



# UU-First

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

66 Elm Street – P.O. Box 637, Gardner, Massachusetts

(978) 632-0222

www.uusg.net

October 2013

## Minister:

Rev. John Pastor

Office Hours

Thursday 1-6pm.

Call church phone for an appointment or to arrange another day or time.

For pastoral emergencies call 508-277-6113.

## Emeritus Minister:

Rev. Neil Bakker

## Newsletter Editor:

Julie Pera

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## Church Office:

Catherine Azora-Minda

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## Sunday Services

10:00 am

Children's Religious Education & Nursery Care during worship service

## Upcoming Worship Services

### October 6 — Comfort Measures Only — Rev. John Pastor

What brings us true spiritual comfort to sustain us in times of struggles and pain?

### October 13 — Inter-Religious Understanding — Sue Blain and Julie Pera

Our first UU principle reminds us that we must affirm and promote the the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Improving our understanding of other faith communities can increase our ability to promote respect in our community among our religious neighbors, while enriching our own spiritual practices.

### October 20 — A Heretic from Gardner, Oh My!— Rev. John Pastor

Abner Kneeland was born in Gardner in 1774. He was a Universalist minister with very radical views for his time. These ideas got him into some trouble with church authorities.

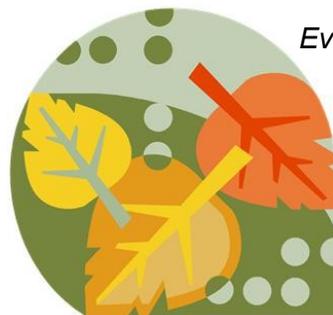
### October 27 — Boo! — Cindy Malley



What frightens you? Terrorism? Extended visits with your family? Speed traps on Route 2? With Halloween just a few days away, we will be addressing our fears; both the 'good' kind (that prevent us from doing very stupid things) and the 'bad' kind (that keep us from living our lives to our fullest potentials). In addition, we will discuss the one miraculous thing that can help us overcome our deepest terrors. (Hint: It has four letters and is not a prescription medication.)

### November 3 — Community Servings — Rev. John Pastor

Small churches, like us, are known for the ways that they reach out to the larger community. In addition to Guest at Your Table, a UU Service Committee project, there are also ways that we can serve the needs of the Greater Gardner Community. (Congregational Forum following the service.)



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

## SAVE THE DATE:

*Our UUSG Holiday Fair will be Saturday, December 14!*



# Pastoring...

## What is our vision of the future?

Florence Chadwick was the first woman to swim the English Channel. In 1952 she decided to swim from Catalina Island to the shore of California. The day that she began her swim the weather was foggy so she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog. I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it." Florence Chadwick was less than 300 yards from her goal. Her only reply after learning how close she actually came was, "All I could see was hopeless."

Not being able to see where you are going can be daunting. When in a fog it is difficult to trust that you are going in the right direction. How does this play out in congregational life?

Last month your Executive Committee and your minister attended an all-day workshop for church boards. Overall it was a good experience, especially the afternoon private session with a facilitator who helped us to focus on achievable goals. During this time, we were asked about our long-term vision. The

collective response from those present suggested that we feel so deeply entrenched in the day-to-day operations of the church, staying afloat, that we don't always see the long-term future clearly. We wondered if some of the members of the congregation may also feel that our long-term future is unclear. It was suggested that this may be why some folks are reluctant to contribute: time, money, or both; because all they can see is hopeless. This was a real honest revelation.

That afternoon, some goals were crafted that will begin to help us to achieve a positive, productive, future. In the next few weeks and months the Executive Committee, a.k.a. Your Spiritual Leaders will be asking for your input. I know that you will all want to participate.

Let us collectively lift ourselves out of the fog to see a new vision of how we can shape the future of this church for ourselves and for those that will surely come after us.

With love,



## Welcoming Congregation Small Groups

Our Welcoming Congregation Committee has been meeting for a number of months and has had an enjoyable time sharing our experiences and thoughts. Our gatherings have resulted in surprising discoveries about ourselves and each other, and have developed a greater sense of community. We would like other members of the congregation to have this same opportunity to share and grow.

