

# U-FIRST

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

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September 2006

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## Upcoming Worship Services

**Sunday Services at 10:00 a.m.**

### September 10—A Cup of Water, Water Communion

Please bring a small vial of water and share a summer experience.

*"Any offering – a leaf,  
A flower or fruit, a cup  
Of water – I will accept it  
If given with a loving heart."* —Bhagavad Gita

### September 17—Finding Time for Renewal

Reflections on the primacy of worship and rediscovery of the Sabbath

### September 24—Billy Budd-Malice and Innocence

This was Herman Melville's masterpiece on the text "...be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Melville was a Unitarian and a fervent seeker for meaning.

### October 1—Living in an Imperfect World

Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement

### October 8—The Cornhusker and the Artichoke, Lay-Led service by David Fabian

Reflections from the Great Plains on the meaning of  
Community and Humanity

### October 15—Cast From Our Height, Our Shadows Form, Lay-Led service by ALisa Starkweather

ALisa Starkweather has been a women's empowerment  
trainer for 22 years. She is the founder of Priestess Path  
Apprenticeship, a women's mystery school focused on  
archetypal realms. She has authored 3 CDs and is a certified  
Shadow Work facilitator. A friend of the UUSG, she lives in  
nearby Templeton.

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

Check it out!

Our new website is up  
and active! Take a  
moment to enjoy our  
efforts.

[www.uusg.net](http://www.uusg.net)



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## Minister's Message

### BEGINNING AND ENDING

*People usually fail when they are on the verge of success.*

*So give as much care to the end as to the beginning then there will be no failure.*

- Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*



As many of you now realize, my tenure as your minister will end on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

After careful consideration I decided that this would best meet the needs of our church. This time frame will complete my fifty years of service as a minister. I have been blessed by being able to service as your contract-consulting minister. My main concern is to insure continuity. We have many reasons to be optimistic about the future of UUSG. During the past two years we have added 19 new members. I hope the next four months will be productive as I conclude fifty years of service. May this transition elicit your loyalty to a wonderful religious community.

Faithfully Yours,

*Stephen*

### Treasurer's Report

#### July 2006

Income: \$849.40

Expenses: \$5,164.18

Spent \$4,314.78 more than received.

\$3,000.00 was transferred from savings to checking account.

Respectfully submitted,  
Priscilla Ericsson, Treasurer



### Thank UU!

To everyone who participated in the work sessions led by Leo Rousseau and held this summer to clean and repair the church for our upcoming year. Thanks to Catherine Azora-Minda, Sue Blain, Priscilla Erickson, Chuck Heidorn, Vicki Heidorn and Trish Mahoney.

To Cindy Malley and Vicki Heidorn for leading our summer worship. Good job!

To the many people who joined in our congregational meetings this summer to decide the future of our church. In particular, we'd like to thank Chris Pera and Sue Blain for leading the meetings and David Fabian for efforts organizing our committees.

To Dave Faucher and everyone else involved in the creation of our beautiful, interactive website.

### CongratUUlations!

To Sue, Dave and Katherine Faucher who welcomed Madeline Audrey to their family on July 18th. Mazel Tov!

To Stephanie Everett, this year's winner of the Charney/Hurd Scholarship. Ms. Everett is the granddaughter of Marion Lyon.

### Welcome

To our newest member, David Fabian, who joined our congregation on Sunday, June 11th.

To our first-time Executive Board members, Qing Fagan and David Fabian.

To our new Music Director, Julie Clinch.

*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".*

### Church Directory

The new church directory was distributed at the annual meeting in June. If you did not receive a copy at that time, or if you did and would like a second copy, please leave a message on the voice mail at the church and one will be sent to you. Copies will also be available from the office on Sunday mornings. Please make sure you have a copy of this handy tool for staying in touch with one another.



## From the Executive Committee

As we prepared for the annual meeting on June 11, the Executive Committee realized that it was important to involve the congregation in some of the issues we face as a board--specifically, learning to make a transition from a deficit-spending congregation to one that is financially balanced and sustainable over the long term. We decided to use the summer to have some forums to explore what activities would support our mission and vision and brainstorm about fundraising and income-producing activities.

On July 8 we had our first potluck dinner and meeting. Approximately 30 people attended. There was lots of conversation, laughter and great food. We reaffirmed the vision and mission of the society written in 1994 with the priorities that we had identified during our vision exercises in March and April.

On July 22 we had our second potluck dinner and meeting. We sang a few songs with song sheets and got down to business; brainstorming ways to do fundraising and generate income.

Our third congregational meeting was August 12. At that meeting we categorized the wide-ranging goals of our society. This way people could identify a logical place where they could work and be coordinated with others. We started thinking about our own interests and abilities (and we guessed at the interests of people who couldn't be there that night!)

These are our current committees:

**Caring:** Set up a telephone chain for weather-related closings and to respond to a prayer need or personal need. Trained volunteers do outreach to members and friends who are grieving. People present who were interested in this area were: Trish Mahoney, Leslie Fabian, Sue Blain, and Heather Mahoney.

**Music and Ministry:** Work with minister and organist for Sunday worship program. Schedule lay and guest speakers from January to June. Those interested in this committee were: Cindy Malley, Dave Fabian, Sue Blain, and Al Ericsson.

**Property:** Help set priorities with physical space. Get estimates on building repairs, development and improvement, eating system repair, weatherization, roofing, and handicap access. Sexton advises and Executive Committee works

closely with this group. There was no one present who indicated an interest in this area.

