

# 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*

**December 23, 2014**

## Upcoming Services

**January 4, 2015** **10:30 AM**

***Beginning Again... and Again... and Again...***

**Rev. Alex Riegel** **Janet Weber, Worship Associate**

Welcome to 2015! We usher in our new year with the delight of a baby dedication and reflections upon starting anew. Day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year we move through life with habits we have cultivated through our life experiences. This can lead to Solomon's "nothing new under the sun," a kind of ennui of the spirit. Given this, how do we begin again? How do we, after the conditioning of the many years of our life's experiences, see with new eyes the beauty, sacredness, and hopeful nature of life? Maybe this beautiful baby we are dedicating has something to teach all of us!

**January 11, 2015** **10:30 AM**

***Silence and the Tyranny of the Discursive Mind***

**Rev. Alex Riegel** **Jim Moir, Worship Associate**

As a meditation teacher I have often heard people decry silence. Indeed, I have heard many people decry even the two minutes of silence into which we invite them on a Sunday morning. I will explore why this is so and suggest that silence isn't actually what chagrins people. What chagrins people is what happens in the context of silence. (Obvious hint - the answer is in the sermon title.) Given this, I will suggest a way forward into silence so that we may discover the gift silence is, when we overcome the impediment to it. I will also suggest that awaits us in silence is a treasure trove of subtle and delightful experiences!

**January 18, 2015** **10:30 AM**

***State of the Church Address***

**Rev. Alex Riegel** **Joseph P. Buttiglieri, Worship Associate**

Every year I deliver a state of the church address. I believe it is important to do this in order to keep everyone on the same page regarding the ministry of the church. This state of the church address is especially important given that this is my first public conversation regarding what I have discovered and experienced at GPUC since my arrival last August. Please make it a point to attend church this particular Sunday as I see this Sunday as the launching point for moving together into a more dynamic and robust ministry at GPUC. Lots to talk about and lots of love to share!

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## Upcoming Events

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January 25, 2015

10:30 AM

*"Strife is the Perpetual Food of the Soul"*

Rev. Alex Riegel

Tonya Wells, Worship

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### Associate

We like it when life is predictable and easy. However, it is often unpredictable and difficult. When it is, we experience strife, something against which we push in our efforts to keep life easy - the way life "should be." Taking off from Friedrich Nietzsche's statement that "strife is the perpetual food of the soul," I am going to suggest that life's struggles are an important catalyst for personal growth. This is a counterintuitive position reflected not only in Nietzsche's philosophy, but many psychological and spiritual traditions as well. In sum, "angst is opportunity!"

## Comments from Rev. Riegel

### A look, touch, a word... a blessing



Have you noticed what a good job our Director of Religious Education, Julie Artis does in posting to our official GPUC Facebook page? Nearly every day, and sometimes more than once a day, Julie shares uplifting thoughts, nuggets of wisdom, or information from our District and Association. Recently she shared a quotation by Marvin Ashton. Part of that quotation reads as follows: "Leave people better than you found them."

This reminds me of the sermon I did a few Sundays back on the topic of shame. In that sermon I talked about the fact that, though we are wont to admit it, we look to others in hopes of receiving messages of affirmation; indicators that we are acceptable in their eyes. This tendency to allow ourselves to be defined by the gaze of the other begins in infancy, with our primary caretaker(s).

Given this, in my sermon I suggested that we hold a great deal of power relative to one another. The gaze we give another speaks volumes about how we feel in regard to that person while the gaze the other receives goes a great way toward determining his/her inner experience (especially when one receives the same gaze from people in general). An antidote to shame, then, I suggested, is to gaze at others affirmatively - with love, compassion, and understanding.

As the new year turns I want to suggest that we each be more intentional about our gaze. I want to suggest that we remain cognizant of the power we hold relative to one another. I want to suggest that we consider looking with love, compassion and understanding upon other people as a spiritual practice. Doing so we can help people feel affirmed, included, and valued. We can leave people better than we find them, with a look, a touch, a word... a blessing.

Namaste!  
Alex

As 2014 draws to a close, there is new energy in our congregation. The transition to our new minister the Reverend Dr. Alex Riegel has been very successful. Membership involvement is on the upswing. Attendance at our Sunday services has continued to increase and as the year draws to a close exceeds 130. Our Religious Education program continues to draw in new families.

To continue this momentum will require the support of the entire congregation. Many of you are active in a variety of ways within our church community, these contributions are greatly appreciated. In 2015 we will need even more engagement. If you would like to become more involved with the GPUC Board, we are currently seeking a GPUC Board Secretary. If you are interested, please contact Jackie Hoats-Shields.

The Board thanks all of you for your help and support this past year and look forward to a great 2015.

Happy Holidays,  
Mark Franchett  
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

## Announcements

### **CIRCLE-CIRCLE DINNER AND MINI-AUCTION: Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Lots of Fellowship and Fun is in store at this year's Circle-Circle Dinner! This will be our major fundraiser for the year as well as a fellowship event.

