

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
Sarah Oelberg, Minister
12333 155th Avenue
Hanska, Minnesota 56041-4310

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit Number 2
Hanska, MN 56041

Mere Lys
(More Light)



norachuu@prairie.lake.com
<http://www.nora-uu-church.org>

Address Service Requested

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

December 7 – “Unitarian Universalist Christmas Presence”----Reverend Wesley Hromatko

Servers: Elroy & Ardis Wellmann, Wayne Weinshenk, Dave & Jean Wenk

Musician: Ben Marti

9:00 – Adult Discussion Group

11:30 – POTLUCK LUNCH

December 14 – “Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow.”

After 12 ½ years together, I am retiring. Some thoughts on leave-taking and letting go.

Servers: John & Anne Makepeace

Musician: Ben Marti

9:00 – Adult Discussion Group

December 21 – Children’s Christmas Service

The children will take part in a skit, read readings and provide the music for this annual service.

Servers: Roger & Norma Breu

Musician: Sally Hansen

9:00 – Adult Discussion Group

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service “A Night of Carols” 5:00 P.M.

Our traditional Christmas Eve service will feature favorite carols.

Please bring cookies to share after the service.

Musician: Muffy Rathman

SARAH'S CORNER

The sounds of Christmas! The incessant playing of Christmas carols in every department store and mall. The familiar themes over the radio and TV. The sounds of media commercials giving the latest countdown of shopping days until Christmas, and advertisements suggesting gifts from the sublime to the ridiculous. By Christmas eve, many of these sounds have become tiresome background noise, which we are mostly willing and able to tune out, lest we go crazy.

Then comes Christmas eve, and the sounds of Christmas once again become meaningful. The Christmas music, in the sanctuary of a church, has a much different sound and meaning than it does blaring from loudspeakers everywhere. The stories of Christmas take on different and deeper meaning when they are related in a religious setting. Each sound becomes laden with meaning, as does the silence, when we are gathered to celebrate the real Christmas.

It seems to me that bells are the nicest sounds of Christmas. Jingle bells, sleigh bells, church bells, silver bells, all speak of the joy of Christmas time. After being in Romania for a month a couple of years ago, and hearing the cowbells as the animals roved over the mountains, I can better appreciate the sounds of that night in the area of Bethlehem – the cattle are lowing, the baby awakes; but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I can just hear the cowbells, and see baby Jesus waking up and listening to them, kind of like a lullaby.

Then there are the Salvation Army bells, ringing to remind us that there are those who cannot, will not, enjoy Christmas unless others pitch in to help. Perhaps they, more than any other bells, represent the true spirit of Christmas – giving unto others.

I hope you will have a joyous Christmas, with many bells. And a happy New Year, with the ringing out of the old and the ringing in of the new. This new year will be a change for all of us, as we look forward to new possibilities and plans. Whatever happens, let the bells ring on – ringing out “peace and justice and love between our brothers and sisters, all over the land!”

MOUNT PISQUA CEMETERY BOARD UPDATE

The Mount Pisqua Cemetery Board has never made a request for an extra contribution over and above the perpetual care charge you paid when you purchased your cemetery lots. We are not in any financial crisis at this time but because of the extremely low rates on our interest bearing savings, our expenses will exceed our income in 2004. That may not improve in the immediate future.

We would appreciate it very much if everyone owning lots on the Hill or have loved ones buried on the Hill, would consider making a small contribution to help with the upkeep of our beautiful cemetery.

If you are so moved, please make checks payable to Mount Pisqua Cemetery and send to Mount Pisqua Cemetery, Treasurer Algot Blomquist, P.O. Box 83, Hanska, MN 56041-0083.

Thank you.

Mount Pisqua Cemetery Board:	Warren Paulson	Scott Chambard
	Clayton Olson	Wayne Johnson
	Algot Blomquist	

RETIREMENT PARTY OPEN HOUSE

For Reverend Dr. Sarah Oelberg

The members of the Unitarian-Universalist Church in rural Hanska will be hosting an Open House in honor of the Reverend Dr. Sarah Oelberg and her husband, Jerry, on Saturday, December 6, 2003, from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Church Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Dr. Oelberg is retiring from the Ministry. She has served as the Minister of the Nora Church since 1991. She has also been involved in many community, county, and broader area activities during her time here.

An invitation is extended to everyone to attend. The Oelbergs will be leaving the Hanska area on January 1, 2004.

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

Following the service on Sunday, December 14, Nora women's Society members and helpers will fill holiday boxes for shut-ins. As in past years, we are asking others to help by bringing traditional Norwegian or holiday treats to church on Sunday, December 7th or 14th. These boxes are for our members who are no longer able to get out and about.

