

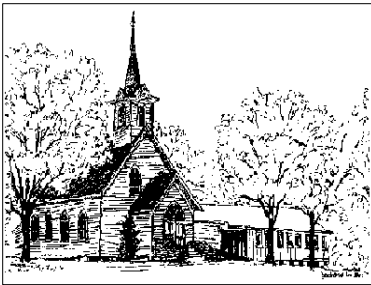


# MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

December 2008

## VIEW FROM THE HILL



December is *the month* people traditionally look for optimism. At the end of the month, the days begin to become longer, which our ancestors saw as a hopeful sign. Hence, we have many holidays, begun as holy days, at this time of year.

No, there is not much hope that the economy is going to improve any time soon. Experts say economic indicators won't turn in a positive direction until the second half of next year, at the earliest. America's economic anxiety will be with us for a while.

Yet, I have a glimmer of hope for the coming year for a couple of reasons and I think they are connected in some way. The first is that though the economy is in a bad way, I think there may be a silver lining to the turmoil. Of course, it isn't obvious so let me elaborate.

The common thread that weaves through the commentators about this economic calamity is that it was caused by greed. Greed existed among some mortgage lenders who did not disclose to the borrowers what they were getting into or to investors who were buying securities filled with mortgage loans of dubious worth. Greed existed among borrowers who thought they could get a valuable asset of a home without having adequate income or other assets to support the investment. Greed characterized some home owners who were using the equity in the homes as an ATM to buy things they otherwise wouldn't.

These are just a few of the examples pulled out of media reporting of this financial meltdown. Journalists are diplomatic in their judgments and would refrain from describing this as human greed, but ministers periodically are known to counsel against human vices or sins, like greed (see Luke 12:15) The difference is that Unitarian Universalists believe sin or vice has consequences in *this life* and not necessarily in some future existence. And so I am optimistic that greed may be viewed in our society as having negative consequences and that is good for religion in general, provided that we collectively care for the innocent bystanders of the economic downturn.

The second reason I am optimistic for the coming year has to do with our recent election. No, this is *not* about the partisan results of the election, but what began during the campaign. Some months ago, I wondered what would happen after the election was over. I had seen a tremendous network of people working on behalf of Sen. Obama's campaign. Where would this network go and what would these people do after it was over?

This successful election campaign was built using the tools of community-based organizing.\* And this method of bringing people together to solve our common problems *will continue* into the future. I believe there is great potential to re-energize the public consciousness about addressing problems and issues locally. In fact, I just received an email and a means of feedback from what was the election campaign that intends to do just that. It is *not partisanship*, but citizen engagement around bringing this nation back to its former greatness. I want to sign on to be part of that effort. Blessings and peace,

\*For more information, go to; <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregation-basedcommunity/>

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

As some of you may know we pay dues to the UUA based on the size of our membership. These dues pay for many things including help when we are in the search process, religious education support, and the publications we receive. It is important that we have an accurate number to give them, in part so we don't pay more than we have to but also because it is an important gage on the health of the congregation.



In going over our by-laws we have found them to be very vague on what constitutes a member of Nora beyond signing the book. After looking this over the Board has set up a Belonging Task Force to go over material from other congregations and write up a by-law that will define membership. It is our hope that this will be done in time to provide an accurate count for the year in February. This will also require a congregational meeting in January to make this part of our by-laws.

With this more accurate number we will pay the correct dues to the UUA, be better able to judge the health of the congregation and our growth as a congregation.

## GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

Just a reminder that the GAYT program asks us to place a box in each home during the holiday season. The idea is to put in the box all the change we bring home from Thanksgiving through Christmas. The boxes can be turned in at our first service in January.



## THANKS FROM THE BOARD

Thanks from the Board for this month are for all the people who worked on sprucing the church up before Smorg. All of our painters: Julie Sellner, Edith Beckius, Nancy Brudelie, Joy Rathman, Susan Evers, Lee Schmitt and Laurie Kunerth.

Also to Alon Chambard and Darrell Hinsman for installing the ceiling fan and the on-going electrical work they are doing.

