



MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

December 2009

VIEW FROM THE HILL



I bought a delightful and unusual garland this past weekend at the Nora Church bake and craft sale. I can't wait to hang it on my Christmas tree. Soon it will take its place

among traditional Christmas bulbs, brightly colored Hmong ornaments, a couple graduation cap tassels, a pair of leather and fur boots from Alaska, fragile glass balls, delicate hardanger diamonds, and dozens of other figures in shapes and media from a pewter sled to a sequin studded satin ball, from an ice-skating Victorian lady to stars made from olive tree wood, ceramic, and stiff, glittery paper. Most are gifts accumulated through a lifetime of December birthdays. All trace back to particular moments in time, to treasured people in my life--a trip to Cooperstown and the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, my Bluebird days, my internship church, college friends, Mom, Dad, former congregants, secret Santas. This month my new garland will become my first Nora Church ornament.

When I go to shopping malls or fine restaurants or holiday parties in private homes this time of year I gaze upon perfectly coordinated theme trees with a mix of admiration and curiosity. Whether they're hung with all small wooden toys and twined with pop-corn and cranberry garland, or silver and blue balls, or gold stars and red lights, or devoid of all decoration except a sprinkling of twinkling white lights, I wonder about the creative impulse from which the theme emerges, and I wonder about the restraint the decorator has shown in sticking to that theme.

I'm curious because I can't stop adding more and more to my tree. The baubles given to me that are

intended to hang upon the branches of a Christmas tree, and as well, the things I happen upon and want to honor with a place amidst the greenery--like the graduation tassels. There is an undeniable beauty, and often simplicity, to theme trees, but in my mind the holidays themselves are like my tree.

Christmas, Yule, the Solstice--each layered upon earlier, more ancient holy times and observances. Each celebrated in unique and culturally specific ways in different places around the globe. And in this country celebrated as a showcase of all those myriad ways and places. Carols in French and Latin and Spanish. Father Christmas, Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, Pere Noel, la Befana. Yule logs. Mistletoe. Adventskalender. Paper chains. Santa Lucia. Christmas crackers. Los Posadas. Luminaria. Advent wreaths. Christmas trees. Christmas stockings. *The Nutcracker Suite*. *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

And the food, the food! Buche de Noel, wassail, lutefisk, lefse, oyster stew, pasta with squid sauce, cookies and milk, candy canes, fruit cake, eggnog, roast goose, springerle, herring, Pavlova, glogg, julekake, tamales....

We call these weeks soon upon us "the holidays", as if they were a unified whole but they are not. Falling on different days, different nights, each celebrated according to traditions whose origins may be long forgotten, each observed in ways unique not only among cultures but within cultures, as families mix and match and meld and create meaningful rites and rituals to suit their needs, desires, and whims, the holidays, these holy days sparkling in the deep darkness of this time of year here in the northern hemisphere offer many gifts, many delights, many tastes and sounds and wonders.

Continued...

Holiday observances in the Unitarian Universalist tradition are seldom elegant affairs, developing and expanding upon a single religious or creative theme. At Nora Church this season we'll offer an array of events as messy and varied as my Christmas tree--old familiar songs and stories, new words carrying ancient messages, longed for treats, unexpected surprises. It may not be breathtaking in its aesthetic presentation, but may it be, for each of you, a time of joy as brilliant as a star in the night sky, a time of awe as ancient as time and as young as a new born babe, and a time of love as pure and true and sweet as a ringing bell.

-Lisa

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

I would like to wish you all a happy holiday season! A time to get together with family and friends. Family situations can change from year to year, perhaps leaving someone away from normal contacts. We all have different definitions of family and perhaps we can extend our family to someone alone or in need. We can brighten someone's day (perhaps your own). -Scott

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

Guest at Your Table is an outreach program of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The funds received go towards promoting projects for clean water, food, and equality in third world countries. Participants may earn UUSC membership with membership-level contributions during Guest at Your Table.



UUSC membership rates are: \$40 - Individual
\$75 - Dual (2 adults) \$20 - Senior (65 and over)
\$10 - Youth/Student. Any amount is appreciated. If you choose to write a check, please make it payable to UUSC. Boxes or envelopes will be available beginning November 22nd., and will be due mid-January. Please keep an eye on the newsletter and order of service for final due date."

