

# 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*

## January 2016

### Upcoming Services

Jan 3, 2016

10:30 AM

#### Janus, the Two-Faced God

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Chuck Palmer, Worship Associate

The turn of the New Year often brings reflective thoughts and a "vow to do better this year!" I will share a story I once wrote about this theme, which will serve as grist for a dialogue sermon. Put on your thinking caps and bring your best - or not so best - self to start the new year.

Jan 10, 2016

10:30 AM

#### Paying It Forward

Dr. Alexander Riegel

Tonya Wells, Worship

Associate

Seventy five years ago GPUC's Founders had a mission. Fifty years ago they completed the structure they envisioned to support that mission - the lovely building we now occupy. Since then GPUC has been enacting that mission - but 75 years have passed. Now it is our turn. It is our turn to take the time to pause and reconsider what mission makes sense for GPUC today and to pledge ourselves anew to that mission, so that 50 and 75 years from now GPUC will have remained a vital ministry here in the Pointes. Toward that end, this Sunday is dedicated to reconsidering GPUC's mission. Our service will be one half hour in length followed by a presentation and short workshop as we begin mission work together. (For more information, please see the minister's article in this newsletter.)

Jan 17, 2016

10:30 AM

#### Islam

Rev. Kimi Riegel

Meghan Boomhower, Worship

Associate

Islam has been in the news again. How do we sort fact from fiction? Some people want us to be afraid. Some people want us to tolerate Muslims. Still others want blanket acceptance. What works? What are the limits of acceptance? Kimi has been preaching on Islam since the early 90s. What has changed over the years?

Jan 24, 2016

10:30 AM

#### Music Lessons

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## Announcements

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## Upcoming Events

[Fri Jan 8 Circle Circle Dinner](#)

[Sun Jan 10 1st Mission Wkshp](#)

[Thu Jan 21 Women's Book Group](#)

[Fri Jan 22 Just Mercy Book Group](#)

[Sun Jan 24 2nd Mission Wkshp](#)

[Fri Jan 29 Just Mercy Book Group](#)

[Sun Jan 31 3rd Mission Wkshp](#)

[Sun Feb 7 Congregational](#)

Rev. John Corrado

Chuck Palmer, Worship

[Meeting](#)

Associate

With more time to arrange, perform, and mentor music I have become increasingly aware of how music teaches me; how music provides lessons about spiritual and religious living. I believe these lessons can apply to everyone, even those who can't play or sing a note.

[Forward To A Friend](#)

Jan 31, 2016

10:30 AM

**Just Mercy: An Examination of our Criminal Justice System through the Eyes of the Most Vulnerable**

**Dr. John Artis**

**Ed Marck, Worship Associate**

Using the work of Bryan Stevenson and others, we will examine justice by analyzing the record of justice for the poor and the condemned in our society.

## Comments from Dr. Alexander Riegel

### *Paying it Forward*



Seventy five years ago GPUC's Founders had a mission. Fifty years ago they completed the structure they envisioned to support that mission - the lovely building we now occupy. Since then GPUC has been enacting that mission - but 75 years have passed. Now it is our turn. It is our turn to take the time to pause and reconsider what mission makes sense for GPUC today and to pledge ourselves anew to that mission, so that 50 and 75 years from now GPUC will have remained a vital ministry here in the Pointes.

Most of you remember our last attempt at creating a mission. Several years ago, under less than optimal circumstances, that attempt to create a mission fell short. Further, it left many people frustrated and skeptical. At the same time, it is important to let go of the past (As Heraclitus said, "You can't step into the same river twice," anyway.) and recommit ourselves to the task of determining what mission makes sense for our congregation today, given the context in which we now live. Besides, circumstances today are optimal are much better than they were just a few short years ago...

Moreover, consultants across the spectrum tell us that if an organization cannot articulate its mission, its chances of success are small. In other words, if an organization doesn't consistently express the reason it exists - its *raison d'etre*, to steal a French phrase - why should it expect to draw the attention of like-minded folk? It shouldn't. There is a reason many UU churches joke about being the best kept secret in town. It's time to start telling new jokes...

So, I truly hope you all will engage the new mission process, which the mission team (Christy Winder, Ann Helm, Wally Friesen, Julie Artis, and Dr. Riegel), appointed by the Board, has designed to be concise, coherent, and productive in a relatively short span of time (see meeting dates below). The process begins following a shortened church service on Jan. 10th, to leave ample time for the mission team to introduce us to a uniquely designed process that will begin an earnest conversation. With that in mind, please make a special effort to attend church that day and stay for the mission workshop immediately to follow. The goal is to have the workshop completed by 12:30pm, if not sooner. Subsequent workshops will run from 11:45am to 12:30pm on Jan 24th, 31st, with the vote on the mission statement to take place at a special congregational meeting immediately following church on Feb 7th.

