

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
Non-Profit Org.
Sarah Oelberg, Minister

Mere Lys
(More Light)

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Postage

U. S.

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Address Service Requested

Sunday Services
JANUARY, 2003
Social Hour: 10:00 A.M. Worship Service: 10:30 A.M.

January 5 - No Service

January 12 - "Living in the Interim." Rev. Sarah Oelberg. January is the time when we look both forward and back, when we live between the past and the future.

Servers: Joy Rathman and Susan Evers
Musician: Sally Hanson
9:00 - Adult Discussion Group
- Board of Trustees Meeting



January 19 - Rev. Fred Doty will speak on "The Martin Luther King Years." Rev. Doty was a personal friend and colleague of Dr. King, who marched with him in Selma.

Servers: Scott and Vicki Chambard
Musician: Ardelle Becken
9:00 - Adult Discussion Group

January 26 - "Exploring the Unknown." Lewis and Clark began their exploration of the west 200 years ago this month. We all venture into the unknown in our lives.

Servers: Janet and Noah Rosenbloom
Musician: Ardelle and Doug Becken
9:00 - Adult Discussion Group



SARAH'S CORNER

By the time you read this, many of you will have received a questionnaire from the Committee on Ministry. This is a very important step in the process of engaging a new minister. It both tells us what Nora people consider most important, and gives a prospective minister some vital information about the congregation which will help him or her to serve us best. It helps both parties know if a call is a good "match."

I hope that all of you will take the time to fill out this survey carefully. If you did not receive a questionnaire and are a contributing member or friend with an interest in the future of Nora church, please request a survey from the office.

The last time such a comprehensive survey was done was in 1989. I thought it would be interesting to look at some of the results then, and to compare them with the current information. In 1989, 81 people responded; 78 were members.

At that time, the respondents had been members of Nora church an average of 33 years; only six had been members of other UU churches. An amazing 47 were "birthright" Unitarians; while 20 were former Lutherans, 4 Methodists, 2 Catholics, and one UCC. Of those who discovered Nora church later in life, almost all first came because of an invitation from a member, or some personal connection or contact.

The respondents 13 years ago were optimistic about Nora. Fifty-one said they were very positive about the future of the church, and sixty-one described the current condition of the church as strong or very strong.

Forty-eight felt the leadership came primarily from the minister; 26 said it was shared by all who wished to assume responsibility. Yet, 55 felt they had adequate or considerable influence in the church.

At that time, the average age was 52.6 years. Nineteen were single; 47 married, never divorced; and twelve widowed. Thirty-two had not received a high school diploma; 11 had college degrees and 5 advanced degrees. Even then, members lived up to 130 miles away; although many more lived nearby, and many had lived in the same place their entire lives.

Theologically, 33 of the members in 1989 described themselves as Christian; 26 as Humanist; 10 as Theist; 7 as Atheist or Agnostic. Only three claimed to be "professionals," -- all teachers.

It will be very interesting to compare these numbers with the present congregation. I suspect we will find we have changed considerably in significant ways. This will suggest perhaps some different ways of looking at filling our need for professional leadership.

So -- **FILL OUT YOUR SURVEY AND SEND IT IN RIGHT AWAY. YOU DO WANT TO BE COUNTED, DON'T YOU!**

HINTS FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

- 1) Try to enjoy life's ordinary things—the little everyday experiences, from a routine meal to a casual meeting or greeting.
- 2) Keep your perspective—a longer view than today offers on your frustrations and disappointments.
- 3) Do something about your worries—and if nothing can be done to alleviate them, forget them as pointless.
- 4) Have high standards in everything you do—but avoid becoming a perfectionist. There can be no perfection in a living world.
- 5) Accept the diversity of your world, and try to do so with a little relish. It's here—relax and enjoy it.
- 6) Let yourself trust people, and in so doing, judge them by the best you know about them rather than the meanest.
- 7) Never compare yourself with others, or your lot with theirs—you really can't know enough about them for that, in any case.
- 8) Remember that in all probability the universe was not organized for your personal benefit, nor does it mean you harm.
- 9) Give of yourself, your energies and resources, to something a good deal larger and more enduring than your own self.
- 10) Make something other than happiness your goal -- happiness eludes all its pursuers, yet comes unbidden to those who share, love and create with their lives.

Dr. Peter Samson

TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Barbara Gudmundson sends greetings to all and writes: "Marti (in Silver Spring, MD) is between jobs now, expecting to land one as a sales representative of herbs and spices. Holly is busy in the Psych department at the U. of M., helping with their computer skills and problems. Jim has a new position with Walser as head technician, and I am retired and busy with politics, religion at First Unitarian Society, and science. I am host of the coffee hour table Science Spoken Here, which helps especially new members to meet each other; then we invite them to join us at the Walker Art Center's gourmet cafeteria to continue discussion.

