

U-FIRST

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

September 2007

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Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday Services at 10:00 a.m.

September 9—Water Communion—Rev. John Pastor

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.

September 16—The Woodwind Trio Returns

A service of spiritual readings interspersed with the musical talents of David Flemming, Joy Flemming and Mary Seiver.



September 23—Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going?—Rev. John Pastor

As we begin our time together, we will ask these questions to help us to reflect on the past, live in the present, and focus on the future.

September 30—Spiritual Aspects of Yoga—John Featherstone

Yoga teachings and practices have descended from the Vedas and are intended to help us have the direct experience of the highest reality. John Featherstone has been a student of Yoga since 1983 and has been teaching since 1995. His interest is in guiding his students through gentle physical Yoga routines, Yoga way of breathing, Yoga way of meditation and relaxation to help practitioners increase health and happiness. He also teaches Yoga philosophy which helps us to understand the nature of the human experience of spirituality.

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



With Warmest Welcome To Our New Minister

Prior to coming to UUSG, our minister, Rev. John G. Pastor, Jr., served Unitarian Universalist Congregations in Athol, Weymouth, and Petersham. He graduated with academic honors from Andover Newton Theological School where he was actively involved in the Center for Faith, Health, and Spirituality and the Reiki Ministry. During his tenure at seminary he completed a one year, full-time, chaplain residency at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Boston. John was ordained in April of 2006 by the First Congregational Parish Unitarian in Petersham. In addition to serving UUSG, he is a chaplain for Allegiance Hospice

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Please join with us in celebration following worship service on September 16th as we formally welcome Rev. John Pastor and Bob Hall to our Congregation.

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.....

We're about to begin our first year together!

I am looking forward to our new church year that begins with our Water Communion Ingathering Service on September 9th. Be sure to bring some water for our common bowl and perhaps a story to share about your summer. We will come together on other Sunday mornings to worship: to create things of worth. I am planning sermons that will hopefully enhance spiritual well being, celebrate U.U. history, and honor other religious traditions. The Worship Committee is planning presentations that will inform us about a variety of topics and contribute to our understanding of U.U. Principles. Please join us for worship, coffee, and fellowship.

Our religious education is currently going through an exciting creative process. During the next few months we will be exploring programs for children, youth, and adults. The focus will be on the value of lifespan learning. During this time we will be asking for your input on how you would like to form a lasting intergenerational community. To begin with, all children are invited to come to the R.E. Program at our first worship service.

It is my hope that during this year we will take a closer look at how we are a vital, growing, church community: a beloved community. Here is where we will truly share our joys and

sorrows, deepest concerns, uninhibited laughter, fondest dreams, and prayers for peace and justice. Here is where we welcome all to join us in our quest for truth and meaning. This year we will be in spiritual formation as we examine all the diverse ways that we can hold fast to one another in this beloved community. Ways that always remind us "Love is the spirit of this church."

A minister, a pastor, is called to serve. For me, serving means that I will show up and be available to listen to you. I plan on listening a lot this year. I long to hear your stories about the history of this church. I will also be a pastoral presence to your concerns, your hopes, your celebrations, and your pain. You are invited to come and tell me what's on your mind or heart. I am in my office for regular hours from one to six o'clock every Thursday afternoon. You may also contact me to arrange another time to meet.

As I feel my way around, getting to know you, please point me in the right direction, offer me timely criticism, and know that I will make some mistakes- that's how I (we) learn.

Together we will do great good things!

With love,



The Fall Fair



will be held on Saturday, November 3rd.

Dorcas Hurd has agreed to be chairperson of the fair with others overseeing the various attractions, which include:

LUNCHROOM, FLEA MARKET, TEACUP AUCTION, BAKE SALE, CLOTHING SALE, BOOK SALE, CUTLERY SALE, and anything else that may seem appropriate and interesting.

If you are able to help in one of these areas or have any suggestions or questions, please call Dorcas at 978-874-2350 or email her at dorcashurd@comcast.net.

Thank you!

