

# 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*

## February 2016

### Upcoming Services

February 7, 2016

10:30 AM

**Gentle, Harsh or "Just Right," what light do you shine?**

**Tonya Wells**

**Janet Weber, Worship Associate**

In this sermon I will explore how we treat ourselves directly impacts the way we see the world and treat others. While self-awareness is a critical component of accountability, we are best served by looking at ourselves in the mirror with a gentle, forgiving light. I will share my own experiences as a reforming critic, and hope to encourage practices of kindness toward ourselves and others.

February 14, 2016

10:30 AM

**Love: A brief survey, thoughts and some questions.**

**Joseph Buttiglieri**

**Sarah Buttiglieri, Worship Associate**

Romantic love, Unitarian Universalist Love, Non-romantic Love and St. Valentine and the Unitarian Universalists. Come to explore this topic and share some of your own thoughts on St. Valentine's Day.

February 21, 2016

10:30 AM

**"Here We Are Gathered": A General Assembly Primer**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Julie Artis, Worship Associate**

Join us as we welcome Dr. Riegel back from his Study Break! He and Julie Artis will be doing a joint sermon on General Assembly, the yearly national gathering of UUs from across the country, pulling in upwards of 6,000 strong every year. This year's General Assembly is in Columbus, Ohio and we are hoping for a caravan of GPUCers to make the trip! Come welcome Alex back and see what General Assembly is all about.

February 28, 2016

10:30 AM

**"It Matters What We Believe"**

**Dr. Alexander Riegel**

**Tonya Wells, Worship**

**Associate**

These words were spoken by Sophia Lyon Fahs, a Unitarian Universalist Religious Educator whom, some say, saved the Association with a refreshing and compelling approach to religious education at a time when the Association's number were in steep decline (1940s). Alex will revisit her wise words and talk about why it STILL matters - maybe more than ever - what we believe!

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## Announcements

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## Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel



As you read this I am either meditating in the rotunda at Shantivanam (the ashram in southern India I periodically visit), chanting in an ancient shaivite temple, visiting the yogini orphanage, or just chillin' with the village kids in nearby Tannirpalli. I am deeply grateful to GPUC for understanding the value of using my Study Break for deepening my spiritual practice in this way. I can't begin to explain the importance to my ministry of this type of inner work...

That said, I am eager to return to GPUC come mid-February, as GPUCers have also been patient with a lengthy and difficult transition of my family to Grosse Pointe, in part, I like to believe, because you understand as well as I do the potential that lies ahead for our ministry together. Hence my eagerness to "get on with it" with you all! So rest assured, I will hit the ground running once Study Break is over and your patience with my family's transition will bear fruit...

Looking ahead, I want to encourage you all to consider attending General Assembly this June. General Assembly is the yearly meeting of Unitarian Universalists across the country, some 6,000 people strong, and is happening in Columbus this year! It is a wonderful experience to worship with so many likeminded and good hearted people, attend workshops on personal growth and church life, and get to know our fellow UUS who make up the net of liberalism that runs from north to south and east to west. With that in mind, please check out the following link, which will tell you all about General Assembly: [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga). Kimi and I, and Julie Artis for sure are going. We'd love to have a dozen or so of you join us. Let's make a statement about the revitalization of GPUC and let's get involved with the larger Association!

On another - and final - note, Kimi and I also attend a UU summer camp every July. It is the Southeast UU Summer Institute (SUUSI), a singles AND family friendly camp with great activities and experiences for youth and adults alike. We have been attending for over ten years now and strongly recommend it for those looking for an enjoyable vacation experience. By the way, as you can see from the following link, "camp" may not be the best word to describe SUUSI, as it takes place on a college campus. Good food, indoor lodging, and lots of ways to stay connected to your electronic devices. If you care to consider coming down with us, check out the following link and LET US KNOW BY THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE, as our travel plans will shift if anyone decides to join us: [www.suusi.org](http://www.suusi.org)

See you soon!

Namaste,

Alex

### Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

This is an exciting time in the life of GPUC. We on the Board are feeling the bustling energy and vitality present in the church. We are envisioning a bright, growing future for GPUC and want to support the positive direction of enlightening services, educational opportunities, fellowship activities, social justice endeavors, and the warmth of our caring community. At this moment we have several potential new members just waiting for paperwork to be completed.

We are excited about the workshops developing a modernized Mission Statement. At this writing, progress has been made, thanks to the Mission Committee and all those who are contributing. The Mission Committee will have a proposed statement by February 7th for a congregational vote. You can still participate in this process.

After we have adopted a Mission Statement, it is the Board's intention to engage with the congregation in a process of identifying a shared Vision for the future of GPUC that is consistent with our mission. Our Mission Statement and Vision could define goals and areas of focus where we want to place our energies and our resources. The Vision process may also pinpoint structural improvements to our facility in order to support GPUC's priorities.

