



MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

August 2007

VIEW FROM THE HILL

It's not always easy to describe liberal religion; because we gather around values (religious freedom, supportive community and universal justice) and not specific beliefs, we sometimes get mislabeled as flaky or flat-out weird. This despite a history of reason in religion that dates back centuries and organized European churches that existed long before some of those that find us heretical or bizarre.

One of my favorite things about UUism is that we are not bound to some version of "The Book". At our best we respect the holy writs of Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) as well as those of Judaism, Islam and a host of Eastern religions, but we can't go along with the idea that a book, no matter its long history or rich wisdom, is the last word on how to grow a soul. And so it is that we mine wisdom from a great many sacred texts.

Take the Hindu tradition, for example. Within the texts of Hinduism is the powerful insight that all things are in a state of decay. (As George Harrison observed in one of his many fine songs, "All things must pass".) Plants die. Animals die. People die. One day, even the Sun will die. But, among others, the late UU theologian, James Luther Adams, believed that institutions are the exception to that natural law; he taught that mission-focused groups, grounded in love, can last for the long haul. Maybe as long as the Sun.

Nora friends, our region of Minnesota has been, for a century-and-a-quarter, made richer for this congregation's presence. Children have been raised here, secure in the belief that they are not inherently evil. Couples have been married here, secure in the belief that the quality of their love, not some imposed creedal test, is worthy of our blessing. People have been challenged to be global citizens here, secure in the belief that the good they do locally and globally is nothing short of love made manifest. And the old and not-so-old have been buried here, secure in the belief that whatever Grace and Love attended them in this life will suffice in the face of final mystery. Nora Church has mattered over all these years; we think it matters still.

You'll be asked to take some risks over the next few years. Our Board and Committee on Ministry are just getting started on the next phase of the plan that was developed in the period between Sarah's ministry and mine – a plan that asks us to entertain some important questions about how an institution that has promoted religious freedom for the past 126 years might re-imagine itself. By my lights, this is the year we begin to get specific about how we achieve the goals of our vision statement. And that's exciting, risky stuff!

All things must pass? We'll see about that...

*Best wishes for this new church year,
Don*



THE LUNCH BUNCH

Watch for announcements



Choir will start Sunday morning, September 16 at 9:00 AM in the sanctuary. Everyone's invited! Come to have a good time with singing and fellowship.

RELAY FOR LIFE



Brown County Relay for Life will be held Friday August 17th at the Brown County fairgrounds in New Ulm. This event is open to the public. Please join us for a fun and wonderful evening. If interested in purchasing a luminary or making a donation please contact Julie Sellner at 375-8737

ADULT DISCUSSION

The adult discussion group will meet informally at 9:00 AM on Sunday morning for the four Sundays of the year before the choir begins its rehearsal schedule: Come to enjoy stimulating discussions on Aug 19 & 26 and Sept 2 & 9.

SMORGASBORD

It's not too early to be thinking about "Smorgasbord" and getting items ready for the Country Store. It's a great opportunity to work together for fun and profit and to honor our Norwegian heritage. This year it will be on October 7th. Plan on attending and bringing friends. Spread the word!

Items for the Country Store are appreciated: baked goods, garden produce, jams & jellies, games, anything you cannot use anymore and you think would be of interest to others.

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

There will be a short Nora Women's Society meeting following services on Sunday, September 9th to discuss smorgasbord. Everyone is welcome.

GUEST DAY at Zion Lutheran in Hanska

Wednesday, August 15 – Noon Luncheon. The Mike Kingery Family from Grove City will present a musical program. The family includes 7 daughters and 2 sons. All are welcome. RSVP to Gudrun Kjelskus by Aug 7. 439-6837.

ADULT RE & GROWTH

Looking for an opportunity to engage in spiritual exploration in community? Plans are currently in the works for an hour-long open meditation, and a spiritual study group. The open meditation will be largely silent, and facilitated by a member of the laity. The meditation will be preceded by a 30 minute study group that, in its initial sessions, will be looking at various meditation techniques and traditions. Hopefully, this will give those just starting a meditation practice some idea of what may be most useful to them, while those with previous meditation experience, or an established practice, may be able to share insights and experiences gained in their practice, or perhaps find something to focus or renew their practice if it has fallen by the wayside. Participation is open to members and non-members of Nora Church alike, and there are no attendance requirements; people should feel free to partake of either or both offerings, as they are moved to do so. Current plans are for the study group and meditation to take place at Nora Church, twice monthly, in the evening, during those weeks that do not conflict with Soulful Sundown. Based on feedback received from those interested in participating, specific dates and times will appear in the newsletter when the schedule is set. Please contact study group facilitator Christopher Olson by phone at 507-995-7059, or by e-mail at kitakis@aol.com, for further information, and to express scheduling preferences.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD - JUNE MEETING

The final meeting of the Board of Trustees for the 2006-7 church year was held at church on June 13. Treasurer Sally Hanson reported the welcome news that it appeared that the church budget for the fiscal year would end with a small surplus.

