

U-FIRST

October 2011

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

66 Elm St. — P.O. Box 637, Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
(978) 632-0222 — www.uusg.net

Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday Services at 10:00 a.m.

October 2—All Creatures of the Earth & Sky—Rev. John Pastor

In the spirit of St. Francis, our UU Franciscan minister will, once again, celebrate the life of St. Francis.

Note: Rev. John will bless the animals at the Gardner Animal Shelter on October 1st at 10am.



October 9—How, What and Where—Bill Ruggiero

Bill's special presentation will focus on the things we all do in life to get along. Rev. John will be assisting.

October 16—Bring a Friend Sunday: What Is a UU?—Rev. John Pastor

You are invited to bring a friend to share in our worship and fellowship. Rev. John will explain what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Friends of all ages are welcome.

October 23—Sharing Poetry

Once again, you are invited to share your writing talents or favorite poems and poets during this worship service. Please speak to Marion if you want to be included. There will also be time for sharing from the congregation for those who haven't signed up before the service. We encourage you to think of poems that could be the: Opening Words, Reading, Meditation and Closing Words, as well as part of the homily.



October 30—All the Souls and Saints—Rev. John Pastor

This is our time to gather to honor those who have died yet still continue to influence and inspire us. Those who we will always remember: Our Saints.



November 6—Guest at Your Table Sunday—Rev. John Pastor

This Sunday we launch the annual UUSC, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's, effort to raise funds for those in need in our world community. Rev. John will be speaking about how we can help.

Need a Refill for Home?
Housewarming Gift?
Teacher Appreciation?



Everyone is invited to join us for coffee and conversation in the fellowship hall downstairs following worship.



Please get your Dean's Beans Coffee Order to Julie Pera by October 15th, for delivery the 1st weekend of November.

For more info, see the order form at www.uusg.net.

Minister: Rev. John Pastor — Office Hours: Thurs. 1-6pm,
Call for an appointment or to arrange another day or time.
For pastoral emergencies — 508-277-6113

Emeritus Minister: Rev. Neil Bakker

U-First Editor: Julie Pera — uusg.newsletter@gmail.com

Church Office: Catherine Azora-Minda, Secretary — 978-632-0222

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Pastoring...

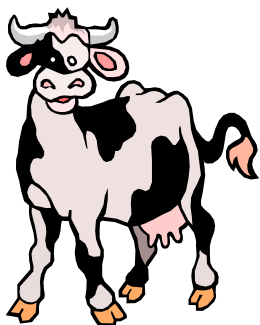
The Tasks of a Religious Community



October is a special month for me. I really enjoy the crisp fall air, the colorful leaves, and sitting in the warmth of that first hearth fire. October 4th is a day that I celebrate the life of St. Francis of Assisi, my spiritual mentor. I call myself a Franciscan UU. Many of you

already know that I began my ministry as a student candidate for the Franciscan priesthood.

It was many years ago when I was an undergrad at a small Franciscan college in upstate New York. While a candidate, I lived much of the time in a religious community, sometimes spending some weeks in a monastery. It was there that I first really experienced living in a religious community. The community prayed together five times a day. Our daily shared tasks were, tending the garden, milking the cows, preparing meals, and keeping the monastery neat and clean. Our tasks also included welcoming visitors to worship on Sunday mornings. Many years later, I find myself in the UUSG "monastery" where, with the exception of milking cows, we are all doing about the same tasks of a religious community.



Mark Morrison-Reed writes about another task. One that he feels is most important. He writes, "The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all," in other words, deep sharing with each other. He also tells us, "The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done." "Together," he writes, "our vision widens and our strength is renewed."

Thank you for being a part of this religious community. Thank you for all of the tasks that you do so willingly, so joyfully. Thank you for being the dwelling place of wider visions and renewed strength.

In the spirit of St. Francis, may you be blessed.

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "John".

CongratUUlations

To Bo & Catherine on renewing their commitment to each other after 25 years in relationship. Thank you for including all of us in your special day!

Thank UU

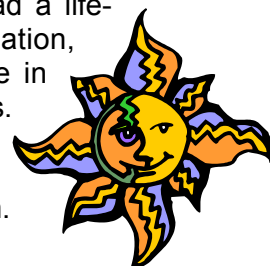
To Leo Rousseau, for the all the hard work Leo has dedicated to the UUSG over the years and we wish him well in his retirement.

Boudoin and Catherine Azora-Minda would like to thank all of the members of this blessed community who shared their energy with us around the celebration of our 25th anniversary - through the gift of their presence at the ceremony and celebration, through their good thoughts and wishes, and for their ongoing support of us within this community. And, a special thank you from Catherine to all who were a part of the "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" dance and song

Thank UU, CongratUUlations, In Our Thoughts & Welcome
If you know of a contribution, concern, or accomplishment that deserves mention in this column, please be sure to send a note to the newsletter editor via e-mail or "in-box".

Help Create Sunshine!

