



# MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

March 2011

## A VIEW FROM THE HILL



Ah, March. Shamrock shakes. Corned beef and cabbage. Pots of leprechaun gold at the end of rainbows.

You, the congregation of Nora Unitarian Universalist Church, and I, the candidate minister, will follow a rainbow at the end of this month, from March 27 to April 3. And the pot of gold we'll be seeking is a formal affirmation of the new relationship we desire. After the service on Sunday, April 3 you will vote whether or not to call me as your next settled minister.

We've been together now for a year and a half, and getting along swimmingly. It's hard to remember sometimes that this is a temporary arrangement. Our current agreement calls for me to serve two years as your consulting minister. It was, to be clear, something of a compromise. Nora Church wanted a settled minister but a search, conducted by your dedicated search committee, failed to find a suitable candidate. I was eager to serve a congregation in Minnesota, but reluctant to commit to a rural setting.

As compromises go this has been a good one. I've been both professionally challenged and personally content. And in a series of cottage meetings last fall you indicated your desire for our ministry together to continue. Which brings us to this spring's candidating week.

An article elsewhere in this newsletter provides a schedule of events for the week along with an excellent explanation of the purpose behind our candidate week. I'm aware that some of you are wondering why we are engaging in what seems a mere formality. The way I see it, we can view this week as a hoop to be jumped through or as an opportunity to set the stage for a long and fruitful ministry. Since we have already had a significant amount of time together, joys and sorrows and lots of ordinary times in between, candidate week is our chance to look toward to the future.

Please read the candidating week article carefully and put the events on your calendar. If we're to find that pot of gold on April 3, we'll need everyone to follow the rainbow--forthright in airing concerns and bold in envisioning a vibrant future for Nora Church. I look forward to our adventure together.

-Lisa





**Top o' the day** to all Lunch Bunchers. Our next gathering will be on St. Patrick's Day, Thursday, March 17, at 11:30 a.m. at George's Restaurant, 301 N. Minnesota St., New Ulm. Wearing o' the green is optional.

### NOTES FROM THE BOARD

During the winter hibernating months, Tracey and I tend to watch more TV than at any other time of the year. The fight for control of the remote is always on our minds. One of Tracey's favorite shows is House Hunters-where buyers narrow three choices down to one and finally make an offer on their favorite.

Here at nora, we have found a favorite reverend and now through candidating week, we have a chance to seal the deal. With a few meetings from March 27th to April 3rd, Rev. Lisa and Nora congregation will have opportunities to visit on several different topics. I would encourage all to check the schedule in this months news letter and attend any or all of these gatherings that are of interest to you. A congregational meeting after the service on April 3rd will be held to seal the deal!!! Thanks -Scott

### THANKS FROM THE BOARD

Thanks from the Board this month goes to all of the people who brought salads, cakes, worked in the kitchen and made sure the church and parking lot were in good shape for Muriel Thordson's funeral. It's always hard to say good bye to one of our own, so in this small way we extend the fellowship of Nora to her family and friends.

### HEAR IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

In an effort to improve church communications we're setting up a new e-mail mailing list. Our Mere Lys (newsletter) e-mail goes to district staff, our friends in Benced, visitors, other churches and assorted interested groups and individuals, most of whom do not need or wish to be informed of memorial services, weather related cancelations, newly scheduled events, last minute meetings or pastoral concerns. If you DO wish to receive such announcements and reminders please send an e-mail to [norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net) with "add me to the grapevine" in the subject line.

And, as long as we are improving communication, if your newsletter e-mail isn't reaching the address you prefer, please send updated information to the same address.

### GUEST ON MARCH 20TH

"Hungry for Change: Ethical Eating for Everyone"

We have, most of us at least, three "votes" a day to change our unsustainable food system. We can be the courageous and powerful people that make necessary changes when a system no longer serves us or our planet. Transforming our food system from a wasteful, polluting system to something sustainable is work we all can participate in.

Lisa A. Coons  
Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry  
170 Good Counsel Dr., Mankato, MN 56001



### To Keep In Touch



Our sincere sympathy to the family of Muriel Thordson. Muriel passed away on February 6th. A memorial service was held at Nora Church on February 12th. Muriel was a life time member of Nora 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**

## SAVE THE DATES!! A TIME FOR VOWS



In the process of calling a settled minister candidating week is often described as a “courtship”. It is usually the first meet-up between an interested minister and a congregation. All participants put their best faces on. They hope to “wow” each other during a carefully designed selection process. The church wants the minister to see energetic, committed members, a welcoming physical setting, an intriguing surrounding community to live in, an opportunity for spiritual growth. The minister hopes the congregation will see a warm and caring disposition, intellectual capacity, strong communication, inspiring leadership. As Nora Church prepares for candidating week we find ourselves in a different place than “courting”. Lisa already has a good picture of our talents and flaws, the ebb and flow of our energies, our history and concern for the future. We aren’t in a position of “wowing” each other, so are we ready for the vows?

What does candidating mean for us? The obvious is that on April 3 there will be a congregational meeting to take official action to call a settled minister. We have had the good fortune of getting to know Lisa for eighteen months. We’ve taken steps to prepare for candidating. We did a paper/pencil survey at the end of the first year together. It gave us the chance to see if any big or little issues lay unspoken. Growth, religious ed, and outreach to shut-ins were brought up as areas of concern. Cottage meetings were held last fall. Members in face to face dialogue shared their ideas, hopes and dreams for church life. Increasing financial concerns became apparent. We know the future for rural churches is precarious. During the eighteen months that Lisa has been here, she has already shown us what she has to offer. We know her preaching abilities, her intellectual capacity, her communication style, her relationship building skills. We have two upcoming opportunities to just be together, to enjoy each others company, share a story, tell an old joke, have a laugh. There will be circle get-togethers in small groups Mar. 11 –13 and an evening for card playing and board games for all ages at the end of the month.

