



MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

February 2009

A VIEW FROM THE HILL



As I wrote last month in this column, I am going to talk more about the church in general and Nora Church in particular. In a recent sermon, I said that the purpose of the church is to help all of us lead lives of value and meaning. Yet, I also see the church community as a place where we can give service to others. We can do that by developing and using the gifts we have been given. There is no more inspirational piece I know of to encourage us to use our gifts for the greater good than the words of Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, president of Starr King School for the Minister. This piece she calls simply, "Your Gifts" -

Your gifts -- whatever you discover them to be -- can be used to bless or curse the world. The mind's power, the strength of the hands, the reaches of the heart, the gift of speaking, listening, imagining, seeing, *waiting*: Any of these can serve to feed the hungry, bind up wounds, welcome the stranger, praise what is sacred, do the work of justice or offer love. Any of these can draw down the prison door, hoard bread, abandon the poor, obscure what is holy, comply with injustice or withhold love.

You must answer this question: What will you do with your gifts? Choose to bless the world. The choice to bless the world can take you into solitude to search for the sources of power and grace; native wisdom, healing and liberation.

More, the choice will draw you into community, the endeavor shared, the heritage passed on, the companionship of struggle, the importance of keeping faith, the life of ritual and praise, the comfort of human friendship, the company of earth, its chorus of life welcoming you.

None of us alone can save the world. Together -- that is another possibility, waiting. The choice to bless the world is more than an act of will, a moving forward into the world, with the intention to do good. It is an act of recognition, a confession of surprise, a grateful acknowledgment that in the midst of a broken world unspeakable beauty, grace, and mystery abide.

There is an embrace of kindness, that encompasses all life, even yours. And while there is injustice, anesthetization, or evil there moves a holy disturbance, a benevolent rage, a revolutionary love protesting, urging, insisting *that which is sacred will not be defiled*. Those who bless the world live their lives as a gesture of thanks for this beauty and this rage.

I see those of you in the Nora Church community using your gifts to bless the world. At the same time, I see the all-too-often hesitancy that comes from being too shy or too uncertain about what others will think. Yet I know that everyone has gifts with which to benefit others and gifts that can be parlayed into learning new skills. This broken world, this southern Minnesota community, and the Nora Church community need *all* of our gifts to be made known. One of the tasks of a pastor (as our Lutheran friends name ministers) is to help others with new discoveries of their gifts. I welcome walking that journey with you. Ours is a journey of discovery and of service. See you in church!

-Dana

SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

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

UU and YOU

Our outreach program in New Ulm is off and running! The February dates for our 5:00 PM Saturday UU & You services are February 7 and 21. We meet at Rhein River Arts Center. Come check it out!

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE CHANGE



Please note there is a change in Pastor Dana's schedule for the week of Feb. 1 - 5. He will be working in the church office on Monday, Feb. 2 and Tuesday, Feb. 3, but will be gone Wednesday and Thursday morning. This is for that week only.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



One of the most important things a church needs is leadership. On February 15th we will have a Congregational meeting following the service to elect a new board member for next years' Board of Trustees. If you are interested in being on the board please contact a current board member and let them know.

There will also be information presented on this year's Prairie Star District meeting and on General Assembly in Salt Lake City. Both of these meetings are great opportunities to learn more about leadership, church govern-ship, and have fun doing it. Please consider going to one of these gatherings.

ADULT RE ~ SPIRITUALITY GROUP

Remember there is a spirituality group that meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Southpoint Federal in New Ulm. We are in the process of determining our topics for February and March.

Anyone is welcome to join us at anytime. If you have any questions, please feel free to talk with Anne Rieke, otherwise join us when you can.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION!



Sunday school classes have begun! We will be covering lots of exciting topics this year. Our younger class will be focusing on the basics of the UU Religion. They will learn the importance of the chalice, the UU principles and much more!

Coming of Age and Tweeners: What does 'freedom of belief' mean? We talk about it as we define our church to others, but now we're going to take a closer, more personal look at the subject.

At Nora we are a diverse group of believers and non-believers. In the coming months members of the congregation will be meeting with the class (we are combining the two classes for this) to discuss their personal stories and how they find meaning and sustenance in life. It will be a sharing of ideas and ideals. We plan on having 2 members of the congregation simply talking with the youth. It will not be a debate, but simply an open exchange of ideas, with interaction, and open dialogue between all. It will be a sharing of individual stories, knowledge, doubts and faith. Jerry Allen, Jeannie Hinsman, Al Blomquist, Lee Drogemuller, Scott and Angie Becker Kudelka, Gil and Sally Hanson and Chris Olson will be sharing their thoughts and we encourage others to do so. Call Kristine at 507-439-6316 if you want to be a part of this. Everyone has things to share.

