



MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

March 2009

A VIEW FROM THE HILL

This winter, I've been looking at a lot of information about other congregations in my search process. While doing a lot of reading, I am frequently reminded of Pastor Rick Warren's books, *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life*. I've not read either book, just enough excerpts to know that I disagree with the theology Warren puts forward.

"Purpose" is an important factor in congregational life, as it is in people's lives. At least, Rick Warren is on to something there, and I am reminded that President Obama thought enough of Pastor Warren to speak at his church and invite him to give the invocation at the inauguration. Purpose drives what we do, whether we are aware of it or not.

I have seen lots of variations in how other congregations describe their purposes. No matter what words are used, whether it is mission, vision, "glowing coal," or role fulfillment, one can see that the purposes of the church *should* inform everything that goes on. Indeed, you can usually find the thread of purpose woven throughout the fabric of what a congregation says about itself.

As I have looked through all of this material, I have categorized a congregation's stated or implied purposes along a continuum. On one side, I would label as "internal" purposes, those philosophies and activities that are focused on the needs of the members of the congregation. Descriptions would include, "caring for one another," "promoting the people's spiritual well-being" (presumably, those people who are in attendance), and "fostering an atmosphere of acceptance," are some of what I have come across that I put on the internal-focus side of purpose.

On the other side, I would label as "external," those philosophies and activities that are focused on the wider world, the service-giving focus "beyond our walls," as the saying goes. Descriptions I put on this external-focus end of the continuum include, "taking our message to the wider community," "helping to meet the needs of [at-risk] populations in our area." Here's one short excerpt, from a congregation out East, I had to quote: *"Our concern about the state of the world is manifested daily by our willingness to be compassionate and to act decisively on a range of justice issues . . ."* Some of those issues are then listed. No doubt this is on the external focus side of my continuum!

It is obvious to me, perhaps it goes without saying, that a vibrant church is going to have a good balance between philosophies and activities that are internally-focused AND externally focused. Even a simply-stated mission, "to minister to the world and to ourselves," contains that balanced mix. Too far an emphasis on one side or the other, by necessity, will mean a lack of meeting some of the needs on the other side. Congregations need to do both.

I have also learned that it is important for congregations to have discussions about their purposes. What is not clear is, how can this happen on a regular basis? These discussions are important so that the clarity about the purposes in the church are known. We sometimes see this in our individual lives too. Sometimes, we feel adrift and have to stop to have a "discussion" with ourselves about our purpose.

I want to encourage you at Nora Church to find the time to have this discussion. Of course, I will assist you in this process. My question is, are you on-track or are you feeling adrift? There are no wrong answers and not everyone will be feeling the same thing. I just want to make sure that you and Nora Church are purpose-driven.

"UU & YOU"

Our next date for UU & You, our outreach ministry in New Ulm, is Saturday, March 14 at 5:00 P.M. We meet at Rhein River Arts Center. Bring a friend and join us!



For over 25 years, Minnesota FoodShare has worked with food shelves to organize the largest food and

cash drive in the state of Minnesota: The March Campaign. It is responsible for more than half of all food distributed each year at the food shelves.

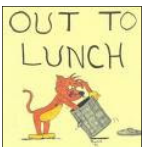
Bring your Cash and food donations to church any time during March. They will go to the New Ulm Food Shelf..

SCOUTING FOR FOOD

In conjunction with March being Food Share month, in New Ulm boy scouts will be distributing food bags and collecting food on Saturday, March 14. Please consider donating nonperishable food and toiletry items by leaving the bag outside your door.

All area churches have committed to sending 4-5 volunteers to sort food at the New Ulm Area Food Shelf on March 14 as it gets collected by the scouts. We are looking for volunteers to work either the morning shift (9-12) or afternoon shift (12-3). If you can volunteer for a shift, please contact Angie Becker Kudelka or Darrell Hinsman. Thanks.

LUNCH BUNCH

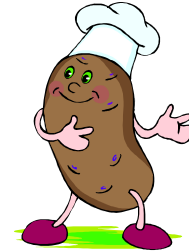


Watch your Sunday bulletin for this month's chosen place.

THANKS FROM THE BOARD

It's time once again to say thank you...for all you do for our church, community and folk here at Nora. Thanks from the Board goes to the Social Justice committee for organizing another successful MLK Presentation and Spaghetti Dinner. Also to all the volunteers who helped prepare, serve and clean up.

Baked Potato Bar with a variety of toppings



Sunday, March 1, 2009
Serving: 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Adults: \$6.00
Children (6-12) \$4.00
6 and under: Free

A variety of salads, breads, desserts,
and beverages will be served with your
baked potato
Come...and bring a friend!!

