



# MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

APRIL 2010

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## A VIEW FROM THE HILL

*Passover and Easter are the only Jewish and Christian holidays that move in sync, like the ice skating pairs we saw during the winter Olympics. (Martin Olasky)*

I like the image of Passover and Easter as a figure skating pair—the grace and movement and relationship that implies. The dates of each are determined according to two different calendars, the Gregorian for Easter and the Hebrew for Passover—and because of the different calendars and some decisions made long ago about standardizing the Gregorian calendar, there is no longer a strict, one-follows-the-other, correlation between them. But in origin and religious significance they are bound together. Easter being the day of Jesus' resurrection on the third day after his crucifixion, which followed the Last Supper, which was in fact a Passover Seder!

Jews celebrate freedom now in these waning days of March, dawning days of April. Christians celebrate resurrection and the life everlasting this month. Environmentalists, school children and just plain folks celebrate Earth Day. And Unitarian Universalists dabble in all three. With mixed emotions—uncertainty, eagerness, reluctance, joy, obligation—we recreate family traditions, experiment with new rituals, attend festivals, and wonder what meaning any of it (except perhaps Earth Day) holds for modern religious liberals.

I urge you, this year, to set aside the wondering, to abandon the disavowal of miracle, to silence the rigorous questioning of facts, to rest from the strident distinction between belief and rational understanding. This spring enter Easter, Passover, Earth Day with your heart more than your mind. Take stock of your freedoms and rejoice. Recall the rebirths you have known and rejoice. Walk along the river, through the woods, across your backyard and rejoice.

These gifts—freedom, rebirth, this glorious earth—aren't the exclusive property of one religious tradition or social movement or another. They are blessings that come into all lives, often in disguise. Freedom from repressive attitudes and expectations of the past. Rebirth into a life of sobriety or an embrace of true sexual orientation. Freedom from damaging relationships, or outdated beliefs. Rebirth into parenthood, or a new career, or widowhood. And the earth—well, it's ours. Our birthright. Right outside the door, just beyond the window. Ours to savor and ours to save.

May you find abundant cause to join the chorus. Hallelujah!

Lisa



## NEW BOARD MEMEBERS

At a congregational meeting on February 28, 2010, two new board members were elected. We welcome Joy Rathman and Karen Farrell. Each will serve a three year term. Please welcome and encourage them as they serve you.

A special thanks to Julie Sellner and Sheldon Rieke who have each given their time and talents for the past six years.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

At our April meeting we will be going over the Nora church budget. If any one has concerns please contact a board member.

- Thank You. Scott Schmiesing

## LUNCH BUNCH



The gourmets of Lunch Bunch will meet Thursday, April 15, 11:30 a.m., at May's Kitchen, 136 W. Main St., Sleepy Eye. Come and give yourself a treat after filing your income taxes.

## THANKS FROM THE BOARD

Thanks from the Board this month goes to the Social Justice committee and the other people who worked so hard doing all the legwork on the wind energy project. It has taken a lot of hours and energy to get us to this point and we are all grateful and more knowledgeable because of your effort.

## EASTER BREAKFAST

There will be an Easter breakfast at 9:30 on Easter Sunday. We are looking for people to make egg bakes, provide fruit, pastries and beverages.



If you are interested in providing food for the breakfast or helping with serving, please contact Anne and Sheldon at 507-354-7832 or [shrieke@newulmtel.net](mailto:shrieke@newulmtel.net). Any help will greatly be appreciated. Thank you.

## LET'S DO IT AGAIN!

Reverend Lisa invites kids of all ages to join her at church for Earth Day crafts, activities and treats on Saturday, April 17, from 1-4. Wear grubby clothes and prepare to get messy! Please let Lisa know by Thursday, April 15 if you plan to participate.



## SPIRITUALITY GROUP

A spirituality group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesday in New Ulm at approximately 6:30 p.m. The location of the gathering varies from meeting to meeting. We'll try to keep you updated in the Sunday service program about our topics and meeting locations. If you have questions or would like to meet with us, please feel free to talk with Anne Rieke, Colleen Tasto, Vicki Sieve, Nancy Brudelic, Kristine Paulson or Nancy Dickson and we will give the most current information.

