


Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church

A Welcoming Congregation 



*Welcome! You have found an oasis of liberal religious and spiritual exploration serving the Grosse Pointes and the surrounding east side communities.
Reverend Dr. Alexander Riegel, Minister*

August 25, 2014

Dear GPUC Members and Friends,

Welcome to the new church year. There is a great deal of excitement around our new minister the Rev. Dr. Alex Riegel. Our feature article will give you a virtual introduction to Rev. Riegel.

Another change is this new look and feel to our newsletter. It is a work in process, so please send any suggestions to newsletter@gpuc.us.

Rudy Wedenoja
Editor

Upcoming Services

August 31, 2014 **10:30 AM**

Corporate Executive Compensation
Chuck Palmer Lay Service Leader

A moral Examination of Increasing Wage Inequality

September 7, 2014 **10:30 AM**

Religious Education Sunday

Rev. Alex Riegel Julie Artis, RE Director

Join Julie and Alex as we welcome everyone back for the upcoming church year. Inter-generational services provide an opportunity for the children and adults to worship together. With this opportunity, we will share the beginning of the exploration of World Religions for our youth and the pathway for mutual fellowship for the adults.

September 14, 2014 **10:30 AM**

Beloved Community
Rev. Alex Riegel

A phrase making the rounds these days in UU circles is "beloved community." It is a lovely phrase and is often invoked as being descriptive of the ideal church community.

In This Issue

[Upcoming Services](#)

[Intro to Rev. Riegel](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Religious Education](#)

[Adult Enrichment](#)

Announcements

[Ushers and Greeters Needed](#)

[Membership](#)

[Writers Workshop](#)

[Women's Book Club](#)

[Alliance Luncheon](#)

[GPUC Directory](#)

[Sit and Stitch](#)

[Food Sharing Sunday](#)

Upcoming Events

[Sunday Sept. 7 - Food Sharing](#)

[Tuesday Sept. 9 - Sit and Stitch](#)

[Sunday Sept 14 - 1st RE Class](#)

But, what does it really mean, beyond the rosy sentiment that it invokes? Alex will suggest that the idea of beloved community is one thing, while the actuality of it may look quite different than one might imagine. Further, he will suggest that membership in beloved community may be one of the hardest commitments you'll ever make. Nevertheless, it is also one of the most important.

September 21, 2014

10:30 AM

What is 'Spirituality'?

Rev. Alex Riegel

What Is 'Spirituality'? In any given Unitarian Universalist congregation members run the theological gambit from atheistic to agnostic to theist, from secular humanist to Buddhist to liberal Christian. This theological diversity is, though challenging at times, one of our strengths as a movement. Along these lines, people (not only UUs) are increasingly identifying as "spiritual but not religious." Alex will suggest what people mean by this phrase and share his own perspective of what the term "spiritual" means.

September 28, 2014

10:30 AM

Show up. Pay Attention. Speak the Truth. Let Go of the Outcome.

Rev. Alex Riegel

These four Buddhist principles are an effective recipe for being in relationship, either in one-to-one relationships or in relationships with groups. What does each principle mean and how do the four principles collectively enact our UU principle of the inherent worth and dignity of every person?

[Tuesday Sept. 16 - Alliance Luncheon](#)

[Tuesday Sept. 16 - Sit and Stitch](#)

[Sunday Sept. 21 - GPUC Directory Updates Due](#)

[Forward To A Friend](#)

Introduction to Rev. Riegel

Greetings Everyone!

As I write this initial newsletter column numerous timely topics regarding church life swirl through my head. Since I am just beginning to get to know you, I thought that before addressing those you might like first to know a bit about me personally.

I am a Michigander by birth. Born in Ypsilanti, I was raised in Saline. My father spent his work years as a police officer in Ann Arbor and my mother was a homemaker until I was old enough to manage myself after school, at which point she went to work as a secretary. I have two siblings, an older brother who practices law at General Motors and an older sister who works for Saline Public Schools.

