

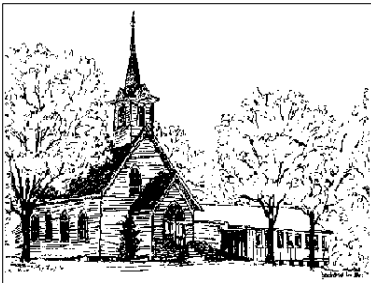


MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

January 2007

VIEW FROM THE HILL



Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 78 years old had he lived until his next birthday, January 15. He was 39 when he was shot on a Memphis motel balcony in April 1968. He was there to support a strike by that city's sanitation workers.

I think of King in much the same way I think of the Hebrew prophets and, to a large degree, Jesus, too: prophet. So about this time of year I reread King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail", that scathing indictment of the white, liberal clergy that remained quiet as the remnants of the Old South reacted with clubs and water cannons and tear gas in defense of their racism. That letter, composed on the margins of newspapers, reminds us that slavery has a shelf life that will never expire. It reminds us that race and class are bound together. And it reminds us that ecumenical and interfaith cooperation are essential to justice work.

Come January 14 we'll borrow the UCC (New Ulm) kitchen and sanctuary to host another spaghetti supper, this time featuring a lecture by Dr. Hamed Sallam, who teaches at Minnesota State University, Mankato. (Dr. Sallam will speak to us about Muslim-Christian dialogue.) The proceeds of that benefit will go to support an orphanage and burn unit for children in Iraq.

So what does that fundraiser have to do with Dr. King? Everything. The King who worked to dismantle racism was also the King who bitterly opposed the Vietnam War. The King who protested that war was the same King who decried poverty. And the King who decried poverty was the same King who turned to a Hindu, Gandhi, to be schooled in nonviolence.

Can we doubt that Martin Luther King, Jr., had he survived, would be doing anything other than protesting a war rife with religious division? A war begun by his own country? Would he not be heartened by even our meager attempts to do something about the carnage our presence has created in Iraq?

Please come join us on January 14, and if you can't, we'll appreciate your contribution on behalf of the innocent children caught in the crossfire of yet another war. That's not a bad way to mark the birth of prophet.



Thanks,
Don

SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

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

SOULFUL SUNDOWN CONTINUES



Soulful Sundown, our bimonthly service in New Ulm, is scheduled for Thursday, January 4 and Thursday, January 18. We meet at Rhein River Arts Center, 208 N. Minnesota, at 6:30 P.M. We share music, silence and life. Come check it out!

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Social Justice Committee is gearing up for our January Martin Luther King fundraiser for the children of Iraq. You may remember that we had a successful event last year raising over \$1000. Lee Schmidt was able to forward on the orphanage portion of those monies near where he is stationed in Iraq. We're looking forward to photos in the near future that illustrate that endeavor. This event was supported very well by you as a congregation last year as well as a number of others from the community and so we decided a repeat was a good next step this year. Don, along with the UCC pastor, Hank Campbell, have made arrangements for our guest speaker, Dr. Shallom. Now what is needed are your efforts and "manpower" to prepare, clean up and serve the spaghetti dinner as well as do pre-event sales of the enclosed tickets. We are hopeful that if we all work together we can have another great evening. So, mark January 14th on your calendars. Call one of the Social Justice committee members to volunteer. Sign up on the clipboard which will be available at the first service in January, January 7th.

Nora once again helped to distribute the food in St. James for the Food for All project. We took our quarterly Saturday, December 9th, and helped with this outreach to those in need of food. Thanks to those who volunteered that day! What a great opportunity for our community brothers and sisters in need to take home items which they can use to provide meals to themselves and their families.

BOARD NOTES

The Nora Church Board of Trustees accepted with regret the resignation of board members Tarrie Swenstad and Charles Anderson and welcomed new member Scott Schmiesing. The board stressed the need for long-range planning to decide what it wants the church to look like in several years and work purposefully to achieve those goals.

The board also received reports from various committees outlining ideas to make the church more attractive to visitors.

The board set a timeline for the budget process. Committees are being urged to prepare a budget request for the next church year by Sunday, February 14 so the board can begin putting together a budget at its February meeting. Doug Anderson has agreed to head the Pledge Committee. The board authorized purchasing a new computer for the office. The current one was damaged by a lightning strike and has not been working up to speed.