**Fundraising:** Chairing or working on a specific fundraising event, analysis and goal setting, Every Member Canvass (general donation campaign). There was no one present who indicated an interest in this area.

**Publicity & Visibility for Membership Growth:** Local publicity, marketing, website, becoming a voice in the community, radio. Priscilla Ericsson and Leslie Fabian expressed interest in this area.

**Religious Education:** Children, Adult, Coming of Age for 12-14 year olds, Nursery & Preschool. Teachers and other support helpers. Heather Mahoney, Dana Malley, and Cindy Malley were in attendance and indicated an interest.

**Activities:** Interest groups, discussion/belief groups, social activities. Sue Blain, Dana Malley and Trish Mahoney indicated an interest.

For your information, the following people and duties are identified:

**Building Use Coordinator:** Bob Gifford.

**Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Representative:** Melody Gifford.

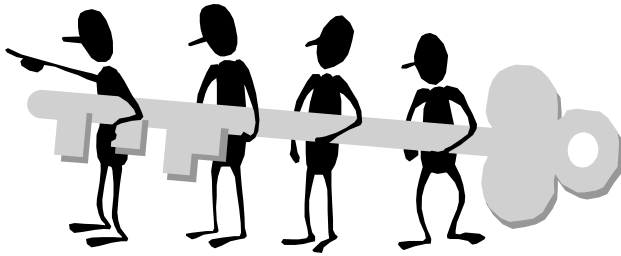
**Nominating committee:** Diane Tousignant, Julie Pera, and Connie Thompson were elected at the Annual Meeting.

The Executive Committee is the democratically elected group responsible for the operations of our society. We follow a structure that encourages committees and task groups to take initiative and responsibility. This structure allows for responsible communication between groups so that programs are not scheduled in conflict with each other and priorities can be set. Good communication and being sensitive and respectful of one another were identified as goals in our vision exercise in the spring of 2006.

I look forward to an exciting year of activities and decisions. I hope you will find a place that you will feel feeds your soul and gives you a chance to serve.

Sincerely,  
Vicki Heidorn, Chairperson





## COMMITTEE NEWS

### Religious Education

The teachers and groups for children's religious education are:

Infants—Qing Fagan  
Toddlers—Dana Malley  
Pre-K through 1<sup>st</sup> grade—Julie Pera  
Middle School—Heather Mahoney

Children's RE will be held during worship service each Sunday, beginning with a short orientation session on September 10th and regular classes on September 17th.

An adult religious education subcommittee was formed to develop a plan for adult education this year. If you are interested in being on this committee, please contact Sue Blain.

The next RE Committee meeting is planned for September 17th at 11:30am.

### Music and Ministry

The Music and Ministry Committee (formerly Music and Worship Committee) will be meeting for the first time on Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:30AM. This year, the committee will be vital to the continuing growth and energy of our congregation. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend or speak with Cindy Malley.

### Nominating Committee

There is now a Nominating Committee created to fill vacancies on the Executive Board. If you are interested in serving, please speak to Julie Pera, Diane Tousignant or Connie Thompson.

## September Holidays by Religion

### **September 5th—Ananta-chaturdasi (Jainism)**

Ananta-chaturdasi (Festival of Ten Virtues) is the holiest day of Dashalakshani-parva for the Digambara sect.

### **September 7th—Ullambana (Buddhism)**

On Ullambana, Buddhists make offerings to the Triple Gem (the Buddha, the Dharma/Teachings, and the Sangha/the monastic community) on behalf of ancestors. Chinese and Korean Buddhists call it Happy Buddha Day.

### **Nisf Sha'ban (Islam)**

Nisf Sha'ban, the 15th day or middle (Nisf) of the eighth month (Sha'ban), is the Night of Repentance in preparation for Ramadan. It begins in the evening.

### **Ksamavani (Jainism)**

On Ksamavani Jains ask forgiveness of others for wrongs committed during the previous year, and likewise forgive those who caused them suffering.

### **September 23rd—Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)**

Rosh Hashanah—New Year's Day year 5767 and anniversary of the creation of the world—begins at sundown the previous day. This is the first of the Ten Days of Awe (or Repentance). Reform Jews celebrate the holiday for one day, all other Jews celebrate for two.

### **Mabon (Wicca)**

Mabon (Harvest Home) celebrates life's encapsulation as a seed to survive the cold, barren winter and the Harvest of the Vine, which as wine symbolizes the Goddess' power to transform youth's sweet nectar into old age, wisdom and spiritual maturity.

### **September 24th—Ramadan (Islam)**

The Holy Month of Ramadan begins. Ramadan is the month of fasting during which Muslims who are physically able, do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset.

# 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."

Sept 06

## 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 2005-06**

Vicki Heidorn, Chairperson  
Sue Blain  
Keith Casavoy  
David Fabian  
Qing Fagan  
Bob Gifford  
Cindy Malley

## Save the Date!

Sept 10—Water Communion Service, 10:00AM;  
Children's RE Orientation, during worship;  
Board Meeting, 11:30AM

Sept 17—Children's RE Classes Start, during worship  
Religious Education Committee Meeting, 11:30AM

Sept 24—Music & Ministry Committee Meeting, 11:30AM

**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 [b.charmer@verizon.net](mailto: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 October newsletter is September 10th.**