

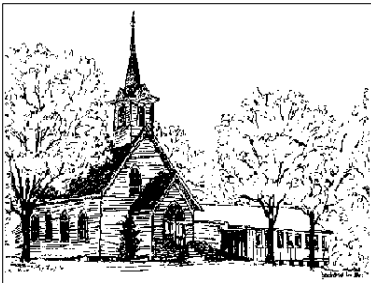


MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

December 2006

VIEW FROM THE HILL



You might remember Gloria McLendon Houston's book, "The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree: An Appalachian Story", the tale about a WWI soldier's separation from his family at Christmastime. It's a poignant story that, unfortunately, American (and some other nations') families are living right now. It's a story of hardship and sacrifice in a time of war.

I've talked with enough of our members and friends to know that the war in Iraq was never popular among us. It began as a war without clear justification and has morphed into a dilemma without clear answers. But morally indicting of our nation as that war may be – and as much as we may want to will it into a sane end – none of that changes the fact that the body count continues to rise and the wounded list continues to grow.

But there was, and still is, support among us for those who are fighting this war. Yet, last I checked, when a U.S. serviceman or servicewoman is killed the family is given \$6,000 and a folded flag. And I know for certain that when a U.S. serviceman or servicewoman is injured while on active duty, he or she can count on the VA for long-term medical care, but little else. Our leaders seem better at deploying our military folk than seeing to their post-war needs, let alone those of their families.

There are a number of legitimate nonprofit funds set up to assist military families: Soldier-Fund, PatriotsFund, and Operation Family Fund, just to name a few. Most of the agencies that I've found online use their donations to help pay for rent, daycare, groceries, clothing and modifications for wheelchair access. It's worthy work to support, especially in this holiday season. (Be sure to check with an online charity rating firm, just to make sure that your dollars are well-used.) It's one way of bringing as much Christmas as we can to those whose loved ones can't be with them.

So, the trick is to enjoy the blessings of this season without forgetting there's a war going on. The art is to think, pray, live and work on behalf of a peace that will unmask war for the tragedy it is. And the vision is a world in which a story about a family divided by war is just a tale from a long-ago time.

All Holiday Blessings,
Don



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

December 3 Practice for the Winter Program

December 10 Winter Program!

December 17 No Sunday School

December 24 Christmas Eve Service

SERVICE SCHEDULE REMINDER

There will be no morning service on Sunday, December 24th (we'll gather at 5:00 P.M. for the Christmas Eve service) or December 31st. Our regular service schedule will resume on Sunday, January 7th, at 10:30 A.M.

SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

Loose change on the 2nd Sunday of each month will go to "Food For All"

CHOIR ANNOUNCEMENT

There will NOT be choir rehearsals on Sunday Dec 10 and 17. The choir needs a well deserved rest. Rehearsals will resume on January 14 at 9:00 am.

SOULFUL SUNDOWN



Soulful Sundown, our bimonthly ministry in New Ulm, will meet on December 5 and 19, at Rhein River Arts Center, 208 N. Minnesota. Don will lead us in a time of music, meditation and sharing.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

We missed getting the Guest at Your Table boxes to everyone who wanted one. There will be extras on the foyer table, next to the orders of service. (Just a reminder that the GAYT program asks us to place a box in each home during the holiday season. The idea is to put in the box all the change we bring home from Thanksgiving through Christmas. The boxes can be turned in to Anne Rieke as late as our first service in January.)



SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Social Justice committee recently completed the second step of our exploration of our (congregational) views on diversity and the various values and experiences we as individuals may bring to our efforts to be inclusive and welcoming of ALL to our church. The "baker's dozen" who joined Becky Marquez in completing individual surveys met after the potluck in November. The next step in our process will be for Becky to administer the survey to those that wish to still take the survey before church, the first Sunday in Dec. She is hoping to enter the information into the computer and tabulate those with the other surveys we did previously, allowing for a more complete group (congregational) picture. After church on that day, Dec. 3rd she will present the explanation of the model on which the results are based, and will present the group's profile.

Upon completing the group profile, she will be available for about 10-15 minute sessions per person to review individual results. We may want to have people sign up for times so that they know (and I know) how much time we are dealing with. Based on the group profile, she will make recommendations to our committee as to what steps should follow.

FOOD FOR ALL

Reminder that our next opportunity to help distribute food to those in need over in St. James will be coming up shortly. On Saturday morning, December 9th Nora's commitment to provide people resources occurs. We leave around 8 a.m. and have historically been back home by around noon. This is a great inter-generational activity. If you'd like to be a part of our volunteer effort please call Darrell Hinsman at 359-7494.

REMINDER: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE FOOD SHELF

We will need 2 volunteers each for the dates of December 11th, 13th and 27th. from 11:45 until 3pm. If you're able to help at any of those times please let Darrell Hinsman know. The work involves packing up orders and he can get you started. The food shelf serves rural areas of Brown County including Hanska and Comfrey.

