

U-FIRST

Summer 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.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

July 17—Encountering Judaism—Shauna Pratt

Just what exactly is Judaism and why is it part of our UU heritage? What spiritual practices could we take away from it? Is the food really that good? Find more questions (and maybe an answer or two) in this service on Judaism.



August 21—Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams—Rev. John Pastor

Summer Services are followed by a Potluck Brunch. Everyone is invited to join us for coffee and conversation in the fellowship hall downstairs following worship.

Pastoring...

Another church year has come to an end. What a year it was!

Touchstones of Worship became a theme for the Music and Worship Committee encouraging our members to lead worship with resources from the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Members of UUSG participated in Gardner's 225th Anniversary Parade held on September 26th Roy Gilbert even wore his kilt! We held a very successful, less work, less stress, Fall Fair in November. We were one of the eight churches that came together for the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service.

In February, the Executive Committee went to a CBD gathering called "Who is in Charge Here?" and returned energized with new ideas for growth. Who can forget their "Mission Possible" service? Accessibility at UUSG got a lift with more interest and investigation. On Good Friday, UUSG sponsored a Traveling Worship Service. Seventy-five people

gathered at our church as part of this event. Also in April, we held our second annual Regional Association Sunday in Leominster. Then the Contra Dances happened! In June we held our Spring Fair, welcomed new members, and dedicated a special baby, Lily. And these are just some of the things we did together.

I hope that you found inspiration in my sermons this year. I spoke quite a bit about spiritual practices and journeys. Themes of hospitality, humor, doing the right thing, and building your own theology were predominant. The Christmas theme was "Jesus Christ Superstar" and at Easter I asked, "What Would Jesus Do?"

As we wind down and move into our summer, let us all take a moment to count the many blessings of this community of loving, caring, and giving people. You are so awesome! I'm already looking forward to next year.

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Pastor".

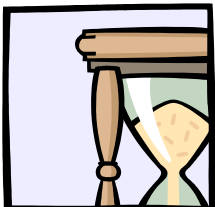
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Minister: Rev. John Pastor — Office Hours: Thurs. 1-6pm,
Call for an appointment or to arrange another day or time.
For pastoral emergencies — 508-277-6113

Emeritus Minister: Rev. Neil Bakker

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

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

June Recap

Lots of wonderful things happened during our services in June. We hope that you didn't miss any, but just in case...

June 5—Annual Meeting



A beautifully introduced service that included our annual meeting and was concluded at 12:45 with the extinguishing of the chalice. Please speak to Catherine Azora-Minda or one of the members of the Executive Committee if you would like a copy of the annual report, 2011-12 budget, or have any questions.



June 12—The Meaning of Belonging —Rev. John Pastor

During this worship service we honored past members, acknowledged current members, and welcomed new members. A special child dedication ceremony was held to formally welcome Lily Marandino. It was wonderful to have so many guests and children present for this beautiful service. Thank you, congratulations and welcome!



June 19—Flower Communion —Rev. John Pastor

We celebrated our tradition of Flower Communion and recognized all those that have contributed to our church community. The Hurd-Charney Scholarship was presented to Katie Abisla and Mary Nicholson.



1st Annual Sundae Sunday



Following the Flower Communion service, our "First Annual Ice Cream Sundae Sunday" was a huge success. Thank you to everyone for your generous contributions, and a special thanks to Bo for the grilled hot dogs. Our last coffee hour of the season was indeed rambunctious! We thought it would be fun for the kids, but we were all kids when we were building our individual sundaes. We would also like to thank everyone who hosted and those who contributed so generously and creatively to the many pot luck coffee hours.

—Tom, Jean & Terry

Summer 2011 Worship Services

In addition to our services on July 17 and August 21, here are some other summer worship services.

August 14, 10am–noon

NCMUUC Picnic at Lake Dennison State Park, special worship service at 11am.

Contact Rev. Leaf Seligman at 978-343-6307.

Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, New Hampshire

Summer Services at the historic church are at 10:30am. For directions to the Universalist Memorial Church, please check their website, www.universalistheritage.org

- July 10—Rev. Lee Page, Affiliate Minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Vero Beach, Florida.
- July 17—Rev. Stephen M. Shick, Minister, Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson, Massachusetts
- July 24—Rev. Stephen D. Edington, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire
- July 31—2011 Universalist Heritage Foundation Sermon Award Winner (TBA)
- August 7—Reverends Peter L. and Faith Scott, Retired Unitarian Universalist Ministers
- August 14—Rev. Steven M. Wilson, Consulting Minister, All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Braintree, Massachusetts

Services sponsored by The Living Universalism Project of the Universalist Heritage Foundation.

www.universalistheritage.org

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FALL FAIR DATE PICKED!



