



# MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

April 2008

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## VIEW FROM THE HILL

*By 2009, Nora will be known in Southwest Minnesota:*

*As a place where people will gather in a caring and accepting fellowship  
to explore spiritual growth and the challenging questions in life.*

*For worship that is beautiful and spiritually engaging.*

*For its generous outreach of service and learning regardless  
of race, creed, age, gender or sexuality.*

*For valuing and involving children and youth in its mission; and  
for being hospitable and having fun.*

Life in the parsonage affords me with a nearly constant view of Nora Church. The tall windows bless me with four-season, panoramic pictures, reminding me that I'm part of a bucolic, prairie ecosystem. (And what an ecosystem it is!) Nora is a community of beauty.

Then there's that storied past. All those accomplishments. All that gumption it took to start this liberal religious ministry. All those colleagues who served all those people. All those friends and loved ones who rest here. All those memories. Nora is a community of history.

Beauty and history are fine things. Important things. But, after giving a proper nod to our aesthetic surroundings and institutional memory, we know that we're called to be more than a park or a museum; we know we exist to practice and promote freedom, community and justice in the service of love. That sense of calling is evident in the above vision statement – the one that was developed between Sarah Oelberg's ministry and my own.

Although still in the early stages, the Board, Committee (COM) on Ministry, Lyn Burton (our planning consultant) and I are committed to developing a long-range plan that will serve us well. (Rest assured, you'll be involved; everyone will have multiple opportunities for input and feedback.)

Money will be required. It's that simple. Since joining you in July, 2004, Nora's elected leaders have taken the position that no reasonable program should be scratched because of lack of resources, and our current Board and COM are no exception. That's huge, folks! It's a testimony to bold vision and follow-through.

Soon you will be asked to make your pledge for the 2008-09 church year. (Details are being ironed out as I write.) If you're one of our members, longstanding or recent, you know that a vision statement requires our dollars if it's to mean anything. If you're one of our great newcomers, we ask that you join us in funding the vision of this healthy, forward-thinking UU congregation – a community of beauty and memory.

Thanks in advance,  
Don

## SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING



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

## MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY

Have you been thinking about becoming a member at Nora? If so, we're planning a Membership Sunday - April 20. Just let Don know you're interested, and we'll be glad to welcome you into full membership. (If you're ready to join, but can't be there that day, just let Don know that, too. We can always recognize you on a different date.) You can Email Don: (drollins@sleepyeyetel.net). Call him (439-6240) Or see Don in person. Thanks!

## LUNCH BUNCH



The Lunch Bunch is planning an outing to Fairmont in April to visit with Joanne Saxton. Date and place to be announced.

## NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The NWS set out an ambitious agenda at its March meeting. The women voted to have a salad and baked potato bar fundraiser on Sunday, April 6. This event will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the church in place of the usual first-Sunday potluck. The event is open to the public and notices will be sent to area churches inviting them to attend.

The members also voted to hold a bake sale in conjunction with Maifest in New Ullm on Saturday, May 3. It was decided to make some of the lefse used for Smorgasbord. Wednesday, August 20, was chosen as a work day to make the lefse.

In other business, Nancy Brudellie volunteered to donate a quilt to be raffled off. The members agreed to use NWS funds to match the profits from the Sunday school's Easter breakfast to be donated to "Kids Against Hunger." The Women's Society also authorized Julie Sellner to get cost estimates and material samples for cushions for the church pews.

Thank you from UUSC for your support with "Guest at Your Table". Nora's donation was \$237.67.

## CROP WALK

Join area people for the CROP Hunger Walk, Sunday, April 27 beginning at 2:00 PM. Watch for more information in the Sunday announcements.

**What is a CROP Hunger Walk?** Neighbors walking together to take a stand against hunger in our world. Together we raise awareness and funds for international relief and development, as well as local hunger-fighting.

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It's that time of year when we decide what amount we'll set aside in support of this wonderful spiritual home of ours. To make this year's pledge drive as painless as possible (for you as well as the pledge committee) here's a few suggestions:

1. Take a couple of minutes right now to think about Nora - its fellowship, its values and its future - and think, too, about what it means to you, personally;
2. Think about what you know it means to others, within and without our membership;
3. Consider the amount you pledged this year - can you give more for the 2008-09 church year?
4. Now you're ready to make your pledge. When you get your pledge card you just fill it out and you're done. Easy. Simple.

