



# MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

April 2007

## VIEW FROM THE HILL

What a tough time of year, “mud season”. It was T.S. Eliot who observed that April is the cruelest month; if he had lived in southern Minnesota, I’ve got a hunch that he would have gone with March, not April.

Mud season has been made even more cruel this year, what with the number of deaths of late. Jane Thompson, Rosie Hanson and Corinne Iverson were, each and all, good souls and true friends of Nora Church. We miss them. The world was a better place when they were still with us.

But mud and death notwithstanding, our shared community – the one established and tended with care by committed laypersons and gifted ministers – continues to do well. Sure, there’s still much to be done. But the “vital signs” (attendance and giving) are up, morale is high and we’re extending ourselves into the greater community more and more. April is not without promise.

April is “pledge drive season”, too. It’s the time when we ask ourselves what Nora Church is worth to us. (Hold on, in no way do I mean to suggest that we can all give the same amount, nor do I mean to discount the work of those who give with the gift of time and sweat in lieu of money.) Given this broken world and groaning planet, there is any number of good places to put our dollars, but there’s just one Nora Church. What’s it worth to us?

So, where’s our money go? As most of you know, we support the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), as well as the Prairie Star District (PSD), on a per-member basis. When coupled with the costs of our newsletter, the first \$75 of each pledge is earmarked for those three line items. (As an aside, I’m proud of the fact that Nora has a long history of pulling its weight in support of the UUA and PSD. We’re well-served on both levels.)

Where else do those pledge dollars go? To educate our children. To pay the heat and light bills. To pay my salary and housing costs. To celebrate and party. To help stock a local food shelf. To pay for guest speakers. To maintain our buildings and grounds. To pay our Religious Education Coordinator (Anne) and Office Administrator (Cindy). To buy a new computer.

Copy paper. Toner. Ink cartridges. Candles. PSD and UUA conference costs (for laypersons’ registration, travel, etc.) Sheet music. Piano tuning. Blank CDs. Insurance. Books. Coffee. Telephone/Internet service. Advertising. Cleaning.

You get the idea: ministry (yours and mine) often requires money. And our Board does excellent work in making sure our money supports our ministry.

So, as I say in the midst of every mud season-turned pledge season, I am absolutely shameless in asking you to join me in supporting Nora, the UUA and the PSD. And I’ve said this to you because I know of no better way to help advance the cause of religious freedom than to support a local UU congregation and the levels of organization that serve it.

So, I’m humbled by the way you’ve upped your giving over the past three years. It was a risky thing to remodel the parsonage and return to full-time ministry. Thank you for being the generous, committed congregation I anticipated when I came. And thank you in advance for giving what you can to this amazing light for religious freedom.

Blessings,  
Don



## SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING



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

## SOULFUL SUNDOWN



Soulful Sundown continues on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month, at Rhein River Arts Center, 208 N. Minnesota (New Ulm) at 6:30 P.M. Facilitated by Don Rollins, the format is music, silence, meditation and sharing. If you

haven't tried it, come check it out! (And tell somebody else, too.)

## LUNCH BUNCH



We'll meet at the Mankato Downtown Holiday Inn on April 25 at 11:30 AM. See you all there!

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NOTES

March has found the Social Justice committee following thru with the "local" congregational goal related to Hunger and our commitment to provide people power to the St. James Food for All Project one Saturday a quarter. Our date was again the 2nd Saturday, March 10th. This opportunity will come up again in June, the morning of Saturday June 9th, so mark your calendar and join in on the food distribution.

Please note that the SJ committee still has available the role of being the contact person for this project and it's group of 3 to 4 church volunteers. If interested give one of the SJ members a call.

SJ is also taking a look at potential proposals for 2007/2008 congregational goals. We've been doing some research and will try to have some basic ideas for you to look at as you (the congregation) plan what initiatives you'd like to be a part of for our next church year in the next newsletter. We continue to focus on our mission: To inform and educate Nora members about current social justice issues, lead and involve members in acting on issues, and to facilitate our connections with other social justice groups.

And with that direction as our focus we're preparing for our next SJ Sunday, May 13th when Phil from Out-front Mn. will speak with the congregation (more on that next month too!)