## CLEAN ENERGY, A PRIORITY CHURCH MEMBERS VOTE TO EXPLORE WIND PRODUCTION ON MOUNT PISQUA

After a year's study of Nora's alternative energy choices, the Social Justice committee prepared its report and asked the Nora Church Board to call a congregational meeting. At the Feb. 28 meeting the question was raised as to whether members wished to begin exploration of building a wind turbine on church property. The vote was 29 to 7 favorable. This follows the congregation voting at the July '09 annual meeting to commission an alternative energy study. Industry leader, Energy Concepts was retained to study the feasibility of either solar or wind production at our site. The "Solar and Wind Site Assessment Report" and the "Wind Assessment Report Summary" is available on our church web site <http://nora-uu-church.org> under the newsletter link. Additionally the Social justice Committee's recommendation, "Nora Clean Energy Report" can be seen. This discusses the pros and cons of geo-thermal, solar and wind and why we have a superior site for wind production.

There are several hurdles to clear before the congregation can vote for actual construction. Those include the location of the wind tower. We need a county permit including a variance for height and

set back requirements. A survey has been requested as part of the application process.

Another hurdle is financing. If we start construction in 2010, credits and grants are available through Federal Stimulus funds to either a major donor(s) or to a corporation established by the church for the purpose of making the project more feasible. Grants are being explored that could shorten the payback period which have the potential to reduce the cost to half. ***We are interested in discussing the 30% tax credit with any individual(s) wanting to invest in this project. Smaller donations are also welcomed.***

Most recent contacts of the committee have been with county zoning, neighbors, a grant writer of Region 9 as well as others on their staff, Alliant En-

ergy, a wind turbine manufacturer, and vendors who specialize in the construction of wind projects, among others.

"Reducing our carbon foot print and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels is a worth while goal." A turbine that produces electricity wouldn't necessarily reduce foreign oil but it would reduce the need for coal. It will be a major effort to have this project be successful, but church members and the committee are excited by the possibilities. We would like to keep you informed and be available to provide information and offer updates. Feel free to contact Clean Energy Committee Members Karen Farrell 507-834-6917, Mark Wiger 612-799-9224, Claud Monro 310-906-0298 or Darrell Hinsman 507-359-7494.

### WHAT'S COOKING?

Submitted by Wendy Monro

After spending most of my life in Southern California where there is never a sign of winter, I know for certain that spring is magical when you have experienced the long cold months preceding. The anticipation of green grass, leaves sprouting from branches, buds blooming, geese returning, and rivers flowing is thrilling.

"And Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
rose from the dreams of its wintry rest".  
~Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Sensitive Plant"

A change in seasons brings an adjustment in the food we eat. It's time to lighten up what we put into our bodies and hopefully, in turn, lighten up our bodies as well. Let's make salads, eat more fruits and vegetables, and drink lots of wine (I mean water). So, here is a nice easy recipe for polenta and vegetables to get us started.

#### **A tower of polenta with vegetables and a creamy tomato coulis:**

You can really make a meal magical by adding a coulis. A Coulis is a form of thick sauce used from strained or pureed fruits and vegetables. Here, it provides the foundation on which the polenta and vegetables rest. Once you break into the tower and everything falls in the sauce, the result will fill your mouth with flavor.

Creamy tomato coulis:

- 3 C. tomato sauce
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 Tbsp. Sriracha hot chili sauce
- ½ bottle beer

½ tsp. thyme

2 Tbsp. cream cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

In a sauce pan, combine the tomato sauce and paste with the chili sauce. Mix well over medium heat. Add the beer and thyme. Simmer for ten minutes. Add the cream cheese and mix. Add salt and pepper to taste. Form a layer on the bottom of the plate with this sauce.

Polenta and vegetable tower:

4 wooden skewers

1 package of polenta (in a tube), sliced

Tomatoes, sliced in half

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 C. mushrooms, sliced

1 C. onions, sliced

1 C. celery, chopped

1 C. peppers, sliced

4 slices of cheddar cheese.

A few sprigs of parsley



Grill the polenta for about ten minutes each side. Grill the tomatoes for ten minutes. In a sauce pan, over medium heat, pour in the olive oil. Sauté all of the vegetables until the onions become clear. Place four slices of cheese on four slices of polenta to melt.

Place one slice of polenta on the sauce. Layer on the vegetables. Place another layer of polenta (with the cheese on top). Top that with a tomato half. Add another layer of vegetables. You will want to place the skewer into these to keep them from falling down. Add another polenta and you are finished. You can add a sprig of parsley on top to make it pretty.



