Crossroads. Juniors and Seniors collected cans/bottles for their fund for trips. An Easter Egg hunt was offered to all students with our very own Easter Bunny. We scheduled an Intergenerational Earth Day Service in April. We started Meatless Mondays with Buddha bowls.

More recently, Erica Phardel held an art class with our 6-12 graders making garden mushrooms to give to their mother's on Mother's Day. We also started a book lending library of our RE books. We put in a new Peace Pole with a Peace Pole Ceremony. In Person gatherings have been held since September 2022. The December in person holiday pageant was titled "Would You Like to Hold the Baby?"

Several fundraisers were held to support the annual trip to Boston. Among them, a raffle on a "Love in Person" quilt, a Buddha Bowl Dinner held on November 6th and chili bowls were available for purchase on the Sunday's including our Annual Fall Grounds Clean Up held on November 13th, as well as other Sunday Services.

The following pages encompass an appendix of miscellaneous information not covered in earlier sections, plus a detailed news article covering the visit of the Rev. Martin Luther King to Grosse Pointe in 1968.

**ANNUAL MEMBER COUNT
GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH**

This information does not seem to have been kept consistently over the years. Between the office administrator and this historian, here's what we've come up with. Please note that even as the count has not been kept consistently, the definition of count seems to also have changed to sometimes include all who attended regularly and supported the church, even those who had not officially become members. There is some reference in the archives to those who had not been members for at least six months not being included for voting purposes. A more definitive definition of membership was enacted by the Board during Rev. Corrado's tenure.

2023 - 149	1994 - 197
2022 - 163	1992 - 220
2021 - 157	1991 - 219
2020 - 158	1990 - 220
2019 - 140	1989 - 208
2018 - 161	1985 - 239
2017 - 150	1980 - 235
2016 - 149	1979 - 226
2015 - 144	1978 - 276
2014 - 163	1976 - 234
2013 - 154	1970 - 240
2012 - 156	1968 - 367
2011 - 166	1967 - 357
2010 - 164	1966 - 301
2009 - 164	1965 - 302
	1950 - 119
	1949 - 94

**PRESIDENTS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH**

Ford Whelden	1938-40	Elizabeth Sanders	1986-88
Stewart Manson	1940-42	Allen Freiwald	1988-89
Dorothy Angevine	1942-44	Richard Morshead	1989-91
Fred Schumann	1944-45	Doris M. Cook	1991-93
G. Leslie Field	1945-47	Russell Peebles	1993-94
John Herrmann	1947-48	John Cole	1994-96
John McPherson	1948-50	J. Thomas Roberts	1996-98
John Herrmann	1950-51	William C. Bishop	1998-00
Donald Pascoe	1951-53	Charles Palmer	2000-01
Hershel Reynolds	1953-54	Joseph Buttiglieri	2001-03
John Carson	1954-56	Veronica Smith	2003-05
Jean Herrmann	1956-57	Christina Winder	2005-07
Daniel Basinski	1957-58	Joseph Ritok	2007-09
Stanley Smith	1958-60	Ann Helm	2009-11
Russell Peebles	1960-61	John Owens	2011-12
Creighton Lederer	1961-62	Janet Peplin	2012-13
Alfred Taylor	1962-64	Mark Franchett	2013-14
John Herrmann	1964-65	Robin Ramsey	2014-17
John Hamann	1965-66	Joseph Buttiglieri	2017-19
Carrie Peebles	1966-68	Russell Chavey	2019-22
Robert Dupuis	1968-69	Tonya Wells	2022-22
Donald Young	1969-71	Ann Lipsitz	22-2024
Ruben Van Leeuwan	1971-72	Jenevieve Lilly	2024
Sally Brown	1972-74	Jerry Herron	July 2024-Current
William Salot	1974-76		
Joan Hines	1976-78		
Robert Button	1978-80		
Mary Beth Smith	1980-82		
William Friesen	1982-84		
Veronica Smith	1984-86		

**CHURCH SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATORS
GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH**

In the 1944-45 GPUC Directory there is an entry for "CLERK", but no name is listed. It was general practice that often the Board Secretary would assist the minister when necessary. The ministers were responsible for their own correspondence and for the church printing and quite often office tasks fell to their wives. Not until 1960 was specific mention made of a paid Church Secretary. The old phone directories and annual reports were reviewed but found no further information from the earlier years.

