

The Grosse Pointe Unitarian

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10:30 AM

Recognition: Race and Racism in a Modern World

Reverend Mitra Rahnema

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the most important theologians of our time, and we have seen dramatic changes over the past forty years. In 2010 racism exists, yet it can be hard to recognize. Today we will explore what it means to recognize people of color in our communities and how our faith calls us to understand our inter-racial experiences.

January 24, 2010

10:30 AM

The Van Gogh Café

Reverend Keith Kron and Reverend Mitra Rahnema

"Beyond Categorical Thinking" is a program facilitated by the Unitarian Universalist Association to help congregations in ministerial search find the best match. Conscious and unconscious biases can creep in and have kept congregations from finding the best minister for them. The sermon, "The Van Gogh Café," based on the children's book of the same title, will look at how our conscious and unconscious biases keep people, including ourselves, from being whole and human with one another.



Minister's Musings

The New Year reminds me that church is a safe place to welcome new ideas, practices, and leadership so that we may continue to be relevant to a changing world. Essentially, the New Year reminds me, of what Gabriel Garcia Marquez wrote in his book, *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

"...human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but that life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves."

It's January, 2010, and exciting new things are happening at the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church. First, we are beginning a new Worship Associates program. With the support of the Board we have a new group of members to share in the worship leadership of the congregation. They are charged with considering the worship life of the community and evaluating what is meaningful in partnership with the minister. Throughout the next six months, you will see Worship Associates offer words of welcome, readings, and personal reflections on a variety of Sunday mornings. I hope you will welcome these new voices of religious leadership!

Another change to the worship service is the welcoming of our children into the sanctuary at the beginning of every service. Our children need to know what we do in worship, and we need to know the children. This is their church and you are their community. Therefore, every Sunday the children will come into the service for the first fifteen minutes. This is precious time of shared space so that worship can truly be a time in which we are together.

Sunday, January 24th is an important date for all members and friends. Mark your calendars now, for the **Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop**, following the Sunday morning service. Our Unitarian Universalist Association offers this workshop for all churches in the midst of ministerial transition. The Beyond Categorical Thinking program creates opportunities for conversations and reflection related to identity and ministry. In this process, congregations explore biases, learn more about the search process, and begin to think about next steps. This workshop is important in your transitional journey. The Reverend Keith Kron will lead the worship service on January 24th followed by an afternoon three-hour workshop. Child care will be provided. I hope that you will take advantage of this time to engage in this important part of the congregation's ministerial search process. I look forward to seeing everyone there!

For New Year, the church is also instituting a recycling program. You can read more about it in this newsletter. The birth of this program is a wonderful opportunity for us to live our values and care for the planet. I hope that you will read on and recycle with enthusiasm!

These are just a few of the new and exciting things happening this January, 2010. It is part of the process of birthing and re-birthing ourselves each year. For me, it is an honor to be on this invigorating journey of life and new life of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church.

With love,

Rev. Mitra Rahnema



Religious Education Lessons

All students attend the first 15 minutes of the church service every week.

Lower Elementary Students, on Jan. 17th will study the third UU Principle, "We believe we are free to learn together." On Jan. 24th, they will study the fourth UU Principle, "We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life."

Upper Elementary Students, on Jan. 17th will study "The Wonder of Birth: Unique and Wonderful You, Part One". On Jan. 24 they will study, "The Wonder of Birth: Unique and Wonderful You, Part Two".

Juniors, on Jan. 17th will make posters and plan for the Spaghetti Dinner being held on Mar. 7th. On Jan. 24th, they will be studying UU Origins.

Seniors, on Jan. 17th are asked to attend the church service for the Martin Luther King Jr. topic. On Jan. 24th, the seniors will be going to COTS. Please meet in the GPUC parking lot at 8:30 a.m.

Circle-Circle Dinner On Friday evening, January 22nd, please join us for an evening of dinner, fun, fellowship and music. This year, "Pandora's Box" will begin playing at 7:30 p.m. The dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., with a \$5.00 charge for ages 12 over, and ages under 12 are free. We ask you to bring a dish to pass; an hors d'oeuvre, a salad or a dessert, and BYOB. Please sign up with Julie Artis.

