

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
17150 Maumee Ave., Grosse Pointe, MI 48230
Phone: 313-881-0420 Fax: 313-881-6430
Email: gpuc@gpuc.us Website: www.gpuc.us

Rev. Mitra Rahnema, Minister
Email: revmr@gpuc.us

VOLUME LX, Number 8
December 6, 2009

Editor: Vicky Keating
newsletter@gpuc.us

December 13, 2009

10:30 AM

Religious Education Holiday Pageant
Director of Religious Education, Julie Artis

“Festival of Light” is the story of St. Lucia’s Day. “Lucia” means LIGHT. In Sweden the winters are very dark and long and bitterly cold. The Vikings of Sweden held this festival on December 13 for a friendly spirit to bring back the light to frighten away the demons. Our students will provide their own version of “St. Lucia Day” to bring light and hope for our holiday season.

December 20, 2009

10:30 AM

Successful Failures
Reverend Mitra Rahnema

We have a tendency to box our lives into good or bad, success or failure. These values are often heightened during the pressures of the holidays. Today we will explore and celebrate the depth of success and failure, honoring the power of ambiguity.

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.



Minister's Musings

"A little simplification would be the first step toward rational living, I think." Eleanor Roosevelt

We are in the middle of the All-American Holiday Season. It is a time of year when the temperature becomes cooler, twinkling lights frame the streets, family members come home, there is a lot of cooking, and we spend time creating memories. It is a time that has the potential for joy. It is also a time of the year in which we experience stress with long to-do lists, family tension, over-eating, and shopping.

To deal with these stressors, the world encourages us to buy. In subtle ways, we are told if we get the perfect gift for a loved one, they will be happy. Or, if all the decorations are up then people will love each other. I know we are stressed when we begin to list our chores in conversation, so we "don't forget" all we have to do. Sadly, as Vicki Robin says, **"We are constantly seeking more, only to discover that more is never enough."** Consumption and work numbs us to our own lives. As a result, we expend more energy trying to hold ourselves together. This can be exhausting.

In response to this pressure might we remind ourselves of all we have and consider living more simply. To live simply begins with choosing to take inventory of the "stuff" in our lives. As Audre Lorde said, **"We are all more blind to what we have than to what we have not."** Then to live simply, we evaluate what of that stuff defines us and what feeds us. Finally we carefully make intentional choices when purchasing stuff for ourselves or others. We might consider what we value, what is functional, what is sentimental or beautiful, what better serves the earth, and what is filling space. To live simply is to pay attention to when we are full and what it means to be content rather than what is before us in dishes, on shelves, or yet to be had. Jon Kabat-Zinn once said **"Voluntary simplicity means going fewer places in one day rather than more, doing less so I can do more, acquiring less so I can have more."**

Simplicity is not something done in a day, a month, or a year. It is not a task to complete. It is simply living. As Albert Einstein said, **"Everything should be made as simple as possible."** So, this month I urge you to consider one thing, one moment, one purchase, or task that you can simplify or let go of, each and every day. I know you will find a newer sense of life.

Happy Holidays,
Rev. Mitra

*~ A wonderful book on voluntary simplicity is "Simplicity Lessons"
By Linda Breen Pierce.*



Religious Education Lessons

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HOLIDAY PAGEANT

On **December 13th** at 10:30 a.m. over 45 students from the GPUC Religious Education program will provide a holiday program called "Festival of Light." The students will share their talents by acting, being ushers, singers, Santa Lucia's, Star Boys, readers and more. Students are asked to be at the church by 9:15 a.m., after a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast. Church members will provide cookies, cheese, crackers and fruit after the program for the whole congregation. Please join us for a morning of holiday joy, light and hope during this holiday season.

DECEMBER 20th all students are asked to attend the church service for the first 20 minutes. We will then have holiday crafts and snacks in the purple room.

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

GIVING This is a good time of the year to remember to bring in new mittens, gloves and hats to decorate our tree at the back of the church. These donations will go to Crossroads. You may also bring in any food donations anytime during the month of December and weigh them in the RE wing. Remember your "Guest at your Table" box is due on Jan. 3, 2010.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

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

Dec. 20-Tea Party with Rev. Mitra

Jan. 22-Circle Circle Dinner

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the volunteers in the RE program. Thank you for all your positive energy to help the students at GPUC and in our community. Enjoy your holidays. My best to you all.

Please feel free to contact me at the church, (313) 881-0420 or via email, julieartis@hotmail.com.

-Julie Artis, Director Religious Education



Adult Religious Enrichment

ARTICULATING YOUR FAITH

The last meeting for this year will be held Thursday, **Dec. 10** at 7 p.m. We will have one more meeting where we will plan a service to be presented to the congregation in late January. All the participants in this seminar have enjoyed it very much, and we are all recommending that it be presented again in the spring so that others may take part in it.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

On Thursday, **January 21** at 5:30 Susan Boynton will lead a 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 will make America's economy stronger and its borders more secure.