**Saturday,
November 5, 2011**

Mark your calendars!

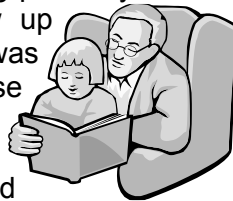
Just Between UUs

Submitted by Catherine Azora-Minda



Jay Rainey has been an integral part of our worship services, playing piano and now the organ for us for about five years. Jay came to UUSG through a friendship with Bill Ruggiero that began at the gym where they both still work out. Bill is one of the original members of the Wednesday night meditation group and he would talk with Jay about it. Jay began attending meditation on Wednesday nights and eventually decided to check out the church services. We discovered that he played piano one day when he was playing Christmas carols downstairs during coffee hour, which led into his current role at the church.

Jay's dad came from a family of 14 who all played music. In the family home, they had a Steinway piano that belonged to his grandfather who gave it to Jay's mother because "he knew one of the kids would play piano." Jay started playing piano by ear before the second grade. He grew up knowing that what he wanted to do was either music or art. If Jay could choose one person to have a fantasy dinner with, it would be his grandfather who was a professional musician and held a Master's degree in pipe organ, piano and voice. While he did spend time with him as a young child, his grandfather passed away when Jay was still in grade school. He would like to talk with him now as an adult about his music, what it was like for him and where he traveled. He was known for developing Debussy's music for the pipe organ and once had dinner with Paderewski.

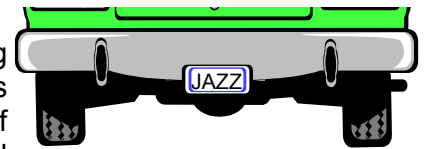


Originally from Templeton, in the early 1970's Jay moved to Arizona for 13 years. He spent some time in New Mexico and then "drove into Phoenix with \$70 in my pocket." He didn't know anyone there, but

eventually found work playing at a dinner theater. Jay has been playing professionally ever since and currently plays for musical theater at the New Players Theater Guild in Fitchburg, at the Mount and with high school theater groups. It was in Arizona that he met his wife and they began their family. Being a musician and working at night allowed him to be at home caring for his kids during the day. At some point they came back to Massachusetts for a visit and "ended up staying here."



Jay's favorite thing about Massachusetts is the seasons "all of them, I don't even mind the snow too much." His least favorite thing is that they are so far away from his wife's family in Arizona. If he were to have a vanity license plate, it would say "Jazz." He went to Berklee and studied classical music but likes to play jazz – "a lot of 40's jazz, Brubeck and Herbie Hancock."



The farthest that Jay has traveled is Hawaii where he went when he was about 19 years old to visit his brother who was stationed there. He "liked the tropical atmosphere, the beach and the water." He loves the ocean and has always been drawn to it. While a lot of things can make Jay smile, kids always do. He has a granddaughter who just turned two and "there will be a sister coming along in August." It all comes together at the end of a Sunday service when Josiah Pera climbs up on Jay's lap at the piano and they play their weekly duet. Both they and everyone gathered around them at the piano are smiling.



CongratUUlations

To the two Hurd-Charney Scholarship recipients, Mary Nicholson and Katie Abisla. Mary and Katie have been volunteering their time to provide child care at UUSG for several years. They were each awarded \$1,000 at our Flower Communion Service on June 19th.

To the Marandino family on the dedication of Lily Marandino. Many blessings be upon you!

Thank UU

To Terry Dattolo and her "band" of helpers, for an extremely fun and successful first season of UUSG Contradancing. We are looking forward to more after the summer heat subsides!

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".

Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637
Gardner, MA 01440

TO:

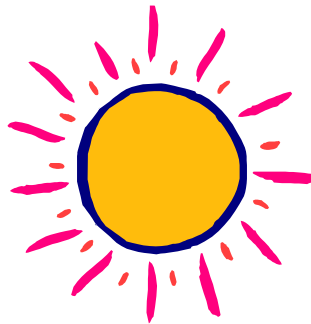
Your Executive Committee

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 2010-11

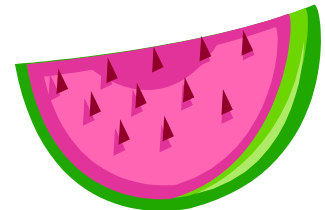
Bo Azora-Minda ('12)
Tom Brady ('14)
Laura Reichsman ('14)
Melody Fortier ('13)
Bob Gifford (Chair, '13)
Chris Pera (Clerk/Treasurer, '12)
Mike Vecchi ('12)

(year in parentheses indicates term ending)



Save the Date!

July 17—Summer Worship Service
August 21—Summer Worship Service
September 11—Water Communion
Worship Service
November 5—Fall Fair



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 September newsletter is August 15.