## BOARD NOTES

The Board of Trustees met Wednesday evening, March 14, in the Mankato Fellowship building. The main business before the board was preparing a proposed budget for FY 2007-8. Using committee budget requests when available and discussing other items, the board made its best estimates of expenses. Most items remained close to current levels. There were increases in staff compensation and fuel and insurance costs. A new line item of \$2,000 was created for purchase of technological equipment for the church. The bottom line on proposed expenses is \$96,401 as compared to 2006-7 of \$89,382.

In other business, the board elected officers for the 2007-8 church year beginning in July. Sheldon Rieke was re-elected president; Julie Peck re-elected as vice president, and Sally Hanson re-elected as treasurer. Diane Becken was elected secretary to succeed retiring secretary Janet Rosenbloom.

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It's that time of year again when we ask that you pledge what you can to support this unique place called Nora. When you are asked to give this year do what you can. Nora has a mission in this area to be the liberal beacon on the hill, to be the voice of reason, and to speak for those that have no voice in the community. In doing that we will reach people who need Nora and its loving, caring community just as much as Nora needs their caring and talents. Give so Nora can grow and be there for all of us who need her. One other note, Nora will only grow with new people. Spread the word, offer to give people a ride out, just don't keep this light of hope, reason, love, and liberal religion hidden. Other wise no matter how much you give we will slowly loose this wonderful place called Nora.

## BRAVOS FROM THE BOARD

The March selections for "Board Thanks" begins with the great work of the snow removal team, Wayne Johnson and Warren Paulson, with an as-

sist from Algot Blomquist on the shovel. Their efforts made it possible to hold church services and three funerals under difficult conditions. Also worthy of special thanks are all who worked on the funerals, with a special nod to Carol Chamberd and Kristine Paulson who arranged for food and workers. It's the efforts of such people that make Nora Church such a great place.

## NORWEGIAN FOLK MEDICINE

"Remedies and Rituals: Folk Medicine in Norway and the New Land" is a new book written by Kathleen Stokker, a professor of Norwegian at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. In the book, Professor Stokker "uses hundreds of original documents and firsthand accounts to detail the ingredients, customs, and histories behind natural remedies, potions, whispered spells, and the infamous 'black books' used for centuries by Norway's folk healers," according to the news release announcing the publication.

Professor Stokker visited Hanska a few years ago to gather material for this book. She recently wrote to Lorraine Becken "...one of the most exciting parts of the research for this book was realizing that the man I had been researching in Norway as Ole Toftelien was the father of Marit Toftelie, as I first knew Marit from a memoir of life in Hanska around 1900, written in 1970..." Marit Toftelie's medicine cured the memoirist's sister who suffered from rickets. The sister still considered the cure a miracle. The book also contains a story by Doug Becken who wrote a college paper on Marit. The book can be purchased from the Minnesota Historical Society Press or on the Internet.

While doing research in the area, Professor Stokker attended a service at Nora Church and donated a copy of her first book, "Yuletide Traditions in Norway and the New Land," to the church library.

## MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL

YOU CAN HELP low-wage, hard working families that struggle to keep their jobs because they have unreliable transportation. Donate your car to MVAC's "Wheel Get There" initiative. Donated cars are evaluated, repaired and leased or sold to low-wage workers at an affordable price that doesn't put a further strain on their budget. Do-

nors are entitled to a fair and reasonable tax deduction because the vehicles are going to low-wage workers. The demand for reliable transportation is greater than the supply. Donate this week. For more information, call Dan Jones @ 507-345-0466 or go to the Minnesota Valley Action Council web site ([www.mnvac.org](http://www.mnvac.org)).

MVAC is a non-profit organization serving the people of south-central Minnesota since 1965. The agency develops resources and opportunities that empower people in low-wage work to secure affordable housing, viable transportation, employment, training for employment and educational opportunities for children. MVAC believes that hard work should be valued and rewarded, that working people are struggling and that MVAC provides solutions. Thank you.

