

U-FIRST

February 2008

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.

Feb 3—What's the Issue? *Scout Sunday*

—David Fabian, Rodney Fagan & Chris Pera

On Scout Sunday, Scouts recognize the importance of spirituality in their Scouting lives. Rodney and Chris, local active Scouters, will lead the service and David, an Eagle Scout, will reflect on what he believes are some real issues when people do not understand others beliefs.

Feb 10—Shadows and Lights—Rev. John Pastor

(This sermon was originally going to be presented on Feb. 3.) We don't seem to give February 2nd very much attention these days. Besides being Groundhog Day (one of my favorite holidays), this date shares Christian and Pagan holidays that also honor the symbols of shadows and lights. Come learn more.

Feb 17—A Language of Caring—Rev. John Pastor

You may have heard that conflict is good. The co-creative process always involves tension and conflict. This sermon will explore ways that we can name conflict with caring words that invite growth.

Feb 24—What's the Difference—Leslie Fabian

During this service three physically challenged people will share their journeys with the gathered congregation.

March 2—Practice Makes Imperfect—Rev. John Pastor

Sometimes we strive to be perfect in an imperfect world; this can be a real struggle. We can all develop a spiritual practice that lets go of this struggle.

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

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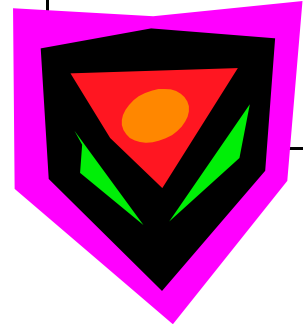
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CHURCH CANCELLATIONS

If you have reason to believe that a church service or event may be cancelled due to inclement weather, please call the church office at 978-632-0222. You will be informed of the cancellation via the church voicemail.



Minister: Rev. John Pastor — Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-6:00 pm
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

Pastoring.....

Thank you to all who participated in the Congregational Forum that took place on January 6th. It proved to be an important time for sharing our thoughts about how to be a more efficient and caring faith community.

Some of the things that I took away from this meeting:

- ❖ The desire for the Executive Committee to more fully communicate with the rest of the congregation. I support the recommendation to publish the approved minutes from their meetings in the newsletter, website, and other appropriate places.

- ❖ A recognition that our website should be re-written in an easier format. Thanks to all who came forward to offer help, especially to Nina and Chris. Thanks to Bob Gifford for all he has done. The website is an important source of information for this congregation and to those seeking to know more about our church.

- ❖ Our financial situation requires some focus. As most know, we are operating at a deficit budget. The Executive Committee is looking at filling the Treasurer position and organizing a canvas. We all need to think and act on our financial situation in order to secure a more stable future for our church and the future of professional ministry.

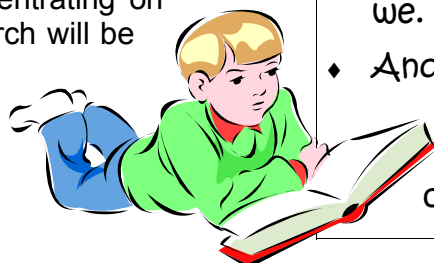
- ❖ We need to make coordinating coffee hour more user friendly, especially for new folks.

- ❖ If you have an activity you would like to sponsor, talk to the EC, contact Al Ericsson for building availability, and go for it: Game Night, Potluck, Dance, etc.

I am hopeful that future meetings will be as informative and as helpful. Good job everyone!

On January 27th I will begin an Adult RE Program. It was to be a program of eight sessions focusing on caring for this planet. But, based on the outcome of the above meeting, I've decided to change the focus to the meaning of membership. It will probably be about four sessions. It is my belief that concentrating on what it means to belong to this church will be helpful to our growth and overall well being. Together we can do great things.