Secret Pal If you would like to be a Secret Pal for a junior high school student, please contact Julie Artis. This fun program begins on Jan 31st.

If you would like to volunteer for the RE Program or for questions about the program, please contact me.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education



Adult Religious Enrichment

Understanding Grief

A five week class facilitated by Rev. Mitra Rahnema will be held on Tuesday evenings from 7-9 p.m., from Feb. 23rd through Mar. 23rd. Are you facing the difficult process of grieving? Is the sense of loss overwhelming? Mourning is the outward expression of many thoughts and feelings about loss. It is important to engage with our unique grief and hold ourselves with care.

Using the book, *Understanding Grief* by Dr. Alan Wolfelt, the group will be guided through talking, telling stories, listening, and some reading to help process the feelings that come with loss. Please sign up in the foyer or with Jill Crane. The cost is \$10 per person, book included.

Friday Evening Theological Chat

Please join us this Friday, Jan. 15th, from 7-9 p.m. for the second "Chat with Rev. Rahnema."

Entitled *Where is God Now?*, this discussion asks the following questions: "What is your experience with God, the Divine or any other Higher Power? What is your image of God and how does that inform your life? Is God supernatural? Does God decide if we live or die? Is God fallible?" Be thinking of these questions, then come and let's talk about God. Sign up in the foyer or email me. Refreshment Donation \$3.

Heartland Book Recommendation

The January selection is *My Little Book of Unitarian Universalism*, edited by Patricia Frevert. This is a good book for children and parents alike.

Men's and Women's Book Discussion Groups

The men and women join together this month on Jan. 21st from 5:30-7 p.m. in the church 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. Please sign up in foyer or by email. \$2 per person donation.

The Men's Book Discussion Group will meet Monday, Feb. 1st at 7:30 p.m. to discuss The *Hemingeses of Monticello* by Annette Gordon-Reed.

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

Jill Crane, Director, Adult Religious Enrichment

jill@gpuc.us

Alliance Luncheon

Our speaker, Melissa Sargent, will offer Healthier Living Tips. We'll learn which foods should be organic, what are the best containers for microwaving food, how to avoid harmful, yet common, personal care ingredients and how to kill germs without anti-bacterial soaps. Lunch begins at noon, Tuesday, Jan. 12th, in the Olympia Brown Center, with program following. Please call Shirley Reeves, 313-822-4651 for reservations. Friends are always welcome.

Schedule Meeting Rooms Early

Many events are happening at the church this winter and space is filling quickly. Don't be disappointed; contact Candy in the office at 313-881-0420 or by email gpuc@gpuc.us to reserve a meeting room.

-- Candy Dunn, Office Administrator

Our New Year's Resolution: Recycle

This week at GPUC you will see recycling signs, collection cans and other evidence of a new commitment to recycling our waste. The City of Grosse Pointe has agreed to including us in their weekly curbside collection and Willie Barber, our custodian *par excellence*, will ensure that recyclables get to the curb for Monday pickup. Candy Dunn, our very capable office administrator, has offered to retrieve our curbside recycling container each Monday morning, completing that part of the loop.

As important as these two people are, the success of the program is up to the rest of us. We are asking everyone to REMEMBER TO RECYCLE. There are special collection containers throughout our two buildings. Nearly everything is recyclable. Besides garbage and hazardous waste, only two commonly used materials should not go into the marked containers: Styrofoam and waxed cartons (i.e. milk, juice). Large items can go directly into

the new blue recycling can outside the Olympia Brown Building.

Sunday mornings especially we can capture a large amount of recyclables. Continue putting your Order of Service in the basket in the Gallery as you come from the Chapel. Coffee cups and lightly used napkins can be deposited directly into the marked collection container that will be near the coffee service. Specific details regarding coffee-time recycling will be in each week's Order of Service for the next several weeks.