The board approved hosting a Prairie Star District workshop on "Radical Hospitality" on Nov. 3. Nora Church will provide breakfast and lunch for attendees.

The Buildings & Grounds report indicated that new screening had been put on the parsonage porch, and summer plans included shingling and repairing the siding on the gazebo and residing part of the garage.

The board accepted the Religious Education report. There will be a two-year Coming of Age program beginning this fall. The committee expressed concern about the uneven attendance of Sunday School children. Rev. Rollins urged the board members to be involved again in the RE program.

Rev. Rollins announced that two new members, Angie Becker and Scott Kudelka, would join the congregation at the June 17 service.

Board president Sheldon Rieke thanked Wally Wellmann for filling a vacancy on the Board and also thanked treasurer Sally Hanson and retiring secretary Janet Rosenbloom for their service.

In other business, the Board voted to keep the church locked in the future, with keys distributed on a need basis.

Following the adjournment of the board meeting, the Committee on Ministry joined board members to discuss ways to revitalize Nora Church. The discussion centered on ideas presented in the book "Can Our Congregation Live?"

Ideas expressed were that conflict within a congregation is not necessarily a bad thing; that changes should be allowed to work on their own rather than being integrated with existing programs; that it was important to tell the story of the church, how it came into being, and why it is still relevant. It was recommended that the board give the committee a budget so it would not be necessary to go back to the board for every expenditure. Hiring an outside

consultant was also discussed. The group wanted to know what to expect from a consultant and what it would cost. Rev. Rollins agreed to contact the consultant to get more information. The board and Committee on Ministry agreed to continue to work together.

A reminder to congregation members: The minutes are posted on the bulletin board in the foyer after they have been approved by the board. Later the old ones are moved to a binder on the book cart in the Iverson Room so they can be accessed by everyone.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It's a new church year here at Nora and it is a year that needs to see growth. As many of you know the board and the COM have been meeting jointly even over the summer to look at the future of Nora. You may wonder why when, right now, the future seems to look so bright. The high pledge numbers and the continued hard work of our members are something most churches would envy. We have gained some wonderful people this year, however we have lost some wonderful people too. The problem, institutionally, is that in simple numbers they don't balance out.

Unfortunately this has been happening for several years and needs to be dealt with now. We need to reach out to the community even more. We need to be that " Liberal Light on the Prairie", shining as brightly as we can. There are people who need us that don't know we're here or think they don't have easy access to us. Some have realized there is more to life than what their churches offer but don't know what to do about it. Some feel trapped in guilt because they see things different and feel alone. They need us and frankly we need them.

Attracting new members and growing will be hard work, but the people of Nora are used to hard work. It will require us to stand up for our convictions, and we have done that before. It will probably mean some changes but changes are part of life and Nora has changed before.

So rest up and enjoy the last days of summer, because there is some good work ahead of us all. After all won't it be great to hear people say things like, "Did you see what Nora did for the schools?" or "What is all this talk about Nora?" instead of, "Nora? What's that? I never heard of it. Isn't that a cult?"

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

Sixteen members of the Nora Women's Society met at church the evening of July 9, 2007, to plan its year. Elections were held. Joy Rathman has agreed to be president, taking over from Carol Chambard who has served in that capacity for many years. Norma Breu will be asked to continue as vice president. Shannon Weiss agreed to serve as treasurer to replace Bonita Blomquist, who also has served for many years. Janet Rosenbloom volunteered to continue as secretary.

The bake sale originally scheduled for Maifest was moved to Nov. 3 at the Rhein River Room in New Ulm, to coincide with the arts and crafts event in New Ulm. There will be coffee, tea, rolls and muffins for sale as well as baked goods. The sale will start at 8:30 a.m. Georgine Tepley and Norma Breu are handling arrangements.

Smorgasbord Sunday is Oct 7 this year. New ideas are being sought to promote the event. The women decided to try selling tickets prior to the day of Smorgasbord. There will be meeting on Sunday, Sept. 9, to discuss more details. Joy Rathman and Julie Sellner again will be in charge planning.

The women also agreed to serve lunch for Bloodmobile personnel during the September blood drive. Janet Johnson and Edith Beckius volunteered to provide food. Other members also volunteered to help.

It was decided to have a social meeting at Luther Memorial Home in Madelia to visit with the members who live there. The date has been rescheduled from Aug. 16 to Aug. 22 at 2 p.m. to coincide with Nina Mikkelson's birthday.