We know that Nora Church exists today because of the culture of generosity that we've inherited from those who came before. We know that its future depends, in part, on what you and I contribute, whether it's our time, elbow grease or hard-earned dollars. So let's make sure the church we pass on reflects that same spirit of generosity. Let's make certain that future generations are given the financial tools to maintain (and increase!) the quality of ministry we're doing together today.

## THANK YOU

This month we say thank you...to Gene and Georgine Tepley for all they do to keep Nora the great community that it is. Kudos to you!



## **ADULT RE & GROWTH**

The Spirituality Study Group will meet at 6:25 PM at Nora Church for the first three Thursdays in April, with our last scheduled gathering for the month being April 17. We will continue to focus on exploring additional aspects of spirituality, using Eckhart Tolle's book, "A New Earth - Awakening to Your Life's Purpose" and Gregg Braden's book, "Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer" as inspiration and resource material.

The Open Meditation will be held in the sanctuary at Nora Church at 7:00 PM for the first three Thursdays in April. As with the Study Group, our last scheduled gathering for the month will be April 17. This hour-long offering is largely silent, though usually accompanied by meditative music. The practice of meditation affords individuals the opportunity to step away from the pressures and stress of daily life and allow a measure of peace and tranquility to enter both mind and heart.

Both of these offerings are open to members and non-members of Nora Church, and people need not attend both in order to participate in the session that is of interest to them. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Christopher Olson, either via e-mail at [kitakis@aol.com](mailto:kitakis@aol.com) or by phone at 507-995-7059.

Note: There have been a few people who have indicated an interest in participating in the meditation, but have found that Thursdays hold too many scheduling conflicts, so if a different day (most likely Wednesday) would work better for you please let Christopher Olson know, using the contact info above.

## **THANK YOU**

The family of Maurice Keith (Skeeter) Blomquist extend their sincere thanks to all those who expressed their condolences in anyway following his death on March 8, 2008. Special thanks to all the members and friends of Nora Church who helped in any way on the day of his Memorial Service, Saturday, March 15. Extra special thanks to Rev. Rollins for the time he spent with Michael prior to the service as well as assembling a most meaningful and memorable service for a person he had never known.

Skeeter's suffering is over and he is now at peace. We are all grateful for all the people who helped us through those difficult days.

- daughter, Michelle Eldien; son, Michael; brothers and sisters, Arline Schmiesing, Muriel Frederickson, Rebecca Johnson, Algot Blomquist, Richard Blomquist, Warren Blomquist.



## **NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS**

MVAC is now accepting applications for the 2008-2009 Head Start school year. This is free for low-income families with children who are 3 or 4 years old by Sept 1st, 2008, and for income-eligible children with a diagnosed disability regardless of severity. Transportation is provided when available. Staff assist families in obtaining transportation. To apply call 359-7139 or 345-6822

## **HEAD START OPEN HOUSE**

You are invited to attend the open house on Tuesday, April 15 at Jefferson Elementary in New Ulm from 9:30 am to 10:30 am and 1:15 pm to 2:15 pm.

Also at First United Methodist Church (basement) on Friday, April 11 from 9:20 am to 10:30 am.

Meet the teachers, Family Advocate, and children. Bring your future Head start children and mingle or ask questions while you have refreshments. Everyone - parents, children, grandparents, business people - are invited. For more information call Sharon Berg at 359-9287 (New Ulm) or 794-5660 (Sleepy Eye) or 1-800-767-7139 ext. 444 or ext. 448.



## NORA CHURCH COMPLETES ENERGY AUDIT

In January 2008, Nora engaged the services of Alliant Energy to complete an energy audit on the church and parsonage. Several members of the social justice and building/ground committees completed the walk-through with the professional engineer.

What we're doing well:

- Rare use of air conditioning
- Unplugging many appliances when not in use
- Turning down heating thermostat during weekdays/outside of church events
- Turning off all lights when not in use (we use very little electricity)

The Alliant representative contractor said that the facility is managed very well and that any conservation practices should be continued.

Where we can improve:

- Add additional insulation to attic.
- Install high efficiency furnaces when the units need replacing
- Install high efficiency water heater when unit needs replacing
- Replace light bulbs in parsonage and church with compact fluorescent lights.

Replace single pane windows with double pane, low-E windows to reduce heat lost (as needed – savings will not be entirely sufficient to pay for windows replacement).

Please contact a member of the social justice committee if you'd like to see a full copy of the energy audit.

