

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian

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10:30 AM

JUDGMENT DAY: MAKING AN ETHICAL DECISION

Reverend Mitra Rahnema

Some may agree that we Unitarian Universalist are ethicists more than we are theologians. Therefore let us ask, what do we do with judgment? This week we will consider ethical decision-making processes when uncovering the purpose of our lives.

December 6, 2009

10:30 AM

THE MIRACLE OF COVENANT

Reverend Mitra Rahnema

Judaism is vital to Unitarian Universalism. We can find many overlapping concepts of morality, human responsibility, and covenant between the two traditions. Hanukkah, known as the Jewish Festival of Lights, is a celebration of miracle and survival. Today, we will take this opportunity to explore one of our important religious sources.



Minister's Musings

Today, I woke up with poet Adrienne Rich's words on my mind:

"My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
So much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age,
perversely, with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world."

"My heart is moved" repeated in my mind like a mantra until one of our GPUC members walked into my office and began to tell me about her day. She spent her morning taking her child to school, grocery shopping and doing general errands that amounted to a continuous list of tasks, chores, and visits. She felt it was all too ordinary and, therefore, dull. (She has given me permission to reference her story here.)

Well, her unexpected visit impacted my mantra. My morning words shifted and my mind began to repeat "with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world."

The ordinary, that which goes unnoticed, is ultimately extraordinary. Tasks like caring for our children, gathering needed sustenance for our families and visiting the minister are ordinary routines that connect us to the world. We are inter-connected through these life tasks. The ordinary transforms into the extraordinary when we take notice, when we give attention to the routines we take for granted. Transformation happens when we notice the daily routines that ground and support life. As our seventh principle suggests, it is extraordinary to respect how we are interdependently connected through the webs of our ordinary lives.

Those ordinary times, when we have a tendency to numb out, could actually be when we change the world. Without knowing it. It is easy to become numb to our chores and tasks. Challenging this numbness can be scary. If we pay attention and notice that our chores are not feeding us then we might make decisions to do something differently. Making change can be very difficult and uncomfortable so we might avoid knowing or noticing our lives.

Fortunately, it is the sum of the ordinary that ultimately becomes extraordinary. Because, we are connected to each other, and to humanity, through what is ordinary in our lives. And that interconnection is unbelievably extraordinary. For example, today my ordinary visitor reconstituted my world. Without her knowing it. I became more aware and engaged in life and as a result I am reminded that each of our members are extraordinary!

Therefore, as November rolls on, I encourage us all to look for the ordinary. Celebrate it as extraordinary. As Adrienne Rich says, it is us who, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world! So, I cast my lot with those who have a list of ordinary tasks, for I know you are the people who bless this world!

Today, I am inspired out of my ordinary into the extraordinary. I hope you are too!

Cheers to the ordinary!

Rev. Mitra



Religious Education Lessons

LOWER AND UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND JUNIORS will be practicing on **Nov. 29th** and **Dec. 6th** for our "Festival Of Light" program. The program will take place on **Dec. 13th** at 10:30 a.m. Please remember to turn in all student contracts and contact Mrs. Artis if you need help with costumes.

SENIORS on **Nov. 29th** will meet at the Franchett home at 7:30 p.m. and continue with studying the "Old Testament". Rev. Mitra Rahnama will be joining the seniors on Nov. 29th. **Dec. 6th** the seniors will meet at GPUC at 8:30 a.m. to car pool to COTS. When they return to GPUC they will join the other students to rehearse the "Festival of Light" program.

UNICEF-Thank you to everyone that donated to our UNICEF collection. The students collected a total of \$278.20. The funds have been sent to UNICEF on behalf of the Religious Education Program of GPUC. Thank you again.

BAKERS-We need help for Sunday, **Dec. 13th** "Festival of Light". If you would like to bake cookies for our cookies and coffee hour, please contact Julie Artis. We are baking a special "Swedish" cookie for the event.

CHALICE COOKIE CUTTERS-The RE program is placing an order for Chalice cookie cutters. If you would like to purchase one, please contact Julie Artis. You may go to www.ChalicePalace.com to view the product and pricing.