My younger years were spent in very typical, Midwestern, small town fashion. When I graduated from High School my spiritual journey began, which took me to many a spiritual home in search of... what? Eventually I decided to become a minister and thus my academic training began. I went to undergraduate school at the University of Michigan where I received a B.A. in Philosophy. I hold a Masters of Divinity and a Masters of Theological Studies from



Harvard Divinity School. And, I did my Doctoral work at Andover Newton Theological School (writing a thesis on the affirmative nature of Friedrich Nietzsche's religious/philosophical thought).

My first settlement was in a small church south of Boston, in Canton, Massachusetts. I served there three years then became the Assistant Minister at First Church in Boston, in Boston's beautiful Back Bay, where I also served three years. When my son was born I took a brief hiatus from ministry to stay home and care for him. I then did a one year stint as interim minister in Bridgeport, Connecticut, following which we moved back to Michigan. My last settlement was in Farmington Hills, where I ministered for 12 years. I am now happily serving as the consult minister at GPUC, which likely goes without saying (Don't you love it when someone says "it goes without saying," but says it nevertheless?!).

My wife, Kimi Riegel, is the minister at the Northwest UU Church in Southfield. I have a 25 year old step daughter who works at Gleaners Community Food Bank and is engaged to be married next May. I have a 14 year old son who is my daily delight and attends The Roeper School in Birmingham. We are a serious dog family and currently companion my Alaskan Malamute, Nietzsche (yes, the Philosopher's namesake) and my wife's Australian Shepherd, Ophelia (yes, after Hamlet's girlfriend). We refer to them as the "fatalist" and "tragic romantic," respectively.

Finally, there are numerous things about which I am passionate regarding ministry. I love the preaching and teaching aspects of ministry. I very much enjoy the pastoral element of ministry, which, it sometimes seems to be forgotten these days, is a "people business" after all. And I find the administration and organizational challenges of ministry invigorating, which I realize is a rather rare trait among ministers. (I am especially keen on bringing my experience and training in organizational dynamics to bear on these areas of church life. Along these lines, I will be writing and speaking about organizational dynamics in a variety of ways in the coming months. I hope you will take the time to read/listen to what I have to write/say, for not only are these lessons important for creating and sustaining healthy organizational structures, they can be life changing as well.)

That's it for now. In the meantime, Namaste (The light in me recognizes the light in you, and, when we recognize that light together, we are one.),

Alex

Announcements

"I am overwhelmed to the point of tears by the endless kindness and generosity on the part of our congregation. I could never adequately express in words my feelings about the support of our church congregation. With all of the current fighting going on in the world, it's refreshing to see the love right here at home in this church community. I am genuinely humbled by your acts of selfless kindness." -

Linda Lawrence,
Care Committee Chair

Movers and Shakers needed!

The Usher (the movers of money) and Greeter (the shakers of hands) Committee is looking for volunteers to join the team! Everyone appreciates arriving at church on Sunday morning,

being greeted by a smiling, familiar face, followed by our welcoming ushers at the entrance of the sanctuary. This is a great way to get to know congregants and volunteer your time (especially for those who don't have a lot of time to volunteer outside of Sunday morning). No experience necessary! We will match you up with an experienced usher or greeter. Please **contact Dave Biernat** if interested, by phone or email (contact info is in the church directory).

We would also like to thank Mark Reeve for his many years of service as the Usher and Greeter Chairman. He set the best example of "prompt, courteous and stalwart." Thank you, Mark!

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is in need of a Chairperson. The duties include staffing the welcoming table on Sunday mornings, helping facilitate the Pathways to Membership for new members and hosting the Newcomers' Circle once a month. Please contact the office or any board member if you would like more information regarding this very important role in our church.

GPUC Writers Workshop

The GPUC writing group will resume in October. The dates and times to be determined. Pat Gillis will facilitate the group and Mary Beth Smith will drop in whenever she is in town. Come share your writing experience, improve your work or just listen to what others have written to get your creative juices flowing.

Women's Book Discussion Group

Book lists for the coming year are available on the sign up table near the RE Wing.