To keep the congregation informed about board actions, the minutes of the previous month's meeting are posted on the foyer bulletin board. Older minutes are filed and available in a notebook which is kept on the book cart in the Iverson Room.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's the start of a New Year and with that time for a look back at the past year at Nora.

There were little physical changes like removing one pew to provide better access to the side aisle. There were bigger ones like new lights in the sanctuary, the painting of fellowship hall, and the painting of the church itself.

There were more personal changes with new friends joining and the lost of old friends. More people were willing to teach at Sunday School or to serve on committees. The Coming of Age class graduated and Soulful Sundown was started in New Ulm.

The biggest event of course was the 125th Anniversary of Nora's founding. A wonderful day in August followed in November by another great

evening celebrating our past at the Union Hall. Now we must look to the future. One item we need to be aware of is how we can better use technology to do the work of Nora. But there are probably other ideas out there too to consider. So, thanks to the Committee on Ministry, look for an idea box that will be placed in the lobby. If you have an idea or just a thought about something concerning Nora just slip it in the box if that's what's most comfortable for you. There will be other changes but of course in the coming year but the caring, giving hearts of Nora won't change. That is one constant we can depend on.

UU PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL will:

BE the bridge that connects our congregations with the world.

REACH across all boundaries to collaborate with old and new partners.

CREATE transformational opportunities for pilgrimage and hospitality, for learning and service. CHALLENGE ourselves theologically and open ourselves to changed values and behavior.

INITIATE creative unprecedented partnerships between North America UU congregations and diverse faith communities and organizations so that together we may promote international awareness, human rights and a better world.

SUSTAIN this global vision, enlarging and renewing it as "new occasions teach new duties".

Invitations to Membership are available at the resource table in the foyer of the church.

BOOKSTORE CATALOG

We recently received the 2007 Bookstore Catalog from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. They not only have church resources including music, church leadership and administration, RE materials for all ages, but also have reading for all ages including children youth family, inspirational, etc. A copy of this catalog is available on the resource table in the church foyer.

VOLUNTEERS FOR PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT

Prairie Star District is looking for volunteers for District positions, both elected and appointed. Please help by suggesting a potential candidate. You may complete a form (available on the resource table in the church foyer) for

yourself or anybody else. This information will be kept on file and the person contacted when an appropriate opening appears. Prairie Star District thanks you for your input.

ADOPTION OF BYLAW CHANGES

The Commission on Social Witness has a packet of materials about adoption of bylaw changes for the study/action issue related to a statement of conscience process. At GA in St. Louis, Peacemaking was the first CSAI (Congregational Social Action Issue) under the new system adopted there. By March 1st, 2007, comments are due. (a comment form is available as are other parts of this packet) Let Brenda Wiger know if you'd like to review it. We also have a chart overview of the new system, the draft Statement of Conscience(DSOC), as well as the text of the draft SOC on Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society. On the website you can find much more including soon an updated Proposer's Guide for the next round of CSAI proposals. Your comments help shape congregational networking and GA workshops of Peacemaking. www.uua.org/uuawo. All of this material is also available online.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The group that took the Intercultural Development Inventory with Becky Marquez got together to go over the results of the survey. People had the opportunity to go over not only their individual results but met as a group to look at the congregational profile. We are interested in further discussion/action related to those results. We will touch base following the January 7th service to arrange how best to begin that process.

8-WEEK WORKSHOP Divorce Transition

Going through a divorce—gone through a divorce? Divorce is life-changing in many ways. This workshop will discuss the challenges that accompany divorce. We'll talk about how divorce affects you, your family and your employment. St. Peter Public Library, 601 S Washington Ave, Mon evenings: 6:30-8:00 pm beginning Jan. 22. New Ulm Life Work Planning Office, 1618 S Broadway, Tue Evenings 6:00-8:00 pm beginning Jan. 22.

RELIGIONS EDUCATION



Thank you to all of the kids who participated in the Winter service. You are all awesome and did a fantastic job. Thank you to Mimi for providing music and Ross for his sound engineering. Finally,

thank you to the parents to getting the kids to the church earlier than usual that day.

