



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

February 2014

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:

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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

March 2 — What Dreams May Come — Rev. John Pastor

Our dreams are fascinating experiences. What can we learn from our dreams? How can we use our dreams for inspiration and insight?

March 9 — International Women's Day & Girl Scout Sunday — Catherine Azora-Minda & Julie Pera

We take some time to honor our foremothers and to notice some of the women who shine brightly among us today. Girls from Brownie Troop #41057 will participate in the service, including sharing a story about the Girl Scout founder.



March 16 — Putting Off the Crazy Old Lady — Cindy Malley

In this sermon, Cindy Malley will answer the universal, age-old question, "What is the key to happiness?" Well, probably not. But she hopes to, in the very least, point out which keyhole you should try.

March 23 — The Voice That's Within: Experiencing the Holy Through Music and Song — Rev. Susie Allen



What is it like to be embraced by Holy Love? How do we know when that is happening? Come and gather in worshiping community to touch into the Voice within – your voice, the voice of the community, the voice of Holy Love.

The Rev. Susie Allen is a spiritual director, organizational and leadership consultant with Executive Soul (www.executivesoul.com) and retreat leader. For over 6 years, Susie served as Associate Pastor at the Boxborough United Church of Christ. She has been singing her whole life long: at home, in church, at school, at bedsides, on the theatre stage, and with the a cappella group, Custom Blend. She delights in bringing the joy and power and connection of music to worshiping communities. She has three grown children and resides in Boxborough, MA, with her husband, Roger.

March 30 — Activism as a Spiritual Practice – Connecting with the Web of Life — Sue Blain

Taking action on behalf of the interconnected web of life, including people and planet, can be a way to connect with the Source of all that is.



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

Lent arrives this first week of March. I see it as a time of forty days that can be an opportunity for a transformation of the spirit through deep reflection.

Lent has been known to offer some questions that you may not always want to face: questions about your mortality, about what currently gives your life meaning and purpose, or about what you have done with your life, so far. From these questions feelings of regret may arise about things that you could have done better, relationships you may have damaged, or bad choices you have made. I believe that Lent asks you not to bury these feelings but to lift them up, spread them out in the sunlight, confront them. With these feelings exposed to the daylight you can take the time to reflect on your failures and then prepare to begin again, like the arrival of the blossoms of springtime.

Lent is a time not only to say you are sorry for past mistakes, but it is a time to remind you of the ideals you already hold on to. To let what you already know as right and good guide you.

Your past mistakes are lessons that help you to make better future choices.

I invite you into a spiritual practice of deep reflection this Lent: During each of these forty days find some quiet time to reflect on your life. Take some moments for self examination and to acknowledge your less than best choices and the opportunities you've missed. And if you start to feel guilty or depressed, invite those feelings in. Let them remind you that you're still committed to something better. And then put them to work removing the negatives of the past, the painful regrets. It may be hard work, but it is healing work.

Let this transforming work of Lent begin.

With love,



SAVE THE DATE!

On SUNDAY, APRIL 6th, after the worship service there will be a Dedication and Potluck Celebration of our new kitchen. UUSG will formally "cut the ribbon" to officially open the kitchen and honor those that worked to make the renovation possible. There will be a potluck immediately after the dedication. Members and friends are asked to bring their favorite dishes. The Executive Committee is bringing the cake and ice cream. Come celebrate this UUSG historic milestone!

Melt-In-Your-Mouth Cranberry Pie

from Rev. John

- 2 Cups of Cranberries
- ½ Cup Chopped Walnuts
- 1 ½ Cups Sugar
- 1 Stick (1/2 Cup) Unsalted Butter (melted)
- ¼ Cup Vegetable Shortening (melted)
- 2 Large Eggs
- 1 Cup All-Purpose Flour

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Butter 10" pie plate and arrange cranberries on the bottom. Then add walnuts and sprinkle with ½ cup of sugar.

In a bowl beat, eggs with an electric mixer and gradually add the remaining 1 cup of sugar. Add flour, butter, shortening, and mix until smooth.

Spoon batter over the cranberry mixture and bake for 1 hour or until top is golden brown.



Potluck & Movie Night

Saturday, March 29

5:00-5:30 Arrival

5:30 Dinner

6:30 Movie, followed by discussion

In & Out (PG-13, 90 minutes):

Kevin Kline, Joan Cusack, Tom Selleck
midwestern teacher questions his sexuality
after a former student makes a comment about
him at the Academy Awards.

Sponsored by the Welcoming
Congregation Committee.



Where Are We Growing?

In September of 2013, members of the Executive Committee participated in a district workshop at the UU Church in Leominster. During the afternoon session, individual church boards were given the opportunity to work with a facilitator to explore possible goals for the board to work on during the coming year. During this discussion, there was a suggestion to form a small committee of church members to focus on creating a long-range (5 year) plan to help grow the congregation in membership, funds and programs.

The committee is currently discussing these topics and is planning on presenting its recommendations at the annual meeting in June. The members of this committee are Roy Gilbert, Rev. John Pastor, Chris Pera, Frieda Reichsman and Mike Vecchi. Please feel free to talk with any of these members with concerns or recommendations you may have about the future of our church.

General Assembly Registration!

On Monday, March 3, at 9am, registration and housing reservations will open for the 2014 General Assembly, to be held June 25-29 in Providence, RI. *(Save money by registering between March 3-May 1)*

The complete program of workshops and tentative business agenda for this GA will be posted at www.uua.org/ga by mid-March, and the Final Agenda will be posted in May. You will also find information about side trips, tours, children's programs, and more.

LOVE REACHES OUT

A core purpose of our faith is to help people grow in spirit and in service. We believe that our faith provides a path for each of us to unlock our transformational capacity to serve the world with love. We will gather in 2014 to help our association live into a future where Love Reaches Out - to share our faith both within and beyond our congregations' walls.

2014 WARE LECTURER

The 2014 Ware lecturer will be Sister Simone Campbell, a religious leader, attorney and poet with extensive experience in public policy and advocacy for systemic change. In 2012, she was instrumental in organizing the "Nuns on the Bus" tour.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

With a thriving arts community, vibrant and diverse neighborhoods, available university housing, and a renowned restaurant scene, Providence is a fitting spot for us to gather.

On Saturday, June 28, the UUA will cosponsor WaterFire Providence®, a community event and public art phenomenon. This is an amazing opportunity for us to participate in the local culture of our host city while simultaneously witnessing our faith.

Some opportunities for scholarships, volunteer and church leader discounts are available.

We hope to see you in Providence in June!

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 15th of the month.