On Feb 1st we will have a general discussion about the many meanings of the word "God". On Feb 8th we will begin our discussions on individual thoughts. We are also planning visits to other churches, temples, etc. Call or email Muffy if you have ideas, or can help in any way.

We know there is no one path to finding the courage and sustance to not only cope with life but to embrace it, and one does not need all the answers to do so. We'll be taking a closer, personal look at a number of paths, and we'll all be richer for it. We are excited about this and look forward to your participation. If you are unable to be in church please send a copy of what you have to say, and some one will read it to the class. You can send it to Dana at Nora Church.

If you have questions or ideas on topics to cover, or are interested in teaching, please contact Ryann at rrathman@diabetes.org or at 612.325.9166.

REPORT FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee (Edith Beckius, Sally Hanson, Jeanie Hinsman, Pat Kunerth, Scott Kudelka, and Joy Rathmann) began their work in October. Our first tasks were to create the congregational survey which was distributed in November and to meet with our Prairie Star District settlement rep, Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs. Committee members reviewed the congregational record that was compiled in 2004 and spent about a month drafting changes and updates to reflect how we see the church in 2009. This thirteen page document includes church history, description of committees and leadership, mission, demographics, and summarizes the aspects of congregational life which reflect the character of our church and the type of minister we are seeking. After being reviewed by Janne Eller-Isaacs and the Transitions Office in Boston, the record went "online" on Dec. 24. This means all UU ministers looking for a congregation can access our record.

The committee tallied the results of the survey in both text and graphs. Summaries are available in the church fellowship hall. We also revised the "letter of agreement", a proposed contract between the minister and congregation, and a proposed salary package which was approved by the board at its December meeting. Our next tasks are to prepare our interview questions and skills in the hopeful event of conducting ministerial interviews this winter. Committee members are also compiling what is referred to as "the packet", a more detailed depiction of the geographical region, the church's events and worship, intended to reflect life at Nora Church through pictures, text, and collected materials. The packet is sent out to prospective ministers before a personal visit is made to Hanska.

The Search Committee will gather at a table in the Kaffestua during the February potluck. We hope anyone who has questions about our process, reactions to the survey, or any comment about future ministry at Nora will join us in conversation. A box for comments is also available in the church entry if you prefer to relate comments there or contact any of the committee members personally.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY A SUCCESS

We completed our 4th Annual Martin Luther King Event on Sunday, January 18th at 5:00 p.m. *What happens when "the money runs out"?*

The evening began with the choirs of Nora and UCC singing our most recent piece, "Like a Mighty Stream," which was a very fitting song for the event. This was followed by a presentation from the New Ulm Human Rights Commission of the Martin Luther King Jr. award to three winners. This year: Lizzy Bruns, Cassandra Hasner and Brittney Peterson, who are three former ALC (alternative living center) students, were nominated by Synova Nelson (the school's principal) for their hard work to gain the right to walk with the rest of their high school class during the NUHS public graduation ceremony. What brave young women these three were in the face of the potential rejection of this 'rite of passage' opportunity.

This was followed by a presenter: Southern MN. Regional Legal Services Attorney Gary Petersen who described the plight of the poor who are struggling with mortgage foreclosure issues; repossession; predatory lending schemes; garnishment and bill collectors. His message included: Those of us with a job and a house are fortunate. Increasingly, friends and neighbors are experiencing layoffs and joblessness.

The SMRLS mission statement on the website states eloquently what our committee felt was a timely and urgent concern. *"The harm resulting from an unfavorable outcome of a legal dispute is frequently more severe for the poor than for others."* We all know that as the economy worsens, more and more people will find themselves vulnerable and at a disadvantage.

Through this event, the committee hoped to expand the general awareness concerning the current economic crisis and ways it is impacting the increasing numbers of poor citizens from our area. We note that "maintaining freedom from homelessness" is high on the list of areas where SMRLS offers its assistance. Gary addressed this topic in all its dimensions.

The location of the event was once again The United Church of Christ in New Ulm. We are grateful for their generous sharing of the central location as well as the work/expertise to run the dishroom and the sound equipment.

The Social Justice Committee would like to thank all who came to the event and especially those of you who also took the time to either donate items or your time to help accomplish this event. As the event ended with a spaghetti supper it took many hours from many people. Thank you so much.

CONGRATULATIONS NORA

Nora UU Church recently received the Creating Justice Banner Society 2008 certificate from the UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee). This was sent to you as a congregation in honor of exceptionally generous congregational corporate support for UUSC's human rights and social justice work. Congratulations Nora! The certificate will be posted outside the kaffee stuge.

NEWS FROM BENCED

The following is part of the most recent correspondence from Krisztina who will be visiting Nora mid-month and is from Transylvania.