Refreshments, Hanne Nielsen and Vicky Keating. Sign up in the foyer or on line.

Please Note: There is a change in the **Women's Book Discussion Group's** schedule...

Feb. 18 we will discuss **The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society** by Mary Ann Schafer and Annie Burrows.

April 15 we will discuss **Cezanne's Quarry** by Barbara Corrado Pope.

Please make the changes on your book list. You will also be notified via email.

FRIDAY EVENING THEOLOGICAL CHAT Hosted by Interim Minister, Reverend Mitra Rahnema and Director of Adult Religious Enrichment, Jill Crane. You are invited to the second of our series of casual theological chats. We will pose questions and ask you to discuss your thoughts and experiences with us on Friday, January 15 from 7 until 9. (Please note earlier time)

This "Chat" is entitled, **Where is God Right Now?**

What is your experience with a 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? Come and let's talk about God!

The premises of the discussion are:

- > Whoever is there is supposed to be there. It is always a perfect group of people -- offering exactly what we need.
- > Whatever is said is supposed to be said; remember to both talk and listen.
- > Differences of opinion are to be engaged and also respected. Dialogue and debate with a loving heart. Good humor is welcome.
- > Sharing of your heart as well as keeping an open mind to multiple experiences is encouraged.
- > Laughter is a wonderful religious community activity.

We look forward to seeing you there. Refreshment donation: \$3. Sign up in the foyer or by email at jill@gpuc.us

-Jill Crane, Director Adult Religious Enrichment

ALLIANCE PROGRAM

The Annual Alliance Holiday Lunch will be held Tuesday, December 8, at 11 a.m. in the gallery, adjacent to the church sanctuary. This is a great kickoff for the holiday season and an opportunity to chat with friends, enjoy good food, and listen to wonderful music sung by the Grosse Pointe North High School Choir, led by Ben Henri. Hors d'oeuvres and punch will be served at 11 a.m.; then the Choir will present a holiday medley preceding lunch. Please call Shirley Reeves at 313-822-4651 for reservations and to discuss what you would like to bring for the potluck. The main entree and dessert will be provided.

--Ruth Cain for the Alliance

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' NEWS

Alex Hardesty has done an outstanding job as Board Secretary for almost two years. Unfortunately, he has a conflict starting in January and has resigned his position. Thank you Alex for all of the work you have put into this job. I am delighted to announce that Janice Gray will be our Board Secretary for the remainder of Alex's term.

--Ann Helm

SEVEN MORE CHRISTMAS BASKETS ARE NEEDED!

The Outreach Committee needs seven more volunteers to bring the food for Christmas Baskets to 15 of the neediest families at Crossroads East. The committee will buy hams, bread, and extra treats from the Thanksgiving collection to add to the items that volunteers bring to church on December 20. Please contact Susie Boynton, Jo Ann Kelly, or Janet Peplin for a list of items, if you can help.

Volunteers will be needed also on Tuesday,

December 22 to load and/or deliver the prepared baskets to Crossroads East. The work is rewarding and creates a holiday glow for others as well as yourself.

--Susie Boynton for Outreach

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, 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.good-search.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

CANVAS BAG FUNDRAISER

The RE Program is selling very nice canvas tote bags with a chalice on the front. The bag is priced at a donation cost of \$6.00. Please see Julie Artis, if you would like to purchase one. The size of the bag is 15" by 15".

--Julie Artis for Religious Education

FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

Your Ministerial Search Committee is hard at work. Our Congregational Packet is just about finished, and we will make it available for viewing soon. We will let you know when it is ready. We have posted our information with the UUA for prospective ministers to see. As we hear of ministers who are interested, we will be reading their information carefully and deciding who we would like to look at more closely. This process could take two or three months.

In the meantime, the congregational survey results are attached. This is the same report that was sent out in a separate e-mail on November 23rd. Please feel free to contact any one of us with comments or questions. We welcome your input.

--Joe Buttiglieri (chair), Laurie Arora, John Artis, Janis Garan, Andrew Hartz, Chuck Palmer, Larry Peplin, Kinnie Smith, Veronica Smith, Christy Winder

HEARING HELP

Hearing devices are available to help you enjoy our services more. We have several hand-held devices that amplify the audio from our sound system and they are available for loan each Sunday. Sample ear buttons are available for those who would like to try out a device. If our device provides the audio assistance that you require, we ask that you purchase your own ear button for \$15.

The receivers' batteries are kept charged and we ask that you sign for a borrowed device each Sunday and return it with the power turned off. The devices are kept at the greeters table in the foyer. For any questions, please contact Bob Dupuis, (313) 886-7888.

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