## 2007-2008 ENERGY CHALLENGE

Carbon emissions are a key contributor to global warming issues. The Minnesota Energy Challenge website indicates that an average Minnesota family is responsible for the emission of over **50,000 pounds of carbon dioxide** per year. In the fall 2007, Nora members were invited to take an energy challenge pledge as one way for us to acknowledge our personal responsibility towards the environment. A key focus of Nora's social justice this year is environment issues and action and our goal has been to start with personal actions - moving towards greater engagement. During the February 10, 2008 service the social justice committee shared updates of the energy challenge with the congregation. Highlights of the Energy Challenge include:

13 Nora households representing 27 people took the energy challenge pledge  
Together, these households pledged to avoid over 45,000 pounds of carbon dioxide!  
Key actions included:

Replacing light bulbs with high efficiency compact fluorescent ones.

Using a programmable thermostat to lower the temperature in my home at least 5 degrees for at least 8 hours while away at work or asleep.

Setting air conditioning thermostat up 2 degrees.

Setting furnace thermostat down 2 degrees.

Washing clothes in cold water.

Installing a low flow showerhead.

Driving fewer miles/wk by combining trips, walking or biking.

Buying fewer plastic soda and water bottles

Buying eco-friendly cleaning products and packaging



Additionally, up to 3 households will be replacing cars this year with ones that gets 30 miles per gallon or more – this will avoid at least 9,000 pounds of CO2 in a year! If you are interested in joining the pledge, forms are located on the entryway table at Nora.

**Did you know?** If every household in the US replaced just one 25oz. bottle of petroleum-based dishwashing liquid with a plant based product, we could save **81,000 BARRELS OF OIL**, enough to heat and cool **4,600 US homes for a year!**

## BOTTLED WATER

In the 1990s, the first bottled water began to turn up in convenience stores & supermarkets. Originally no one gave much thought of negative consequences to a booming industry that today hits \$2.7 billion annual sales.

As the industry charged ahead with large corporations like Coke (Dasani – made from tap water) and Pepsi (Aquafina – also made from tap water) people began to see an impact. According to the organization Public Citizen, bottled water can ruin local watersheds, drain aquifers, and generate over 20 billion plastic bottles in landfills, annually. That isn't a typo – over **20 billion** plastic water bottles in landfills, each year.

As each of us sip our Evian, Fuji or another brand of bottled water, we impact access to safe drinking water everyone on our planet should have. More than 1 billion people worldwide currently have little or no access to safe drinking water.

Here are a few facts about bottled water:

- Close to 2 million tons of plastic was used to make bottles for water last year. That manufacturing involves an enormous amount of petroleum, since it is the key ingredient in plastic. In the U.S. alone, 30 million bottles a day get tossed out. Recycling them costs another small fortune in gasoline to haul them to plants.
- Bottled water is being promoted all over the world by companies that are staking their future on getting you to drink water from bottles since it is getting harder to persuade you to drink soda and other sugared water from their cans – and its working.
- According to Beverage Marketing Corp., consumption of bottled water has doubled in the past decade. Americans now drink more water from bottles overall than any other nation.
- Be concerned about the quality of the water you are drinking. According to Rolf Halden of John Hopkins School of Public Health, "Bottled water can legally contain many things we would not tolerate in municipal drinking water."
- Halden also cautions about chemicals called phthalates that are sometimes added to plastics to make them less brittle. Phthalates, he says, "are environmental contaminants that can exhibit hormone-like behavior by acting as endocrine disruptors." If you heat up plastics, you could increase the leaching of phthalates from the containers into the water and food.

Consumers wanting to band the bottle can try the following:

- Refrigerate water in a large pitcher. If you don't have a water filter, let water sit in the pitcher overnight to let odors evaporate, then put in the fridge.
- Choose a water filter if taste or odor is a concern. Consumer Reports like the Pur faucet-mounted filter and the Sears countertop filter for removing common contaminants.
- Re-used commercial water bottles a few times after washing them in hot soapy water and air drying completely with the top off to kill bacteria. But you're better off using a durable, reusable sports water bottle that can be refilled many times.

Stop buying bottled water – it will help reduce global warming and cut down the earth's pollution burden. This will mean less oil for shipping the bottles, oil used for keeping the bottles cold, oil for the recycling process and the oil used originally to produce the bottles.

## **LIFE WORK PLANNING CENTER**

### **JOB-SEARCH SKILLS**

If you are, or want to start actively seeking work at this time, this group will help you stay focused and on task to meet your goals.

You will receive support from others in the group as well as specific information on job-seeking skills.