With love,



All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

Some of you have asked for Robert Fulghum's list of his learnings. Here they are:

- ◆ Share everything.
- ◆ Play fair.
- ◆ Don't hit people.
- ◆ Put things back where you found them.
- ◆ Clean up your own mess.
- ◆ Don't take things that aren't yours.
- ◆ Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- ◆ Wash your hands before you eat.
- ◆ Flush.
- ◆ Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
- ◆ Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
- ◆ Take a nap every afternoon.
- ◆ When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
- ◆ Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
- ◆ Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.
- ◆ And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK.



Lifespan Religious Education

A Change....

Rev. John has rearranged the order of service to allow more time for the children to get into their program. The children will be lead in lighting a candle of joy or concern before dismissal.



Adult RE

Beginning Sunday, January 27th, Rev. John will facilitate four Adult RE sessions titled

“Gathered Here; Making the Most of Our Time Together.”

During these sessions we will review our Seven Principles, examine congregational growth, and explore ways that we can put our faith into action. All four sessions will be held Sundays at 11:45 a.m. and end at 12:45 p.m. Session dates are: Jan. 27, Feb. 3 and 24, and Mar. 2.

Questions about teaching Children’s RE:

Q. What happens during the children’s program?

A. We are using stories from the series, “Under the Wisdom Tree.” We have a lesson planned, a story planned, a craft and a game. Usually we do 2 or 3 of the activities before we run out of time!

Q. What groups exist now?

A. We have nursery care for infants and toddlers. We have our children’s program for age 4 through grade 5. If we had more volunteers, we would be able to respond to the different attention spans and interests of the children. We need a teacher once a month for a sixth grader. The Sunday evening teen program has leadership but needs a few more teens, so we need to hear from you to get that scheduled.

Q. Why do you ask for adult volunteers for the children’s program?

A. Our policy is to have at least 2 adults with the children for the safety of all.

Q. What if I don’t think I can teach?

A. Sometimes we just need a second person to satisfy our safety requirement. We will work with your interests and strengths to find out how you can help and at the same time get some satisfaction or reward. We will take advantage of teacher trainings as they become available.

Q. Why would anyone want to miss the adult worship service?

A. Teaching can be a spiritual experience. You may discover, as I have, that a great way to learn new things is to prepare to teach. It is my calling. You may find new insights through the eyes of a child. Since we tape all worship services, I listen to the service later in the day.

Q. Who would be the ideal volunteer?

A. Someone who is willing to be called upon from time to time or who can set up a schedule of availability. Actual duties would be tailored to the volunteer’s interests and abilities. Coming 2 weeks in a row helps with continuity.

Q. What else do I need to know?




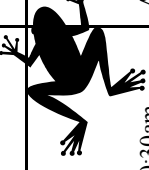
A. In following Safe Congregation recommendations, we are becoming familiar with the process to run a criminal background check, which will be done on staff and volunteers who are working with children and vulnerable adults.

Q. How do I volunteer to help with the children’s program?

A. Contact Rev. John by calling the church office, 978-632-0222, and thanks.

Submitted by Vicki Heidorn

UUSG February 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Jan 27 Worship, 10am Adult RE, 11:30	28 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	29 TOPS, 9am	30 Meditation Group, 6pm	31 Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm 	Feb 1 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	2 AA, 12-1pm Private Function, 1:30-5pm 
3 Worship, 10am Congregational Forum	4 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	5 TOPS, 9am	6 MOMS Club, 9:30am Meditation Group, 6pm	7 Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	8 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	9 Publicity Committee, 10am (Old Parsonage Tea Room) AA, 12-1pm
10 Worship, 10am <u>Newsletter Deadline</u>	11 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	12 TOPS, 9am	13 Meditation Group, 6pm Exec Committee, 7pm	14  Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	15 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	16 AA, 12-1pm
17 Worship, 10am RE Comm., 11:30am	18 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	19 TOPS, 9am	20 Meditation Group, 6pm	21 Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	22 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	23 AA, 12-1pm
24 Worship, 10am Adult RE, 11:30	25 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	26 TOPS, 9am	27 Meditation Group, 6pm	28 Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm Worship Committee, 7:30pm	29 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm 	Mar 1 AA, 12-1pm

Bold: UUSG events at UUSG

Plain Text: Rental Groups at UUSG

Italics: Community Events

Boldface Italics: District & UUA events

Reiki Share

for those who want to heal
themselves and others.