Sunshine Outreach Ministry will be sending out greeting cards to members of our church community who may be ill or had a life-changing event (birth, graduation, marriage, death, etc.). They are in need of greeting card donations. If you have any extra greeting cards that you would like to donate, please contact Rev. John.



Altar Flowers

Flowers enhance the beauty of our sanctuary in so many ways. This year you are invited to donate a flower arrangement to be placed on the altar for our Sunday worship services. The donated flowers may be in memory of a loved-one, to celebrate a life event, or perhaps flowers from your own garden that you wish to share. For more information contact Catherine Azora-Minda or Rev. John.



From the Executive Committee



Notes

The EC would like to keep our Congregational Forum meetings on the 1st Sunday of the month.

We tried a new seating arrangement for Septembers forum, let us know what you think.

The Lift Project is still in the works. Members of the committee have been reviewing different lifts and are looking at different areas of the church for the best possible location.

With our church building being used by many different groups, we would ask that church members coming into the meetings areas respect the privacy and space that we provide to community groups. Please check the calendar on the office door for times the church is in use, and depending on the group using the space, please consider coming back to the church at a later time.

As always, if you have a concern about church business, please talk with a member of the Executive Committee.

Pledge Update



Have you made a financial commitment to UUSG? Our spiritual home needs our many gifts in order to thrive in our local community. Gifts of our time and participation are important, but those alone can't pay our bills.

Last spring, our Executive Committee proposed a goal of raising \$35,000 in pledges for the 2011-2012 church year. This represents approximately half of our yearly expenditures. Can we meet this goal and balance our budget? You can help by making a financial commitment for this church year. Your generosity is part of being an active member of our church community and can be a big part of your spiritual practice.

As of this newsletter, we have received \$25,600 in pledges from about half our current membership. Have you pledged yet? If not, pledge forms are available on our website or from our Finance Committee, Priscilla Ericsson and Chris Pera. All amounts are kept confidential. If you any questions or would like to talk with someone about pledging, please contact Priscilla or Chris.



Committee in the Spotlight

**Children's
Religious Education (CRE)**

Meets: 2nd Thursday of the month, 7:30pm

Chair: Vicki Heidorn

Members: Laura Reichsman, Julie Pera, Elke Anderson, Natalie Nelson

Purpose: Religious Education is a lifelong process. Our committee supports the volunteers caring for and teaching our children.

How YOU Can Support this Committee: Volunteer to provide childcare or teaching; Share resources (supplies, talents, interests or information); Ask questions!



Tidy Time

While we are in the process of hiring a new sexton for the church, we will join together on the 4th Sunday of the month to clean and tidy up the sanctuary and hall for a couple hours after coffee hour. If you are unable to stay on a Sunday, we would still welcome your help at another time that you are willing and able. Tasks would include taking down cobwebs, dusting, sweeping, vacuuming, and even helping with the bathrooms, kitchen and mopping the hall floors if need be.

Mike Vecchi will be coordinating this volunteer effort. The first monthly clean sweep will be announced shortly. Please contact him if you have any questions.



127TH ANNUAL FALL FAIR

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5th
9 AM - 2 PM
CRAFT & FLEA MARKET



Vendors Apply at UUSG.NET or call 978-632-0222

Unitarian Universalist Society
66 Elm Street, Gardner, MA



Tea Cup Auction
Silent Auction
50/50 Raffle
Brunch Café
Baked Goods

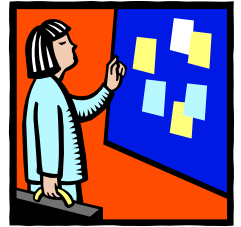


How Can I Help?

It's not too late to jump in and get involved in the Fall Fair! The next planning meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, October 5 at 7:30pm.

The vendor application and flier are posted on our website, www.uusg.net. If you are interested in having either a craft or a flea table, please submit an application as soon as possible. If you know of someone who might be interested, tell them about our Fair and give them a copy of the application form. Please make copies of the flyer and help to spread the word by posting them on bulletin boards in places that you frequent.



Flea Market Donations

Bring flea market items starting Sunday, October 23rd. If donations need to be dropped off after hours, please speak to a member of the Executive Committee to arrange a time.

**Please, NO clothing,
electronics, books or furniture.**

Clara Barton and Massachusetts Bay Districts

Got Purpose? 2 NEW workshops in a great series!!!!

Last year, DOUG ZELINSKI, Director of Leadership Development, inspired many with the first workshops in his "Got Purpose?" series. This year, he is back with two more. Whether you've been to all or none of the previous workshops, you are welcome! Come prepared to be engaged and inspired as the adventure continues.

Designed for all seeking to live out the purpose of Unitarian Universalism, this series is especially useful for ministers, Committees on Ministry, Board and Standing Committee members, religious educators, social justice advocates and small group ministry facilitators. Congregational teams are strongly encouraged to attend with discounts available.