There's something fun for everyone:

- Lasagna dinner to share with friends. Please bring an appetizer, salad or dessert.
- Drummunity - a participatory drumming experience
- Mini-Auction with exciting prizes - 4 Vacations, glass-blowing, Redwings tickets, a private DIA tour, an Italian Dinner Party, a case of wine, and a hand-loomed shawl.
- Roscoe the Clown for the kids early in the evening

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

The fun starts at 5:30p.m. with appetizers. Drummunity at 7:30p.m. interspersed with the Silent and Live Auctions. Children 11 and under free. \$5 for everyone else.

## *The Holy Longing*

*Saturday, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm*

*Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church*

Join Dr. Alexander Riegel and the Russell-Scott Project for a special evening of mystic poetry set to music. Dr. Riegel will recite from the works of Rumi, Hafez, Kabir, Rabia, Mary Oliver, and Goethe. The Russell-Scott Project, known for their fusion of contemporary and classical music, will provide the backdrop for the evening with their special talent and numerous original pieces. This performance is open to the public. A donation of \$10 is requested but not required. Refreshments will be served.



### **Coffee Hour**

Are you a fan of Coffee Hour after Sunday Service? Volunteers are needed to make coffee for Sundays during this year. "Sign up" is in the lobby, or email Sonja Franchett. Training and directions are happily provided! Thanks for your help and participation in building our church community.

### **GPUC Sit and Stitch**

Sit and Stitch will resume meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm in January (January 13 and 27) 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!

### Care Committee

I would like to acknowledge the work of the members of the "Care Committee." Mary Morshead, Joy Spurr, and Sydney Lentz have done a wonderful job. I am grateful to them and to all the members of the church who have graciously offered both food and transportation when needed. Thank you all for your dedicated work throughout the year.

Linda Lawrence, Care Committee Chair

### Resale Shop News

Time to schedule Thursday evenings at the GPUC Resale Shop. Work for two hours, 7 pm to 9 pm approximately once every five to six weeks. It's easy, it's sociable, it gives you an exclusive preview of our merchandise. Schedules are updated every three months. Give it a try! Call or text Suzanne Ross

### Duplicate Bridge Lessons

Duplicate bridge lessons by Cynthia Luce. Please contact Cynthia if you are interested. It's a fun game that will keep your mind active. \$5.00 per person per lesson. If enough people sign-up, we will then decide on a date and time.

### Newsletter Deadline

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, January 23 at noon. They should be sent to [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us).

## Adult Religious Education

### Upcoming Book Discussions

On Fridays, January 23 and 30 John Artis will lead a two part discussion on the book, The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege by Robert Jensen. This short, but powerful book attempts to rearrange the Race question from one dealing with racial minorities to one dealing with whites and white privilege as the Problem facing our country. The author examines personal experience, data, and theory and uses them for examining race and racism in America.



On Fridays, February 27 and March 6 the discussion continues with, Reproducing Racism by Daria Roithmayr. This powerful book examines how everyday choices we make without any intention of doing so lock in white advantage in America. She examines the locked in system beginning with Jim Crow and demonstrates how it is now a self-reinforcing and perhaps troubling permanent economic class system in America.

Jill Crane, Director of Adult Religious Education

## Religious Education News

**"There are years that ask questions and years that answer." - Zora Neale Hurston**

Church school for our students is a journey. Church school is a garden of information for our teachers to share their information and our students to enjoy. We encourage our students to be pathfinders, pioneers, detectives and explorers. As we close out 2014 we shared many different religions for our students to explore. We hope our students saw some variety in approaches in the different religions. Chronologically we are at the end of the year but will continue our journey of World Religions.



As 2015 begins this is a fresh new start. The first chapter of the year is joining the Religious Education Program at the Circle Circle Dinner on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. It is a wonderful evening to meet new friends and greet your old friends. Appetizers, dinner, dessert, and we have a clown at 6:45 p.m. for our young members and all member entertainment with Drummunity. A new part of our Circle Circle Dinner is a Mini-Auction. Sign-up to attend in the church lobby or email me at [julie@gpuc.us](mailto:julie@gpuc.us)

**Nursery and Preschool** is always open at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning.

**Lower and Upper Elementary and Junior** students will continue their studies on World Religions. The month of January they will begin with the study of Buddhism. They will visit a temple towards the end of January. More information will follow in the weekly post. Junior students will continue to meet in the annex.

**Senior** high students on January 4<sup>th</sup> will meet at 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. They will meet at the Ottenhoff home and continue their studies on Hinduism. Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup> they will go to Gleaners in Detroit as a community service from 1-3:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Ann Ottenhoff. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, seniors will attend church services with their family. On Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> seniors will meet at Ann Ottenhoff's home at 7-8:30 p.m. to begin the study of Buddhism.

*"And now let us welcome the New Year-Full of things that have never been."* - Rainer Maria Rilke

Have a Happy and Safe New Year.

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

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