*You can never get enough
Of what you don't need
To make you happy.*
Eric Hoffer

NUMBERS THAT COUNT

- Percentage change since 2000 in the number of Americans living at less than half the federal poverty line: +32
- Factor by which uninsured children in U.S. hospitals are more likely to die of their injuries than are insured children: 2
- Percentage change since 1990 in worldwide demand for newsprint: +18
- Percentage change in North America: -26
- Minimum number of different books sold in the U.S. last year, as traced by Nielsen BookScan: 1,446,000.
- Number of these that sold fewer than 99 copies: 1,123,000.
- Number that sold more than 100,000: 483
- From *Harper's Magazine*, June 2007

- Percentage of American adults who reported that their computer receives more attention than their significant other: 65
- Percentage who reported increased psychological dependence on their computer over the past three years: 85
- Hours per month the average American spends fixing computer problems: 12
- Percentage of non-Muslims in the U.S. who believe that Muslims are disrespectful of women: 69
- Percentage of Muslims in Pakistan who believe that Westerners are disrespectful of women: 52
-From *Yes Magazine*, Summer 2007

To Keep In Touch

♥♥♥

Bob Schmitt is in an assisted living facility
in sleepy eye.

♥

Lynn Schmitt continues to improve after
her stroke.

♥

Clarice Sandmann is under heavy sedation
for pain, but is conscious.

♥

Eric Schmitts have a new son,
Riley Joseph, born June 15.

♥

Henry Kuerth was on A honor roll at Ca-
thedral High School in New Ulm.

♥

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



RELIGIONS EDUCATION

It's difficult to believe that it's August. Wasn't it June yesterday? Hopefully, everyone has had a fun summer. While it's sad to see summer end, it will be great to see all of the Nora friends again.

The Youth RE Committee has been busy planning for the coming year. We are excited about trying a new format this year. It's based on the **Way Cool** Sunday School model. The first two Sundays of the month will be typical structured Sunday School classes. The third Sunday will generally be Children's Chapel. The fourth Sunday will be more of a social event. I am working on the calendar for the year and there will be more specific information regarding class topics and activities in the next newsletter.

The Tweeners class will now become the Coming of Age (COA) class. Families who have children who could be in this class have hopefully received letters about the program. If not, there will be a letter coming soon. Sorry, I got a little sidetracked this summer. The COA class will start out using the curriculum, **What Do You Stand For? For Teens** this year. The curriculum will help the youth learn about their strengths and areas of character they could develop more. We hope to incorporate more first hand experiences for the COA youth this year.

The younger children will be combined into one larger class because of sporadic attendance. We need to think of a name for this class, so one of our first activities will be a class name contest. Ideas for names will be taken and the children will vote on the class name. Our focus for the year will be on social justice. We will start the year using the **In Our Hands** curriculum.

Registration forms for Sunday School will be mailed to families this year. You may put all of your children on one form. Please bring them to church with you anytime before September 9th.. You can give them to Anne, Jeanie or Julie. There will be extra forms available at church too. Our first Sunday School will be September 9th..

As always, I'm looking for people to volunteer to teach Sunday School. Three people are needed each weekend. The RE Committee is hoping

that people will consider volunteering two Sundays in a row to help with continuity for the children. If you teach two Sundays in a row, then you could take a month or two off from teaching and then teach another two Sundays a few months down the road. In August, I'll be emailing and calling people who volunteered to teach this past year. Thank you for your past generosity with your time and talents. I hope you will be willing to continue to share with our youth and children this year.

We are looking for more people to join the Youth RE Committee. We generally meet three to four times a year to plan Sunday School and other youth events throughout the year. So if you would like to have a say in the youth programming, we would love to have you join us. And if you thought teaching Sunday School was easy, this is even easier. **We really are looking for some parents to be on the committee. Please talk with Anne if you are interested.**

THANKS FROM THE BOARD

The board expressed special thanks to Warren Paulson and Wally and Bev Wellmenn for their work on the parsonage porch, to Anne Rieke for her dedication to the Religious Education program, to Cindy Mosenden for her excellent work as office administrator and to Janet Rosenbloom for her years of service as board secretary.



You Don't Say

I had always wanted an adventurous Life. It took a long time to realize that I was the only one who was going to make an adventurous life happen to me.