Our "Green Team", made up of individuals from different key components of our church life, stands ready to facilitate our recycling program. We've brainstormed the best ways to facilitate recycling throughout the congregation. Besides myself and the individuals named above, the members of The Green Team are:

Margo Bishop for Resale

Jenny Marck for Religious Education

Ann Ottenhoff for Youth

Ann Parker for Alliance

Suzanne Ross for Sunday Morning Coffee

Please approach one of us, if you have a question, a concern or a good idea to encourage participation. As we start the new year, join our "Green Scene" and RESOLVE TO RECYCLE.

-- Jo Ann Kelly, Chair, The Green Team

Ministerial Search Committee Workshop

As Reverend Mitra Rahnema describes in this newsletter, we are very fortunate to have the Rev. Keith Kron coming from the UUA to conduct a "Beyond Categorical Thinking" workshop with us. It will be held after the service from 12-3 p.m. on Jan 24th. LUNCH AND CHILD CARE WILL BE PROVIDED. This is a great opportunity for us, both as individuals and as a community, to think in depth about our own biases and pre-conceived notions in what we expect in a minister. The more we are in touch

with our own thinking, the more likely we are to choose a minister who is exactly the right person for us.

The Search Committee urges you to sign up for this workshop, which we are told involves fun along with deep thinking! Please e-mail the office (gpuc@gpuc.us) or sign up after church on Sunday.

-- Veronica Smith for the Search Committee

Fellowship Soup Sunday

Mark your calendars for soup and fellowship, immediately following the service on Jan. 31st, in the Olympia Brown Center. The cost is a nominal "buck a bowl." -- Mollie Fletcher

Our Baskets Runneth Over!

The generosity of our members and friends set a new record this year of 30 Christmas baskets with 15 to Crossroads and 15 to Ravendale. Not only did we collect \$609 at the Thanksgiving service for Crossroads East and hams for the Christmas baskets, but another \$250 was donated after Thanksgiving.

Ann Parker's friends at Severstal Corporation decided to donate the money spent on their gift exchange to our church. This amounted to \$600, with which Janet Peplin and Susie Boynton purchased another 15 baskets for Ravendale's eastside community organization.

A special thanks is due to our members and friends who shopped for our 15 baskets for Crossroads East: Lucie Beard, Debbie Connelly (two baskets), Jill Crane, Karin Garrett, Jan & George Gray, Erica Guido, Jane Hoey, Michael Levitt, Jenny Marck & Family, Mary Morshead, Carol Nine, Carrie & Russell Peebles, Janet & Larry Peplin, Jean & Joe Ritok, Janet Weber & Bill Rutledge.

Other volunteers who made this project possible: Jim & Kevin Kelly loaded and unloaded their van two days in a row at

Ravendale and Crossroads, Janet Peplin shopped and arranged baskets for the size of families, Phil Dondero designed our GPUC cards to the recipients and loaded tubs, Karin Garrett arranged baskets to match the size of families, Colin Gillis loaded and unloaded baskets for Crossroads East and helped families when they picked up baskets, Jackie & Herb Levitt assisted families in loading baskets, and Susie Boynton shopped for baskets, arranged baskets, and assisted at Crossroads East.

--Susie Boynton for Outreach

Adult Forum on Depression

Following the soup lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 31st, a discussion on *Depression* will be held by Robin Ramsay and Karen Webb. Please join us for this very important and timely topic. --Jill Crane

You are Needed to Donate Blood

The winter blood drive, sponsored by the Grosse Pointe Community Blood Council is on Thursday, Feb. 4th, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The drive will be held at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, in the Crystal Ballroom. Anyone who is willing and able to donate blood on this date should contact Pat Freiwald. Your 'Gift of Life' will be very much appreciated.

-- Pat Freiwald for Outreach

Newsletter Schedule

The next few editions of the GPUC Newsletter will be published on Jan. 24th, Feb. 14th, Feb. 28th, Mar. 14th and Mar. 28th.

The Newsletter article collection box, which formerly resided on top of the file cabinet in the office, has been retired - due to loneliness.

Non-electronic articles should be given to the Office Administrator, Candy Dunn, by noon of the Friday preceding the newsletter publishing date. Electronic (email) submissions should be received at newsletter@gpuc.us by noon of the publishing date. --Tom Roberts for the Editors