THANKS FROM THE BOARD

We want to thank Ron Peck for making our lives brighter and more energy efficient with the replacement of many old fixtures. Thanks also to everyone who worked, baked, made lefse and purchased goodies at our very successful bake sale. Special thanks to Anne and John Makepeace for the use of Rhein River.

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch will dine at the Downtown Holiday Inn in Mankato on Tuesday, December 15 at 11:30 AM. Come, join us!

CONGRATULATIONS

Julie Peck has been involved with the Merely Players Community Theatre in Mankato for many years. At a recent performance, Director Gretchen Etzell presented her with the Director's Award. It recognizes that Julie's "...Organization, Energy, Patience, and Incredible Unbounded Creativity Make Possible All Things Theatrical..." Congratulations Julie!

SMORG RECIPE REQUEST

Submitted by Shannon Weis

ORANGE-FROSTED CRANBERRY COOKIES

1 cup sugar 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 tsp grated orange peel
2 tbl orange juice 1 egg
2 1/2 cups flour 1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt 1/2 cup nuts (if desired)
2 cups cranberries, chopped (fresh or frozen)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

In large bowl, beat sugars, butter, orange peel, orange juice and egg.

Stir in flour, soda, salt. Stir in cranberries & nuts
Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheet.

Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until edges and bottoms are light golden brown. Remove to wire rack and cool completely (about 30 minutes)

Frost with ORANGE FROSTING:

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 tsp grated orange peel
2 to 3 tbl orange juice

SPIRITUALITY GROUP

The Spirituality group will meet on Wednesday, December 2 and Monday, December 21 at 6:30 PM. On the 21st we will participate in a Solstice ceremony. Please keep an eye on the weekly bulletin and/or email for locations.



In the Sprit of Christmas

**Saturday December 19th
7:00 PM
Nora UU Church**

Join us for an evening of
Christmas music
by Nora and area musicians.

Coffee and Christmas treats will be served.

If you are interested in participating call
Julie Sellner ~ 375-8737
Kristine Paulson ~ 439-6316

A Holiday Mixed Bag "Pink Pearls"

by "SISTERS"

Sunday, December 6, 4:00 PM
Nicollet High School Theater
(tickets available through Nicollet Public School
Main Office, 1 Pine Street, Nicollet. Call Tamara
(507) 232-3411 ext 4123 between 7:30 am -
4:00 pm M-F. or at Pro Growth Bank, Nicollet
or online at www.SisterProductions.com

The group, Sisters, are formerly known as "The
Norvald Sisters" in southern Minnesota.

A SPECIAL
Fair Trade Holiday Promotion
From UUSC

Buy delicious pecans and pecan candies from UUSC's partner,
Southern Alternatives Agricultural Co-operative (SAAC)!

Order Yours Today!
SAAC's delicious pecan candies make great holiday gifts

The holiday season will be here before we know it, and what better way to celebrate the joys of the season than by purchasing delicious pecan candies and fairly traded pecans from UUSC's partner, the Southern Alternatives Agricultural Co-operative (SAAC)?

Participating in this special holiday offer is easy! Simply send [your completed order forms](#), accompanied by cash, check, or credit card number, by mail to UUSC by **December 14, 2009 (postmark date if mailed)** if you'd like to receive your pecans by **December 24**. If you pay with a credit card, the form can be faxed back to us. (Sorry, orders cannot be accepted by phone or e-mail.)

To learn more about this and UUSC's other exciting Fair Trade partnerships, please visit www.uusc.org/coffeeproject.

Happy
Holidays!

To Keep In Touch

Norma Breu is at home recovery from orthopedic surgery on November 9th. She is doing well and members of Nora church wish the best.

Marylynn O'Reilly was recently hospitalized with pneumonia. She is back at Luther Memorial Home recuperating. We wish her the best.

She would like to hear from members of Nora Church, so please send greetings to her.

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

The following are excerpts from the newsletters we received from our friends at our partner church in Benced. The entire copy of the newsletters is available via Nora's website.

From the minister of Benced, Ildiko:

We renewed our church, and we were waiting to sit near together in our small white church the youngsters, our bishop, our church leaders, to show them how proud we are and that we love this land, our churches.



We saw our young and brave organize with hard work in Benced the Transylvanian Unitarian Youth Conference proving that even if we are less, if the aim is common we can be heard.

We opened the gates of many homes, on tables were bread, when 250 young were brought into our hearts and our community, with its hospitality, kindness, good food. We hope they will never forget Benced.