Lois Leddick	1960-1964
Virginia Conner	1964-1969
Geraldine Pfeiffer	1969-1970
Helene Littlefield	1970-1971
Darlene Seeley	1971-1973
Ursula Singleton	1973-1977
Sally Zimmer	1977-1978
Marjorie Hirt	1979-1983
Barbara Anderson	1984-1988
Theresa Young	1989-1998
Lisa Rambo	1998-2000
Allison Nelson, wife of Ministerial intern Adam Tierney, filled during the search for a replacement.	2000-2001
Jennifer Côté	2001-2006
Kimberly Holzerland	2006-2009
Candy Dunn	2009 –2020
Ameera Bandy	2020-

**DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH**

Nancy Bridge	1962-1964
Jean Taylor	1964-1965
Patricia McFadden	1965-1967
Ruth van Leeuwen	1967-1969
Nancy Birnie-Visscher	1969-1970
Darlene Krato	1970-1972
Jean Stewart	1972-1973
JoAnn Kelly	1973-1978
Cynthia Buell	1978-1979
Susan Kirkland	
Nancy Doughty	1979-1981
Harlene Michaels	1981-1982
Joyce Simowski	1982-1984
Peggy Wilke	1984-1986
Donna Carloni	1986-1990
Sandra Fleming	1990-1993
Margaret Teall	1993-1995
Doreen Cole	1995-1996
Miriam Engstrom	1996-2006
Julie Artis	2006-

GPUC ALLIANCE PRESIDENTS 1940 – 2022

1940-41 Mrs. Gilbert Currie
1942-43 Clara Schumann
1944-45 Mrs. Edgar Cooper
1946 Mrs. Flancher
1947-48 Florence Adams
1949-50 Betty Frolund
1951-52 Jean Hermann
1953 Mrs. George Taylor
1954-55 Rose Sowden
1956 Julia Smith
1958-59 Kay Reynolds
1960 Carrie Peebles
1961-62 Mrs. Richard Wilde
1962-64 Helen Poxson
1965 Betty Frolund
1966 Lois Hamann, Ruth Cook
1967-68 Natalie Lederer
1969-70 Joan Hines
1971-73 Maya Elmer
1973 Bonnie Wooden
1974-75 Mary Miller
1976 Mary Ellen Aurelius
1977-79 Veronica Smith
1979-81 Anita Mitasik
1981 Veronica Smith
1982 Betty Frolund
1983 Alice Snyder
1984 Jean Harris
1985 Beth Sanders
1986-88 Ula Perry
1988 Anita Mitasik
1989-91 Dorothy Rieven
1992-93 Carol Hammond
1994-95 Joan Hines
1996 Doris Cook
1997-99 Lucie Beard
2000-07 Patty Mogk
2008 Mary Moreshead/Carol Nine
2009-22 Mary Moreshead

In 2022, the Alliance disbanded due to lack of membership.

Births, Marriages, and Memorials: significant firsts and numbers

Dedications/Baptisms/Christenings

Francis and Frederick Hartz, children of Alice and A. Boynton Hartz were the first children to be dedicated. The ceremony was noted but undated and occurred before June 7, 1941.

126 children were dedicated in the Carter House up to September 27, 1964.

There was a mass dedication of twenty-three at the Maumee Church November 21, 1965.

198 children have since been dedicated as of June 2022.

Total: 358

Marriages

The first couple noted in church records to be married were Elizabeth Cooper and Robert Wellesley Ward. Since there was no date available for that marriage, the second marriage noted is included here. That was Josephine Stein to George Alberto on June 14, 1941.

There were 56 marriages listed (including the two above) up to 1960 when there is a gap in the records, or no marriages were performed. The records begin again in the Maumee church September 18, 1965, when Kathryn Jo Michael married Neal Stuart Hakken followed by Anne E. Poxson marriage to John R. Sparks September 25, 1965.

685 marriages have been performed at our Maumee church and or by our church ministers up to August 2021.

Throughout the records it can be seen that with some regularity marriages have been performed by the GPUC minister elsewhere or by a minister from another church (or faith) at GPUC.

Total: 749

Memorials

The first memorial service occurred March 25, 1940 in memory of Ms. Alice V. Guysi (e?) age 77, a member of the church.

109 memorial services were performed from 1940 to September 28, 1964. The records pick up again as soon as the Maumee Church was completed.

201 memorial services were offered between September 1965 to January 2023.

Total: 334

Note: Membership status is rarely indicated in the church records of these ceremonies.

