



MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

August 2008

VIEW FROM THE HILL

“They never know why we leave,” she said. “True enough,” I replied, “but often as not, neither do we.” She nodded her head and we sat in silence.

That’s a snippet from a conversation with a colleague – a conversation held a few years back and long before I submitted my resignation last month. We were reflecting on all the personal and professional factors that land us in and out of a given congregation, then acknowledging the reality that it’s usually a “gut thing” on both counts. That was surely true in my decision to become your minister, and it’s every bit as true as I leave.

It’s true that leaving Nora is partly a career move, one calculated to help make up for serving relatively small congregations for relatively small pay. It’s also true that I’m ready for a different set of challenges, mostly having to do with setting and size. But it’s also a gut thing – a sense that both Nora and I would benefit from a change. In the end, it’s not about money. It’s not, thankfully, about conflict. It’s about the gut sense that a change is in order.

As to the practical stuff, the Board has taken me up on my offer to provide emergency coverage (primarily serious illness and/or memorial services) until another minister (interim or settled) is chosen. In lieu of that minister, I’ll be filling the pulpit of August 17 and 31, as well as September 14 and 28. (I’m in negotiations with our Bloomington congregation regarding “Smorg” Sunday, October 5.)

Please keep in mind that all of this will change should an interim or consulting minister be hired. Both common sense and ministerial guidelines require that my role at Nora end once she or he is on board.

Because it’s possible that this may be my last column, let me tell you that I immediately liked you, the good folks of Nora. Because of my own wiring and “stuff”, it took some time before I realized how much I love you. Thank you for returning that love in spades.

With the Board and Program Committee’s permission, I’ll be speaking on August 17 no matter the status of the interim/consulting search. I hope you can attend that or whichever service will be my last. If not, rich blessings on you. And thanks for all you do to keep Nora a vibrant voice for liberal religion.

Best wishes,
Don

THE LUNCH BUNCH

Come join us for our monthly get-together on Tuesday, August 26th at 11:30 AM. We'll be dining at Holiday Inn, New Ulm.



NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The Nora Women's Society has scheduled a lefse making session for Wednesday, Aug. 6, starting at 2 p.m. at the church. Anyone interested in helping (male and female) is welcome to attend and learn the delicate art of making lefse. If you miss that session, there will be another one on August 20. If you can't attend, donations of money or ingredients will be gratefully accepted

PLEDGING FOR THE NEW YEAR

Please turn in your pledge cards for the new year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. There are still a number of cards yet to be turned in. They can either be given to Sally Hanson or mail them to her at: 1622 Northridge Lane, N. Mankato, MN 56003. Your gifts are very much appreciated.

SPIRITUALITY GROUP

There is a spirituality group that meets twice a month at South Point Federal Credit Union in New Ulm. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays from 6:30 to about 8:30. Our purpose is to gather together in a common community to support one another on our own spiritual journeys. At this time we have chosen to view interviews with authors who have published books on spirituality. The interviews are from the Oprah Soul Series. In July, we watched Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor share her experience of how a severe stroke significantly changed her life, her outlook on life and aided her spiritual growth. On August 6th. we will watch an interview with Elizabeth Lesser, author of The Seekers Guide. Interviews for viewing on August 14th. and for September 6th. and 20th. have not yet been chosen. There is time after the viewing to discuss what we saw and share our own experiences. There are members from Nora who attend as well as people from New Ulm and Sleepy Eye. Please feel free to join us when you would like. If you have any questions, please talk with Chris Bodick or Anne Rieke.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It's hard to believe that summer is 2/3 gone and we will soon be starting regular services here at Nora. This year will see a lot of changes here at Nora: new choir director, new RE system, and more importantly new minister. It is important to remember with all these changes that *Nora belongs to its members* not any one person. More importantly it belongs to those who will be members in the future.

This year will be a transition year. If we look to the future and the needs of Nora 5, 10, 15, or 20 years down the line we will come out of this year stronger than we started. It is our choice. Look to the future or the past. We must always appreciate what has gone before us but we must also look to the future to grow and survive.