WANTED: PENPALS FOR UU PRISONERS



Looking for a social justice project that UUs can do alone or in groups, in their homes, whenever it's convenient: The church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has dozens of prisoner-members waiting to be matched with a (non-incarcerated) UU penpal through CLF's "Letter Writing Ministry." All letters to/from prisoners are forwarded through CLF's prison ministry (prisoners are told only their penpal's first name). The CLF's prison ministry staff makes penpal "matches" and remains available to all penpals for advice and support (prismin@clfuu.org).

Individuals are welcome, or a group from one congregation can apply and be "matched" at the same time to form an ongoing study/support group. Visit CLF's website, www.clfuu.org (Prison Ministry tab), to review the guidelines for the Letter Writing Ministry and request an info-application packet, or write to CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108

LOOKING FOR A LITTLE FUN DIVERSION FROM WINTER???

We are looking for volunteers to sew baby blankets. Brown county Public Health visits all newborn babies in Brown County. As part of this home visit, families are given a baby blanket. The blankets are reminders to parents to place babies on their tummy when they are awake in order to promote gross motor development. If you have basic sewing skills you would be able to make these simple blankets. We provide the fabric, batting, and instructions. If you are interested, please call Brown County Public Health at 507-233-6820 or 1-888-359-2809 (toll free) and ask for Judy Mathiowetz or Terri Helland.

SANTA'S CLOSET PROJECT



The Sertoma Club of New Ulm will again be providing Santa's Closet this Christmas Season. It provides an opportunity for families with limited financial resources to select gifts for their children. This project serves families with children from infancy through 14 years of age.

A referral from your pastor is needed to take part in this. If you know of someone in need of this service this Christmas, please refer them to your pastor. Families will remain anonymous, but the gender and age of the children is needed to ensure that appropriate gifts are available.

SANTA'S CLOSET will be open on Saturday, Dec 16 from 9 am to 4 pm, for parents to "shop" for their gifts at the New Ulm Armory, 205 N Broadway. PLEASE CONTACT DON IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE A NEED FOR THIS SERVICE.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS For UUA Trustee

Nominations for the position of Trustee for Prairie Star District of the Board of the UU Assoc are to be submitted to:

TRUSTEE ELECTION COMMITTEE
c/o Prairie Star District, UUA
122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 303
Minneapolis, MN 55404

- Nominations must be submitted at the above address by 5 pm on Feb 1, 2007.
 - The nominations must be signed by the chair/president or clerk/secretary of the congregations' governing board and must certify that the nominee meets the eligibility requirements noted below.
 - Nominations may be made by motion at a legally called meeting of the congregation OR its governing board.
 - Congregations eligible to nominate candidates are those which were eligible to send delegates to the UUA General Assembly in 2006.
 - Each person nominated must be a legal member of a congregation of the District and reside within the geographical area encompassed by the District.
 - A letter from the nominee, agreeing to accept the nomination and containing biographical information of not more than 100 words, must accompany the nomination or be received separately at the above address by 5 pm, Feb 1, 2007
- On or before March 1, 2007 the Trustee Election Committee will communicate with you again with further information on the election procedures.

HOMES FOR ALL! 2006 CONVENTION



Homes for All! 2006 will bring together concerned citizens, people impacted by the lack of affordable housing, housing industry members, service providers, advocates, and government, business and community leaders – to organize action

around housing solutions to ensure housing affordability, end homelessness, and create healthy communities that will close the gap in achieving homes for all Minnesotans. Participants will learn about housing solutions that are working in Minnesota, & how they can take action around those solutions and be part of the solution. **Minnesota's governor-elect will speak in the late afternoon & Juan Williams will keynote in the evening.** Juan is one of America's leading political writers and thinkers. He is the senior correspondent for NPR, a political analyst for Fox Television, and a regular panelist for FoxNews Sunday. In addition to prize-winning columns and editorial writing for The Washington Post, he has also authored six books. His most recent book, *My Soul Looks Back in Wonder*, presents stirring, eyewitness accounts of history-making movements for Black, Hispanic, and Women's rights, as well as other successes at creating a better America.