At the November 14th meeting, NWS members began to sort through items left by Marjorie Moe Tieg. There are many scrapbooks, letters, and photographs. The pictures have been sorted into Moe family items and things of interest to the church. Some are not identified. This is a good reminder to us to take some time to organize and identify our family photos. There is more work to be done and the NWS will be working on this at future meetings.

HELP!!!!

Note from Sarah

In going through our "stuff" I discovered I am missing my videotape of Isaac Asmov's funeral service. Jerry says he thinks we loaned it to someone. Was it you? Could we please have it back? Thank you.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Our Annual Christmas Service will be on Sunday, December 21st, rather than on Christmas Eve. We have found a story/skit to perform and will explain more on December 7th at Sunday School. All of the children and young adults are invited and encouraged to participate. We will need children and young adults to perform in the skit, read readings, and provide music. If you have readings or music you would like to have included in the service, please let Anne and Sheldon know as soon as possible, so it can be included in the service. We will practice for the service at Sunday School on December 7th and 14th.

WHAT'S NEW AT NORA

Though I am not really new at Nora, I am in a sense. My name is Julie Schmitt and I live in Comfrey and work just outside of Sleepy Eye at Christensen Farms. I have taken on the position of secretary at Nora and have a few housekeeping tips I hope you will help me out on. I will be doing the monthly newsletter and would appreciate getting any news, articles, meeting notes, etc., by the 20th of the month. This allows me the time to put together the newsletter, print it and mail it out in a timely manner. I will put a box in the church annex for any information that could possibly go in the newsletter. I will figure that "no news is good news, but we won't really know about it because it wasn't shared with all of us!" You may contact me at my home evenings at 507-877-4754 or email me at jas-jas@frontiernet.net. Thanks in advance for your help and support.

Also, there will be monthly need for a "column" of some sort to take the place of "Sarah's Corner". Can you volunteer to write one?

LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will meet at 11:30 on Tuesday, December 16 at the Holiday Inn in New Ulm. This is the last chance to have lunch and conversation with Sarah before she leaves.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Program Committee has been meeting and scheduling ministers and lay persons to fill our pulpit for the upcoming six months. At least two Sundays each month will be filled with U.U. ministers. Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen, our interim consultant, will also be leading us through the transition process.

We think our other speakers will also be interesting and informative. The coming year will be a challenging year for all of us. As a committee, we are pleased with our choices for the Sunday morning services, and feel it will be a rewarding year as well.

See you in church!

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee will be meeting in December with Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen, who is the Director of Shalom Hill Farm and a consultant to rural congregations. He will be helping us go through the interim process. We are excited about the progress we have made and look forward to the next phase with great anticipation.

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The congregational record is complete and posted on the internet. We are working on the packets to send to the ministers who are interested in learning more about us. We are trying to make our packets as informative and attractive as possible. It will include information about the Church, the congregation, and the area. If anyone has any ideas as to what to include, pictures to include, or something that will help to make our packet "stand out" and help us "shine", let a member of the committee know soon. Committee members are Doug, Jeanne, Mark, Anne, Sheldon, Beverly Jean, and Kristine.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Matt Harbur and Kathleen Baril for the donation of the Eureka vacuum.

NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

A Negotiating Committee, consisting of Anne Makepeace from the Search Committee, Sally Hansen from the Board, and Algot Blomquist representing the congregation at large, has met twice and drawn up a tentative contract proposal which would serve as a base for negotiation of the contract for the future minister.

AREA HAPPENINGS

The **Oak Hills Auxiliary** is sponsoring a Holiday Bazaar, Bake Sale and Raffle on Saturday, December 6th from 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. at the Oak Hills Living Center. Monetary donations, craft items or baked good are welcome by 9:00 A.M. on Saturday. Proceeds will be used to purchase dining room furniture for the residents of the Oak Hills Assisted Living Addition.

Volunteer Services at the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center are asking for donations to provide a little bit of Christmas for the mentally ill individuals from our 10 county area. Money and various items(as noted on the bulletin board) should be delivered by December 10th to the Old Center Building on the campus.

Madelia Hospital Auxiliary will be having a "Tree of Remembrance" service honoring the memory of a loved one. Madelia's lighting ceremony will take place on December 7th at 5:00 P.M. at the Madelia Community Hospital.

The "**Reach Out for Warmth**" program is looking for contributions to help keep your Brown County neighbor warm this winter. This program is through the Brown County Energy Program and helps in an energy related emergency. Please send donations to PO Box 788, New Ulm, MN 56073

Happy Holidays