Finally, due to the mission work scheduled on the above dates we will NOT be holding Adult Ed. classes after the holiday until I return from my Study Break. The next Adult Sunday Ed class will be the February Meditation class on Feb 21st, followed by the Philosopher's Club on Feb 28th.

Namaste,

Alex

Message from the GPUC Board of Trustees

The holiday season reminds me of how proud and grateful I am to be part of the GPUC community. It's wonderful to watch the generous food baskets and winter clothing go out to needy families, to see the RE's production of "The Grinch", to listen to beautiful music in the sanctuary and to see the preparations for the Solstice celebration. I'm looking forward to our lovely Christmas Eve service. I'm always touched by the generous work of so many volunteers.

Exciting projects are coming our way as we move into 2016.

- The Mission Task Force will be presenting workshops in January to help us develop an inspirational statement of GPUC's Mission. Such a statement helps direct our choices and can aid in describing our church to the wider community.
- Last year's highly successful pledge campaign has allowed us to consider long-awaited improvements at GPUC. The Board is planning an All-Congregational Meeting on February 7th to propose enhancements of our Heating and Cooling system including AIR CONDITIONING! The size of the expenditure requires approval from the congregation, and it will be important that we have a quorum of the members at that meeting. So please attend! More information will be coming your way.
- Plans are in the works for the two other projects identified at our recent retreat: Improvements to the Memorial Garden and Improvements to our Audio-Visual capability.
- The Finance Committee and the Board will begin work on the Budget for next year as the Canvass Committee prepares for our pledge drive and Fellowship Dinner in March.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER:

- January 10, 24, 31: Mission Workshops
- 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

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

New Year is the day of new beginnings and happy memories. Winter is upon us and I think of an evening of good food, friends and fun. This description reminds me of the **Circle Circle Dinner. Friday, January 8th, 2016 we will begin at 5:45 p.m.** Everyone is asked to sign up in the GPUC lobby or contact [Julie@gpuc.us](mailto:Julie@gpuc.us). We ask everyone to sign up for an appetizer, salad or dessert. The cost is \$5.00 for anyone over 12 years old. Our entertainment this year will begin with "**The Bubble Man**" and then we will enjoy **Square Dancing** in the main church. This is an evening for all ages; bring your family and friends.



#### RE 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 get to know each other.

**Lower and Upper Elementary and Junior** students on January 3, 2016 will begin their lessons on Unitarian Universalism. They will also continue their study of Tolerance through our Golden Club. Parents will be receiving their teaching schedule next week.

**Junior and Senior High** students that signed up for OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes begin Sunday, January 3, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. The class dates are January 3, 10, 24, 31, February 21 and 28, March 20, April 10, 17, 24, and May 1. The classes will take place in the annex and Room 2 in the RE wing.

## Dates to remember:

- January 3rd- Classes begin and bring in food for Crossroads
- January 8th- **Circle Circle Dinner** and sign up in the GPUC lobby
- January 13th- RE Committee Meeting at 6:30 p.m. in annex

## Boston Trip in June, 2016

Our **junior and senior** high students are going to Boston to explore our UU roots. They need your help with fundraising. You will be seeing our students selling UU reusable bags, collecting bottles and cans, hosting a Spaghetti dinner in March and more. Please talk with our students and contact me if you would like to know more how you can lend a hand. BOSTON 2016!!!

Julie Artis, Director of Religious Education

## Adult Religious Education

It's hard to believe we are already into the New Year, but the Adult Religious Education Committee has already made plans for many new and exciting opportunities for you in 2016 to further your knowledge of many different subjects.

We will, of course, continue with our tried and true programs, one of them being the Women's Book Discussion Group. For those of you not familiar with the format, we meet on the third Thursdays of the month at 6 pm in the Church Annex. We provide light refreshments and wine, a \$3. donation is gratefully accepted. All are welcome!

