



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

66 Elm Street - P.O. Box 637, Gardner, MA 01440  
(978) 632-0222  
www.uusg.net



## November 2016

### Minister:

Rev. John Pastor

### Office Hours

Thursdays 2:30 - 5:00 PM

for pastoral emergencies  
508-277-6113

### Newsletter Editors:

Catherine & Boudoin  
Azora-Minda

### Photographer:

Frieda Reichsman

uusg.newsletter@gmail.com

### Church Office:

978-632-0222

### Sunday Service

10:00 AM

Children's Religious  
Education & Nursery Care  
during worship service



## Upcoming Worship Services

**November 6** – *Theology of the Wizard of Oz, Part II*  
Rev. John

Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!" Is there a person behind the curtain? If so, what do they have to say?

**Congregational Forum following this morning's service. Grab a little something to eat and drink and join in a discussion of immediate church issues and cottage meetings.**

**November 13** – *"When They Go Low, We Go High"*  
Laura Reichsman, Lay Leader  
Words and wisdom from our First Lady.

**November 20** – *Thanksgiving Bread Communion*  
Rev. John

You are invited to bake bread or bring bread to share for our annual celebration of Thanksgiving. This year we will be gathering around the table in Fellowship Hall. Rev. John will bless the bread to be shared in community.

**November 27** – *Does Charity Begin at Home?*  
Marion Lyon, Lay Leader

Following the service we will be greening the sanctuary for the holiday season.

### Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

**Monday, November 21 – 7:00pm** Annunciation Parish

50 Lovewell Street, Gardner  
Refreshments to follow in church hall.



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

# Fastoring

What's more universal than thanksgiving?



I remember my first year with you when I attended a clergy meeting at Heywood Hospital. It was the beginning of November, so I asked about the planning for the Community Thanksgiving Service. The long-time clergy proclaimed that there has not been a gathering of the churches for Thanksgiving in many years. So, I suggested that we start it up again. A handful of ministers said that they would not participate. "Why?" I asked, "What's more universal than Thanksgiving?" The answers from most of them were that they planned their own services. After the meeting I learned that I was a problem for these clergy folks; it was because I was Unitarian Universalist and a married gay man.

So the newbie ministers in town, Rev. Jim Hinds and me, planned a service. Six different churches gathered that year at the First Congregational Church. Since then, there has been a Community Thanksgiving Service at a different church every year, for nine years. Rev. Jim has taken over the planning; he's so good at it!

This year the service will be on the 21st of November. See further details on page 1.

Allow me to share with you a prayer that I wrote for the offerings to the CAC at the service in 2011. It serves as a reminder to give to those in need..

*Spirit of Love and Life, Eternal Mystery, dear God,  
We ask Your blessings on this community gathered here in your presence. Gathered for thanks-giving. Gathered to share their abundance, these gifts. Bless these gifts, O God, offered to those in need. May each gift, whatever its size, multiply the good to be done. We pledge that these donations will not be an end to our giving, but a continued offering to help build the Beloved Community here on this earth. We dedicate our time and abilities in Your work of healing, comforting, and proclaiming good news. O God, you are the great reflection of our gifts, of our shared hopes and values. We give in thankfulness for what you have given to us in love. **Amen.***

Bob and I wish you a Blessed Thanksgiving.

With love

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Dear Friends,

Please join us for two special upcoming meetings to discuss our upcoming plan for the future of our church. We will be having a congregational forum on November 6th during coffee hour to discuss our projected budget for 2017 as well as a discussion about ministry at our church.

This will be followed up with a potluck dinner on November 12 at 5:30 pm.

With Metta,  
Bo Azora-Minda  
Executive Committee Chair

**November 12 - All Church Potluck - Dinner and discussion starts at 5:30pm**

Dear Izzy,

I just found out my friend is transgender and I don't know if it's okay to tell other people.

-Enquiring mind



Dear Enquiring,

Thanks for asking this question. I know that sometimes it is confusing to know what to do especially if the person is telling others themselves. It is usually best to let the person decide who they share personal information with. Below are a few helpful guidelines.