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Subject: Usa Travel

Dear Hanska community. First of all sorry of my silence but I am full of work. Before going to USA I will have exams in Bucharest, and at the same time I have a lot of troubles which need to finish, first of all national, international projects for my school, and for the foundation for Benced. So I am busy. Here in Benced everybody is full of life. We invited on first day of New Year, in the church a famous Choir from Udvarhely. At the same time we made chants in every house of Benced with the youth of our community. We made community meeting, we ask the community to fill out a questionnaire form, to survey the situation, the most important aim, needs of ur community. There appear 10 needs, from these we want to make action plans for the first 3. Here are:

1.renewing the toilet of the culture house/ this was the main aim because this summer we want to organize the Unitarian Youth Camp.

2. renewing the churches, making a big szekler gate for the garden of our church

3. making a village museum So we will make action plan based on these aims.

A lot lot of kisses, Krisztina

On Sunday, February 22nd, Krisztina will be giving the message during church, so please plan on coming to welcome her on her first visit to the United States. Also, please mark your calendars to help with a potluck on that Sunday, February 22. This will give all of us a chance to talk with Krisztina and learn more about her and Transylvania.

Transylvania to Hanska Project is Near!

We're all getting excited to share Nora Church with Krisztina Pall from our partner church in Benced, Romania. Krisztina will be arriving in Minnesota on Wednesday, February 18, and staying through Wednesday, February 25, 2009. As mentioned in past newsletters, the Social Justice committee has been developing the relationship and organizing Krisztina's visit to Minnesota and then the UU Conference in Texas.

Krisztina will be staying overnight with Colleen Tasto each night of her visit. To give her a full range of a Minnesota experience, we are asking Nora members and friends to volunteer to host Krisztina for a few hours and half-days. Her current schedule:

Wed 18: Arrive late to Minneapolis

Thurs 19: Make way down to Nora; Evening meal with Social Justice group

Fri 20: Day at New Ulm School

Sat 21: **OPEN** - for you to volunteer! (evening - UU & You)

Sun 22: Church and Potluck (**OPEN** afternoon and evening)

Mon 23: Day at Social service organizations (MBW; Food shelf); **OPEN evening**

Tues 24: New Ulm Day - Lunch Bunch, touring and shopping?) **OPEN**

Wed 25: To Texas

If you have an idea for a local activity and/or if you are interested in inviting Krisztina into your home for a few hours please get in touch with Vicki Sieve by email: vsieve@mbw-company.com or by phone at 507 354-6215 and cell 507 217-1877

* * * * *

Three children were talking about their religions. "I'm a Catholic," said one, "And our symbol is the cross."

"I'm Jewish," said the second, "And our symbol is the Star of David."

The third child said, "I'm a Unitarian Universalist and our symbol is a candle in a cocktail glass!"

REDUCE YOUR GAS USAGE

The price of gas has dropped from a high of \$4.00 plus per gallon this summer to below \$1.50 at some stations. As we all know, the price of gas will eventually go up. It is just a matter of time. Reduce your gas usage now and save yourself some money, along with helping the environment. Some of these tips will also help lengthen the life of your car and minimize repair costs over time.

Here are a number of tips to try:

- Maintain your car properly. According to the Department of Energy, you can improve gas mileage up to 4% by getting regular tune-ups to ensure the engine is working right.
- Replace a dirty air filter. This can enhance mileage by as much as 10%.
- Properly inflate your tires and add up to 3.3% to you mileage.
- Use the grade of motor oil recommended by the car manufacturer – could boast another 1 to 2% in mileage.
- Slow down. By driving the speed limit or lower, you will reduce costs at the pump and also be safer. Dropping to 55 miles per hour from 75 increased gas mileage by 33% according to a Consumer Reports test.
- You will also want to avoid rapid acceleration, numerous stops and starts, along with lengthy idling.
- Using your car's cruise control will also help with gas mileage by ensuring a steadier pace at a reasonable speed.
- Lighten up your car by removing heavy objects. According to the Alliance to Save Energy, removing an extra 100 pounds from the car can save you as much as 12 gallons of gas in a year.
- Don't transport items on top of your car. The added weight and drag from carrying materials on your roof can cut gas mileage by 5%.
- Consolidate your trips. A little bit of planning can help save gas as well as your time.



POTATO BAKE

Save the Date!! The Spring Potato Bake will be held on Sunday, March 1st from 11:30 to 1:00 at Nora Church.



This month we'll be having a special guest join us for our "Lunch Bunch". Krisztina will be joining us at Turner Hall on Tuesday, February 24. Following lunch those who care to will be touring New Ulm. It all starts at 11:30 AM. Let's show Krisztina that Minnesota/Hanska hospitality!

CHURCH OF THE LARGER FELLOWSHIP (CLF)

Religious Education Resources
for kids, families & congregations Available

Looking for high-quality religious education resources? *RE Express Plus* offers tools to create a complete religious education program for children and families, or to creatively expand a larger program. Imagine – religious education resources 24/7.