The UU Affordable Housing Partnership (a working group of the Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance) encourages interested UUs to attend: **Homes for All! 2006 Ensure affordability.**

End Homelessness. Build better communities. Thursday, December 7th 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., St. Paul River Centre - 175 West Kellogg Boulevard in St. Paul

1,500 people expected to attend—the largest affordable housing conference in state history!

www.homes-for-all.org

SEVA FOUNDATION GIFTS

Seva Foundation has been turning our donors' gifts into acts of service. Seva supporters share a spirit of compassion—one that calls us to reach out and build solutions to poverty and disease. Select gifts to honor your friends, family, and business associates—perfect for holidays. All gifts are tax deductible. Contact at www.seva.org or 1-800--223-7382. Examples of "projects" include Heart of Compassion which include the gift of clean water, the gift of affordable health clinics, the gift of literacy, the miracle of eyesight, etc. There is a brochure with more specifics available at the resource table outside the coffee area.

wUUrld's 2007 WhaleCoast Alaska

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to eco-cultural programs in June right after the Portland General Assembly or in July, 2007. See



the *REAL* Alaska! With UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau and Sitka, UUs host parties and lead tours. We visit Tlingit and Inupiat Native Alaskans, see wildlife from bears, moose and caribou to whales, sea otters and sea lions. We visit Denali and 3 other National Parks. Led by Rev. Dick & Mary Weston-Jones, 12th year. www.wuurld.org.

E-mail alaska@wuurld.org or phone 1-888, 998-8753 for a brochure. Reservation deadline: February 28. More information will be available in December.

U U Association of Congregations 2005-2006 Annual Report on Giving Now Available

This year, Unitarian Universalists have boldly stood on the side of hope, love, compassion, and action. The generosity demonstrated in this year's Annual Report on Giving shows the ways in which Unitarian Universalists have helped better the world -- from the Annual Program Fund to Friends of the UUA; from support of Gulf Coast Relief to the Freedom to Marry Fund; from the Legacy Society to the Tapestry of Faith curriculum project; from our many scholarship funds to marketing projects in Times Square and around the country. Read this year's Report on Giving and celebrate the life-saving and world-changing generosity of Unitarian Universalists!

Download: [UUA 2005-2006 Annual Report on Giving](#)

If you don't have a computer, you can go to your local library and use theirs.

Please contact the Stewardship and Development department if you have any questions or comments regarding the Annual Report on Giving. 1-888-792-5885 | giftinfo@uua.org

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People are funny, they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.

UU PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

Aspiring to unities and universals, Unitarian Universalism is global, not parochial. The 6th principle of our Purposes and Principles asserts "the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all".

Nonetheless, the international commitment of North American Unitarian Universalists has been often weak. We have lacked staying power. Sometimes we have lacked the resources or the will to see our global commitments through and our self-interest or self-centeredness has caused us to shrink from our global calling.

Never before in human history, however, has the need for international understanding and engagement been greater than it is today. Never before has it been more important to encourage global citizenship. Feeling fresh urgency-against a background of increasing fear and xenophobia, in a new era of instantaneous communication and with increasing awareness of the interdependency of people and their struggles for social justice-the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council projects a bold new vision:

We will establish global citizenship as a common commitment of liberal religion, transform ourselves and our congregations, and thus make international engagement a moral and spiritual principle of UU congregational life.

Much as the modern civil rights movement solidified Social Justice as a core value of Unitarian Universalism, we commit the partner church movement to make Global Citizenship integral to the core identity of all Unitarian Universalists and every UU congregation.

An invitation to membership in the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council programs and goals is available thru PO Box 88, Bedford, MA 01730-0088 (\$30 individual membership, \$50 Family membership) Building global community one partnership at a time!

There is a newsletter called Partner Church News available outside the coffee area on the resource table.

NOW IS THE TIME Conference Announcement

Ten years ago General Assembly made a commitment to move toward becoming an antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. At the 2006 General Assembly in Saint Louis, the congregations' delegates voted to go back to their congregations and hold at least one program over the next year to address racism or classism, and to report on that program at the 2007 General Assembly.

A 2006 General Assembly Responsive Resolution seeks to address behaviors towards people of color in our own congregations and communities, revealing that it is essential for UUs to continue with this important work as we seek to build just and inclusive communities through our commitment that is rooted in Unitarian Universalist identity, theology, and values.

Join congregational and district leaders from throughout the United States as we explore together what we can do to lead congregations into a multiracial and multicultural future. Now is the time. You're invited to attend the "Now in the Time" Conference.

NOW IS THE TIME: Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future UUA 2007 National Conference Arlington, VA February 16-18, 2007 Online registration starts November 15, 2006 at <http://www.uua.org/cde/nowisthetime2007/index.html>

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*If you don't have a computer, you can visit your local library and read it or print it out.

UUPCC PILGRIMAGE OPPORTUNITIES

*2007 Pilgrimages to the Unitarians of North East India (including side trips to Delhi and the Taj Mahal) - Feb 15—Feb 28

Approximate cost per traveler - \$1800 (Delhi and Khasi Hills) + 1750.00 (air fares) + \$50 non-refundable registration fee.