Conflict and Competing Values

October 22, 2011, 9am-2:30pm
First Parish in Framingham
Register now! (Deadline 10/17)

October 29, 2011, 9am-2:30pm
Sheraton Monarch Place Hotel, Springfield, MA
Register now! (Deadline 10/24)

Covenant and Creating Community

December 3, 2011, 9am-2:30pm
Sheraton Monarch Place Hotel, Springfield, MA
Register now! (Deadline 11/28)

December 10, 2011, 9am-2:30pm
First Parish Church in Weston
Register now! (Deadline 12/5)

For more information, visit www.cbd-mbd-uua.org

The Beauty of Fall Cleaning

First we would like to thank everyone who came by on the holiday weekend and helped. We are very grateful and appreciative for all the time and effort. Thank you!

Well the clean up went very well, we had a hard working crew that tackled the kitchen area very aggressively and the sanctuary crew was also a blur of activity. Only a few photos could be taken with all the activity, but the chandelier, on the other hand, has a great shot and only because I became very familiar with it.



Lois and Roy, Jean and Tom, Terry, Barbara, Dorcas, Catherine, Nina and myself were in attendance and ready for battle. The kitchen crew went into places that have not seen the light of day in years, everything has been cleaned out... Yes, the coffee cans piled high are now going away! The corner where buckets of who-knows-what, along with the buckets of sand, were piled and covered with more junk, gone! Stoves that were... well, let's just say they are still soaking.

The crew scrubbed from arms reach to the floor, and I do mean scrub. The windows and tops of the cabinets remain, otherwise it's been cleaned or moved out.

Roy worked the chairs with his power washer and then Tom and Lois joined in the spraying and moving and cleaning the chairs. (White is so not a good color for chairs by the way.) Everyone worked the kitchen and chairs, and then finished off in the Sanctuary. Old English Wood polish was flying all around and the wood hasn't shined so bright even on this overcast day. Amazing work by all!!

Having spent most of the day in the sanctuary on ladders, I know that lots of details are not included in this note so I apologize for missing details, like Tom running up and down stairs all day working the kitchen and then the sanctuary and outside with the chairs. He was even zapped when he was cleaning the chandelier in the front parlor, good thing is was OFF.... All I

can say is everyone did such a wonderful job and I am thankful for all the work that was done.

On a side note, Dorcas was a cleaning machine upstairs—funny thing is she was only going to stay until 1:00-ish, but just could not leave until she was done having so much fun (at around 4:00-ish) and she had started at 10. She just kept going, she made me tired.

The hall and restrooms had to wait for their makeover, we called it a day at 4:00.

Submitted by Mike Vecchi

Contra Dances

***on-going church fund-raiser
for handicap accessibility***

The dances are usually the
4th Saturday of the month.
The next dates scheduled are:

**Oct 22nd & Nov 26th
7:30-10pm**

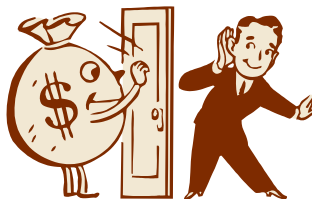
All welcome. No experience required. No partner necessary. First-time dancers welcome! Free instruction just before the dance.

\$2 discount for students with student ID card.
\$7 adults; \$5 teens; maximum \$18 per family.

For more information, see uusg.net,
or contact Terry Dattolo
at dattquiler@hotmail.com.



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Salisbury Singers present:

What's It Worth?

**Gala Benefit:
Wine Tasting & Silent Auction**

Friday, October 21, 2011

**Jepson Hall, Trinity Lutheran Church
73 Lancaster St., Worcester MA**

*6-7pm Wine tasting
courtesy of O'Hara's Wine & Liquors*

*7-9pm Silent auction and "What's It Worth"
appraisal by expert from Skinner's Auction House.*

Tickets: \$25 includes one item for appraisal; \$20
for general admission and wine tasting only.

Limited tickets available.
Advanced purchase recommended.

See Marion, Vicki or Chuck for tickets.

Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637
Gardner, MA 01440

TO:

Your Executive Committee

The Executive Committee usually meets on the third Monday of the month. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding church policies or programs, please feel free to speak with any of the church trustees.

Trustees for Church Year 2011-12

- Bo Azora-Minda ('12)
 - Tom Brady ('14)
 - Melody Fortier ('13)
 - Bob Gifford (Chair, '13)
 - Chris Pera (Clerk/Treasurer, '12)
 - Laura Reichsman ('14)
 - Mike Vecchi ('12)
- (year in parentheses indicates term ending)

Newsletter Contributions

The deadline for newsletter contributions is usually the 15th of the month. Please send your contribution via e-mail to uusg.newsletter@gmail.com, or provide a typed or *neatly* handwritten copy to Julie Pera. Contributions may be edited for length or content at the discretion of the editors.

The deadline for the November newsletter is October 15.

Save the Date!

October 1—Blessing of the
Animals, Gardner
Animal Shelter, 10am



October 2—Congregational Forum, after worship

October 5—Fall Fair Planning Meeting, 7:30pm

October 16—Bring A Friend Sunday

October 22—Conradance, 7:30-10pm

October 23—May begin bringing Flea Market
donations to church (see page 4)

November 5—Fall Fair, 9am-2pm

November 6—Congregational Forum, after worship