The newsletter of the Unitarian Church contains 4 articles about Benced, showing that in Benced is a builder, and a hard working community which loves God.

Visit of Project Harvest Hope in Benced

On 7th of September the former and the present president of Harvest Hope Foundation from USA and the representative in Transylvania Kelemen Eva, the wife of minister of Okland visited us, visiting the results of the project sponsored by them, too.

Our community shows them our realizations; we talked about our dreams, plans, too. Finally they visited the new toilet of the Culture House financed by them, too. They were really excited. The present president of the Harvest Hope Foundation, Will Saunders wrote us a letter:

*“Article for Pall Krisztina, Benced
September 23, 2009*

During the week of September 7, 2009, I was delighted and privileged to visit eight villages in Transylvania where Project Harvest Hope supports Local Development Agents who are functioning as community organizers in their villages. This was the first time that, as President of Project Harvest Hope, I had the opportunity to witness, to see first hand the work of our partnership with the Transylvanian Unitarian Church and CIVITAS: Foundation for Civil Society to renew civil society in the Unitarian homelands. It was also the first time that I had the opportunity to meet many of the wonderful peo-

ple who are working so hard to turn the hopes and dreams of our Transylvanian brothers and sisters into reality. During my visits, several impressions and observations were fixed in my mind:

- *I was struck by the way that each village was able to embrace its own identity and how each village was different from the others. I was pleased that each village seemed to be able to respond to its own unique needs.*
- *There are two parallel programs in each village. The first is a tangible project – renovation of a room, installation of a milk cooler, construction of a playground. The second is less clear and less tangible – the recovery of a dream, the joy of working collaboratively, an increased sense of hope in the future. In some villages, the intangible seemed primary; in others the tangible seemed primary. They worked together and reinforced each other. I came away with the distinct feeling that they are inextricably linked.*
- *I also observed that the familiar American dichotomy of religious and secular, church and community, is often false. In many of the villages I visited, there is no separation between the church and the community. So, for example, whereas the focus of our project is on “community organizing,” in truth, that means nothing less than “church organizing” for many of the LDA villages.*
- *In all the villages, the role of the minister was critical. In every case, the minister and the LDA worked “hand in glove.”*

With love and care,

Will Saunders, President Project Harvest Hope”

Congregation's News

We have finished our second project financed by the American Harvest Hope Unitarian- Universalist Foundation: inside men-women toilet implementation in the culture house. We received sponsorship from Siménfalva's Local Council also, thanks for both contribution.

This time our church welcome the guests, spoke about great success, and our community's achieved acts. Finally we took a look at the achieved projects. The sponsors were fully satisfied with it's construction.

We started to get ready for the elders' festivity among the children with religion class.

Thanks for all persons, who get Lord's Supper at Thanksgiving Day. We were in the Church more than 170.

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2009

Parsonage: 507-439-6240



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Spirituality group in New Ulm- 6:30	3	4	5
6 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service POTLUCK	7	8	9 	10 	11 	12
13 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	14	15 Lunch Bunch - Downtown Holiday Inn, Mankato	16	17	18	19 7 PM - an Evening of Christmas music at Nora
20 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service	21 Spirituality group in New Ulm- 6:30	22	23	24 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26
27 No Service	28	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
6	Jordan Rathman	Norma & Roger Breu Ellen Byro	Jerry & Susan Allen
13	Sally Hanson	Julie Sellner, Susan Evers	Gil & Sally Hanson
20	JoAnn Huss	Scott & Angie Becker Kudelke	Clayton & Shirley Olson
24	Ryann Rathman	CHRISTMAS EVE Wally & Beverly Wellman	Alon & Carol Chambard
27		NO SERVICE	



PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Lisa will have Mondays off.
Friday will be sermon writing day.
She can be reached on her cell when not in the office:
507-766-5682



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

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Happy Holidays!



EMAIL
norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

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

Nora Church Sunday Services DECEMBER 2009

Coffee 10:00 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

Dec 6 ~ "Even Unto Us"

Dec 13 ~ "Not a Jewish Christmas; Not a UU Holiday"

Dec 20 ~ "...in thy dark streets shineth"

Dec 24 ~ 5:30 PM Candle Lighting Service with Reading and Carols

Dec 27 ~ No service per Nora Church "tradition."