Volunteers for Seniors of
Brown County Presents the

SPRING GALA

Saturday, March 21

5:30 - 8:00 pm
New Ulm Community Center

This fundraiser will benefit volunteers
for Seniors of Brown County.

It will include dinner as well as a
wonderful variety of entertainment
provided by local choral groups,
soloists, instrumentalists and others.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Please continue to encourage and support our youth.

MAKING YOUR SUMMER PLANS?

Registration is now open for Camp StarTrail, our new UU summer camp for all ages. Go to www.psdoua.org and click on Camps on the left tool bar.

Camp StarTrail will be held August 2 – 7, 2009 just off I-80, between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. Join us for a multi-generational camp that celebrates and explores Unitarian Universalism, in the beautiful rolling hills of the Platte River Valley. From the morning Celebration, to the workshops, to the evening Vespers and campfires, there will be fun and good conversation. If you'd prefer to sit in a rocking chair and read a good book, you'll enjoy the quiet of the woods, lake, and sky.

Our Theme Speaker is Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. Her topic is "Toward Wisdom: How to recognize and become a spiritual grown-up, with or without god." Rev. Mark Stringer, First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, is our Chaplain and Vespers leader. Other ministers who will be present include Rev. Jim Eller of All Souls UU Church of Kansas City; Rev. Fritz Hudson of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln; and Rev. Ted Tollefson of UU Fellowship of River Falls Wisconsin.

Costs will be reasonable. Tent and RV camping is available. A variety of housing is available; most spaces are air conditioned.

Photos of the camp are available on the Prairie Star District Web site at <http://www.psdoua.org/CampStarTrail/CampStarTrail>. There's a swimming pool, a small lake for canoes and paddle boats, hiking trails, challenge courses, including high ropes, plenty of comfortable housing, and excellent food. We're renting a Lutheran camp for the five days.

For an affordable vacation this summer, consider Camp StarTrail. You'll be glad you did!

CHURCH OF THE LARGER FELLOWSHIP

Unitarian Universalist Podcasts -- sermons, meditations, RE materials and more, are available from the Church of the Larger Fellowship anytime and any place

for your ipod, MP3 player, or computer. Hear the voices of UU contributors to the CLF's worship publication via iTunes subscription, or listen à la carte.

The Church of the Larger Fellowship is the UU congregation through mail and the Web. Our monthly worship publication, "Quest" (also available in print and on-line), gathers contributions from renowned UU ministers.

You can subscribe to our free podcasts at www.clfuu.org/podcasts, or listen to segments à la carte at www.clfuu.org/quest. The CLF Quest podcast has nearly 1,000 subscribers worldwide: join our community of listeners today! Visit the Church of the Larger Fellowship at www.clfuu.org.

Questions? Contact Beth Murray:
bmurray@clfu.org 617-948-6150

PSD Annual Conference 2009
Our Blue Boat Home:
Living the Seventh Principle



Living the Seventh Principle

April 3–5, 2009
Duluth, Minnesota
This year in scenic Duluth:

- We explore a broad spectrum of environmental and sustainability issues and their relationship to each and every one of us.
- The [Keynote Speaker](#) is a pioneer in sustainable agriculture.
- The [Judy Lecturer](#) wrote "Blue Boat Home", one of our favorite songs.
- We devote one of the traditional workshop sessions to a [Presidential Forum](#) on the candidates for the UUA Presidency.

Two pre-conference workshops are offered Friday on [Racial Equity](#) and [Environmental Justice](#).

Highlights

Keynote Speaker

Linda Barnes and Mark Runquist, stewards of **high hopes gardens**, LLC

Arthur M. Judy Lecturer

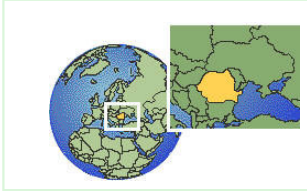
Peter Mayer, singer and songwriter

Saturday Night Entertainment

Sara Thomsen, singer and songwriter

<http://www.psdoua.org/AnnualConference2009/AnnualConference2009>

From Transylvania to Nora Church Krisztina Visits!



With great success, the Transylvania-Hanska project is here! Krisztina Pall from Benced, Transylvania arrived to Minnesota on

Thursday morning February 18, and spent almost a week here in the greater Nora community.

Krisztina is an active leader of her village. She is a community organizer, teacher, and is back in school getting another degree to help her in her work with local organizations. Krisztina is also president of the Ittre Bentid Foundation. With three telephones in the village, the foundation worked to create a "telecottage" – a center equipped with computers and internet connections for the villagers to use. The foundation is now working to bring computers into the homes of Benced residents. On Sunday, February 22, Krisztina gave the message at Nora. It focused on her local community efforts and reintroducing the Benced village and people to Nora Church.