Dan Jones  
"Wheel Get There"  
Transportation Initiative Administrator  
Minnesota Valley Action Council  
Phone: (507) 345-0466

## MONEY MATTERS



It's that time again! The Board of Trustees has prepared a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2007-8, and the Pledge Drive Committee is gearing up to present the case for all of us to pledge as generously as possible.

On Sunday, April 1, during the potluck lunch, Pledge drive chair Doug Anderson will present a brief summary of the financial needs of Nora Church, and board and committee members will be available at different tables to answer questions and stress the need for continued strong support of the church. Pledge cards will be distributed. Those members and friends who can't attend the April 1st event will be contacted later. It is the committee's hope that the strong support Nora Church has always enjoyed from members and friends will continue.

## NEW UUA TRUSTEE

The UUA Trustee election committee for Prairie Star district is pleased to report the unanimous nomination of John Blevins as our representative. John and his wife, Sharon, have been active members of All souls UU Church in Kansas City,

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Nora received a thank you for the support it has given to our partners and the UU Partner Church Council over the last year. They stated that this has been a banner year for the UUPCC! Supporters have allowed the organization to do the hard work of a maturing organization-strengthening what works, fixing what doesn't, bringing the best hearts and minds together to solve problems that they didn't even dream of 14 years ago. You remember from past newsletters that UUPCC provides members and partnered congregations with a variety of services that support its three core program areas: Personal Transformation, Congregational Partnerships, and Community Capacity Building.

A recent visit with one of our former pastors, Rev. Harold Babcock found him just returned from a leave of absence where he spent an extended time with the folks in Transylvania facilitating the bond between US congregations and Transylvanian congregations. A contribution appeal for UUPCC can be found on the resource table in the church foyer.

## PROPHETIC FIRE OF THE FUTURE

At last year's General Assembly in St. Louis, the Rev. Richard Gilbert gave a lecture titled Growing People of Prophetic Fire. He stated that religious education is the garden in which we grow those who would presume to change the world. How do we nourish our own prophets? He is a retired UU minister and author of Building Your Own Theology, The Prophetic Imperative and How Much Do We Deserve? He went on to talk about the importance of being a "public nuisance". He stated that we need to look at issues of "entitlement" vs. "community responsibility". He believes that we are preparing our young to be the Prophetic Fire of the Future. They are in our midst. We need to ask questions about the prevailing social values and have experiences to take us out of our comfort zone to promote empowerment. This education (experiences) can be a change agent. He expressed the importance of walking the talk and for our youth to have opportunities to be with others of varying opportunities and it's potential impact as a social transformation. He spoke of "praxis"- learning by doing. He closed by stating that we communicate our values by what we live and do.

A child, on seeing the flaming chalice for the first time: Mommy, why do Unitarian Universalists build fires in their bird bath?



**MidWest Leadership School**  
the Resource for Training Programs

**July 21, 2007 - July 28, 2007**  
**Beloit College Campus**  
**Beloit, Wisconsin**

UU leadership schools exist to continue the tradition of fostering effective adult lay leadership in the UU community for people ages 18 and older.

Are you currently - or soon to be - in an active leadership role on the local or district level? Board or committee member or chair? Would you benefit from knowing more about how groups work, grow, and develop? About consensus building or conflict management? About organizational skills, dimensions of healthy congregational growth, addressing social justice issues, and working with volunteers? MidWest Leadership School is for you!

Registration is open to applicants from and recommended by the member congregations of the three sponsoring districts and to seminary students not yet in candidate status

Complete information & registration can found on their website: [www.yymwls.org](http://www.yymwls.org). Information is also on the bulletin board.

## BAYSIDE CAMP

**Summer is fast approaching! It's time to start making plans for summer time family fun! Come join us for good Unitarian Universalist fellowship and a relaxing week of village life... July 15th - 21st, 2007**

Bayside is a small (80-100 person) family summer camp held at the Wesley Woods Conference Center the third week of July. Bayside offers adult workshops and worship services, with an emphasis on quality child care during the morning adult activities, and lots of free time in the afternoons for family fun and relaxation.

Founded in 1988, Bayside Camp aims to provide a nurturing "family" atmosphere for singles and families of all configurations and traditions.