GUEST at YOUR TABLE-On Sunday Nov. 22nd everyone was given a box to place on their table at their home. These boxes are due **Jan. 3, 2010**. If you have any questions please contact the staff at GPUC.

CHILDREN'S TEA PARTY with Rev. Mitra-**Dec. 20th** right after church; any child age 7 and under is invited to a Tea Party with Rev. Mitra in her office. RSVP to Julie Artis if your child/children would like to attend.

DATES to REMEMBER

Nov. 29th and **Dec. 6th**-Rehearsal for "Festival of Light" program

Dec. 6th-RE Committee meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Dec. 13th- "Festival of Light" Program, all children at church by 9:15 a.m.

If you have questions or want to volunteer, please give me a call or email me. Thank you all for supporting the Religious Education program for GPUC.

-Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education



Adult Religious Enrichment

ARTICULATING YOUR FAITH

Just a reminder to the people signed up for this seminar that the meetings are as follows: Thursday, **Dec. 3rd**, and **10th**, Thursday, **Jan. 21st** from 7-9pm. in the church library.

MEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Monday, **Dec. 7th** at 7:30pm. in the church library. The men will discuss **The Elegance of the Hedgehog** by Murial Barbery. The book follows events in the life of concierge, Renee Michel, whose deliberately concealed intelligence is uncovered by the unstable but intellectually precocious girl named Paloma Josse. Paloma is the daughter of an upper-class family living in the upscale Parisian apartment building where Renee works. The book is full of allusions to literary works, music, films and paintings. It incorporates themes relating to philosophy, class-consciousness, and personal conflict.

The men are always looking for new members...please join them. No sign up necessary.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

On Thursday, **Jan. 21st** at 5:30pm the men and women will have a combined discussion on **Hot, Flat, and Crowded** by Thomas Friedman. Friedman brings his unique point of view to the red hot topic of global climate change. Here he proposes a national plan for going green that will not only benefit the earth, but also make America's economy stronger and its borders more secure.

Discussion Leader: Susie Boynton Refreshments: Hanne Nielsen and Vicky Keating

\$2 per person refreshment donation on the night of the meeting.

Please sign up in foyer or with Jill Crane at Jill@gpuc.us

Book lists are in the foyer and on the GPUC website.

Childcare is available at no cost for all Adult Religious Enrichment programs. See Julie Artis in the Religious Education Wing.

-Jill Crane, Director, Adult Religious Enrichment

HABITAT GP PARTNERS RECEIVES AWARD

Habitat Grosse Pointe Partners, an association of twelve GP churches of which GPUC is one, has received the 2009 Community Partner of the Year Award from Habitat for Humanity Detroit. We were represented at the **Nov. 17th** annual dinner meeting by Mark Franchett, Rudy Wedenoja and Sam Smith. GP Memorial Church is the most prominent member of HGPP, but GPUC plays a very large role in the organization relative to size. So we can all take pride in this very nice honor. We hosted the Nov. 4th meeting as well as the Nov. 14th Second-Saturday build day. For information contact Ann Helm or Sam Smith.
-Sam Smith

WELCOMING CONGREGATION STEERING COMMITTEE

Citing the first principle of our Unitarian Universalist faith, that we: "Covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of all persons"; the delegates of the General Assembly voted in 1989 to initiate the Welcoming Congregation Program. It was a call to make our congregations truly welcoming places for people of all sexual orientations, including: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations.

This year, with the blessing of our board, we are beginning the process by which GPUC will become a *Welcoming Congregation*.

At this time, I would like to invite anyone who thinks they may be interested in participating in an active committed capacity (as a steering committee member) to attend an initial meeting for the purpose of learning what is involved in this process.

We will explore:

- Action Steps to Become a Welcoming Organization
- The curriculum and guidelines
- Components included in the following areas:
 - Education
 - Organizational Life
 - Community Outreach

Our purpose will be to set up and carry out the curriculum of workshops for congregation members. If you think you may be interested, please join us after service on December 6th at 11:45am in the church library.