INVENTORY OF CONTENTS OF CORNERSTONE BOX

Placed November 1, 1964

NAME	TITLE OR FUNCTION	DOCUMENT(S)
Mrs. John R. Decker	Charter Member	List of charter members
Mr. Merrill Bates	Past Minister	letter
Mrs. Emil Leidich	Charter Member	Church History
Mrs. Boynton Hartz	Building Committee	Building History
Hon. David Burgess	Mayor, City of GP	This is Your Grosse Pointe
Mrs. Richard Snowden	Historian	List of Past presidents List of Members, Friends and Directory
Mrs. Mack Monroe	Society Clerk	
Mrs. Addison Igleheart	Member, Bd. Of Trustees	Constitution and By-Laws Fund Drive Pamphlet and Estimate of building. costs
Mr. Russell Peebles	Bldg. Fund Treasurer	
Mr. John Singley	Ushering Chairman	Sunday Leaflets
Mr. Robert Dupuis	Newsletter Editor	Newsletters
Mrs. Roy Erickson	Publicity Chairman	Newspapers
Mr. Allen Freiwald	Bldg. Construction Chairman	Microfilm of plans Photos of site and construction progress
Mrs. Stanley Smith	Bldg. Committee member	
Mr. Mike Calcaterra	LRY President	Liberal Religious Youth documents
Mrs. Herbert Wood	R.E. Chairman	R.E. Program Curriculum
Mrs. Nelson Frolund	Women's Alliance Pres.	Alliance documents
Mr. Haig Tarpinian	Book Table Chairman	Book Table printed matter
Mr. William Reddick	Organist	Hymnal "Hymns of Spirit"
Rev. Wm. D. Hammond	Past Minister	letter

A timeline of the history of GPUC

- 1938**
- February 25 - Meeting at the home of Mrs. J. Watkins to discuss forming a UU church in Grosse Pointe
 - March 27 first service held in the Ladies Parlor, Grosse Pointe Memorial Church. Dr. Augustus P. Reccord presided
- 1939**
- March 19 - Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association met with members of the fledgling church. The name "Grosse Pointe Unitarian" was selected. Our Covenant was presented and signed by 55 people (ultimately signed by 66 founding members).
 - April 16 - A constitution and by-laws were adopted
 - May 14 - Rev. Merrill Otis Bates preached and accepted the call from GPUC to become the first Settled minister.
 - September – The congregation began to meet at the Alger House Museum (Grosse Pointe War Memorial) every Sunday at 11am.
- 1940**
- Women's Alliance formed.
 - First memorial service occurred March 25, 1940, in memory of Ms. Alice V. Guysi(e?) age 77.
 - Francis and Frederick Hartz, children of Alice and A. Boynton Hartz were the first children dedicated/christened. Ceremony undated but occurred before June 7, 1941
- 1941**
- First marriage performed Elizabeth Cooper and Robert Wellesley Ward. Again, no date but the second marriage, Josephine Stein to George Alberto took place June 14, 1941.
- 1943**
- October 1 - Carter House mortgage signed
- 1944**
- Fall - First of many Christmas Fair fundraisers.
- 1946**
- January 30, 1944 - Dedication ceremony of the Carter House.
- 1948**
- November - First reference to a musical program
- 1950**
- Rev. William D. Hammond accepted the call to serve GPUC. He stayed until 1964.
 - House at 769 Notre Dame purchased for use of minister and family. It was sold in 1956.
- 1956**
- February 27, Carter House mortgage was paid off.
 - House at 1575 Grayton was purchased for use by Rev. Hammond and his family
- 1960**
- September - Began offering two services every Sunday to accommodate the burgeoning membership.
- 1962**
- The house at 448 St. Clair was purchased, rented out and demolished in 1967 adding green space to church property.
 - Bill Reddick named music director and more regular choir was formed.
- 1964**
- April 12, Groundbreaking for Maumee church building.
 - November 1, Cornerstone was laid.
 - The parsonage on Grayton was sold.
- 1965**
- October 3 - Maumee church dedication ceremony.
 - Rev. Robert Wilde Lawson became our interim minister
 - Rev. Harry Chamberlain Meserve accepted the call as settled minister
 - First book discussion group formed.
 - Kenneth Cook became the church organist and choir director, soon joined by Carol Solenberger as choir director.
- 1968**
- March 14 - Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council President, Rev. Meserve, helped bring Martin Luther King to speak in Grosse Pointe.
 - First Gaieties program offered.