Alliance Luncheon

The first Alliance Luncheon of the church year will be Tuesday, Sept 16th at Noon in the Olympia Brown Center. Ross and Jeri Grover will give a presentation on life in 17th Century America. They will be dressed in clothing of the period and demonstrate the art of weaving, candle making as well as food preparation. Join us for lunch and a journey back in time. Please call Shirley Reeves at for reservations.

NEW GPUC Phone Directory for 2014-15

Directory update emails and letters will be sent to members and friends beginning the week of August 25 for the purpose of verifying your listing information. This is your chance to update emails, add cell numbers, or delete/correct outdated information. The directory also offers "GPUC Blue Book" listings. Members may share their business/professional services info via special listings in the back of our new directory, and in a binder that is kept in the office. Our youth are invited to participate by listing skills they would like to share such as babysitting, pet care, leaf raking, etc. Please submit information to: gpuc@gpuc.us or send it in writing to Candy Dunn in the church office.

Example GPUC Blue Book listing in the directory:

John Doe Realtor Phone Email Website Special offers to members, if applicable.

I need a response from you even if you are not making any changes to your current listing. The deadline for submitting your directory updates and GPUC Blue Book listing information is Sunday, September 21.

Sit and Stitch

Sit and Stitch will resume meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7 - 9pm in the Annex. All are welcome to join us for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.). Please contact Ann Helm with any questions. Feel free to just drop in and join the group! Our next Sit and Stitch meeting is Tuesday, September 9 at 7pm.

First Sunday Food Sharing

As we gather for our first service of the fall season, please remember our friends at Crossroads East. September 7 will be our First Sunday Food Sharing, and you can help by bringing donations of non-perishables such as cereals, soups, peanut butter, and canned meats, vegetables or fruits. Also appreciatively accepted are monetary donations, which we use to purchase items such as meat, milk, eggs, and potatoes. These donations are delivered to Crossroads East, located on Moross and I-94 in Detroit, to assist with their food pantry. Thank you!

Religious Education

"We are resolved to protect individual freedom of belief. This freedom must include the child as well as the parent. The freedom for which we stand is not freedom of belief as we please, not freedom to evade responsibility, but freedom to be honest in speech and action, freedom to respect one's own integrity of thought and feeling, freedom to question, to investigate, to try, to understand life and the universe in which life abounds, freedom to search anywhere and everywhere to find the meaning of Being, freedom to experiment with new ways of living that seem better than the old."

-- Sophia Lyon Fahs, 1876-1978, Unitarian Universalist Educator



Welcome to the 2014-15 Religious Education year for our children and youth. We invite our children, youth and parents on a pilgrimage of learning and exploration regarding how we each take our faith as Unitarian Universalists into our world, to take action and make choices for a positive change.

This church year our students will be exploring World Religions. Our education program is a cooperative program. Parents and other church members volunteer their time, talents and leadership skills to teach our UU values to our students in the classroom on Sunday mornings and at planned special events.

We encourage you to build the Sunday morning service and church school program into your family calendar. Your child will build a UU identity by attending classes, special church events, making UU friends and becoming acquainted with other parents, members and the staff at GPUC.

Religious Education Lessons

September 7th will be our first Sunday back with an All Family Service. This is a wonderful time for you and your family to hear our new minister, Rev. Alex Riegel. The following Sunday, September 14th, all students will start their Sunday experience in the church service for 20 minutes and then together we will go back to the RE wing for our first classes of the year. The nursery is always open for our young children. Our caring and skilled sitters are available on every Sunday with open arms and hearts to greet our young UU's.

Registration forms have been sent out to all past members. If you are new and would like to register your child, please contact me by phone or email. Teaching assignments will be sent out the second week in September.

We have a few more days of summer. Enjoy the sun, breathe and lighten your heart.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

Adult Enrichment

The Adult Religious Enrichment Committee has many exciting programs planned for the coming year. The ongoing programs such as the Women's Book Discussion Group which meets on the third Thursday of the month beginning in October, Chalice Circles, and Sunday adult forums will continue.

We will be offering a World Religions course in conjunction with the Religious Education department; more on that later.



Contact Information
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
Editor: Rudy Wedenoja newsletter@gpuc.us