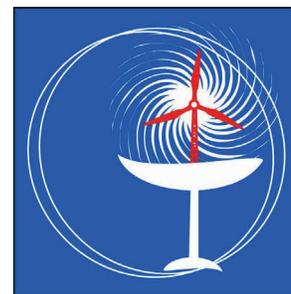


NERE LYS

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Hanska, MN

December 2014 Newsletter



## A VIEW FROM THE HILL

A random bit of advice (I have no idea where I read it or who offered it) to ministers preparing for the Christmas season keeps looping through my mind: “Just remember no one in the story was white.” I don’t describe or even mention race or skin color in my retelling of the Nativity story, but I was Mary in my church’s pageant, when I was a senior in high school—a very white, very fair, very Minnesotan Mary. So that reminder hits close to home in a way the smug and/or amusing reminders that Christmas is the pagan holiday on which we celebrate of the birth of a Middle Eastern Jew don’t quite do.

We get so much of the Nativity story “wrong”, if we are concerned with historical accuracy—or even likelihood. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. The probable season of Jesus’ birth. The conflation of the birth narrative and the visit of the magi. The census. The star. The animals (maybe even talking animals, on that night and that night alone). And of course, countless depictions of non-Middle Eastern Holy Families in countless paintings, pageants, drawing, cartoons, needlepoint canvases, and Christmas cards through the ages.

We get so much of the Nativity story wrong, some will argue, that to pay attention to issues of race at Christmas is nothing more than misguided political correctness that will distract from the meaning of the season. I’m not interested in political correctness or even simple historical accuracy, however.

In times such as this, when so many are so ready to demonize the other, to fear the stranger, to distrust any overt gesture of deep faith (other than mainstream Protestantism or North American Catholicism)—in times such as this, it matters which parts of the story (**any** story) we choose to get right and which ones we consider too insignificant or inconsequential to be bothered with.

If we’re going to *sing peace on earth, to all good will*, we’d do well to intentionally expand our vision of *all*, and make manifest our smallest, most vital every day acts of *peace*. If we’re going to sing, *son (child) of God, love’s pure light*, we’d do well to remember all the hues and shapes and genders and ages and nationalities of *love*. If we’re going to sing, *the hopes and fears of the all the years are met in thee tonight*, we’d do well to remember that though our circumstances and situations are many and very different one from another, still our hopes—for peace, health, security, education, love, freedom—and fears—of war, violence, loneliness, oppression—are few and very similar.

If we’re going to celebrate this mishmash of a pagan holiday celebrating the birth of a Middle Eastern Jew who would become the central figure of Christianity after his death, let us do so with messy and expansive joy, with courageous cheer, with deep and prayerful good will toward all.



### Services

Coffee 10:00 am

Worship 10:30 am

~

December 7th

*“A Clear Sunday Morning”*

December 14th

*“And So the Children Come”*

December 21st

*“Each In Their Own Ways”*

December 24th

*Candle Lighting Service ~ 5:30 PM*

December 28th

*Winter Break  
No Service*

-Lisa

### *A Note From the Treasurer*

#### **Monthly Income and Expenses**

At the suggestion of the Nora Church Board of Trustees, Sunday plate collections and total monthly expenses are listed for the full month prior to the *publication* of the newsletter. Totals indicated do not include special collections or memorial gifts.

#### October:

Income:       \$ 9,163.25  
(not including memorials and gifts)

Expenses:     \$ 6,771.17

This does not include the floor refurbishing or the tree trimming, as we have not been billed for these yet.

*Thank You!*

#### **Thanks from the board...**

...to Gil Hanson for helping with getting the new computer.

...to all who helped with the Wurtz memorial service.

#### *Nora Church Board Meeting*

The next Nora Board meeting will be Sunday, December 14th, following the service.

#### *Lunch Bunch for December*

The hardy Lunch Bunchers who made it to St. Peter for the November gathering picked Thursday, December 11th at 11:30 a.m., for the December holiday special.

