



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

**January 2015**

## **Minister:**

Rev. John Pastor

Office Hours  
By appointment.

For pastoral emergencies  
call  
508-277-6113.

## **Newsletter Editors:**

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## **Church Office:**

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[info@uusg.net](mailto:info@uusg.net)

## **Sunday Services**

**10:00 am**

**Children's  
Religious  
Education**

**& Nursery Care**  
during worship service

## Upcoming Worship Services

### **January 4 - *Burrowing In* – Catherine Azora-Minda, Lay Leader**

If we had any sense, we'd all be hibernating. Since some of us find ourselves reluctantly dealing with the coldness and isolation of wintertime, what might help us move to acceptance and deep peace?

### **CONGREGATIONAL FORUM FOLLOWING SERVICE**

### **January 11 – *The Congregational Village Well* – Rev. John**

The village well is where the community gathers to be nourished.

### **January 18 – *Confessions of a Believer-Wannabe***

#### **Rodney Fagan, Lay Leader**

I want to believe real bad but after studying and trying many of the major religions, a part of me is still ripping at my heart every day. I hear the words seek and you shall find; but when, where, how and what goes unanswered.

### **January 25 – *Stand By This Faith* – Rev. John**

Olympia Brown, the first woman ordained as a Universalist proclaimed this message of loyalty in 1920. How does this speak to us in 2015?

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



# Pastoring...

## Living in the Now

These words are attributed to Kalidasa, a 3rd century Indian poet:

*Look to this day!*

*For it is life, the very life of life.*

In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of existence:

*The bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty;*

*For yesterday is but a dream,*

*And tomorrow is only a vision*

*But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness*

*And every tomorrow a vision of hope.*

*Look well, therefore, to this day.*

This past year I attended a three-day silent retreat at an Episcopal monastery. It was difficult for me to shut off the outside world without cell phones, internet, radio and television. It took almost twenty-four hours for my mind to calm down, though it was not empty of thought. The two workshops that the monks offered were around mindfulness. They were times for deep listening. During one of these sessions the monk teacher told us something that most of those present already knew: "The only reality is now." It was a reminder, as Kalidasa instructs us, "Look well, therefore, to this day." Indeed, look well to this hour, this minute, this second. It leaves us totally in the now, the only reality, the present present. It's a good practice though not always easy, as you may already know.

Living in the now, doing one thing at a time and not multi-tasking, is my New Year's resolution.

What, if any, are your resolutions? My great hope is that you will "resolve" to simple practices that will awaken your minds and souls to deeper connection. A deeper connection with yourself centered on living one day at a time in the now.

Look to this day!

Happy New Year.

With love,



## From the Executive Committee

Dear Friends,

Another year has come and gone. It's hard to believe that it's January 2015. The time flies by very quickly. During this time of year I find myself reflecting on the year that has passed and pondering the year to come. When I reflect on the past year at UUSG I am amazed at the dedication of people in our church community. One of the projects that people are particularly enthusiastic about is the Welcome Table. I am proud to say that we have served three meals so far and they have been very well attended. I have spoken to people in our congregation as well as in the community at large and have heard rave reviews about the food and the hospitality. It truly is a welcome table.

I continue to be proud of our congregation's continued efforts in being a welcoming congregation. The Interweave meetings are informative and an endless source of learning for all who attend. Additionally, the congregation as a whole continues to be a place where people who are newcomers feel warm and welcomed. Those who have been coming for a longer time feel they are welcome to be themselves and share themselves with others.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support of UUSG. Without you we would not be where we are today. As you know we have tightened our belts this year and are striving to have a balanced budget. Everyone has been pitching in to support this community. Because of you we continue to thrive and grow. Thank you.

With Metta,

Bo Azora-Minda, UUSG Chair

## Thank UU!

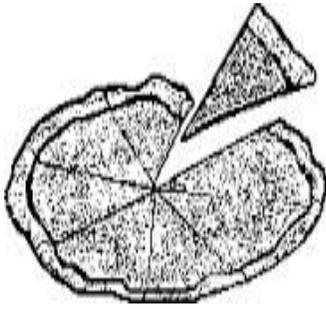
Thanks to everyone who helped make Religious Education possible this year. We appreciate those who contributed by telling a story, teaching a lesson and providing daycare.

*If you know of a contribution, concern, or accomplishment that deserves mention in the newsletter, please be sure to send a message to [uusg.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uusg.newsletter@gmail.com).*



**Story Hour  
and  
Nativity Scenes  
created by RE Class**





## Italian Night Dinner

January 17  
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.  
\$8 adults (12 and over)  
\$4 kids  
Children under 2 free



Proceeds from the dinner will help to fund our Community Meals



## Stewardship Cards

As we continue this year to balance our church budget, please consider making an additional gift to help with the unpledged needs of the church. Stewardship cards can be found in a pocketed wall hanging on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Please take a card, write your name on the card if you'd like tax credit, and place it in the offertory plate or under the office door



**UUSG Facebook Page** – If you are a Facebook user, please consider liking our page and interacting and sharing our posts. By doing so, you share the good news of UUSG.



**Church Directory** – If you are not currently listed in the church directory or if any of your information has changed, please contact Catherine Azora-Minda. If you would like a copy of the directory, either virtual or actual, let Catherine know by leaving a message on the church voice mail or e-mailing [info@uusg.net](mailto:info@uusg.net).

# NOTES FROM THE KITCHEN

Thank you to everyone for your wonderful, creative and delicious contributions which make our potluck coffee hour a success. Love seeing so many children, so juice is also welcome if you are at a loss for what to bring. If anyone would like to help host a coffee hour when we are away in January, please let us know! We will be away January 18 and 25. There is always some help around for set up. It involves putting the coffee, decaf and hot water on, putting out the tea, cups, plates, napkins, silverware, etc., and setting up the tables and chairs. We put the food out on the serving table as it comes in (covered). Everyone is also very helpful with cleanup, so it all goes very smoothly and is lots of fun!



Jean & Tom



## January Welcome Table Hosted by Rotary Club

The Rotary Club of Gardner will be cooking and serving the Welcome Table meal which happens on January 27 at 5:30. The Rotary has a commitment to the community, as well as to the world, to provide humanitarian aid whenever possible. Their regular participation in the Welcome Table is one part of the local club's community projects. In addition to hosting this month's meal, the club has a number of volunteers who are assisting at each meal, as needed, throughout the year. Not only is the Gardner Rotary Club supporting the community meal physically, they are also supporting it financially to help defray the monthly cost of the main dish.

UUSG has stepped out into the community with the Welcome Table and the response has been very gratifying, to say the least. With many others in the wider Gardner community lending their support, the success of our small church is making a difference in the lives of those people who partake of the dinners each month.

Submitted by Roy Gilbert

# 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 2014-15**

(year in parentheses indicates term ending)

Boudoin Azora-Minda (Chair, '15)

Barbara Bartl ('15)

Roy Gilbert ('16)

Chris Pera (Clerk/Treasurer, '15)

Frieda Reichsman ('16)

## Save the date!

**January 4** – Congregational Forum during coffee hour; degreening of the sanctuary will follow the Forum

**January 11** – Music & Worship Committee Meeting – 11:30 a.m.  
Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend.

**January 17** – Italian Night Fundraising Dinner – 5:00-6:30 p.m.

**January 19** – Executive Committee Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

**January 27** – Welcome Table Community Meal – 5:30-6:30 p.m.

## Newsletter Contributions

UU-First is published monthly with the exception of July/August:

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