We are looking for five volunteers to host a group of six to eight people during the last three weeks of October. A member of the Welcoming Congregation Committee will join you. If you are able to volunteer, or have questions, please contact Chris or Julie with a day and time that you would like host.

## Become a Chalice Lighter and Support District Congregations!



The Chalice Lighters Program is the Clara Barton District's competitive grant program. Because we have several members of our congregation who contributed to it regularly over the past couple years, we were eligible to apply for the grant that we received for our kitchen project. You can be a chalice lighter too!

For more information or to donate go to:

<http://cbd-mbd-uua.org/content/chalice-lighters-clara-barton-district>

## Thank UU



To Jean Brady for the beautiful vase of cosmos that decorated our altar on Water Communion Sunday.

*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.

## DEAR FRIENDS,

For the past two years or so the Clara Barton and Mass Bay Districts have offered a workshop for executive committees in which we can gather together. This is an opportunity to for our executive committee to hear what other churches are doing, to brainstorm issues and concerns and to revitalize our commitment to ourselves and our church.

This is always an interesting experience. It is fascinating to see what other churches look like physically but it is also interesting to see and hear what challenges others are tackling and accomplishments they have made. Most of the churches that attend these gatherings are often larger than our own. Sometimes, it is disheartening to hear about churches with 100 or 200 members but when you really listen you hear that they have many of the same challenges that we do. They have leaky roofs and crumbling brickwork. They also face challenges of growth and vitalization of their membership.

This year we had a unique opportunity. This day long workshop started as usual with answering



questions and discussion as a group about what important for the vitality of our congregations. Our presenters described and discussed our roles as boards of our churches. Some of the things that I remember most is the description of our church as bowls nesting in one another. The board being the largest bowl and the committees and church members being held inside of the larger bowl. What this means for me is that the board is charged with taking care of the big picture of the church. This big picture includes recognizing the hard work that has happened already and create a vision for the future of our church. This church year will see the creation of a plan for our future. This will include a vision and concrete goals that our church will be actively working together on. These goals will be our action plan for the future.

I am looking forward to a bright future for UUSG and its members.

Our next Executive Committee meeting is October 21, 2013 at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to attend.

With metta,

Bo Azora-Minda  
Executive Committee Chair



## Regional UU Church Events

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm, Winchendon (tentative location) – NCMUUC Monthly Meeting . Members and lay leaders from all congregations are all welcome to meet share ideas and experiences.

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, Fitchburg – Boulder Coffee House, listen to local singer/songwriters, \$5 suggested donation

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, Worcester, [www.uucworchester.org](http://www.uucworchester.org) – Great Concert coming up: “What happens when you unite three of the best male singers in the folk realm... Brother Sun” [www.brothersunmusic.com](http://www.brothersunmusic.com) Admission: \$15/ \$10 seniors and students, advance tickets available at the church. For information call 508-853-1942.

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 9am-12pm, Winchendon – Fall Festival/Yard Sale: multi-family yard sale, baked apple items, hot dogs, craft tables, vendors & more.

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7pm, Winchendon – Our Neighbor's Kitchen is a low cost meal for the local community. Volunteers are welcome throughout the day not just during serving time.

October 25<sup>th</sup>, 6pm, Fitchburg – Presenting the original silent movie "Phantom of the Opera" accompanied by their own Robin Dinda on the 1928 Skinner Organ.

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 9am-2pm, Hubbardston – Fall Indoor Yard Sale: huge array of jams & jellies, knitting, spices, chances for the "Jacob's Ladder" Country Quilt, "Church Lady Luncheon" of soup & sandwiches, and homemade baked goods.



# Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637

Gardner, MA 01440

## 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 the Church Year 2013-14**

(year in parentheses indicates term ending)

Bo Azora-Minda (Chair, '15)

Barbara Bartl ('15)

Roy Gilbert ('16)

Brien Hawkesworth ('14)

Chris Pera (Clerk/Treasurer, '15)

Frieda Reichsman ('16)

Laura Reichsman ('14)



## Newsletter Contributions

UU-First is published nine times per year:

September, October, November, December-January, February, March, April, May-June, and July-August.

**The deadline for the newsletter is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.**