Holly gets one free course a quarter; now she's into French again and really enjoys it.

Phil Hahn reports that he and sister Bonnie moved to Des Moines in June. Bonnie is at The Abbey where she receives good care and is happy.

Phil works for Martin Luther Homes providing residential services to persons with developmental disabilities. He is active in the Des Moines Astronomical Society and enjoys friends and activities there. His new address is: 2643 Beaver Ave., #302, Des Moines, IA 50310.

Bud Anderson will be starting another round of chemotherapy this week, but is feeling pretty good otherwise.

DENOMINATIONAL DOINGS

It is not too early to think about attending the General Assembly in June. This year it will be held in Boston, and promises to be the largest yet!

Some featured speakers will include Julian Bond, chair of the NAACP; Dr. Jonathon Kozol; Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of Why Bad Things Happen to Good People, and many more! There will be many interesting workshops, the annual Service of the Living Tradition, and worship services, performances, business, and social events. The dates are June 26-30. Sarah has registration forms.

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The Nora Women's Society will have a potluck lunch at the church on January 24.

We have received notes of appreciation for our Christmas goodie baskets. It is nice to reach out to our homebound and lonely members in this way.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The New Ulm Life-Living Series will meet at the Middle School Auditorium on Mondays January 20 and 27; and February 3 and 10, at 7:00 pm.

The first features Jan Turner, who will share her success story in overcoming quadruple amputations, and encourage others to overcome obstacles in their lives. Jan is a single parent, teacher, pastor, and radio personality among other activities.

On January 27 the Urban Hillbilly Quartet will perform. This group plays bluegrass and eclectic music. The fiddle player is Sena Thompson, daughter of Jane Thompson. The group also includes her husband on bass, and accordion and mandolin players.

On February 3, the "Tilting at Windmills" theatre group will present a performance exploring how mentally ill people shape our culture through their contributions to the arts.

The Feb. 10 program will explore the grieving process and show how "good grief" is important to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

THANK YOU! thank you!

I have so much to be thankful for, but certainly some of the best are the wonderful people at **Nora**, who have sent Christmas and Get Well cards, and who think of the minister at Christmas time. I am on the road to recovery, and anxious to see all of you in church on the 12th!

Sarah

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

It is time again for committees to meet! President Christopher Olson has been drafting job descriptions for various committees, in the hope that they may become more active and focused. Having well-functioning committees is very important to prospective ministers, so this is a good time to get more organized.

There will be the mid-year All Committee Meeting on Wednesday evening, January 29. Sarah will provide soup at six; the meetings will begin around 7:00 pm. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. If you are not on a committee and would like to be more involved in the work of the church, please come and we will find a slot for you!

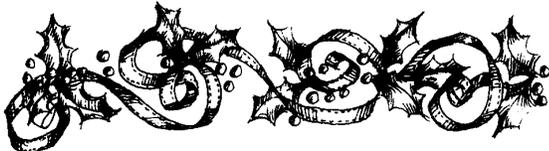
The Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, January 14, at the Troll Hus in Hanska. We will gather about 11:30.

At its December meeting, the Nora Board of Trustees voted to pledge \$2000 toward the building of a ramp to make the Community Center (former Liberal Union Hall) handicapped accessible. We chose to do this on behalf of all those who cannot attend events held at the hall, including members of Nora church. We have so notified the City Council.

Most churches have money in their budgets for "mission", benevolent and outreach work. Most churches also have a fund to help people who come with requests for various types of assistance.

Nora, being out in the country, seldom gets such requests, and has not had an active, budgeted, mission program. It seemed, therefore, appropriate to allocate some money for the mission of making the historic hall, which is part of our history, accessible to everyone. It is our hope that this pledge will help to achieve this

"Generosity is giving more than you can;
pride is taking less than you need." *Kahlil Gibran*



much needed asset for the community.

TRIP TO TRANSYLVANIA?

A few people have expressed some interest in going as a group from Nora and Mankato to visit our partner village in Transylvania, as well as to see interesting sites related to Unitarian history. Many UU churches have made such "pilgrimages," and returned with a deeper understanding of our own history and the situation in Romania for our UU partners.

Sarah and Jerry have been there four times, and each time was more meaningful than the last. We now feel we know enough to be able to guide a tour of others, and would like some people from both churches to experience Transylvania, so that our partnership can continue after Sarah's retirement.

If you think you might be interested in participating in such a trip this August, please let Sarah know. It is time to begin thinking seriously about planning how we can do this, and determine costs and arrangements. A "go/no-go" decision will probably have to be made by March 1st at the latest. Plans will, of course, vary depending on the number of people. For now, let it be known if you are at all interested; we will nail down the numbers in a month or so. The trip would probably take two weeks, in order to make it really worthwhile.

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