#### *Topics to be covered include*

- The job search process
- Filling out an application
- Writing a resume and cover letter
- Where to look for work
- Interview skills

**Thursday Evening 6:00-8:00 pm  
Begins April 10th**

*Life-Work Planning Center, Mankato  
201 N. Broad St., Suite 100*

To register, call Marlene at 507-345-1577

### **DIVORCE TRANSITION WORKSHOP**

*Are you going through a divorce?  
Have you gone through a divorce?*

Divorce is life-changing in many ways. In this workshop we will discuss the challenges that accompany divorce. We'll set goals and find ways to move toward them that work individually.

**Thursday Evenings 6:00-8:00 pm  
Starts April 10th**

Life-Work Planning Center, New Ulm  
1618 S. Broadway

To register, call Marlene at 507-345-1577

### **OVER 50? TIME TO CREATE THE LIFE YOU LOVE**

*Take a fresh look at the last one third of your life!*

\*Facing Retirement?   \*Career Change?   \*Family grown?   \*Is this all there is?

We will discuss the importance of attitude and skills in reaching personal and employment goals.  
This is a 10-week workshop in Mankato.

**Thursday Afternoon 1:00-3:00 pm ~ Begins April 10th**

Mankato Life-Work Planning Center Office  
201 N Broad St., Mankato

To register, call Marlene at 507-345-1577

### **UU NIAGRA EXPERIENCE**

Join UUs from around the country in Niagara Falls, July 20-23, 2008. Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective. Spend four days with us exploring the rich history and natural beauty around the Falls. For information visit our web site : <http://www.uunex.net/>



July 20, 2008 - July 26, 2008

Beloit College Campus, Beloit, Wisconsin

Experience a whole new level of  
Unitarian Universalism!

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. Registration deadline is June 1st.

### 2008 AMUUSE SINGLES CAMPS Adult Midwest Unitarian Universalist Singles Enrichment

Three opportunities for single adult community recreation providing friendship, fun, fellowship, and personal and spiritual growth.

- June 15-20 - Saug' in June - Saugatuck, Michigan.
- July 13-19 - Lake Geneva - Williams Bay, Wisconsin.
- August 10-16 - Saugatuck! - Sugatuck, Michigan

For more information, visit the website:  
[www.amuuse.org](http://www.amuuse.org)

## STAND UP FOR GLBT EQUALITY with UUs from around the state!

Don't forget your congregation's banner!

**OutFront Minnesota's *JustFair Lobby Day*** is at the State Capitol, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Join other fair-minded Minnesotans in letting our leaders know that Minnesota cares about equality for our GLBT citizens and their families. Educational sessions will be held in the morning, followed by a rally on the front lawn of the capitol from 12 – 1 pm. Appointments with lawmakers scheduled throughout the day. Info and Lobby Day registration at: [www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org). Questions? Contact Jo Haberman: [jhaberman@outfront.org](mailto:jhaberman@outfront.org) 612-822-0127 x 103.

## Empowering Congregations

Today we honor two of the congregations that reached truly **empowering** levels of energy and generosity on Association Sunday 2007. The River of Grass UU Congregation in Plantation, Florida and the UU Fellowship of Huntington, New York each held such inspiring services and spearheaded such organized campaigns that they were able to raise more than \$50 per member! Association Sunday 2008 is October 12.

## Kaufmann Mental Health Fund Announced

Recognizing that the UUA's ministerial scholarships are rarely large enough to cover expenses outside of tuition, books, and basic living needs, two profoundly generous donors have endowed the [Katherine S. and John W. Kaufmann Ministerial Student Mental Health Fund](#).

Through their exceptional gift, the Kaufmanns have given our seminarians access to therapy, supporting their transition to professional ministry and equipping them to be the most effective Unitarian Universalist ministers they can be.

## Baked Potato Bar with a variety of toppings

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008

Serving: 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Adults: \$5.00

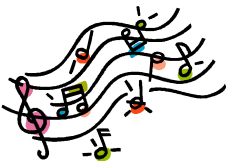
Children (6-12) \$3.00

6 and under: Free

A variety of salads, breads, bars, and beverages  
will be served with your baked potato

## Rebecca Aadland and Don Rollins in Concert Saturday, April 26, 8:00 pm

Don't miss the opportunity to  
see our own singer/  
songwriter, Rebecca Aadland  
and minister Don Rollins in  
concert at the Rhein River  
Arts Center.



Rebecca recently released her first CD, *Foreign Soul*, showcasing songwriting styles that range from folk to rock to country.