-Richard Bach

LEADERS AT NORA

OFFICERS:

President: Sheldon Rieke
 Vice-President: Julie Peck
 Secretary: Diane Becken
 Treasurer: Sally Hanson

BOARD MEMBERS

Warren Paulson
 Julie Sellner
 Scott Schmiesing

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Edith Beckius

RE COORDINATOR:

Anne Rieke

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY:

Doug Anderson

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY:

President: Joy Rathman
 Vice President: Norma Breu
 Secretary: Janet Rosenbloom
 Treasurer: Shannon Weiss

MT PISQUA:

PRESIDENT: Warren Paulson
 SEC/TREAS: Algot Blomquist
 MEMBERS: Scott Chambard
 Wayne Johnson
 Clayton Olson

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Mark and Brenda Wiger
 Darrell and Jeanie Hinsman
 Christopher Bodick
 Scott Kudelka
 Angie Becker Kudelka
 Don Rollins

PROGRAM COMMITTEE:

Noah Rosenbloom
 Susan Allen
 Shirley Olson
 Christopher Olson
 Kristine Paulson
 Vicki Sieve
 Reverend Don Rollins (ex officio)

CARING & SHARING:

Georgine Tepley
 Carol Chambard
 Shirley Olson
 Bonita Blomquist
 Susan Allen

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Julie Sellner
 Joy Rathman
 Norma Breu
 Diane Becken
 Carol Chambard
 Julie Peck
 Sheldon Rieke

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

Darrell Hinsman
 Warren Paulson
 Wally Wellmann

SERVERS

GREETERS/USHERS

AUGUST

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 19 | Jerry & Susan Allen | Angie & Scott Becker Kudelka |
| 26 | Clayton & Shirley Olson | Janet & Noah Rosenbloom |

SEPTEMBER

| | | |
|----|--|----------------------------------|
| 2 | Edith Beckius Scott Chambard | Darrell & Jeanie Hinsman |
| 9 | POTLUCK Nancy Dickson Gil & Sally Hanson | Chris Bodick Charles Anderson |
| 16 | John & Julie Schmitt | Algot & Bonita Blomquist |
| 23 | Pat & Laurie Kunerth | Scott & Ross Chambard |
| 30 | Julie Sellner Susan Evers | Wally & Beverly Wellman |

OCTOBER

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7 | SMORGASBORD | Gil & Sally Hanson |
| 14 | Vicki Sieve Mimi Kamleiter | Diane Becken Doug Anderson |
| 21 | John & Anne Makepeace | Edith Beckius Kristi Bodick |
| 28 | Sheldon & Anne Rieke | Roger & Norma Breu |

NOVEMBER

| | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| 4 | POTLUCK Wally & Beverly Wellmann Jason & Katie Monnens | Jerry & Susan Allen |
| 11 | Elroy & Ardis Wellmann | Wayne & Janet Johnson |
| 18 | Warren & Kristine Paulson | Pat & Laurie Kunerth |
| 25 | Ron & Julie Peck | Mark & Brenda Wiger |

DECEMBER

| | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 2 | POTLUCK Joy Rathmann Noah & Janet Rosenbloom | Jason & Katie Monnens |
| 9 | Doug Anderson Charles Anderson | Clayton & Shirley Olson |
| 16 | Mark & Brenda Wiger | Warren & Kristine Paulson |
| 23 | Christmas Eve | volunteers needed |
| 30 | no service | no service |

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

AUGUST 2007



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

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----|-----|---|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Welcome Back! | | | | | | |
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 10:30 Annual Worthington Service followed by a pot luck | 13 | 14 | 15 Zion Women Guest Day | 16 | 17 Brown County Relay for Life | 18 |
| 19 9:00 Adult Discussion 10:00 Coffee 10:30 Service | 20 | 21 | 22 Nora Women's Society - social meeting at LMH 2 PM | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 9:00 Adult Discussion 10:00 Coffee 10:30 Service | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

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

19 Jordan

Jerry & Susan Allen

Angie & Scott Becker Kudelka

26 Sally

Clayton & Shirley Olson

Janet & Noah Rosenbloom

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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August 2007



EMAIL

Nora church @ sleepyeyetel.net

WEB SITE

<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

Nora Church Sunday Services AUGUST 2007

Social Hour 10:00 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

AUGUST 12: Annual Worthington Service – Don't miss this year's gathering of UUs from the tri-state area! The service is held at Pioneer Village, just off I-90 in Worthington, MN, beginning at 10:30 A.M. and followed by a swell potluck lunch. It's Dor's turn to lead the service, so carpool and c'mon on down.

AUGUST 19: "Affirming Tradition: Lessons from Roman Catholicism" – As we begin the new church with an ecumenical sermon series, what elements of the Roman tradition have Unitarian Universalists incorporated into their own?

AUGUST 26: "Affirming Faith: Lessons from Lutheranism" – This second sermon in this series will explore the ways in which the Lutheran tradition has influenced Unitarian Universalism.