Hopefully everyone had a fun and relaxing holiday, and are ready to move on to the new year. Sunday School topics for January are as follows.

January 7th:

Young'uns - **Winter story and activity.** Teacher - Janney Rieke

Juniors and Tweeners - **Work on letters and pictures to send to our partner church in Transylvania.** Teachers - Laurie Kunerth and Anne Rieke

January 14th:

Young'Uns - **Martin Luther King story and activity.** Teacher - Brenda Wiger

Juniors and Tweeners - **Martin Luther King activities.** Teachers - Julie Peck and Sheldon Rieke

January 21st:

Young'Uns - **Feeding the 5000 story and activity.** Teachers - Kate Monnens and Edith Beckius

Juniors - **Timeless Themes #28 - It's a Miracle.** Teacher - Doug Anderson

Tweeners - **In Our Hands # 6 - Deciding for Peace and Justice.** Teacher - Julie Sellner

January 28th:

Young'Uns - **The Good Samaritan story and activity.** Teacher - TBD.

Juniors - **Timeless Themes # 31 - Teachings of Jesus.** Teacher - Jeanie Hinsman

Tweeners - **In Our Hands #7 - Respecting Others and Valuing Diversity.** Teacher - Norma Breu

Classes will be during the service after the children's story or the sharing of joys and concerns depending on the individual services.

You may have noticed that RE Wednesday is not scheduled this month nor was it scheduled last month. There were only three children in

attendance in November. Families have busy schedules and it may not be feasible for the kids to get together during the week once a month for a service project and/or fun project. The RE Committee will be discussing alternatives to RE Wednesday. If you have suggestions or ideas for alternative activities, please talk with any RE Committee member - Jeanie Hinsman, Julie Sellner, Kristi Bodick or Anne Rieke. We hope to have something up and running for February.

Speaking of service projects. The children chose to donate \$100 to UNICEF. The donation has been sent. The remainder of the service project funds will go towards purchasing items for the orphanage in Iraq and for the children of our partner church in Transylvania.

JUST A REMINDER - there is still time to turn in your Guest at Your Table boxes. Thank you for your assistance.

LUNCH BUNCH

Watch the bulletin for announcements.

To Keep In Touch



It appears we're entering the new year in good health. If you know of someone who needs special mention, please let us know.



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



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

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

JANUARY 2007

Parsonage: 507-439-6240
Don's cell: 507-276-8464



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat															
	1	2	3	4	5	6															
7 NO Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	8	9	10 Board Meeting 6:30 pm, Man- kato	11	12	13															
14 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service Spaghetti Dinner	15	16	17	18	19	20															
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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

ARE DUE BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.

WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

ARE DUE BY THURSDAY NOON

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

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, don't hesitate to call to schedule an appointment.

EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL COMMENTS

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.

ALSO: if you have comments to share with others on your opinions of the email newsletter, please send them to me. cindymo@sleepyeyetel.net **Please remember to put "NORA" in the subject line.**



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

Nora Church Sunday Services JANUARY 2007

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

January 7 "Invisible Chains" (Rev. Don Rollins) – What limitations do we put on ourselves, regardless of evidence to the contrary? This first service of the new year is a great time to think about what we can and cannot change. Or should we say, will or will not change?

January 14 Rev. Fred Doty - topic unknown

January 21 "The Fine Art of Lying" (Rev. Don Rollins) – Everybody lies. Most defend it. Few admit it.

January 28 "A Rabid Sports Fan Takes an Honest Look at the Super Bowl" (Rev. Don Rollins) – If professional football is a religion, the Super Bowl is its high holy day. But it's just a game, right?



BENEFIT FOR THE CHILDREN OF IRAQ

Sunday, January 14, 2007

**United Church of Christ,
301 S. Minnesota, New Ulm**

SPAGHETTI DINNER

5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Includes salad, roll & beverage

ADULTS \$7.50

STUDENTS \$5.00

5 AND UNDER FREE

7:00 p.m. ~ speaker

DR. HAMED SALLAM, MSU Professor

"Muslim-Christian Dialog"

music by

Dick Kimmel

Pastor Don Rollins



***Proceeds will go to Iraq Orphanage and
Iraqi Children Burn-Victims Relief***

Sponsored by the Nora Unitarian Universalist Church & the United Church of Christ