## **A Sampling of Upcoming Online Courses**

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

### **Welcome In: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism and the Church of the Larger Fellowship (on-going)**

Welcome to this program for new Unitarian Universalists. You can move through the sessions at your own pace. This online class is intended for people who would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, the CLF, and how their own spiritual journey might connect with our organization and faith tradition. For each session there are readings, as well as a variety of other resources such as links to relevant web sites. Once you have explored the readings and resources you will be able to answer the questions which will guide our discussion. Free!

### **In Our Mothers' Footsteps (on-going)**

This course shares information about important women from our Unitarian and/or Universalist heritage, but more than that, it offers the opportunity for modern women and men to reflect on how our own lives connect with those of our foremothers, and what we might have to learn from their struggles and successes. The course is divided into five sessions: Suffragists, Abolitionists, Writers, Educators and Ministers. This free course is made possible by the CLF through a generous grant from the UU Women's Federation. Free!

### **A UU Approach to the Bible Taught by John Nichols: April 4, 2010 - May 30, 2010**

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

### **Action and Reflection: Living Our Seven Principles Taught by Rob Moore: May 1, 2010 - June 19, 2010**

In this class we will take one or more readings per week representing each principle as a starting point for open discussion to try to appreciate and reflect on our 7 Principles in new and fresh ways. Then toward the second half of each week we will discuss concrete and practical actions which we can take to bring each principle to our home lives, our work lives and/or other areas of our lives. All participants will be teachers and learners together! So come with your ideas and an open heart for the ideas of others. \$40

### **Meet the Universalists Taught by Rosemarie Smurzynski: May 9, 2010 - June 20, 2010**



This six week class asks the questions: Who are our Universalist ancestors and why do they matter? The first week will be an historic overview of that branch of our faith, exploring its threads as Universalism moved to merger with the Unitarians in 1961. The next four weeks will explore the lives of four 19th century Universalists whose passion responded to the sociological and/or political issues of their day, and awake our passions to address current issues of our day. The last session will be a sharing of participants' perspectives on a Universalist of their choice whose life carries a message for our time and inspires us in addressing pressing needs in today's world. \$40

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

# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## APRIL 2010

Parsonage: 507-439-6240  
 Lisa's Cell: 507-766-5682

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 <b>EASTER</b> 9:00 Choir 9:30 Easter Breakfast 10:30 AM Service	5	6	7 6:30 pm Spirituality Group	8	9	10
11 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service	12	13	14	15 Lunch Bunch @ 11:30- May's Kitchen, Sleepy Eye	16	17 Earth Day Crafts & Fun with Lisa
18 9:00 Choir 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	19	20	21 6:30 pm Spirituality Group	22	23	24
25 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	26	27	28	29	30	

**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 **-Caring Committee**

**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
4 Jordan Rathman	Sheldon & Anne Rieke	Angie & Scott Beckler Kudelke
11 Muffy Rathman	Jason & Kate Monnens	Kristi Paulson
18 JoAnn Huss	Wayne & Janet Johnson	Ellen Byro
25 Sally Hanson	Julie Sellner & Susan Evers	Doug Anderson



**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



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

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April 2010



EMAIL

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

WEB SITE

<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

## Nora Church Sunday Services APRIL 2010

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

April 4: "Not in the Tomb"

April 11: "Snips and Snails and Puppy Dog Tails"

April 18: "Budget Barbie and We'll Get By Will"

April 25: "To Live Deliberately" guest, Rev. Jane Esbensen -

Being a Unitarian Universalist is no small thing, but a great privilege and responsibility to ourselves, to each other and to the world. But who are we? In this communal service, Rev. Jane Esbensen, will speak a bit about her religious background and what she brings to UUism, and she invites each and every one of you to come prepared to speak briefly about your religious background and what you bring here, as well. We are all in this together, this religious journey. What a great legacy to be able to carry forward. Rev. Esbensen was ordained in 1996 and served several congregations in Minnesota and Northern Wisconsin, as well as serving as a full-time hospital chaplain. Her experience is varied; most recently she lived in Sweden teaching English and Comparative Literature. While there, she also worked with the latest wave of refugees and immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia, helping them transition to their new life in Sweden. Jane currently lives on the east side of Madison and is a member of the First Unitarian Society. Describing herself as a Humanist, Rev. Esbensen focuses on the "goodness of humanity and the potential for growth that lies within us all."