1. Safety First
2. It's private, medical information
3. Not all trans people are activists and those who are might not want to be all the time
4. Sometimes a persons gender is ambiguous
5. Because trans is not all we are
6. But they are out to other people
7. It sets trans people up for discrimination
8. May change how others see them
9. Whose business is it, anyway?

For further information check out  
[www.americantransman.com](http://www.americantransman.com)

**IZZY**



## Fall Fair – November 19 - 9am-2pm

Plans are underway for our Fall Fair which is a major fundraising event for the church. It truly takes a congregation to make it all happen. Following are ways that you can help. We need:

Items for tag sale  
Gently used items for Christmas area  
Books  
Baked goods for bake sale  
Nicer items for teacup and silent auction  
Items for Cafe  
Help with set up and break down



Apples from Sholan Farms are available in the kitchen stairwell for use in preparing baked goods. Please take what you need.

There are Fall Fair flyers available in the Fellowship Hall. Please post them anywhere you go in the community to spread the word. If you know someone who is interested in becoming a vendor, please let Catherine Azora-Minda know. If you have any questions about how you can help, please contact Laura Reichsman. Let's make this the best Fall Fair ever!



### Welcome Table Meeting

**November 13**

After coffee hour for those who volunteer at the monthly meals.

## Religious Education

### Bake Sale

The children have been talking about illiteracy in the United States. They all agreed that it would be terrible to not be able to read. They immediately grasped how difficult it would be for an adult to survive if they couldn't read or write. There was a long discussion about how the children could help. It was quickly decided to have a bake sale and they voted on where they wanted the money to go. It was unanimous; they all wanted to buy books for the Heywood Library!

On one Sunday, the RE baked cookies which were frozen to be sold the following Sunday. Some of the kids, the RE teachers, and members of the congregation brought in baked goods and had a sale. Between the sale of the goodies and some generous donations, the group raised \$170! Now they are in communication with the library who will give them a wish list of materials they would like. The children will review the list and then vote on what they want to purchase. Once the materials are purchased, the UUSG RE kids will present the materials to the library.



## **Upcoming Unitarian Universalist Association Workshops**

### **Navigating Whiteness**

**Saturday, November 12, 9am-1pm in Weston, MA**

**Presenters:** The Growing Racial and Cultural Equity Team (G.R.A.C.E.) is committed to building a learning community among congregations working to grow their capacity to create and engage in multicultural, anti-racist ministries.

In the United States, everyone must navigate whiteness – whether they realize they are doing that or not. At this year's G.R.A.C.E. Summit, we will hear stories from Unitarian Universalists of various racial identities about their experience of navigating whiteness within and beyond their congregations. Our storytellers will share how they notice whiteness, name it, are impacted by it, resist it, transform it, and how they navigate it. Grounded in worship and story, participants will then engage in small group reflection to consider how they, too, navigate whiteness – finding their own stories. Together, we will identify ways each of us can work within, across and beyond congregations for collective liberation. People of all racial identities are welcome and invited to participate.

### **This is OUR Church: Being or Becoming a Lay Led Congregation**

**Saturday, November 19 – 10am-3pm in Leominster, MA**

**Presenter – Karen Bellavance-Grace**

For Lay leaders in congregations with no minister or with a minister that has gone from full-time to part-time. Ideally, three or more lay and professional leaders will attend together as a team. Come to this workshop to explore how to be more healthy, more relevant, and more invested in the joyful ownership of your Spirit's home. In the company of lay leaders with similar experiences, we will talk about:

**Discernment:** how do we decide what is ours to do – and, crucially, what is not

**Healthy communication, governance, and infrastructure** that creates on-ramps for new leaders

**Preventing burnout, or How Not To Be The One Person Who Does All The Things**

**The stewardship challenge** – assessing your gifts, sharing the wealth, creating a culture of giving

For more information and to register: [uua.org/new-england](http://uua.org/new-england)





## Church of the Larger Fellowship

### Special Message from Lynn Ungar

#### Minister for Lifespan Learning and Quest Editor

I have had plenty of conversations with people who can't understand how Unitarian Universalism can be a religion without holding any particular expectations about people's theological beliefs. And I have had conversations with folks who can't understand how the CLF is a church when we don't have a sanctuary where we gather on Sunday mornings....It's hard for many people – maybe even most – to imagine a faith that is located in the journey rather than the destination, that is rooted in engaging with big questions rather than in prescribing a set of answers to those questions. And it's hard to imagine that a church where people don't see each other face to face, where we can't give hugs or sing together, would be a real church.