CHANGES COMING

With the resignation of Pastor Rollins, we will be seeing changes. An interim Search Committee has been formed to proceed with finding another pastor to serve during the interim. Those on this committee are: Sheldon Rieke, Julie Peck, Sally Hanson and Patrick Kunerth. Please keep them in your thoughts and give them your support.

GUEST DAY at Zion Lutheran in Hanska

Zion Lutheran Church in Hanska is having their guest day on Wednesday, August 13 beginning with a noon luncheon. Daddy's Angels, from Austin, MN, will be entertaining with contemporary Christian music. The Wichmann sisters have been performing for 10 years with their talents of singing and piano playing. An R.S.V.P. to Darlene Odegard at 507-439-6806 by August 6 is appreciated.

RELAY FOR LIFE



Brown County Relay for Life will be held Friday August 15th 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

**FACE TO FACE WORKSHOPS
FALL 2008**

Northern Leadership Conference: Friday & Saturday, September 26-27 at Fridley, MN (northern suburb of Minneapolis)

Leadership Conferences are weekend conferences offering workshops and networking opportunities for congregational leaders. Multiple tracks of workshops run concurrently in the same location.

Tentative Tracks this year include:

- **Presidents Track:** for current Presidents, Vice Presidents, and President Elect.

- **Treasurers Track:** for Treasurers, Financial Committee members, bookkeepers, anyone with an interest in tracking the congregation's finances.

- **Membership Track:** for Membership Chairs, Hospitality Chairs, anyone with an interest in membership and growth in UU Congregations.

- **Leadership Skills Track:** for congregation leaders (officers, board members, committee members) who have already attended a Leadership conference track for a specific position and/or are interested in more advanced leadership skills.

- **Voluntarism Track:** based on a curriculum "Voluntarism & Spirituality" which offers insights into recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Fee: \$50 **Deadline to register:** September 17

**A Sampling of 2008 Summer & Fall
Online Courses**

ADULT ED AND SPIRITUALITY

Available at the Church of the Larger Fellowship

www.clfuu.org/learn

A Chosen Faith: Self-Study Guide (On-going)

A guided examination of Unitarian Universalism, based on the book *A Chosen Faith* by John Buehrens and Forrest Church. Adapted to this online format by Jone Johnson Lewis from a study guide by Joan Goodwin. Full participation in this course requires having the book *A Chosen Faith*, available from the UUA bookstore at www.uua.org/bookstore. *Free*

New UU: Self-Study Guide (On-going)

A program for new Unitarian Universalists. You can move through the sessions at your own pace. For each session there are readings, and various questions to discuss in a forum. All readings are available on-line. *Free*

The Gospel According to Harvey

Taught by David Dawson: Aug. 4, 2008 — Sep. 1, 2008

This four-week class will use the 1950 film version of Mary Chase's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "Harvey," to explore questions familiar to all UUs. This classic film about an eccentric "everyman" who happens to befriend an invisible, 6-foot 3-and-a-half-inch white rabbit was never considered frivolous when it was released. Hilarious, yes. Frivolous, no. Today, the questions that it raises are just as valid, if not more so: How do we maintain our beliefs as free-thinking individuals in a culture of conformity? Are we truly tolerant of individuals who are profoundly different from us, or do we find ourselves trying to change them to fit our ideas of normality? Each week we will look at different facets of UU theology through the lens of this film. \$40

The Soul of Nature: A Journey into the Poetry of Mary Oliver

Taught by the Rev. Amanda Aikman: Sep. 8, 2008 — Oct. 20, 2008

Mary Oliver has been lovingly called "the poet laureate of Unitarian Universalism." Through keen observation of the natural world, Oliver finds delight, sorrow, mystery and paradox. In this six-session class, we will find a safe container for our reflections on the spiritual and personal meanings of Oliver's poems, using her themes as pathways into a spiritual practice of close observation of nature. There will be optional weekly writing exercises for those who wish to try their hand at poetry. The class will be based on Oliver's "New and Selected Poems, Volume 2," which is widely available. \$40