- 1971** - March 10 - Resale Shop opened in the Annex
- 1974** - Doris Eubank named choir director.
- 1975**
 - Rev. Fred Firth Campbell accepted the call as settled minister
 - First annual pledge drive to be run by church members instead of a professional company.
 - First mention of the use of our parking lot by Beaumont/Bon Secours Hospital.
- 1978** - Memorial Garden was installed.
- 1979** - Mr. Willie Barber hired as custodian.
- 1980** - GPUC hosted the annual UUDOM meeting. (Unitarian Universalist District of Michigan)
- 1982** - Rev. Brooks Robert Walker, interim minister until 1982
- 1984**
 - Grosse Pointe Pre-K rents space in the RE wing
 - Rev. John Corrado accepted the call to be our settled minister. He became our longest serving minister having served 25 years before retiring as minister emeritus.
- 1988** - Mary Holmes served as choir director.
- 1989**
 - 50th Anniversary celebration
 - Rob Lappa served as choir director
- 1990**
 - First computer purchased for church office use.
 - Roy Trombley served as choir director.
- 1991**
 - Partnership with Guyton School in Detroit was begun January 22. Tutoring and other services were provided by church members.
 - Larry La Rue took on the dual role of choir director and music director.
- 1992**
 - Sunday service was changed from 11am to 10:30am
 - Adult Programming Committee was reformulated as the Director of Adult Religious Enrichment (DARE) with Ann Roberts as first DARE
- 1994** - Final Gaieties program was performed.
- 1995**
 - The last Holly Fair made \$11,793, the highest profit in Holly Fair history.
 - Anna Speck became choir director
- 1999**
 - Ministerial intern, Adam Tierney began a one-year commitment.
 - Church purchased a home on Neff to rent out and preserve the land for possible church use. It was sold in 2002.
- 2003**
 - GPUC website launched.
 - Joseph Palazzolo became music and choir director
- 2009**
 - Newsletter began to be sent by email to most members.
 - Rev. Mitra Rahnema interim minister until 2011
- 2011**
 - April 22, GPUC recognized by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation.
 - Rev. Shelley Page accepted the call to become our first new settled minister in 25+ years.
- 2013** - Church History first published; "A HISTORY IN THE MAKING" By Janet Weber
- 2014**
 - 75th Anniversary of GPUC congregation and 50th anniversary of cornerstone placement on Maumee church building.
 - Rev. Shelley Page resigned June 7th, 2014
 - Rev. Dr. Alexander Riegel began one year term as consulting minister
- 2015**
 - Rev. Riegel accepts the call and is installed as settled minister; September 24th, 2015
 - NAACP newly formed chapter uses GPUC for meetings
 - Palazzolo Concert Series inaugural concert Fall of 2015
- 2016**
 - Mission Statement Approved February 7th, 2016
 - Vision Statement approved by congregation December 4th, 2016
 - Air conditioning installed in chapel, gallery and foyer
 - First Annual Thanksgiving Potluck
- 2017** - PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Organized and launched by the Social Justice Committee

- 2018**
- Safety Committee Formed
 - Adult Religious Education Committee newly formed
 - **Kaleidoscope, A Collection of Stories** produced by GPUC writers workshop, published and presented in May 2018
 - **Screen Symbol Interpretations** booklet produced by church historian Janet Weber
- 2019**
- Flat roof replaced
 - GP City Municipal Court met in GPUC sanctuary twice a month while the new court chambers were being built. Moved to new facility in March of 2021
 - Bylaws revised and adopted May 19th, 2019
 - Facility Committee presented three options for building usage and renovation
 - New refrigerator for Annex
 - New carpeting installed in the chapel and gallery
 - 15 new trees (memorial) added to landscape
 - First aid kits, fire blankets, fire alarm, etc. installed by the Safety Committee; safety protocols written for ushers and greeters
- 2020**
- Memorial Garden refurbished with the addition of a low stone wall marking the perimeter
 - Dr. Alex Riegel takes a four-month sabbatical January to April
 - Sunday Services provided by a combination of member and guest speakers during sabbatical
 - COVID-19 Pandemic required all churches to suspend services starting March 15th. Services, meetings and activities were conducted using Zoom.
 - a COVID-19 Re-Opening Committee was formed and sought guidance from the UUA, state and CDC protocols to make decisions
 - Major repairs were made to the heating and cooling systems. High efficiency air filters were installed for COVID-19 safety
 - GP Pre-K Closed in summer 2020
 - GP Music Academy's Hummingbirds Music Together program began holding outdoor classes in the Memorial Garden in the fall of 2020 into current
 - Christmas Baskets for 25 disadvantaged families were replaced by Kroger gift cards
 - The parking lot and Annex were used by 2 film companies for crew and cast parking, food tents and Hair and Make Up for the Extras
- 2021**
- Wild Child Playschool opened June 21st, 2021, using the space vacated by GP Pre K. Ceilings were painted and new lighting added to the area
 - Church Services began to be offered in person on September 12th to those fully vaccinated and wearing a mask
 - Celebrated Willie Barber's 50th Year as Custodian/Sexton at GPUC
 - Resale had been closed during 2020 and most of 2021 due to COVID-19; Reopened in July of 2021.
 - Security Cameras installed in November
 - Kroger Gift Cards again used in place of Christmas food baskets
 - GPUC resumes Zoom Only services in December due to an increase in COVID-19 cases
- 2022**
- The Resale Shop closed January and February due to the increase in COVID-19 Cases. Reopened March 2nd.
 - In Person services resumed February 27th, with Zoom continuing to be offered
 - The Alliance, originally formed in 1940 as "Women's Alliance," disbands
 - Masking becomes optional at church services on March 27th, up to date vaccinations still required
 - Heating system pumps for the Church and Annex replaced and/or repaired
 - In October, Tonya Wells, newly elected President of the Church Board, resigned from both, the Church and the Board due to a conflict with Rev. Riegel