Meditation Group

The Meditation Group, which met regularly through the summer, will continue to meet each Wednesday from 6:00-7:15 p.m. The group practices Vipassana, or insight, meditation. The instructor comes from the Insight Meditation Society in Barre. A typical session consists of information and instruction as well sitting and, sometimes, walking meditation. Newcomers are always welcome and donations are accepted.

Flower Communion & Water Communion

The Unique Holidays of Unitarian Universalism

Traditional holidays

Unitarian Universalism includes aspects of many of the world's religions. Holidays from various religions are celebrated together in Unitarian Universalist congregations. Most Unitarian Universalist congregations celebrate the Christian holidays Christmas and Easter, the Jewish holidays Passover and Yom Kippur, and the Pagan Winter Solstice, among other holidays.

In addition to these traditional religious holidays, many UU congregations also honor secular holidays including Earth Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday, Mother's Day and Father's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving. While these are not traditionally spiritual holidays, Unitarian Universalism finds spiritual meaning and affinity with our Principles in the ideas behind these and other secular holidays.

Unique holidays

There are two holidays that many Unitarian Universalist congregations celebrate that are unique to our faith: the Water Communion and the Flower Communion. Both holidays are ceremonies that celebrate our Unitarian Universalist community and the importance of each individual's unique contributions to that community.



The **Flower Communion** usually takes place in the spring near the time of Easter. In this ceremony, members of the congregation are asked beforehand to bring a flower to the Sunday service. Upon entering the sanctuary, each person places his or her flower on the altar or in a shared vase. The flowers are blessed by the minister or congregation during the ceremony, and the sermon usually reflects upon the flowers' symbolism. At the end of the service, each person brings home a flower other than the one that he or she brought.

Reginald Zottoli wrote "The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community: it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community."

From: www.uua.org/visitors/worship/holidays

If you are among the 42 people who have chosen to receive this newsletter via e-mail, you are saving the church approximately 83¢ per issue, which adds up to more than \$8 per subscription and nearly \$350 total per year in newsletter expenses.



THANK YOU!!

If you are not receiving the newsletter by e-mail and would like to try it out, please give your e-mail address to the church secretary or send an e-mail to uusg.newsletter@gmail.com requesting to be added to the e-mail list. The newsletter goes out as a "PDF" document, which is accessible to nearly everyone who has a computer. Back issues of the newsletter are available in this format at www.uusg.net.

The Flower Communion service was originally created in 1923 by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek, who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. The service was later brought to the United States by his wife, Maya.

The **Water Communion**, also sometimes called Water Ceremony, was first used at a Unitarian Universalist worship service in the 1980s. Many UU congregations now hold a Water Communion once a year, often at the beginning of the new church year (September).



Members bring to the service a small amount of water from a place that is special to them. During the appointed time in the service, people one by one pour their water together into a large bowl. As the water is added, the person who brought it tells why this water is special to them. The combined water is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources. It is often then blessed by the congregation, and sometimes is later boiled and used as the congregation's "holy water" in child dedication ceremonies and similar events.

UUSG September 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		TOPS, 9am	MOMS Club, 9:30am Meditation Group, 6pm	Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	AA, 12-1pm
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship, 10am	Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	TOPS, 9am	Meditation Group, 6pm	Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	AA, 12-1pm
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Worship, 10am	Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	TOPS, 9am	Meditation Group, 6pm	Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	AA, 12-1pm
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Worship, 10am	Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	TOPS, 9am	Meditation Group, 6pm	Minister's Office Hours, 1-6pm	Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	AA, 12-1pm
30	Oct 1	2	3	4	5	6
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UUSG events at UUSG

Plain Text: Rental Groups at UUSG

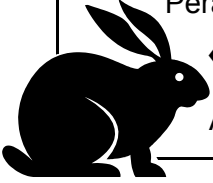
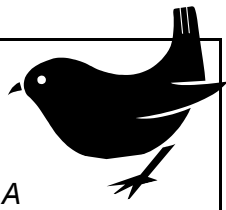
Italics: Community Events

Italics: District & UUA events

Recent Readings

Children's Stories

- ◆ *Will You Be My Friend? A Bunny and Bird Story* by Nancy Tafuri. Read by Catherine Azora-Minda on April 8th.
- ◆ *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds Read by Julie Pera on July 15th.
- ◆ *Hiccupotumus* by Aaron Zenz. Read by Julie & Caleb Pera on August 12th.



ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR

Responsibilities: 10am Sunday worship service. Organ and/or Piano. Adult Choir. Small but growing church. Musical congregation with good energy. Nice acoustics. Mid-September to mid-June. Presently choir meets 9am Sunday for practice, negotiable. Summer and flexible time off.

Dates: September 9, 2007-June 15, 2008

Organ: 1902 tracker organ by J.W. Steere & Son, Springfield; upright piano

Salary: \$6000

Contact: Search Committee,
Victoria V. Heidorn, Chairperson

vvheidorn@net1plus.com

978-632-0222 church office

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and Palliative Care. He also is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the UU Mass. Action Network. Formerly he served on the Board of the Clara Barton District for three years. John lives in Petersham with his spouse, Robert C. W. Hall, Jr.. They share their rural home with their two cats, Jeeves and Salem, and their two dogs, Susie and Charlie.

Rev. Pastor believes that his ministry is about helping to create a beloved church community where all are welcome. He testifies, "It is in this beloved community that we truly share our joys and sorrows, deepest concerns, uninhibited laughter, fondest dreams, and prayers for peace and justice. Building this community is my call as a Unitarian Universalist minister. I am honored and humbled in this task."

Thank UU!

To Michael Rice for the gifts of music he brought to our congregation each week for the last church year.

In Our Thoughts...

Please keep the Heywood-Abisla family in your thoughts as they move forward after the fire in their family home and the loss of their pets.

CongratUUlations!

To Nancy Fiske on the birth of her grandson, Ian, on August 14th. She is currently spending time with Big Sister, Ada. Best Wishes for health and happiness to Nancy's daughter, Moira, and family at this special time.

To our minister emeritus, Rev. Neil Bakker, on the celebration of his 90th birthday!

To Timothy Posthelwaite and Christopher Abisla on their high school graduation this past June. They are both attending college this fall.

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".



EXPERIENCE GARDNER

Thank you to the members of the Publicity Committee (Catherine Azora-Minda, Priscilla Ericsson and Marion Lyon) for arranging for our church to be represented at the Gardner Sidewalk Days, and to the many church members and friends who staffed the table.

Each year on the first weekend of August, on what is either two of the hottest or two of the rainiest days of the summer, downtown Gardner is closed off to traffic and all of the downtown stores move out onto the streets as well. It's a time to learn what Gardner offers and have some fun. This year's weather was no exception, but fortunately the breeze kept blowing and the rain held off until after hours.

An informative and eye-catching display included names and photos of famous Unitarians and Universalists. Those who stopped for a moment were greeted with a smile and an offer of ice cold water. Thanks to Melody Fortier, new brochures about our church were available, alongside some of the UUA's traditional pamphlets.

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."

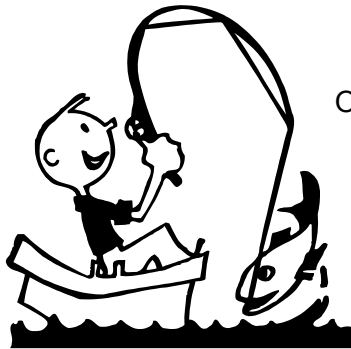
Sept 07

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!

September 9—Water Communion Service

September 16—Celebration to welcome Rev. John Pastor and Bob Hall, following Worship Service

September 30—Adult Education Group, "Why Development of Consciousness is Essential for Ideal Health" led by John Featherstone, following Worship Service

October 20—Potluck Social & Movie Night: An Inconvenient Truth. Public invited, childcare provided.

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 "inbox" 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 16th.