A UU Approach to the Bible

Taught by John Nichols: Oct. 13, 2008 — Dec. 8, 2008

The Fundamentalist insistence that the Bible is to be read literally is fairly recent. Those who wrote the scriptures knew they were writing stories in metaphorical language to illuminate our encounter with the inescapable issues of living and with the sacred. Read as they should be, Biblical passages reveal their meaning and power for everyone, including people of many religious backgrounds. This course will allow participants to try a new way of looking at familiar passages, a way that is fully compatible with Unitarian Universalism. \$40

Religion and Ecology: A Shared Fate, A Shared Task

Taught by Peg Shaffer: Jan. 12, 2009 – Feb. 20, 2009

How are the world's religions responding to environmental concerns? Is the environment a religious issue? John Henry Newman has stated that people will die for a dogma who will not stir for a conclusion. What if, then, environmentalism was discussed in religious rather than scientific language? Would the 2/3 of the world's population who belong to a religion then pay more attention, be willing to make changes? In this course we'll explore the spiritual aspects of the environmental crisis and how the world's religions are working separately and together toward sav-

**From Prairie Star District
Unitarian Universalist Association:**

ing this sacred space called Earth, from the Hindu concept of *ahimsa* (do no harm) and the ethics of Buddhism, to the shareable wisdom of Islam, from the Protestant work ethic, Thoreau's Walden, the *ruach* or "breath" of Judaism, to the Mennonite philosophy of living more with less. We'll look at the resources that these religions bring to the discussion of what is being called "deep ecology," the religious and ethical dimensions of viewing the earth as sacred.

**For information about these courses and more, contact
The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)
www.clfuu.org/learn
617-948-6150
re@clfu.org**

SHAMANIC EXPERIENCE RETREAT

Labor Day Weekend, 2008
Friday, August 29 - Monday, September 1

Jenny Ray, an elder of the Santee Dakota Sioux Tribe, Shaman and Medicine woman will be leading this three-day workshop. We will gather in an ancient forest to become ceremony together and learn the art of drum making, go on an insightful Shamanic journey and make a smudge fan.

Jenny Ray is a Native American Medicine woman, Shaman, author and educator who has studied under numerous native American Medicine People and Shamans from a variety of backgrounds. Jenny has been a Medicine woman for over 20 years, while pouring "Inipi" (Sweat Lodge) ceremony for nearly 30 years. Completion of studies in the Shamanic arts and ceremonies held with Shaman, Phil Morgan, allow her to carry the title of Shaman. She is known as Ska Mato Pejuta Winan (White Bear Medicine Woman), a name given to her by her late father, well known Dakota Elder Chas Thompson.

Location: Nerstrand/Big Woods State Park, Nerstrand, MN (1 hour south of the Twin Cities Metro area)

Cost: \$400 (includes all meals, materials, instruction and space for camping. You will need to provide your own sleeping bag and tent. All other camping supplies provided). Contact: Shannon at 507-744-2490 or by e-mail at Shanna@CreatureComfortsBodywork.com

Come join us over Labor Day weekend for a retreat in nature where you will learn native American ceremonies and build traditional native tools to take with you and help you on your spiritual path!

Contact Don for a registration form if you are interested. If not paying in full when registering, a \$200 deposit is due to hold your space with full payment due by 8/15/08.

Dear Friend of Prairie Star District, As we all enjoy these wonderful days of summer, I want to thank you again for your generosity to Friends of Prairie Star District and to tell you about some of the exciting things going on, made possible, in part, with your gift.

Based on the enthusiastic responses to our first-ever online workshop last fall, we're expanding our use of technology this fall. In collaboration with two other districts, we have scheduled a series of four monthly workshops, each offered twice, between August and November. These will include "10 Good Ideas about Getting Your Church Ready for the Fall," "10 Good Ideas about Effective Leadership in Meetings," "...about Multigenerational Worship," and "...about Adding a Service." The workshops will cover the basics and will also include information about how to access additional resources after the workshop ends. People from Rapid City or Detroit or Indianapolis will be able to participate in significant leadership training from the comfort of their home, without any cost for overnight stays or travel. Staff from all three districts will lead the workshops.