Bayside Camp can be a great stress reducer. It's an affordable way for busy families to spend quality time together, and it is a great place for grandparents, aunts, and uncles to spend some precious moments with their favorite child.

[www.yahoodrummers.com/bayside/](http://www.yahoodrummers.com/bayside/)





## RELIGIONS EDUCATION

We had our first **Children's Chapel** on March 18th. There were 10 children in attendance. The younger children seemed a little overwhelmed, and the older children took it in stride. They all enjoyed singing with Don. It was nice to have time together. Our next **Children's Chapel** will be April 22nd. and we will celebrate Earth Day.

The first batch of letters/pictures to our friends at our partner church(es) in Romania have not been mailed yet. We discovered I was communicating with the wrong minister, thus the wrong church. The UU Partner Church Association is working on the situation. So the letters/pictures are on hold until the matter is resolved. We are trying to make sure they are going to the correct partner church.

We are also trying to get a list of supplies to send to the children in Iraq. We have a website, but it has been rather difficult to maneuver through to get the information we need. We're still trying.

## APRIL RE SCHEDULE

**1ST:** All classes will be doing an **Easter activity** together. Teachers are Doug Anderson and Brenda Wiger.

**8TH:** Please join us for annual **Easter Morning Breakfast**. We will prepare and serve pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, milk, juice and coffee. We will begin serving at 9:30. All proceeds from the breakfast will go towards youth service projects.

**15TH: Young'Uns** - *Celebrating Me and My World #27 - My World Has Air*. Teacher - to be determined.

**Juniors** - *A Lamp in Every Corner - A Voice and A Vote - Olympia Brown*. Teacher - Warren and Kristine Paulson.

**Tweeners** - *In Our Hands #15 - Earth Interdependence*. Teacher - to be determined.

**22ND: Children's Chapel** - Celebrating Earth Day. All children are invited to join us for the celebration.

**29TH:** Clean Up Sunday. Please come and help take care of our church and grounds.

*Thank you to all who have volunteered to teach Sunday School.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Notes & needs

*Our Easter Morning Breakfast.* *Thank you to all of you who have offered to help at the breakfast. It really helps the morning go quickly when there are many helping hands. We will begin serving at 9:30. If you signed up to help please come at 8:30 so we can get started and be ready. We are also looking for electric griddles and frying pans for food preparation. Please bring to the church before Easter morning if you have an appliance to share.*

*June 3rd.: End of the Year Children's Service.* It's hard to believe that it's time to start thinking about the end of the year service. Please join us as we celebrate this past church and Sunday School year. We will also recognize all of the people that volunteered their time to help teach Sunday School. The program works because of so many helping hands and hearts.

### Twins Game May 12th.

We have 70 seats set aside for us for the Twins game on Saturday, May 12th. The seats are in the home run porch (left center field). The Twins are playing the Detroit Tigers. The game starts at 2:55 p.m.. The RE kids, their families, and other baseball fans are invited to join us. You can bring friends too. Tickets cost \$17. The RE program will pay for part of the cost of the tickets (dependent on how many people sign up). We need at least 25 people to go to get the group rate. So far 38 people have signed up to attend.

**DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS APRIL 17,** so we can reserve those seats. If you tell us after the 17th., you will only get a seat if someone else has cancelled. If you are interested in attending, please sign-up on the sheet at church, or contact Julie Sellner or Anne Rieke to reserve your seat.

Thank you to Julie Sellner for getting the ball rolling on this activity.





## PSD Annual Conference

“Nurturing *Our Faith Communities*”

*April 13 - 15, 2007*  
*City Center Marriott*  
*Downtown Minneapolis, MN*

### Speakers

**Keynote Speaker:** Rev. Dr. Laurel E. Hallman, Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas and author of *Living by Heart: A Guide to Devotional Practice*. She has been instrumental in establishing the UUA’s first ‘fast start’ congregation in Keller, Texas.