Sincerely,
Janet Peplin

RECYCLE EMPTY INK CARTRIDGES

Please recycle your empty printer ink cartridges by bringing them in to the church office. GPUC can recycle up to ten cartridges per month and receive cash rewards from Staples. It is a great way for the church to earn extra cash and help the environment at the same time.

-Candy Dunn, GPUC Office Administrator

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY!

Are you an online shopper? Please make every gift count this holiday season! More than 1,300 top stores including Amazon, Toys R Us, Best Buy, Apple, Gap and more will donate a percentage of virtually every sale to the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church. Just go to [GoodShop.com](http://www.GoodShop.com), designate us as the cause you support, and then click over to your favorite store. You pay nothing extra - and you can even save money as GoodShop lists thousands of money-saving coupons and free shipping offers. Or, add the toolbar to your browser at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar> -

and your purchases will count even if you forget to go to GoodShop first! There's no easier way to support the Church this holiday season! Please spread the word – and don't forget to use GoodSearch too!

-Connie Roberts

TO BORROW A PHRASE....

Ladling out **thanks** to all the folks who helped make Stone Soup a success: Sarah and Rob St. Mary, Lucie Beard, Robin Ramsay, Janice Gray, Christy Winder, Russ Chavey, Jackie Hoats-Shields who made the coffee, Susan Hipsley who coordinated the servers, and all the fine people who helped clean up, which was no small task. Again, thank you,

-Mollie Fletcher for Fellowship

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following New Members were presented at the Board Meeting on November 10, 2009

Diane Matiyow

Sara Power

Amy Powers

Paul Rowady

SHOP "GREEN" AT GPUC RESALE SHOP!

Looking for one-of-a-kind gifts for those special people in your life? Interested in updating your wardrobe with some "green" (recycled) threads? Want to shop eco-friendly this holiday? Your "beloved" GPUC Resale Shop - located in the Annex - features special gifts, gently-used clothing, Xmas decorations galore and unique objets-d'art.

We are open every Wednesday 10am -3pm and Thursday evenings 7-9pm. For the shopping convenience of our Sunday friends and

members we will be open after service on December 6th until 1 pm.

Hope to see you there! Remember, proceeds from Resale Shop sales go into the church operating budget. So - eco-shop until you drop!

-Julia Moore

CHRISTMAS BASKETS ARE NEEDED!

The Outreach Committee has contacted Crossroads East to choose 15 of their neediest families to receive Christmas Baskets from our church. You may volunteer to fill a half or a whole basket or round up a group of friends to buy the items on the list. In the past, some people have preferred to donate money for the hams that we provide for each basket. Checks may be made out to GPUC with "Crossroads" in the memo line. Any amount is welcome. See Susie Boynton or Jo Ann Kelly to obtain the list of needed food. Please bring the bags or boxes to church on Sunday, December 20, knowing you've helped make the holidays happier for 15 families.

-Susie Boynton for Outreach

CROSSROADS UPDATE: DEC. 6TH **FINAL FSFS OF 2009**

- FANTASTIC FACT #1: We have already surpassed our 2008 total for donated pounds of food!
- FANTASTIC FACT #2: GPUC members continue to be some of the most generous and caring individuals towards our neighbors in need!

A while ago, we recognized this term and its

meaning:

Food security ...is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as: access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security, at a minimum: is the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods; is an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

GPUC continues to support those socially acceptable ways by stocking the shelves at Crossroads East.

We provide preferred and most needed foods by Crossroads every month. We are the only supplier of fresh eggs: 219 dozen so far this year. In addition, we target high protein sources of canned food; those that contain meat. Canned meats and peanut butter are printed on their most current wish list yet again.

December 6th will be our final First Sunday Food Sharing collection day of 2009. If you forget your cans, a few dollars will do just fine, and any food items that show up during the month of December will be delivered by the 31st. We make multiple trips!

We have provided tremendous support to people in need. In this final month of the year, your sincere generosity will enable GPUC to reach a new personal best in pounds of donated foods...that's not a 'maybe', it's a sure thing!

-Janet and Larry Peplin for Crossroads East