And as we offer ways for people from far apart places to come together through technology, we're also working on something that will bring people together, faced to face, for shared Unitarian Universalist community in a camp setting. Our plans for Camp StarTrail are moving along. In August of 2009, we'll see 200 or more UU's of all ages gathering at a camp near Ashland, Nebraska, for five days of fun, multigenerational celebration, and meaningful conversation.

In addition, we will offer expanded Fall leadership workshops in Des Moines and in the Twin Cities, two Radical Hospitality workshops in Duluth and in Davenport, and more. There are many good things happening in the District. **Thank you, Friend of Prairie Star District,** for supporting our activities with your generous gift!

Sincerely,
Nancy Heege, District Executive

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ONLINE WORKSHOPS:

- Workshops will be 1 1/4 hours long, with a presentation and time for discussions.
- Participants will need a computer with high speed Internet access and a separate phone line.
- All workshops will start at 7:00 PM on the given night.
- Workshops will be led by District Staff from the sponsoring Districts and invited guests with experience in the topic.
- There is no cost to participate, but registration is required.
- Registration is limited.

REGISTRATION: Save the dates. Information on how to register will be available soon at www.psdoua.org.

EVALUATION AND CONTINUATION: At the conclusion of this series of online workshops, we'll be evaluating the workshop format and technology. We may continue in 2009 with additional topics -"10 Good Ideas about Churches as Ethical Employers has been suggested. Your feedback is welcome.

ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES SPONSORED BY Midwest UU Leadership: a resource for UU congregations in Central Midwest, Heartland, and Prairie Star Districts.

ONLINE WORKSHOP TOPICS:

10 Good Ideas about Getting Your Church Ready for Fall:

DATES: Offered twice: August 6 and August 14.

LEADERS: Ian Evison, Phil Lund, and Dori Davenport Thexton.

10 Ideas about Effective Meeting Leadership:

DATES: Offered twice: September 11 and September 16.

LEADERS: Nancy Combs-Morgan and Ian Evison.

10 Good Ideas about Multigenerational Worship:

DATES: Offered twice: October 1 and October 14.

LEADERS: Phil Lund, Dori Davenport Thexton, and Michelle Richards.

10 Good Ideas about Adding a Service:

DATES: Offered twice: November 13 and November 18.

LEADERS: Nancy Heege, Nancy Combs-Morgan, and a minister and perhaps a religious educator whose church has recently added a service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Prairie Start District
www.psduaa.org or 612-870-4823

It's Time for a New Church Directory

All members and friends of the congregation are asked to complete a directory information sheet. Even if your information hasn't changed, it is **NECESSARY** to complete this form. Any information can/will be published in the directory unless you indicate that it should not be published. Please return the form below as soon as possible. Help us to have a complete and up-to-date directory. Thank you.

Name (a) _____

Name (b) _____

Children's names and birth dates _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell: _____

Phone: Work _____ E-Mail _____

Birthday _____

(for caring committee use only)

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

AUGUST 2008

Welcome Back!



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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Lefse Making	7	8	9
10 Annual Tri-State area Worship at Worthington. - 10:30 AM	11	12	13 Board Meeting - 6:30 PM	14	15	16 Memorial: Steve Pheiffer
17 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Worship	18	19	20 Lefse Making	21	22	23
24 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Worship	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Worship						

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

17	?	Clayton & Shirley Olson	Scott & Angie Becker-Kudelka
24	?	Jerry & Susan Allen	Noah & Janet Rosenbloom
31	?	John & Julie Schmitt	Algot & Bonita Blomquist

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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Permit No. 2
Hanska, MN 56041

August 2008



EMAIL
norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

WEB SITE
<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

Nora Church Sunday Services AUGUST 2008

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

AUGUST 10: 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 potluck lunch. Carpool and come on down.

AUGUST 17: Speaker is Reverend Don Rollins

AUGUST 24: Speaker is John Makepeace, "Henry David Thoreau in Minnesota"

AUGUST 31: Speaker is Reverend Don Rollins