Travelers will arrange their own air fare: estimated costs Airfare – US – Delhi (round trip) \$1500.00 Airfare – Delhi – Guwahati, Assam (round trip)- Jet Airways \$275.00 For more info or to register, Go to <http://www.uupcc.org/trips/India06.htm>

Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited - until you try to sit in their pews

THANK YOU

Thank-you to all of you who made the November Nostalgia Event a success. Donations from the evening will be divided among the local food shelves, veterans projects and UNICEF. The evening wouldn't have worked without all of you who donated your time to the event. Thank-you Bev Wellmann and Bonita Blomquist for handling all the publicity and Shirley Olson who did most of the planning for the event. A special thank-you to our DJ Don Rollins, not only for a wonderful evening of music but for all the time spent getting the sound system ready to go. And one last thank-you to Ardelle Becken for the piano music from the forties. It was a special night and a nice way to end our anniversary celebration.

DON'S SCHEDULE

Don will continue with the same (more or less) schedule for the 2006-07 church year. Monday is his day-off and Fridays are reserved for sermon writing. While he continues to have other set commitments (New Ulm Ministerium, drug/alcohol unit presentations, board meetings for Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth, etc.) don't hesitate to call to schedule an appointment.

EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL

Please remember, if you receive the newsletter via email AND snail mail, it's because we need to keep a minimum number to get the bulk rate. As soon as we have enough on email, we can reduce the number being printed and mail out less. If you've decided to try it via email, please let me know.

cindymo@sleepyeyetel.net Please remember to put "NORA" in the subject line.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
ARE DUE BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.

WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS
ARE DUE BY THURSDAY (noon if possible)

cindymo@sleepyeyetel.net

please be sure to include "NORA" in the subject line

(507) 439-6380

20894 County Road 6, Hanska, MN 56041
Thanks for your help in getting articles to me.
Cindy Mosenden, Office Administrator

To Keep In Touch



Daniel Amborn,
son of Dan and Patsy Amborn,
will graduate from the
University of Minnesota, College
of Liberal Arts, with a Bachelor of
Arts degree in English on Decem-
ber 10, 2006. He has accepted a
position with Amity Aeon Corpora-
tion and will be teaching English at
Amity School in Suzaka,
Japan. He leaves for Japan on
April 6th.

Daniel is the grandson of Algot
and Bonita Blomquist.



Please keep our military
personnel in your prayers.
They need our support.



If you know of anyone needing our as-
sistance or attention...please call one of
the following Caring Committee mem-
bers:


Georgine Tepley (chair)
359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm)
Shirley Olson
439-6879
Carol Chambard
354-2242

THANK YOU! - Caring Committee



NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat															
					1	2															
3 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	4	5 6:30 pm Member- ship Committee @ Carol & Alon Chambard's	6	7	8	9 "Food for All" in St. James - meet at the church															
10 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	11	12	13 6:30 pm Church Board Meeting @ church	14	15	16															
17 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Winter Program	18	19	20 6:30 pm RE Wednesday @ church	21	22	23															
24 NO morning service We will gather at 5:00 pm for our Christmas Eve Service			27	28	29	30															
31 NO service	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">MUSICIAN</th> <th style="text-align: left;">SERVERS</th> <th style="text-align: left;">GREETERS - USHERS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3 Jordan</td> <td>Joy Rathmann & Susan Evers Noah & Janet Rosenbloom</td> <td>Katie & Jason Monnens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 Mimi</td> <td>Doug Anderson Charles Anderson</td> <td>Clayton & Shirley Olson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17 Sally</td> <td>Mark & Brenda Wiger</td> <td>Warren & Kristine Paulson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 Muffy</td> <td>???</td> <td>????</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						MUSICIAN	SERVERS	GREETERS - USHERS	3 Jordan	Joy Rathmann & Susan Evers Noah & Janet Rosenbloom	Katie & Jason Monnens	10 Mimi	Doug Anderson Charles Anderson	Clayton & Shirley Olson	17 Sally	Mark & Brenda Wiger	Warren & Kristine Paulson	24 Muffy	???	????
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Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
12333 155th Avenue
Hanska Minnesota 56041-4310

Address Service Requested

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United States Postage Paid
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Hanska, MN 56041



Happy Holidays!

Nora church @ sleepyeyetel.net
<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

Nora Church Sunday Services DECEMBER 2006

Social Hour 10:00 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM

December 3 "Living on the Margins" - Don Rollins and Jill Kramer (Social Worker, Brown County Human Services) It's one thing to see another study about the widening gap between America's rich and poor, but it's something else to learn what that means for some people here in Brown County, Minnesota. And what has that to do with liberal religion?

December 10 "Winter Program"

December 17 "Which Christmas Don't You Celebrate?" Don Rollins – A multicultural society like modern America has more than one understanding of Christmas. Which one(s) do you not believe in? And what's left?

December 24 "Christmas Eve at Nora Church" Don Rollins – Come be part of a family service featuring carols, readings and stories. (Note: there will be no morning service on the 24th. The Christmas Eve service will begin at 5:00 P.M.)