## BAKESALE SUCCESS

We had a great turnout for the bake sale that was held at the Rhein River Room on Saturday November 8th. There was a great assortment of homemade goodies, and the lefse was sold out before 10:00 am. We had several people come just looking for our lefse. We definitely have to make more for next year. Thank you again to John and Anne Makepeace for allowing us to use their building and to all the gals and guys that helped out to make the day a great success!!

## WOMEN'S EXPO

On the same day as the Bake sale, there was a Women's Expo at the Jefferson School in New Ulm. Over 100 chances on the quilt were sold.

## NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The NWS met Oct. 29 in the Fellowship Hall. Treasurer Shannon Weiss gave a summary of figures to date on Smorgasbord. Members discussed ideas for improving the process.

The women also made plans for a Nov. 8 bake sale at the Rhein River Room and decided to staff a table at the Women's Expo at Jefferson School to sell chances on the quilt made and donated by Nancy Brudelie.

The women will hold an MLK event in February and a baked potato fundraiser in the spring. The quilt will be displayed at these events so attendees will have an opportunity to buy chances on it.

## FOOD FOR ALL

Reminder that our next opportunity to help distribute food over in St. James to those in need is on Saturday morning, December 13th at the Presbyterian church. This is Nora's commitment to provide people resources. We leave around 8 a.m. and have historically been back home by around noon. (hours to work approx. 8:30 to 11:00) This is a great inter-generational activity. If you'd like to be a part of our volunteer effort please call Darrell Hinsman at 359-7494. Lift your spirits by joining with others in helping meet the needs of those less fortunate. Remember, also, that our loose offering on the second Sunday of each month goes to Food For All.





# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Nora Church RE Program

My name is Ryann Rathman and I will be the new RE Director for the upcoming year. Winter is nearly here and we need to get our RE Program back on track. We had a very small turnout at our last parent meeting. Please visit the Nora Church Website for materials you may have missed. All children will need to fill out a permission slip to participate. (Also available on the website) We need these permission slips as soon as possible to determine numbers and class sizes. Feel free to email them to me, or give them to Dana or me at church. If you have ideas or would like to be a part of the RE Planning Committee, please contact me. Parents, please watch for emails regarding RE announcements and scheduling.

Contact Information:  
Ryann Rathman  
rrathman@diabetes.org  
612.325.9166

## LUNCH BUNCH

LUNCH BUNCH this month will be at Plaza Garibaldi in New Ulm (the Walmart area) on Tuesday, December 16, 11:30 AM. Take time from the holiday bustle to relax with good company and good food.

## SURVEYS

Surveys were distributed at church or via mail to members, friends, and frequent visitors of Nora Church. The newly charged Search Committee is compiling this information. The results are used to better inform prospective ministers about the character of our church and to identify members' preferences and attitudes toward choice of a new permanent minister. Please return your surveys as soon as possible. The committee hopes to finish tallying results the second week of December. If we missed you on the distribution list and you would like to receive a survey, please let Jeanie Hinsman know: 354-7494.



## NAMETAGS

Last call for nametags! Six people have indicated they are needing magnetic nametags like those on the display board in the church entry. If you haven't already given your name to Jeanie Hinsman, please do so soon. An order will be placed mid December.

## GIFTS TO CLF

Gifts to the Church of the Larger Fellowship make possible the programs, ministry and services that help pass along our UU faith. When you give, even while the CLF is impacting your own life, you are playing an invaluable role in helping the CLF reach the world.

Every gift counts. Every gift is a treasure. And as the year comes to a close, we hope we can count on your goodwill.

CLF's mission is to provide a ministry to isolated religious liberals, and to offer a spiritual home within the Unitarian Universalist movement.

The Church of the Larger Fellowship promotes the understanding and growth of Unitarian Universalism and institutes programs to that end.

## HOLIDAY UU GIFTS

Available from the Church of Larger Fellowship  
[www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org)

Visit the CLF website to view and purchase gifts for friends, family & volunteers...like UU-themed note cards for all occasions. Or several styles of chalice jewelry for all genders and all ages.

**The CLF Shop is now offering a 20% discount** on our UU-themed products, available through January 2009.

The CLF Shop sells a wide variety of UU merchandise - chalice pendants, lapel pins, note cards, luggage straps, and more - **now at 20% discount!**

The 20% discount will not immediately show up when ordering online. When customers type the words **"Newsletter Fillers"** in **Comments field**, their 20% discount will be processed as a credit card refund. Orders may also be placed over the phone! The 20% discount is offered only when mentioning the words **Newsletter Fillers**.