As of now, the Board is recommending one particular initial investment in our physical plant that we believe will facilitate GPUC's growth, both in terms of the number of our members and in the number and scope of activities in which we engage. We are proposing an investment in our heating and cooling capability that will better allow us to truly operate as a year-round church with services and events occurring in the summer. The chapel, along with the memorial garden, is a lovely venue for weddings, and these have the added advantage of bringing in some revenue for the church and in providing a welcoming environment for those who are not affiliated with or accepted by other churches in the area. Our new minister, Dr. Riegel is fond of performing weddings. The church is also a lovely space for lectures, musical recitals and performances. Events such as these bring attention to GPUC in the wider community, offering the opportunity of spreading our message, and attracting new members. Our lack of air conditioning presents a major drawback to these endeavors in the summer. Another drawback in the winter is that the blower for the heating system is noisy and interferes with the enjoyment of concert performances. It has to be turned off if any recording is being done.

Air conditioning is not inexpensive, and it is the congregation's decision as to whether we will make this investment. Please join us after church on February 7th where the Board will describe the HVAC project and costs, and where the congregation will vote on the proposal. It is the Board's consensus that it is now time to finally take action on an improvement that has been discussed by numerous GPUC Boards over many decades. We planned to bring it to your attention in February so we can actually enjoy air conditioning this summer, should the congregation approve the expenditure.

On a related note: Our Pledge Campaign for 2016-2017 is beginning with the Fellowship Dinner to be held on March 12. The generosity of our members last year allowed us to dream of capital improvements, such as air conditioning. I hope you agree with me that GPUC is a wonderful place to put your own personal investments of time and money. Involvement in GPUC in the last 6 years has truly changed me, changed my life, and profoundly added to my happiness. I think many reading this will say the same. Please support our community. GPUC cannot exist without that support.

The Board and I take our responsibility to represent the interests of GPUC. We are always open to feedback and questions. Look for a representative of the Board or Committee on Ministry at the fireside after each service. As always, Board meetings are open to anyone in the congregation, and we welcome your attendance. They take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm, generally in the Gallery.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER:

- January 31: Last Mission Workshop
- February 7: All-Congregation Meeting
- March 12: Fellowship Dinner
- May 1: Budget Hearing
- May 15: Annual Meeting

Robin Ramsay  
President, GPUC Board of Trustees

### Religious Education News

#### ***"There is no remedy for love but to love more." Henry David Thoreau***

Sophia Fahs was a person that shared her love by giving more. Let me share a little about the woman that gave her love to so many children and parents.



**Sophia Fahs Religious Education Wing** is the sign that is right above the double doors as you enter our area for our students. Who is Sophia Fahs? Sophia Lyon Fahs was a revolutionary educator who questioned how we taught religious education. She suggested that children learn through their interaction with the world and not merely be told what to believe. For more than 80 years as a professional educator and author, Fahs strove to create a theology that restored human emotions and human experience to their rightful place as foundational building blocks for a liberal faith.

Sophia Fahs devoted her life to the big questions rather than to the big answers. Here are quotes from two of Fahs books.

*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.*

*The religious way is the deep way, the way that sees what physical eyes alone fail to see, the intangibles of the heart of every phenomenon. The religious way is the way that touches universal relationships: that goes high, wide and deep, that expands the feelings of kinship.*

In the spirit of Sophia Fahs let us continue our lessons with our students to enhance questioning an interaction with the world.

#### **Save the Date: Treat your Valentine to a Coney Dog!**

The RE Junior/Senior Class will be selling Coney dogs in the annex after the worship service on Sunday, February 14. Just \$5 will get you a Coney dog, chips and a pop! (all Michigan made products) Veggie dogs will be available. Please support their delicious fundraiser; all proceeds go to support the Boston trip in June 2016.

#### **Religious Education Lessons:**

The **nursery** will be open at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. We have the same loving childcare workers to provide a safe and caring place for our young UU's. We also have a pot of coffee for parents to enjoy and take the time to get to know each other.

**Lower and Upper Elementary students** will continue their studying on Unitarian Universalism. We will continue our study of Tolerance through our Golden Club. We are asking for donations of juice and snacks for our classes.

**Junior students** will continue their study of Unitarian Universalism. Students signed up for OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes will continue their assigned dates. They will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the annex. All junior students are asked to help with the jewelry, cards and bags for fundraising for the Boston trip each Sunday before and

after church.

**Senior high students** will continue their assigned dates for their OWL classes. Mrs. Ottenhoff will email all students with their service dates for Gleaners.

**Senior** students may also contact Mrs. Artis if willing to be an assistant teacher in the younger classes.

### Dates to Remember

January 31 - RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m., Room 1 in RE wing.  
February 14 - RE Juniors & Seniors selling Coney Dogs in the Annex after the service  
February 21 - RE Committee Meeting at 9:15 a.m., Room 1 in RE wing.  
March 6 - Spaghetti Dinner in annex  
March - Pool Party Coming

Julie Artis  
Director of Religious Education

## Adult Religious Education

### Writing Group

Please feel free to join the Writing Group on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month in the church library. Bring your writings and listen as others read theirs and join in the discussions regarding the selections. The next meetings will be held on February 8 and 22. Contact Patty Gillis for more information.