Martin Luther College cafeteria was selected for the location, but it turns out that day is the college's special Christmas lunch! Fearing that it might be very crowded, the Executive Committee decided to change the location to Turner Hall in New Ulm, same date and time, and save MLC for a later date. Hope this meets with your approval and that we'll see you there.

## **Celebrating Lisa Doege**

Gathering in celebration of Lisa's 20<sup>th</sup> year of ministry and her birthday!

Nora Church congregation members and friends are invited to gather following service Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am.

A soup and salad meal will be served, then youth will decorate the Christmas tree & three adult contestants will play a "Nora Church Jeopardy" game in the fellowship hall. From there we will move to the sanctuary where a half hour of holiday music will fill the air, until cake and ice cream are served at 2:00 pm.



#### *January Mere Lys*

Newsletter delivery turns electronic in January! The Mere Lys will be available on the Nora website and a PDF copy will be sent out by email to those who have requested E-News. Hard copies will continue to be mailed to those who specified first class delivery. Thank you for helping us to phase out bulk mailing! If you have any questions about your delivery please email the office.

#### *Nora Adult R.E.*

We are taking December off and will resume in January!

#### *Inclement Weather*

In case of Sunday morning inclement weather the decision to cancel church service will be made no later than 8:00 a.m. At that time a Grapevine will be sent out, an announcement will be posted on the Nora website and Nora Facebook page, and the cancellation notice will be sent to KNUJ and KTOE.

When church is not cancelled, you are responsible for your own safety. We love to see everyone at church but we would rather know every one is safe. Please do not drive to church when road conditions, high winds or frigid temperature feel **unsafe to you.** We'll see you the next Sunday, or the next month or in April!!

### *Pastor Lisa's Schedule*

Pastor Lisa has Mondays off.  
Friday is sermon writing day.  
She can be reached on her cell when not in the office:  
507-766-7822.



### *Christmas Eve Service Gathering*

Following the Christmas Eve Service there will be a wonderful social gathering in the Fellowship Hall. Let us be warmed by the gathering of our community. Please bring Christmas goodies, or other snacks, to share. Coffee and hot cider will be provided.

### *December Religious Education*

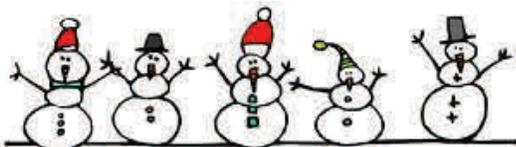
Greetings From Sunday School/Religious Education!

We are having a great time learning about Symbols of faith in our year of religious symbolism. In November we learned about the Mezuzah, the Tallit and the Shofar. In December we will begin an 8-week unit (2 week break in December) on Christianity. This will coincide with our winter holiday celebrations at Nora.

I hope to see everyone!

Important dates to remember: No RE on Sunday December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and Jan 4<sup>th</sup> of 2015.

As always, Love and Peace- Ms. Jennie



### *Notes from the Nora Office...*

**January Newsletter Articles and Information are due by December 16th.**

**Weekly Order of Service Content is due Thursdays at noon.**

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

Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant

***In the office Tuesdays and Fridays.***

If you know of anyone needing our assistance Or attention...please call one of the **Caring Committee** members: Georgine Tepley (chair) 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm), Shirley Olson - 354-1866, or Carol Chambard - 354-2242

### *2014-2015 Server/Greeter/Usher Partner List: January-June*

If your name **is not** on this list and you would like to participate, please call Susan Allen 359-2856. If your name **is** on this list and you are not able to help, please call someone on the list and try to arrange a switch. **ATTENTION PARTNERS:** Please communicate with each other regarding food provision.