THE NIGHT DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CAME TO GROSSE POINTE ... LEST WE FORGET

What follows was prepared by freelance writer Nancy Solak. It is based on interviews with people who attended King's address at Grosse Pointe South High School, newspaper accounts, and a tape of King's speech that night.

On the evening of March 14, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Grosse Pointe South High School to address 3,300 people jam-packed into the gymnasium. Police from Harper Woods, Roseville, St. Clair Shores and Pointe departments stood ready to protect audience members, demonstrators, the High School and Grosse Pointe's Central Library down the street. Members of the Detroit Police Department were called in to protect King. The protection, including \$1 million of insurance, was paid for by the now defunct Human Relations Council, the Group that sponsored King's visit [during the Presidency of Rev. Harry Meserve].

Earlier in the day the Detroit Bomb Squad scrupulously checked the building. Earlier in the week school board members who had voted to permit King's appearance received threatening phone calls during the wee hours of the morning.

Outside the school, on the evening of March 14, demonstrators from the ultra-right wing organization, Breakthrough, marched, protesting King's appearance.

The situation was a volatile one. Seldom had King spoken in a virtually all-white suburb, indoors. His appearance came on the heels of the 1967 Detroit civil disturbances, and the Vietnam Conflict was going strong ---a conflict King was firmly against.

Tickets for Rev. King's address were sold out the week they were available for purchase, and counterfeit tickets were made, allowing demonstrators to gain access to the gymnasium at the expense of late arrivals who held bona fide tickets.

On behalf of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council the Reverend Harry C. Meserve of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church told the audience that “the purpose of this meeting is to bring light and understanding on one of the most perplexing problems of our day---the problem of the relationships that will prevail in American between white Americans and black Americans.”

“The meeting,” he continued, “will be conducted along the lines commonly accepted in democratic communities. We will have a distinguished speaker who will bring us his views of what is needed in America today. You may not agree with him at every point, but I urge you to respect his right to speak, and your neighbor’s right to hear.”

King came out to tumultuous applause and after his general opening remarks said that he came to speak about “The Other America” because “there are literally two Americas. In one America millions of people have the milk of prosperity and the honey of equality flowing before them. This America has millions of people who have food and material necessities for their bodies; culture and education for their minds; freedom and human dignity for their spirits. In this America children grow up in the sunlight of opportunity. “But there is another America that has a bare ugliness about it that transforms the buoyancy of hope into the fatigue of despair. In this other America thousands and thousands of people, men in particular, walk the streets in search for jobs that do not exist. In this other America millions of people are forced to live in the vermin-filled depressing housing conditions.....Probably the most critical problem in the other America is the economic problem...”

At this point an angry ruckus broke out in the audience and a woman shouted that King was a traitor.

“I’ll just wait till our friend can have her say,” King said calmly. The audience burst into applause. With the audience still in a frenzy, he said, “I’ll just wait till things are restored.”

Numerous times he was interrupted by hecklers. June Huetteman, who was program chairman for the evening, recalled the “big, strong Presbyterian minister Gary Gruber,

who took it upon himself to bodily remove those interrupting the speech.” Reportedly, others helped, too, and each time they were given a thunderous round of applause. While there were many in the audience who did not embrace what King stood for, the majority, it has been reported, stood up for his right to speak.

At one point King stopped and said, “I’ve been in the struggle a long time now,” (interrupted by applause), “and I’ve conditioned myself to some things that are much more painful than discourteous people not allowing you to speak. So, if they feel they can discourage ME, they’re going to be here all night because...” He never finished the sentence because the crowd went wild with applause. When they finally quieted down a woman shouted, “We have lots of time too!”

Originally, it had been planned to have a question and answer session after King’s address. But the situation seemed so volatile to the Reverend Meserve [of GPUC] that it was decided to forego it.

Less than three weeks later, April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated by James Earl Ray, who reportedly was in Windsor, Ontario the night King spoke in Grosse Pointe.
