

U-FIRST

June 2006

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.

June 4—Standing on One Foot

If you were asked to give a summation of your faith while standing on one foot, how would you reply?

June 11—Against the Stream

The challenge of keeping the living tradition alive and relevant.

June 18—Flower Communion Service

Please bring a flower to the service to remind us of the pleasure of giving and receiving.



July 16—Lay Led Worship

This service will be facilitated by Cindy Malley. Mike Rice will play the music for the service. If you wish to join a pick-up choir, please let Vicki Heidorn know so we can practice!!! (978-630-2340 or 978-632-7623)

August 20—Lay Led Worship

This service will be facilitated by Vicki Heidorn. Musicians, please contact Vicki—we'll create something!



September 10—Water Communion Service

This summer, remember to collect some water from a special place. We will combine our water in a special water communion ceremony, share stories about our special places, and celebrate the beginning of a new church year.

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

In this issue...

Minister's Message—p. 2

Thank UU & CongratUUlations—p. 2

From the Executive Committee—p. 3

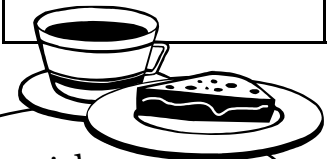
Summer Happenings—p. 3

Treasurer's Report—p. 3

Calendar of Events—p. 4

U-Youth!—p.5

SPECIAL INSERT:
Update from the Vision Group



These special summer services will be followed by a pot luck brunch—please mark your calendar—bring a dish to share, and join us for the blessings of community followed by a wonderful meal!

To reach us this summer:

Messages can be left on the church voice mail, which will be checked regularly. If you need immediate assistance, please call Rev. Howard at home.



Please call the church office at 978-632-0222 for updates on all summer activities.

Minister: Rev. Stephen Davies Howard — Phone: 413-253-5868

Emeritus Minister: Rev. Neil Bakker

U-First Editors: Julie Pera — pera.cj@verizon.net

Cindy Malley — b.charmer@verizon.net

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



Minister's Message



In his chapter on solitude in *Walden*, Thoreau states that, "I have never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude." Walden Pond in nearby Concord might also be a place that has no mark on the map. Each person needs his/her own Walden; a place of our own devising—an ocean beach, a quiet garden, a silent church before the service begins. Much depends on temperament and inclination. Solitude is essential to the spiritual life. It turns our loneliness and alienation into a source of creativity. We can discover what is real and what is illusory. In solitude we can ponder the question raised by the great prophet from Nazareth, "What profit a person to gain the whole world and lose one's own soul?"

Carl Gustav Jung encouraged his patients to devote a part of each day in solitude to give room for the "active imagination". Being apart from people helps us to appreciate and accept them. An "active imagination" helps us become aware of neglected talents hidden by the daily pressures of the world. We are able to accept ourselves and other people. Solitude is a wonderful prelude to the treasures of community.

Sincerely, Stephen

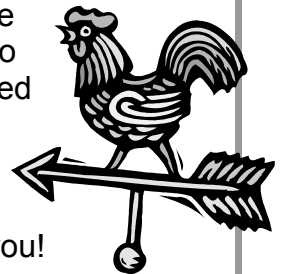


Thank UU!

To Dorcas Hurd for all of her dedication and hard work that made the Spring Flea Market a success. Without her, it would not have been possible. Thank you!

To everyone everyone who helped at the Flea Market on May 20th—the Malleys and Mahoneys, who chaired the bake sale; Ann Howard, who sold cutlery and provided a light lunch for those who were hungry; Vicki Heidorn, who helped set up and worked the entire day; Elizabeth Marie Jackson who was there the night before and the day of the event; Sue Faucher, who hung clothes and arranged the children's things; Catherine Azora-Minda who helped set up; Chris Pera who provided the use of the outdoor tent; and everyone who donated things, baked food, and rented space for sell their treasures.

The weather cooperated, the crowd was continuous for most of the day, and we made more than \$700! Thank you!



To Jane Coleman for preparing our beautiful sanctuary displays for the remainder of our year. Thank you!

CongratUUlations!

To Daniel King, son of Melody Fortier and Bob Gifford on his recent graduation from Gardner High. He will be attending the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

To Elsa Heidorn, daughter of Vicki and Chuck Heidorn, on her graduation from Columbia School of Journalism with a Master of Science in Journalism. She graduated with honors and also was the recipient of a Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship.

If you know of a contribution 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".