Give and receive Reiki and Healing Touch

On the 2nd Saturday of the month at 2 pm

Cost is free.

*All are welcome, whether you've
been attuned to Reiki or not.*

Call ahead 774-275-1585 or drop in!

Held at 33 Electric Ave Suite 205, Fitchburg,
with Natalie.

Tibetan New Year

The most important holiday in Tibet is Losar, which celebrates the Tibetan New Year. It's celebrated in February, but the exact date varies each year according to the lunar calendar.

Losar is a three day festival. On the first day celebrations are usually restricted to the family, with the second and third days being the time to visit and exchange gifts with friends and more distant relatives. This is also a time for Tibetans to visit monasteries and make offerings.

Losar is marked with activities that symbolise purification, and welcoming in the new. Buildings are whitewashed and thoroughly cleaned, people wear new clothes and special food is prepared. Buddhist monks adorn the monasteries with the finest decorations, and conduct religious ceremonies. Rituals are performed to drive away evil spirits, and people celebrate with feasts and dancing.

The festival of Losar can be traced back to the pre-Buddhist period in Tibet.

In the times when Tibetans practiced the Bon religion, every winter a festival was held where people offered large quantities of incense to please local spirits and deities.

This festival eventually became the annual Buddhist festival we know today.

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/holydays/losar.shtm

Committee Information

Ministerial Relations Committee Formed

A Ministerial Relations Committee (MRC) has been formed. The three members are Chris Pera, Jane Coleman, and Dorcas Hurd. This committee will serve as a liaison between the congregation and the minister. They are confidential agents that report to our minister for those issues that you feel you would like Rev. John to know about. You are invited to share with them your concerns, comments, suggestions, and even praise. They will also complete a formal evaluation of the minister for the Ministerial Fellowship Committee at the end of the church year.

All committees are encouraged to provide current information regarding meeting schedule and committee chairpersons for publication in the newsletter. As always, committee news and updates are also welcome!

Thank UU!

To the following who helped to make our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service so wonderful:

Shauna Pratt, flute, Marion Lyon, violin, Chuck Heidorn, guitar, and Bob Hall, oboe and bassoon. And, of course, Jay Rainey, piano.

Readers Bob Gifford, Melody Fortier, David Fabian, Al Ericsson, and Nancy Fiske.

Bill Ruggerio, light dimming.

Vicki Heidorn for filling-in as greeter.

Sue Blain and all those who helped to decorate the sanctuary.

All those that brought refreshments and helped to clean up.

To Leslie Fabian for donating the red mugs for visitors.

To Terry and Don Dattolo for donating the paper goods for Coffee Hour.

If you know of a contribution, concern, or accomplishment that deserves mention in this column, please be sure to send a note to one of the newsletter editors via e-mail or "in-box".

Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637

Gardner, MA 01440

TO:

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, or if your address has changed, please send a note to the church, "Attention: U-First Editor."

Feb 08

Your Executive Committee

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 2007-08

Al Ericsson

David Fabian

Nancy Fiske

Melody Fortier

Bob Gifford (Chair)

Vicki Heidorn (Clerk)

Marion Lyon

Save the Date!

Feb 3—Congregational Forum, following worship

Feb 9—Publicity Committee, 10am (Old Parsonage Tea Room)

Feb 13 (WED)—Executive Committee, 7pm

Feb 17—Religious Education Committee, 11:30am

Feb 28—Worship Committee, 7:30pm

Feb 3 & 24, March 2—Adult RE: Gathered Here...



Look for details inside!

Newsletter Contributions

The deadline for newsletter contributions is usually the second Sunday of the month. Send your contribution via e-mail to uusg.newsletter@gmail.com; or on diskette, typed or *neatly* handwritten in the newsletter "in-box" located on the bulletin board downstairs. No phone submissions, please. Contributions may be edited for length or content at the discretion of the editors.

The deadline for the March newsletter is February 10th.