We are so pleased to learn more about our global neighbors from Transylvania and to share our culture with Krisztina. She has been a delight to entertain! She has visited with community organization leaders, seen New Ulm sites and stores, participated in a UU and You service, visited other communities in Southern Minnesota, spent a day at the New Ulm Public School, and shared meals and adventures with Nora members and friends.

Krisztina says of her visit, "I've met a lot of kind people. The weather here is just like home – still cold in February! I hope that this renewed relationship will last for a long time and Nora Church will come next to Transylvania so we can show our hospitality."

Thank you so very much to all in the Nora Church Community for your care and interest in making this visit possible – both in financial support and social interactions with Krisztina. This was truly a community effort – and a wonderful connection to share.

Additional contributions (beyond the \$1000 collected at the 2/22 church service) can be made by writing a check to Nora Church and in the memo section of the check earmark it to the 'Partner Church' fund.

To Keep In Touch

♥♥♥

Best wishes to Melvin Mikkelson who is now a resident at the Luther Memorial Home in Madelia.

♥♥♥

Friends received word that Shirley Strom Nelson, daughter of the late Alvin and Myrtle Paulson Strom of Hanska, died February 17th in Daniell, California. Shirley battled her cancer with much courage and requested that no formal service be held in her memory. Her many friends and relatives from the Hanska area will grieve her passing but fond memories of Shirley will live on forever. She spent many happy days at Nora Church until her move to California and thought of it as her "family church".

♥♥♥

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

General Assembly, A Meeting of Congregations June 24-28, 2009 Salt Lake City, Utah

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. General Assemblies shall make overall policy for carrying out the purposes of the Association and shall direct and control its affairs. Voting at each regular and special General Assembly shall be by accredited delegates from certified member congregations, certified associate member organizations, and trustees.

[Salt Lake City](#) is an ideal place for us to meet.

[Registration & Housing](#) open March 2.

A wealth of great [programming](http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/programming/index.shtml) (<http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/programming/index.shtml>) is being sponsored by the General Assembly Planning Committee.

[UU University](#) has been incorporated into the GA schedule.

2009 is a [UUA presidential election](#) year.

This year's Assembly will vote to adopt a new Statement of Conscience, [Peacemaking](#).

We welcome Melissa Harris-Lacewell [2009 Ware Lecturer](#).

More information can be found on the UU Association of Congregations website at the underlined links.

<http://www.uua.org/index.shtml>

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

MARCH 2009

Parsonage: 507-439-6240

Dana's cell: 612-229-5907

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|--|-----|-----|---|
| 1 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service 11:30 AM BAKED POTATO BAR | 2  | 3 | 4 Spirituality Group at Southpoint Federal, NU - 6:30 PM | 5 | 6 | 7  <i>turn clocks ahead before you go to bed</i> |
| 8 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 UU & YOU Rhien River Arts Center 5:00 PM |
| 15 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service | 16 | 17  | 18 Spirituality Group at Southpoint Federal, NU - 6:30 PM | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 UU & YOU Rhien River Arts Center 5:00 PM |
| 29 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service | 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

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Muffy Rathman | Jerry & Susan Allen | Chris Bodick Lee Drogemuller |
| 8 Jordan Rathman | John & Anne Makepeace | Darrell & Jeanie Hinsman |
| 15 JoAnn Huss | Dave & Jeanne Wenk | Algot & Bonita Blomquist |
| 22 Sally Hanson | Diane Becken Kay Steffl | John & Julie Schmitt |
| 29 Muffy Rathman | Scott & Angie Kudelka | Gil & Sally Hansen |



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

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 Hanska, MN 56041

March 2009



EMAIL

norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

WEB SITE

<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

Nora Church Sunday Services MARCH 2009

Coffee Time 10:00 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM

March 1. *Family Systems 101: Its Application to Your Church Family.* Our primary relationships begin with our families. Yet, the make-up of our families change over time, requiring adaptation of all involved. Our relationships depend on how we relate to others. Yes, there are “tools” to make relationships work better.

March 8. *Trusting Your Truth:* We would like it if members and friends would share a “spiritual truth” resulting from their life experience. Leader: Colleen Tasto

March 15. *Assessing Human Nature: The Real Divide.* Human nature is a funny thing, but differing viewpoints of our nature create very different ways of operating in the world.

March 22. *World Religions: Ancient China.* Some have argued that China is one of the world’s oldest civilizations. Chinese thought has had a strong impact on Asia over the centuries and it is having a greater impact in the West more recently. This impact is essential to understand a significant branch of Buddhism.

March 29. To be Announced