**Women's Book Discussion Group** Thursday, January 21, 2016, 6PM, Annex (Two books this month.)

*Emma* by Jane Austen

*Emma, a Modern Retelling* by Alexander McCall Smith

An unstoppable combination: Alexander McCall Smith and Jane Austen

Although convinced that she herself will never marry, Emma Woodhouse, a precocious twenty-year-old resident of the village of Highbury, imagines herself to be naturally gifted in conjuring love matches. After self-declared success at matchmaking between her governess and Mr. Weston, a village widower, Emma takes it upon herself to find an eligible match for her new friend, Harriet Smith. Though Harriet's parentage is unknown, Emma is convinced that Harriet deserves to be a gentleman's wife and sets her friend's sights on Mr. Elton, the village vicar. Meanwhile, Emma persuades Harriet to reject the proposal of Robert Martin, a well-to-do farmer for whom Harriet clearly has feelings.

*Emma, a Modern Retelling*

Emma Woodhouse's widowed father is an anxious man, obsessed with nutrition and the latest vitamins. He lives the life of a country gentleman in contemporary England, protectively raising his young daughters, Isabella and Emma. While Isabella grows into a young woman, marries a society photographer for Vogue at the age of 19 and gets down to the business of reproducing herself, Emma pursues a degree in interior design at university in Bath, and then returns to set up shop in her home village. With her educated eye for the coordination of pattern and colour, Emma thinks she can now judge what person would best be paired with another, and sets about matchmaking her young friend, Harriet, with various possible suitors. Little does she know she is not the only person encouraging romantic pairings in the village. As Emma's cupid-like curiosity about her neighbors, both young and old, moves her to uncover their deeper motives, she is forced to confront a few surprising truths about her own. There is a PBS series by the same name that you can watch and also the movie, *Clueless*.

Discussion leader, Audrey Brosowski

Refreshment assistant, Susan Boynton

## Book Discussion - *Just Mercy*

Join us Fridays, January 22 and 29 at 7:30 pm when John Artis and Ed Marck will lead a discussion on the book, *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson; a powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and

a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice—from one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time. *JUST MERCY* is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of justice.

John and Ed follow up the discussion on Sunday, January 31st with a sermon titled, *Just Mercy: An Examination of our Criminal Justice System through the Eyes of the Most Vulnerable*

## Announcements

### **Holiday Giving 2015 Thank You!**

Delivery Day was wonderful! Our Church made 123 people (48 adults and 75 children) very happy and grateful when they received 25 bountiful baskets and bags bulging with spiral-cut, glazed hams, fresh fruit and bread. After members and friends donated 42 pairs of mittens and gloves, 18 pairs of socks, 3 scarves and 68 hats (Ann Helm knit 29) totaling 131 items, each child could pick two items to take home. Also, each child chose three books from the table of 253 books grouped by grade level.

Even more amazing to me was witnessing the level of energy, organization and generosity in our members and friends. Helping hands appeared at every step of the project during the last month starting with the donation of over \$1,900 which financed the purchase of hams, fruit and bread. Super shoppers Juli Moore and Valerie Scarsella used the funds to buy five extra baskets to augment the amount for larger families, even though many of the 25 donated baskets arrived with larger families in mind, such as Debbie Connelly's beautifully decorated silver and red tub labeled "for a family of eight."

Laura Wagner and Susan Fullar helped organize baskets as they arrived on December 13. In fact, Susan took two hours to check the contents of each basket and also worked another two hours with Carol Ghesquiere counting and organizing the mitten tree. Carol volunteered two additional hours sorting the books into grade levels. Two stellar organizers, Janet Weber and Mary Zahler, matched baskets to the size of the family and numbered all boxes and bags with tags from our Church. The team that loaded and unloaded five cars and vans, Robin Ramsay, Rudy & Britt Wedenoja, Amy Thelen, Susan Fullar, Mary Zahler, Ann Ottenhoff and Wendy Biernat broke all time records. We did appreciate the help of eight students at the school in transporting items to the classroom. Setting up and organizing the classroom as well as hoisting all baskets, tubs and bags on dollies were the super efficient team of Ann Ottenhoff, Wendy Biernat and Rudy & Britt Wedenoja. Finally, we must pay tribute to the organizing angel behind all this, Candy Dunn, who created a great spreadsheet to keep track of all the donations of time, baskets and money. Thank you all.

Susie Boynton  
Holiday Giving Chair

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### **Our next First Sunday Food Sharing will be Sunday, January 3.**

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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### **Sit & Stitch becomes UU Crafters New Meeting Schedule!**

The UU Crafters will meet the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Annex from 7-9pm beginning Tuesday, January 19, 2016. 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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### **Newsletter Deadline**

Please submit your contribution to the next newsletter by Friday, January 22 at noon. They should be sent to [newsletter@gpuc.us](mailto:newsletter@gpuc.us).

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### **Contact Information**

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