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### Women's Book Discussion Group - Thursday, February 18, 2016, 6PM, Annex

*Cry the Beloved Country*  
by Allen Paton

In the remote village of Ndotsheni, in the Natal province of eastern South Africa, the Reverend Stephen Kumalo receives a letter from a fellow minister summoning him to Johannesburg, a city in South Africa. He is needed there, the letter says, to help his sister, Gertrude, who the letter says has fallen ill. Kumalo undertakes the difficult and expensive journey to the city in the hopes of aiding Gertrude and of finding his son, Absalom, who traveled to Johannesburg from Ndotsheni and never returned. In Johannesburg, Kumalo is warmly welcomed by Msimangu, the priest who sent him the letter, and given comfortable lodging by Mrs. Lithebe, a Christian woman who feels that helping others is her duty. Kumalo visits Gertrude, who is now a prostitute and liquor-seller, and persuades her to come back to Ndotsheni with her young son. This month we will all join in leading the discussion so come with your questions and comments.

Refreshment Assistant, Erika Baer      A \$3 donation goes towards our refreshments.

All are welcome to join!

## Announcements

### MUSICAL NOTES

#### Joseph Palazzolo in Concert Saturday, April 16, 2016, 7:30 pm

For what is certain to be an exhilarating piano performance by our very own, talented JOSEPH PALAZZOLO! Joseph will be performing a variety of beautiful piano selections by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, as well as Kitten on the Keys, a tango, and Clair de Lune!

Afterglow immediately following the concert.

TICKETS: \$15 adults in advance, \$10 students & seniors in advance, \$20/\$15 at the door  
Reserve tickets from church office - call 313.881.0420

The concert originally scheduled for February 27 has been cancelled.

### GPUC Youth Choir

CAN IMPROVEMENT BE MADE UPON MUCH GREATNESS??? YOU BET! Joseph Palazzolo is looking for additional students in grades 1 - 6 to experience the magic and joy of singing with our fabulous GPUC Youth Choir! No auditions needed, just a desire to learn and sing. Youth Choir performs twice a month during the Sunday service. Rehearsals are held each Sunday from 11:45 - 12:15 in the RE wing. Please contact Joseph Palazzolo for further information: [5jp1music4@gmail.com](mailto:5jp1music4@gmail.com)

DO NOT MISS THIS AWESOME EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR CHILD!!!

Would you like to show your appreciation of GPUC's awesome music ministry costing you nothing more than a

few minutes of your time? Volunteers are needed to clean, polish, and for the light care of the piano and organ in the sanctuary. Email or call Birdi Hansen-Marr

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### **All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten**

For everyone who enjoyed Robert Fulghum's book, we know how important kindergarten can be for a child or an adult. Teacher Kristy Kitchen at Detroit Merit School requested a tutor to work with her students one or two sessions a week, but we are one tutor short! Consider how much having a tutor can mean for a child just starting out in school, while at the same time enriching a tutor's experiences. To volunteer for the fun or for further information, call Susie Boynton.

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### **Habitat for Humanity Grosse Pointe Partners**

Please mark your calendars for **February 13, 2016**. This will be OUR turn (GPUC) to provide the majority of the labor as well as lunch for the Second Saturday Build workers. This is a great opportunity to show your support either physically or monetarily (for lunch supplies). You and your friends, as well as your children/grandchildren ages 16 and up are welcome as well. Helping our neighbors in need is a wonderful way to demonstrate your UU values. You will also meet some wonderful people from our area. Habitat for Humanity also provides a great "community" and "mentoring" opportunity.

Please contact George Gray to sign up or contribute. Let's have a great turnout. All skills welcome.

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### **Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, February 7.**

Our donations are taken to Crossroads East on Moross, just east of I-94. This location is close to our church home and has a food pantry, clothing closet, provides job assistance, and counseling. We will be collecting non-perishables such as cereal, noodles, rice, canned fruits, veggies, soups, and sauces. If you prefer to donate monetarily, your money is used to buy items such as eggs, milk, meat, produce, and bread. Our donations are greatly appreciated and really help keep the shelves, fridge, and freezer stocked. So far this year, GPUC has provided 9,209 pounds of food and toiletries to Crossroads East! Many, many thanks!  
Jenny Marck

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### **UU Crafters New Meeting Schedule!**

The UU Crafters will meet the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Annex from 7-9pm. The next meetings will be February 16th and 23rd. All are welcome to join in for an evening of social stitching (knit, crochet, quilting, needlepoint, etc.) and other small crafts. Also, if you like to color and haven't tried the new adult coloring books there are books and markers for anyone who would like to give it a try. Please contact Ann Helm with any questions.

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### **Charles (Chuck) Brooks**

Charles (Chuck) Brooks died November 21, 2015 at the age of seventy-six after a long illness. Chuck and Cynthia Brooks were longtime members of GPUC before they moved to Sarasota, Florida in 1997.

Well-known in the Detroit Metropolitan area for his business and personal interest in baseball cards, Chuck was frequently interviewed on the media and always a presence at gathering where cards were sold. Adults as well as kids knew "Mister Baseball Cards".

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### **Newsletter Deadline**

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, February 26 at noon. They should be sent to [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us).

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