...We may not have a beautiful building where we gather, but we have a sanctuary in time, a moment when people gather to share from their hearts, to listen closely, rejuvenate themselves or challenge themselves, to grow together...We may not come together in space, but we come together. It's real church.

To read the full article and learn more about the Church of the Larger Fellowship online worship, go to [www.questformeaning.org](http://www.questformeaning.org). You can also sign up there for "Weekly Wisdom" and receive a short meditation, homily or prayer in your inbox once a week starting this month.

### Mark Your Calendars

#### New England Regional Assembly – Awaken!

**April 21-22, 2017 in Woburn, MA**

Gather this spring in Woburn, Massachusetts, with Unitarian Universalists across New England to celebrate our faith. Come for inspired worship, engaged learning, community singing, UUA Presidential Candidates Forum, regional workshops, fellowship and fun. Awaken your spirit!

Besides the forum, there will be a chance to meet and talk with the candidates for President of the UUA. There will be an opportunity to participate in a community sing with Dr. Ysaye Barnwell, conducted in the "oral tradition" so you don't have to read music or have any musical training. Enjoy a weekend filled with opportunities to connect with the larger UU community.

For more information and to register:  
[uua.org/new-england](http://uua.org/new-england)





### **Wednesday Night Meditation Group**

The Mindfulness Meditation group meets every Wednesday at 6:00 pm. In addition to our regular sitting meditation, we are also reviewing the essential principles of practice. If you are interested in learning more about Mindfulness Meditation, please join us.

### **Spend the Day at UUSG – November 5**

Altered Book Making with Amina – 1:00pm

Join in a day of inspiration and creating with others. You can choose to learn how to make altered books with Amina who will have all the art supplies needed to tap into your creative juices. If you have embellishments you would like to bring to add to your book journal that would be lovely. If you wanted, you could bring along a project of your own to work on in creative community. There will also be greens available for making holiday decorations.

### **Potluck Supper**

Starting at 5:00 pm, we will begin to gather for potluck supper which will start at 5:30. Please bring a dish to share.

### **Movie Night – 7:00pm**

In preparation for Rev. John's sermon that Sunday on the "Theology of the Wizard of Oz Part II," we will be watching the film on the big screen, maybe even singing along. Perhaps this year we will find the Wizard who will help us find the way home. Popcorn and beverages will be provided.

P.O. Box 637  
Gardner, MA 01440

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Your Executive Committee

The Executive Committee usually meets on the third Monday of every month. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding church policies or programs, please feel free to speak to any of the church trustees. All meetings are open to church members and friends.

### Trustees for the Church Year 2015-2016

Boudoin Azora-Minda (Chair '18)

Robert Gifford ('18)

Irene Blacquiere ('19)

Chris Pera (Treasurer '18)

Frieda Reichsman (Clerk '19)

Nov 5 – 1:00pm Art with Amina, 5:00pm  
Pot Luck Supper, 7:00pm Movie

Nov 6 – 11:00am – Congregational  
Forum

Nov 12 – 5:30pm Church Potluck

Nov 13 – 11:30am – Music & Worship  
Committee Meeting

Nov 13 - Welcome Table Meeting, after  
coffee hour

Nov 14 – 6:30pm – Executive Committee  
Meeting

Nov 22 – 5:30pm – Welcome Table  
Community Meal

### Newsletter Contributions

UU-First is published monthly with the exception of July/August.  
The deadline is the 3rd Sunday of the month.