

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
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VOLUME LX, Number 9
December 20, 2009

Editor: Vicky Keating
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December 24, 2009

5:30 PM

Christmas Eve
Reverend Mitra Rahnema

It is the night before Christmas and all through the church, music and laughter, stories and meaning, singing and candles bring people together. Members and families, friends and strangers, fill the halls with tradition, joy, and love. Come one, come all, and be together.

December 27, 2009

10:30 AM

What Is Kwanzaa? Why It Was Created.
Mr. Ernest Thomas

Ernest Thomas has been an observer of Kwanzaa for twenty-five years. He has performed Kwanzaa celebrations throughout the Metro area, as well as in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a native Detroit, now living in Clinton Twp. Mr. Thomas is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ravendale Community, a member of Agape Fellowship Church (which is located on the Lower East Side of Detroit), Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Agape Fellowship Scholarship Foundation, Retired District Manager for the City of Detroit, and a former (retired) elected official with the City Council of Lithia Springs, Georgia.

January 3, 2010

10:30 AM

Risking Joy
Reverend Mitra Rahnema

The New Year is a time to reflect on who we have been, and who we want to be. Often we seek to increase personal security, or we seek a more responsible self, in hope for a long and healthy life and community. This New Year Sunday let us consider the task and risks of seeking joy.



Minister's Musings

For this holiday season I share with you one of my favorite poems:
Amazing Peace, by Maya Angelou. I hope you enjoy it.

Happy Holidays! -- Rev. Mitra

Thunder rumbles in the
mountain passes
and lightning rattles the
eaves of our houses. Floodwaters await in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to
avalanche over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and gray and threatening.

We question ourselves. What have we done
to so affront nature? We interrogate and
worry God. Are you there? Are you there,
really? Does the covenant you made with us
still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension,
Christmas enters, streaming lights of joy,
ringing bells of hope and singing carols of
forgiveness high up in the bright air. The
world is encouraged to come away from
rancor, come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season. Thunder ebbs to
silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the
corner. Floodwaters recede into memory.
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us
as we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children.
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk
into their sunsets.
Hope spreads around the earth, brightening
all things, even hate, which crouches
breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.
We hear a sweetness.
The word is Peace.
It is loud now.
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its
presence. It is what we have hungered for. Not
just the absence of war. But true Peace. A
harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of
Christmas, we beckon this good season to wait
awhile with us. We, Baptist and Buddhist,
Methodist and Muslim, say come.
Peace.

Come and fill us and our world with your
majesty. We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and
the Confucian, [and the Unitarian]
implore you to stay awhile with us. So we may
learn by your shimmering light how to look
beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.
On this platform of peace, we can create a
language to translate ourselves to ourselves and
to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of
Jesus Christ into the great religions of the world.
We jubilate the precious advent of trust. We
shout with glorious tongues the coming of hope.
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices to
celebrate the promise of Peace. We, Angels and
Mortals, Believers and Nonbelievers, look
heavenward and speak the word aloud.
Peace.
We look at our world and speak the word aloud.

Peace.
We look at each other, then into ourselves, and we say
without shyness or apology or hesitation:

Peace, My Brother
Peace, My Sister
Peace, My Soul



Religious Education Lessons

DATES AND ACTIVITIES:

Lower and Upper Elementary students: on Dec. 27th please attend church. On Jan. 3 the students will review "The Stories Scientists Tell: Stories in the Stars," and Jan. 10 the students will study "The Stories Scientists Tell: Stories in Rocks and Bones."

Juniors: on Dec. 27th, please attend church. On Jan. 3 and Jan. 10 Juniors will be studying the Seventh Principle, "We Care for Earth's Lifeboat."

Seniors on Dec. 27th please attend church. On Jan. 3 and Jan. 10th the Seniors will meet at the Franchett home at 7:30 p.m. to continue with their study of the Old Testament. COTS has been moved to later in the month.

CIRCLE CIRCLE DINNER will be on Friday, Jan. 22 at 6:00 p.m. Our band this year is "Pandora's Box." Our very own Miriam Engstrom, Maurya Kay, and Warren Liverance will give us an evening of music and song. The cost of the dinner is \$5.00 per person 12 and over. Any child under 12 is free. We also ask each family to bring a dish to pass (appetizer, salad or dessert). Please sign up with Julie Artis. This is an open invitation to all GPUC members, family and friends.

SPAGHETTI DINNER will be on Sunday evening, Feb. 7th. This is a Junior Class fund raiser for their Boston trip in 2011. More details will follow, but mark your calendars now.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING: Jan. 10th at 9:15 a.m.