One of the cherished traditions of the UUA is the freedom congregations have in calling their minister. This freedom gives us choice and a responsibility to act with intentionality. We do not get to this step by chance or accident but by demonstrating that we honor and care for the relationship between minister and congregation. As we approach candidating week we have the unusual opportunity to go deeper in our relationship with Lisa. It’s not the getting to know you dance that we are stepping through. This is our opportunity to acknowledge the strengths and the talents as well as the flaws and the blemishes and decide how we can build a future together. Now, together with Lisa, we can say “This is how I see it. This is what I bring to the relationship. This is where we can go together.”

Candidating week will have events scheduled for particular focus areas. Please see the schedule posted in this newsletter. We will talk about the specifics of finances, budgets and pledges, about membership and program and R. E. Lisa will share views from her perspective. We will share our views. We will come together to be honest, direct, forthright and loving. We will come together to secure as best we can the future of Nora Church. Save the dates, mark your calendars, and let’s see if we’re ready for the vows.

### Candidating Week Schedule:

**Sunday, March 27:** Lisa preaches.  
Negotiations Team meets with Lisa.

**Tuesday, March 29:**  
6:00 p.m. - Board meets with Lisa  
7:00 p.m. - *Focus group—Church budget and finances. What does the future hold?*  
Fellowship Hall, open to all members.

**Thursday, March 31:** 7:00 p.m. *Focus group—Membership, programming and R.E., Time, talent and treasures, we all have something to share.*  
Fellowship Hall, open to all members.

**Friday, April 1:** 7:00 p.m. *Social gathering - Time to play the fool. Let’s have some fun.*  
Fellowship Hall. Members, friends and guests.  
Please bring snack items/beverages to share.  
Games and card playing for all ages.

**Sunday, April 3:** Congregational meeting after the service with potluck following.

Candidating Week is preceded by circle get togethers March 11 thru 13.

If you have not signed up and wish to do so, please contact Diane Becken or Julie Sellner.  
Any questions about candidating events can be directed to Scott Schmiesing or Jeanie Hinsman.

## FORREST GUMP GOES TO HEAVEN

The day finally arrived. Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven. He is at the Pearly Gates, met by St. Peter himself. However, the gates are closed, and Forrest approaches the gatekeeper.

St. Peter said, 'Well, Forrest, it is certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must tell you, though, that the place is filling up fast, and we have been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The test is short, but you have to pass it before you can get into Heaven.'

Forrest responds, 'It sure is good to be here, St. Peter, sir. But nobody ever told me about any entrance exam. I sure hope that the test ain't too hard. Life was a big enough test as it was.'

St. Peter continued, 'Yes, I know, Forrest, but the test is only three questions.'

First:  
What two days of the week begin with the letter T?

Second:  
How many seconds are there in a year?

Third:  
What is God's first name?

Forrest leaves to think the questions over. He returns the next day and sees St. Peter, who waves him up, and says, 'Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers.'

Forrest replied, 'Well, the first one -- which two days in the week begins with the letter 'T'? Shucks, that one is easy.... That would be Today and Tomorrow..'

The Saint's eyes opened wide and he exclaimed, 'Forrest, that is not what I was thinking, but you do have a point, and I guess I did not specify, so I will give you credit for that answer..'

How about the next one?' asked St. Peter. 'How many seconds in a year? Now that one is harder,' replied Forrest, 'but I think and think about that, and I guess the only answer can be twelve.'

Astounded, St. Peter said, 'Twelve? Twelve? Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year?'

Forrest replied, 'Shucks, there's got to be twelve: January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd....'

'Hold it,' interrupts St. Peter. 'I see where you are going with this, and I see your point, though that was not quite what I had in mind....but I will have to give you credit for that one, too. Let us go on with the third and final question. Can you tell me God's first name?'

'Sure,' Forrest replied, 'it's Andy.'

'Andy?' exclaimed an exasperated and frustrated St. Peter. 'Ok, I can understand how you came up with your answers to my first two questions, but just how in the world did you come up with the name Andy as the first name of God?'

'Shucks, that was the easiest one of all,' Forrest replied. 'I learnt it from the song,

ANDY WALKS WITH ME,  
ANDY TALKS WITH ME,  
ANDY TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN.'

St. Peter opened the Pearly Gates, and said: 'Run, Forrest, Run.'

*Give me a sense of humor.  
Give me the ability to understand a clean joke.  
To get some humor out of life.  
And to pass it on to other folks !*



# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## MARCH 2011

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service 11:30 Pot Luck	7	8	9	10	11	12  <i>turn clocks ahead before you go to bed</i>
13 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	14	15	16	17 LUNCH BUNCH @ George's New Ulm 	18	19
20 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	21 	22	23	24	25	26
27 10:00 AM Coffee Time 10:30 AM Service	28	29	30	31		
<b>CANDIDATING WEEK March 27—April 3 - see schedule in newsletter</b>						

**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 Muffy Rathman	Warren & Kristine Paulson	Vicki Sieve
13 Jordan Rathman	Norma & Roger Breu	Colleen Tasto
20 JoAnn Huss	Ron & Julie Peck	Edith Beckius
27 Mimi Kamleiter	Lee & Lynn Schmitt	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:  
 507-766-5682





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

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

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

## Nora Church Sunday Services

### MARCH 2011

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

**March 6** ~ "Feeling Good or Doing Good"

**March 13** ~ "Why Give Up?"

**March 20** ~ "Hungry for change: Ethical Eating for Everyone"  
guest, Lisa Coons of the Center for Earth Spirituality and  
Rural Ministry

**March 27** ~ "The Beginning of the Rainbow"