RE Express Plus can be used by

Children at home
Families during the week
Families unable to attend church on Sundays
Churches with age-graded classrooms
Churches with two Sunday services
Churches with smaller programs
Churches that incorporate worship for children

- Free to CLF members
(not sure if you're a member? call 617-948-6150 or email bmurray@clfuu.org to ask) \$129 annual fee for non-members at www.clfuu.org/re/express.html
Each month RE Express Plus subscribers receive via email:
 - CLIF Notes: A Curriculum Small Groups
 - RE Index of Resources
 - KidTalk Web page for kids
 - REsources for Living

To subscribe to RE Express Plus, or to learn more about the Church of the Larger Fellowship, contact the CLF:

www.clfuu.org
clf@clfuu.org, 617-948-6150

All proceeds from the sale of RE Express Plus support the many ministries of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

UU's VACATIONING

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory UU're Home (formerly Homecomings) can fulfill your dream. For 29 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at 828-281-3253 or at info@uurehome.com, and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the UU're Home website at www.UUreHome.com are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The paper edition is published once a year in April.

For a copy of the 2009 directory and a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 and your e-mail address to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806

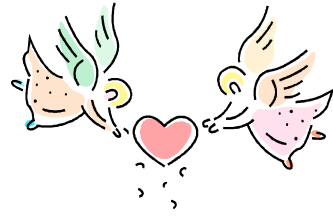
- Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals
- Learn about hosting people in your home to earn extra money

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) offers a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel to different cities and stay in reasonably priced accommodations or become a host and enjoy meeting new friends.

For more information, visit www.UUreHome.com or write to info@uurehome.com



www.UUreHome.com
43 Vermont Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-281-3253



CALLING ALL ANGELS
An invite to my friends at Nora

You're invited to Morning Tea!!
Proceeds to Benefit the
Minnesota Ovarian
Cancer Alliance

Hosted By: Julie Sellner
February 14 at 10:00 am
\$4 per person.
All proceeds will benefit MOCA

Nora Unitarian Church
12333 155th Ave.
Hanska, MN 56041

RSVP appreciated, but not necessary
to Julie at 507.375-8737

February is **Calling All Angels** month, a grassroots effort to help raise awareness of ovarian cancer in Minnesota. **They say the movement of an Angel's wings creates tiny changes in the social atmosphere that ultimately causes large scale awareness.** We know this to be true because in the past five years, **Calling All Angels** has raised over \$85,000 in funds dedicated to raising awareness of ovarian cancer.

Visit www.mnovarian.org for more information.

To Keep In Touch

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 - 354-1866
Carol Chambard - 354-2242

THANK YOU! Caring Committee

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2009

Parsonage: 507-439-6240
Dana's cell: 612-229-5907



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service POTLUCK Search Committee mtg Board mtg	2	3	4 Spirituality Group at Southpoint Federal, NU - 6:30 PM	5	6	7 UU & YOU Rhien River Arts Center 5:00 PM
8 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service Congregational meet- ing following service	16	17	18 Spirituality Group at Southpoint Federal, NU- 6:30 PM Krisztina Arrives late in Mpls	19	20	21 UU & YOU Rhien River Arts Center 5:00 PM
22 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service POTLUCK "potluck for Krisztina from Transylvania")	23	24 Lunch Bunch At Turner Hall 11:30 AM Tour New Ulm with Krisztina	25	26	27	28

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	Muffy Rathman	Darrell & Jeanie Hinsmann Wayne & Janet Johnson	Alon & Carol Chambard
8	Jordan Rathman	Kevin & Shannon Weiss	Nancy Brudelie Anna Schwenke
15	JoAnn Huss	Doug Anderson Kristi Paulson	Gene & Georgine Tepley
22	Sally Hanson	Clayton & Shirley Olson Mimi Kamleiter	Elroy & Ardis Wellmann



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

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
United States Postage Paid
Permit No. 2
Hanska, MN 56041



EMAIL
norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

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



Nora Church Sunday Services FEBRUARY 2009

Coffee Time 10:00 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

February 1 - "Where Spirituality and Depth Psychology Meet." Did you know there was a connection? Mythology and anthropology also connect with depth psychology as well. We will explore these connections as time allows.

February 8 - "Learning the Lessons of Love, Gratitude and Service," guest speaker, Marlene Lange. Susan Allen, liturgist.

February 15 - "The Good News of Unitarian Universalism: Should We Tell Anybody Outside of Church?" Do we as Unitarian Universalists have anything to offer society, and if so, what is it, and how can we let others know?

February 22 - "Bencéd, Transylvania: Its People, Their Events, and Their Economic Development." Krisztina Pall, guest speaker. She is a Community Organizer and Teacher.