In Dedication

On Sunday, May 28th we celebrated along with Chris, Julie, and the entire Pera family in their ceremony of Naming and Dedication for their daughter, Kaarina Laila Pera. Many blessings to them all!

From the Executive Committee

► **Nominations for the UUSG Executive Committee (EC)**—The annual meeting is June 18th following the service. The congregation elects the treasurer, the clerk, and EC members. Nominations can be made in advance or at the annual meeting. If you are interested in being nominated or in making a nomination, please contact Connie Thompson. Members are asked to serve for a three-year term, but commitments can be made for one or two years.

The new EC will choose a chairperson and decide on meeting times. This year we met monthly after church on the second Sunday of the month, with one or two extra meetings to finish business. The EC decides programs, policies, and makes the financial decisions of the society.

We have had a fantastic year with good results thanks to the work of all the EC members and our interest groups. The long-term future of the church depends on creative solutions to finding financial support for our minister, professional staff, building maintenance, and our activities. If this appeals to you, please let us know.

► **Canvass**—Thanks to all who have already turned in your pledges for the upcoming year. Your time, talent and financial support are appreciated!

► **New Building Use Policy**—We have a new policy for building use for members and outside groups. Please contact the Bob Gifford or the church office for information.

►► In Faith, Vicki Heidorn ◀◀

Meditation Group

The meditation group is planning to continue meeting this summer on Wednesdays at 6 pm. Drop-ins and new visitors are welcome. Admission is free. Donations are accepted.

Lend a Helping Hand

Several work parties are scheduled for cleaning the church and making necessary improvements. Helpers are asked to gather at 2:00 pm on the following Sundays: July 9, 23 and 30. Refreshments will be served!



People are need for the following jobs:

- ◆ Yard work and weeding
- ◆ Prepping for painting: washing paint, scraping, wire brushing, masking, patching and sanding
- ◆ Painting (qualified painters, please), priming and clean-up
- ◆ Preparing food for the volunteers

We will need tarps & ladders too, please!



Step up and help out! If you can, either by doing the work or assisting the workers, please contact Leo Rousseau, Sexton 978-632-5825 or the church office 978-632-0222.

Treasurer's Report



April 2006

Income: \$3,638.00 Expenses: \$5,505.49
Spent \$1,867.49 more than received.

Fiscal Year to Date, July 1, 2005 — April 30, 2006

Income: \$42,199.94 Expenses: \$61,693.38
Spent \$ 19,493.44 more than received.

Submitted by Priscilla Ericsson, Treasurer

Scrapbook & Craft Club

Escape the heat and come into the cool of the fellowship hall to work on your current project and enjoy conversation with friends. We will meet on Tuesday, July 11 and Tuesday, August 8 from 7-9:30 pm. Please RSVP to Julie Pera at 978-632-4369.

U-Youth!

Happy Father's Day

There are fathers and grandfathers all over the world

P A T E R F D A D D Y H
 B R E H T A F D N A R G
 G L R P A P P A S A P A
 F L D A K Z G Q D T O P
 Y A A P V R E T A V P D
 K S P A N A G Y A P A N
 E I V A A R I V H L U A
 D A Q A P O S W O K Y R
 E N Q O B B A B D A D G
 R A O T I L E U B A T R
 P V N R I F A T H E R E



ABUELITO
 APA
 BABBO
 DAD
 DADDY
 FATHER
 GRANDFATHER
 GRANDPA
 ISA
 NAGYAPA

OPA
 PADRE
 PAPA
 PAPPAS
 PATER
 POP
 PREDEK
 VAARI
 VANAISA
 VATER

Free for non-commercial use
 ©1998 The Kid's Domain
 www.kidsdomain.com

Recent Readings

Children's Stories

- ◆ *The Mommy Book*, by Todd Parr. Read by Cindy Malley on May 14.
- ◆ *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* by Charlene Costanzo. Read by Heather Mahoney on May 28.
- ◆ *Earth to Audrey*, written by Susan Hughes ; illustrated by Stéphane Poulin. Read by Julie Pera on June 4.



June Holidays by Religion

June 1st—Ascension (Eastern Christianity)

Ascension is the anniversary of Jesus' ascendance into heaven and enthronement as universal sovereign. In the eastern tradition it comes forty days after Pascha.

June 2nd—Shavuot (Judaism)

Shavuot ("Weeks"; the plural of the Hebrew word for seven) marks the conclusion of the period of seven weeks that follows Pesah. Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah to the Israelites and the completion of God's purpose to create a special people. It is celebrated for two days in the diaspora and for one day in Israel and among Reform Jews. Shavuot begins at sundown the previous day.