HOLIDAY GIFT SUGGESTIONS:

To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart.
To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect. (Oren Arnold)

Happy Holidays!
Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education



Adult Religious Enrichment

I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and to also invite you to attend our Adult Religious Enrichment programs in the coming year. It is a great way to get better acquainted with our church members. Child care is available for all events; please contact Julie Artis in the Religious Ed. wing.

THEOLOGICAL CHAT WITH REV. MITRA RAHNEMA

Please join us for the second **Theological Chat** on Friday, January 15 from 7 until 9 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The topic of the January chat is: **Where is God Right Now?** What is your experience with God, Gods, the Divine, or any Higher Power? What is your image of God and how does that inform your life? Is God supernatural? Is God natural? Does God decide if we live or die? Is God fallible? Be thinking of these questions, then come and let's talk about God! We look forward to seeing you there. Donation of \$3 per person towards refreshments. Sign up in church foyer or via email with Jill Crane.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

The men and women will join together on January 21 at 5:30p.m. to discuss **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, Susan Boynton. Refreshments, Hanne Nielsen and Vicky Keating. Refreshment donation, \$2 per person. Sign up in foyer or via email to Jill Crane

SOMETHING NEW

Each month the **Heartland District**, our UU district, puts out one or more recommended "books of the month." We would like to pass these on to our members. This month we have two books, both written by Ric Masten: **Going Out Dancing** and **I Know it Isn't Funny but I Love to Make You Laugh**.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Men's Book Discussion Group, Monday, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.: **The Hemingses of Monticello**, by Annette Gordon-Reed.

Women's Book Discussion Group, Thursday, Feb. 18, 5:30 p.m.: **The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society**, by Mary Ann Shaffer. Please note change of book from list.

Understanding Grief: A five week discussion with Rev. Rahnema beginning Tuesday, February 23. Information to follow.

Movie Night: Friday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m. Movie to be announced.

Third Theological Chat: February 19, 7-9 p.m.

Jill Crane, Director, Adult Religious Enrichment

jill@gpuc.us

CHRISTMAS EVE POTLUCK

There will be a Potluck Supper in the Annex following the Christmas Eve service. People wishing to participate can sign up with Lucie Beard to bring a covered dish, a salad, a dessert, or to help with set-up or clean-up. The cost is \$3 per adult and \$1 per child. Beverages will be provided. Please call Lucie Beard for more information. 313-881-3552

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Church Office will be closed on Dec. 24 and Dec. 25 for the Christmas Holiday and on New Year's Day, January 1, 2010.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members were presented at the GPUC Board meeting on December 8, 2009:

Erica Guido
22958 Colony Street
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080
Email: erica.guido3@gmail.com

Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim Gaber
10900 Marne St.
Detroit, MI 48224
Email: Hamada_ahmed042005@yahoo.com

FLOWER COMMITTEE

The Flower Committee sends out a big THANK YOU to the church members who helped to grace our church by providing flowers for Sunday services from September through December 2009. They include Jane Hoey and the Transition Team, Lucie Beard, Paul Lipsitz, Joe and Jean Ritok, Veronica Smith, John Owens, Susan Boynton, Mike Toutant, Ann Parker, and Mary Beth Smith.

You too can provide flowers for a Sunday service in the new year. Call the office for information on how you can contribute flowers.

--**The Flower Committee: Margaret Borden, Marlene Harle, and Janet Weber**

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

To those members who received a UUSC Guest At Your Table box to place on their table at home, please return the filled boxes to the church office no later than **January 3, 2010**. Contact the Church Office 313-881-0420 if you have any questions.

KROGER FUND RAISER

Thirty-five members helped our Church gain \$371.37 this past quarter (8/1/2009 to 10/31/2009) just by shopping at Kroger and using their Kroger Plus Card, which was specially identified as a contributor to GPUC. Several people have asked how to tell if their card is working on the Church's behalf. An easy way is to look at the bottom of your cash register receipt. It will say "donating to GROSSE POINTE UNITARIAN CHURCH" in very small letters. If you don't see that, your card is not connected. Another way to tell is to look at the list of names on the Church bulletin board near the kitchen. It lists everyone who has used a card this past quarter. If your name is not there, and you have shopped with your Kroger card since August, your card is not connected to the Church.

The way to make the connection is to get a copy of a special bar code from the Church office and take it and your Kroger Plus card to the Customer Service Desk at any Kroger store. They will scan both and you're set.

Contact Janet Weber if you have any questions or problems. Phone 313-881-6499

--**Janet Weber**

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. Thank you to those that have already recycled their cartridges!

--**Candy Dunn, GPUC Office Administrator**