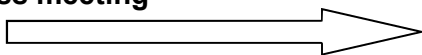
**Judy Lecturer:** Dr. William Doherty, Professor, University of Minnesota Department of Family Social Science. Mr. Doherty holds degrees in philosophy, theology, child development and family relations, and family studies. His interests include democratic community building with families. His writings include *Take Back Your Marriage: Sticking Together in a World that Pulls Us Apart* and *Take Back Your Kids: Confident Parenting in Turbulent Times*.



**Join UUs from across eight states!**  
This year we’re paying special attention to **integrating the youth of the district** into the annual conference. UUA staff members will be there to meet with youth and adults as part of its “**Consultation Ministry to and with Youth.**” You’ll also find **timely, practical, and fun** activities, including **multi-generational workshops on nurturing our faith communities**.

In Minneapolis, you will also find:

- an **integrated youth program**, child care
  - **celebration**, worship, reverence, **remembrance**
  - handshakes, **hugs, social time**, choir singing
  - **music**, food, fun, **laughs**
  - a banquet, **awards**, entertainment
  - **books**, exhibits, **gifts**
- the **annual business meeting**



## To Keep In Touch

♥♥♥

Thanks to all those who helped with the various arrangements related to the three memorial services held at the church. Hospitality to family members and friends in times of loss is a true ministry, and we can be proud that Nora Church continues its long history of caring.

♥♥♥

We continue to extend our thoughts and prayers on behalf of the families of Jane Thompson, Rosie Hanson and Corinne Iverson. They each contributed much to our church and lives, and we will miss them.

♥

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


More information is available on the bulletin board or go to [www.psduua.org/AnnualConference](http://www.psduua.org/AnnualConference)

# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## APRIL 2007

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service Pot Luck <b>PLEDGE DRIVE KICKOFF</b>	2	3	4	5 6:30 pm - Soulful Sun- down - Rhein Rivers Arts	6	7
8 <b>HAPPY EASTER</b>  Easter Breakfast 10:30 Service	9 	10	11	12	13  Prairie Star District Meeting 13th - 15th	14
15 9:00 Choir 9:00 Discussion 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	16	17 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Work on newsletter articles!</div>	18	19 6:30 pm - Soulful Sun- down - Rhein Rivers Arts	20 Newsletter Articles due	21
22 <b>EARTH DAY</b> 9:00 Choir 9:00 Discussion 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	23	24	25 Lunch bunch Mankato Holi- day Inn Down- town 11:30	26	27	28
29 CLEAN UP DAY NO SERVICE	30					

**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

MUSICIAN	SERVERS	GREETERS - USHERS
1 Mimi	Christina Schmitt Clayton & Shirley Olson	Kristi Paulson - Lynn Schmitt
8 Muffy	EASTER BREAKFAST	Chris Olson - Vickie Sieve
15 Jordan	Ardis & Elroy Wellmann	Dave & Jeanne Wenk
22 Sally	Tarrie Swenstad & Edith Beckius	Jerry & Susan Allen
29	Michelle Bethke & Julie Sellner	clean up day

### DON'S SCHEDULE

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.



Nora Unitarian Universalist Church  
12333 155th Avenue  
Hanska Minnesota 56041-4310

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<http://www.norauuchurch.org>



April 2007

## Nora Church Sunday Services MARCH 2007

**Social Hour 10:00 AM**

**Worship Service 10:30 AM**

April 1 "**Striking It Rich: How a Hippie Made the Good Life**" - There's a fellow on the edge of Maine who turned smoked salmon into the "good life", except he already had a good life. As we begin our annual pledge drive, there's a sermon somewhere in that story.

April 8 "**Jesus as Loser**" - According to the various authors of the Gospels, Jesus' followers had no reason to think their revolution would continue once he was killed. And yet here we are, marking the coming of spring (hope) with a two-thousand-year-old story. Do "losers" always lose?

April 15 "**Humor - Secret Weapon of the Progressive (...shhh, don't tell)**" - Dale McGowan, PhD. Dale McGowan is a humanist author and critical thinking educator from the Twin Cities, and has spoken at a number of U-U Societies around Minnesota.

April 22 "**Poetry as Scripture**" - This is the service that was snowed-out in February, suggesting that in liberal religion, holy writ comes in many forms, poetry among them.