June 4th – Pentecost (Western Christianity)

June 11th – Pentecost (Eastern Christianity)

Pentecost (also known as Whitsunday in some western churches) is the commemoration of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus following his ascension (Acts 2:1-11). It comes 50 days after Easter (Western) or Pascha (Eastern).

June 21st—Litha (Wicca)

Litha (also called Midsummer's Eve) celebrates the consummation of the sacred marriage in which the energy of the God is poured out in the service of life. His sacrifice, resulting in his total immolation by the end of the season, sets the standard of self-giving in service to the Goddess.

June 29th—Ghambar Maidyoshem (Zoroastrianism)

Ghambar Maidyoshem celebrates the creation of water, the sowing of the summer crop and the harvesting of grain.

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."

June 06

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held Sunday, June 11th, immediately following the service. Please make plans to attend.

Summer Volunteer Work

If you plan to volunteer time in the churchyard or on building repairs and cleaning, please leave a message at the church office. Communication helps us match jobs with volunteers and coordinate the efforts of all! Thanks!

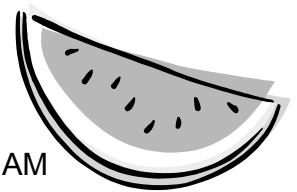
Newsletter Contributions

The deadline for newsletter contributions is usually the second Sunday of the month. Send your contribution via e-mail to pera.cj@verizon.net or b.charmer@verizon.net; 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 September newsletter is August 20th.

Save the Date!

- June 11—Annual Meeting, 11:00 AM
- June 18—Flower Communion, 10:00 AM
- July 8—Potluck & Congregational Meeting, 5:30PM
- July 9— Work Party 2 PM
- July 16—Summer Service and Potluck 10AM
- July 22—Potluck & Congregational Meeting, 5:30PM
- July 23—Work Party 2 PM
- July 30—Work Party 2 PM
- August 20—Summer Service and Potluck 10AM



Look for details inside!

Update from the Vision Group

After the responses to the Vision Group's questionnaires were organized, they were presented to the congregation. During the April 23rd service, we voted on the ideas that were most important to us. Below is an overview of the top votes. Here, we have summarized the overall topics (Action Area, To Be Determined), the number of votes they received (Top Votes), the general message (Idea) and the Vision Group question from which it originated (Topic). We grouped together topics that were sufficiently similar.

We will present this summary at the annual meeting, along with our recommendations on how to proceed. Thank you to all UUSG members and friends for your time, enthusiasm, and participation.

The Vision Group: Bob Anderson, Sue Blain, Melody Fortier, Chuck Heidorn, Jay Lamsa, Trish Mahoney

ACTION AREA, TBD	TOP VOTES	IDEA	TOPIC
Minister	6	The Minister (like Rev. Howard)	The Sunday Service
	5	Full-time minister and staff	Money
	5	At least a ½ time Minister	The Sunday Service
Interest/Discussion Groups	7	More interest groups	Involvement and Empowerment
	5	Discussion groups	Internal Community
	3	Belief/Discussion groups	Religious Education
Handicap Access	7	We need handicap access	The Church Building
	7	Handicap accessible	Money
Outreach	6	Outreach to people who no longer attend	Internal Community
	4	Outreach to members & friends who are grieving	Social Aspect of the Church Community
Publicity	9	Local publicity	External Community
Education	4	Life-span RE for all ages	Religious Education
	4	The Minister (like Rev. Howard)	Religious Education
Respect	5	Need to be sensitive and respect one another	Communication
	3	Respecting boundaries/comfort zones	Internal Community
Others	5	Liberal voice in community	External Community
	5	Grow the membership/care for bldg. and take care of the community	Stewardship and Legacy
	4	Social activities help with spiritual development	Social Aspect of the Church Community
	4	Have enough parking for members	Stewardship and Legacy
	3	More help/people involved	Involvement and Empowerment
	3	Better communication system	Communication



Special Meetings

Two important
All-Congregation Meetings
have been scheduled:

Saturday, July 8

5:30 pm Potluck Dinner
6:15 pm Congregational Meeting

Saturday, July 22

5:30 pm Pot Luck Dinner
6:15 pm Congregational Meeting



Your talents and ideas are needed
at this critical stage in preparing
our church for upcoming