Don Rollins will partner with Rebecca on vocals, guitar and harmonica. Together, Rebecca and Don perform reflective songs that matter, with a sense of humor, contrasting vocal styles, and sharp lyrics.

Tickets are \$10 in advance at the New Ulm Chamber of Commerce or call Rhein River Arts Center: 507-359-9222.

Tickets can be mailed or held at the door.

They can be purchased the evening  
of the concert at the door for \$12.

## To Keep In Touch

♥♥♥

Keep in your hearts the family of Skeeter Blomquist who recently passed away.

♥♥♥

Congratulations to Kathleen Baril and Matt Harbor on the birth of their second son, Max, on March 14. Kathleen and Matt are former members of Nora and now live in New York state. Jim Harbur is the proud grandpa.

♥♥♥

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

## NEW BUMPER STICKERS NOW AVAILABLE

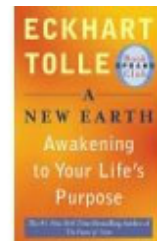
Nurture Your Spirit. Help Heal Our World.

Bumper stickers with the UUA tagline are available for \$2 each with a minimum purchase of 10. The bumper stickers are 15" long and 3.75" tall. They are very eye-catching, with bright green and blue text on a white background. To see a color image and to order, visit: [www.uua.org/marketing/congregational](http://www.uua.org/marketing/congregational).

## ARE YOU READY TO BE AWAKENED?

For the first time ever, you can join Oprah and Eckhart Tolle, the best-selling author of the Power of Now, as they teach "A New Earth" in Oprah's worldwide classroom.

Please join us. We meet at St. Peter's Church, 125 South Broadway, New Ulm, 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays to watch the DVD (from the previous Monday evening's live web-cast) until 8:00 p.m. We then discuss what we saw that evening. There are DVD's you can borrow to watch if you've missed the first weeks. Those who have been attending are excited about the discussions.




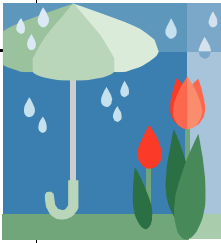


# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## APRIL 2008

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 6 pm Social Justice Committee, Wiger's	3 6:30 Opra's Webinar, St. Peter's Church, New Ulm 6:25 Spirituality Group 7:00 Open Meditation	4	5 UU & YOU Service, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 125 S Broadway, New Ulm
6 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service 11:30 Baked Potato & Salad Bar fundraiser	7	8	9 6:30 Board Mtg, Mankato UU Fellowship	10 6:30 Opra's Webinar, St. Peter's Church, New Ulm 6:25 Spirituality Group 7:00 Open Meditation	11	12 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">11-13 Prairie Star District Annual Meeting, Omaha, NE</div>
13 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service	14	15	16	17 6:30 Opra's Webinar, St. Peter's Church, New Ulm 6:25 Spirituality Group 7:00 Open Meditation Board/COM Long-range Planning Meeting, Nora Church, 6:30-8:30 P.M.	18	19 <i>Travel to watch the Twins Loose to Cleveland Trip (See Julie Sellner for details)</i>
20 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service Newsletter articles due	21	22	23	24 6:30 Opra's Webinar, St. Peter's Church, New Ulm	25	26 <i>Rebecca Aadland &amp; Don Rollins Concert, Rhein</i>
27 CLEAN UP SUNDAY CROP WALK 	28	29	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

6	Lee & Lynn Schmitt Christina Schmitt	Kristi Paulson Christopher Olson
13	Sally Diane Becken Nancy Dickson	Dave & Jeanne Wenk
20	Muffy Clayton & Shirley Olson	Darrell & Jeanne Hinsman
27	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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Nora church @ sleepyeyetel.net  
<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

April 2008



## Nora Church Sunday Services APRIL 2008

**Social Hour 10:00 AM**

**Worship Service 10:30 AM**

**April 6** "Jeremiah Was a Bulldog" - the big stink over Barak Obama's former pastor, Jeremiah Wright, bears a striking similarity with the story of Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet. So *that's why* Obama's bulldog of an "old uncle" is taking so much heat!

**April 13** "Global Warming and Moral Decisions" - Guest speak mark Lindquist

**April 20** "Passover: Pharaoh [Sort Of] Gets It" - The Passover story would fall flat were it not for the stubborn Egyptian ruler who needed ten plagues before getting on board with God's plan for the Hebrews. Everybody's got issues. Nobody "gets it" on all of 'em.

**April 27** Clean up Day