# Energy Assistance

## WHAT IS ENERGY ASSISTANCE?

Funds to help pay heating / energy bills.

## WHO IS ENERGY ASSISTANCE FOR?

Wage earners

Self-employed people

Seniors

Other low income households

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE?

Home owners

Renters who pay heating costs

Renters with heat included in rent, but pay electricity

## WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

You must be income eligible (guidelines below)

#in Household	Gross 3 months	monthly
1	\$5,296.00	\$1,765.00
2	\$6,925.00	\$2,308.00
3	\$8,555.00	\$2,851.00
4	\$10,184.00	\$3,394.00
5	\$11,814.00	\$3,938.00
6	\$13,443.00	\$4,481.00

**CALL**  
**MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL**  
**1-507-345-6822 or**  
**1-800-767-7139 (toll free)**  
**FOR INFORMATION**

### **“Water Conservation: Conserving water is simple and inexpensive”**

How much water do you use in a day? A gallon? Ten gallons? Few people know how much they actually use. The amount is likely to be anywhere from 60 to 160 gallons per person per day. This figure has tripled since 1900.

Water conservation can mean a variety of things to people, including storing, saving, reducing or recycling water. All of us have a stake in conserving this valuable and finite resource. Here is a wide variety of ways to conserve water:

- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing,
- Water your lawn or garden in the morning or evening to minimize evaporation or waste,
- Fix leaks and replace old plumbing fixtures,
- Run automatic dishwasher only when fully loaded,

- Shorten your shower by a minute or two,
- Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees,
- Turn off the water while you shave or brush your teeth.

For more information on water conservation here is one web site to check out: [www.monolake.org/waterconservation](http://www.monolake.org/waterconservation)

## To Keep In Touch

♥

Our sincere sympathy to the family of Jim Harbur. Jim passed away on Nov. 3rd.

♥

Congratulations to Pamela and Brandon Rathman on the birth of their son Trevor, on November 4th. Grandparents are Joy and Gerard Rathman. Great Grandfather is Bob Schmitt.

♥

I am pleased to let everyone know that Kate & Jason Monnens and I are planning a child dedication for Isaac Richard during the Sunday service on Dec. 21. -Pr. Dana

♥

If you know of anyone needing our assistance or attention...please call one of the committee members:

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

**THANK YOU! - Caring Committee**

# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 2008

Parsonage: 507-439-6240



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service POTLUCK	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	15	16 11:30 AM Lunch Bunch at Plaza Garibaldi, New Ulm	17	18	19	20 UU & YOU 5 pm at Rhein River Arts Center
21 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service  WINTER BEGINS	22	23	24 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27
28 No Service	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE			


Newsletter articles due .. Thanks for being prompt!

**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
7	Jordan Rathman	Joy Rathmann Ardis & Elroy Wellmann	Christopher Olson Kay Steffl
14	Sally Hanson	Doug Anderson Ann Nelson	Clayton & Shirley Olson
21	JoAnn Huss	Sheldon & Anne Rieke	Warren & Kristine Paulson
24	Muffy Rathman	Christmas Eve	
28		NO SERVICE	



**PASTOR'S SCHEDULE**  
Pastor Reynolds will be at the parsonage late Tuesday/early Wednesday thru Sunday afternoon/evening. This is, of course, subject to change depending on what's going on.



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

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# Happy Holidays!



EMAIL  
[norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net)

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

## Nora Church Sunday Services DECEMBER 2008

**Social Time 10:00 AM**

**Worship Service 10:30 AM**

**Dec 7 ~ "An Update for Our Universalist Heritage."**

**Dec 14 ~ guest speaker, Rev. Lisa Friedman - "A Light in the Darkness"**

Hanukkah is a minor Jewish holiday that has held much meaning to me since I was a child. It is a celebration of religious freedom and holy miracles. But for me, it is also a celebration of the courage of the human spirit against the violence and oppression of our world that has a message for us all.

**Dec 21 ~ "Finding Jesus at Christmas Time or Any Time."**

**Dec 28 ~ No service per Nora Church "tradition."**