#### **January**

11—Susan & Jerry Allen, Colleen Hokenson  
18—Mimi Kamleiter, Scott & Tracey Schmiesing  
25—Shirley Olson, Louise Guggisberg, Janet Rosenbloom

#### **February**

1—Potluck—Kristine & Warren Paulson, Kristy Paulson, Scott Chambard  
8—Kate & Jason Monnens, Mimi Kamleiter  
15—Karen Farrell, Julie & Ron Peck  
22—Georgine & Gene Tepley, Nancy Brudelie

#### **March**

1—Potluck—Carol & Alan Chambard, Janet Rosenbloom, Scott Chambard  
8—John & Julie Schmitt, Susan Evers  
15—Lynn & Lee Schmitt, Jeremy Schmitt  
22—Tracey & Scott Schmiesing, Julie Sellner  
29—Norma & Roger Breu, Michelle Bethke

#### **April**

5—Easter—Colleen Hokenson, Diane Becken, Edith Beckius, Christina Schmitt  
12—Kristine & Warren Paulson, Jordan Kuelbs  
19—Nita Gilbert, Kate & Jason Monnens  
26—Joy Rathman, Wayne Johnson, Ellen Byro

#### **May**

3—Potluck—Susan & Jerry Allen, Diane Becken, Pat Kunerth  
10—Edith Beckius, Shirley Olson, Louise Guggisberg  
17—Syttende Mai—Wayne Johnson- Nancy Brudelie, Kristy Paulson, Scott Chambard  
24—Peter & Katy Hemberger, Nita Gilbert  
31—Ardis & Elroy Wellman, Jordan Kuelbs

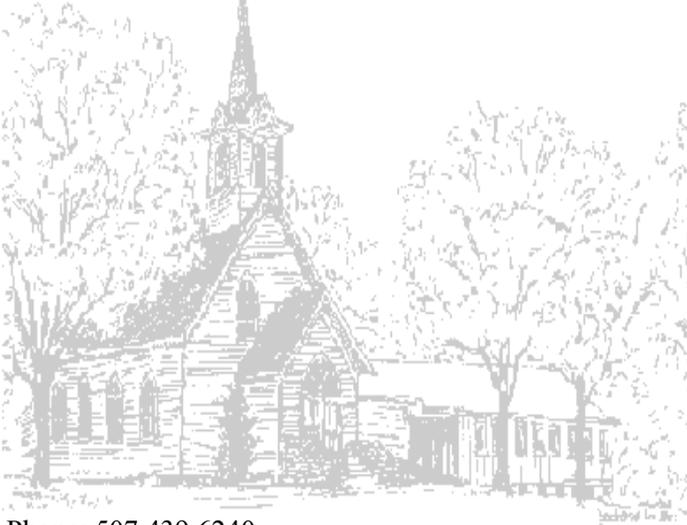
#### **June**

7—Potluck—\_Beverly & Wallace Wellman, Shannon Weiss, Christina Schmitt  
14—Jeanie & Darrell Hinsman, Colleen Hokenson  
21—Picnic at Lake Hanksa—Sally & Gil Hansen, Julie Sellner

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 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU](http://www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU)

***Caring Committee: Reaching Out***

Hello! We would like a couple of volunteers to visit our members in nursing homes, or otherwise unable to make it to church. We ask that you bring a Christmas plant, which you will be reimbursed for. It is a nice way to let them know we haven't forgotten them, and they really do enjoy a little visit. I will have a list of people we should visit. Please contact Georgine if interested. Phone: 507-359-3060. *It is easier to reach me after 5:00 p.m. Thank you*

***Doctrine of Discovery***

Find links and information on the Doctrine of Discovery (mentioned in the November 16 sermon) at:

<http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/dod/>



<i>Date</i>	<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Greeters, Servers and Ushers</i>
Dec. 7	Jordan Kuelbs	<i>Potluck</i> —Karen Farrell, Julie & Ron Peck
Dec. 14	Sally Hanson	Beverly & Wallace Wellman, Joy Rathman
Dec. 21	JoAnn Huss	Susan & Jerry Allen, Vickie Sieve
Dec. 24	Muffy Kaim	Kristine & Warren Paulson
Dec. 28		<i>Winter Break—No Service</i>