

MERE LYS

December 2015 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church



Services

Coffee 10:00 am
Worship 10:30 am



December 6th

“Expectant”

December 13th

“Time Out”

December 20th

“Bringing the Light”

December 24th

*Candle Lighting
Service*

Service ~ 5:00 PM

December 27th

*Winter Break
No Service*

A View From the Hill

*They looked like people you see on the six o'clock news—refugees, sent to wait in some strange ugly place, with all their boxes and sacks around them...It suddenly occurred to me that this was just the way it must have been for the real Holy Family, stuck away in a barn by people who didn't care much what happened to them.**

*The night when she first gave birth/Had been cold. But in later years/She quite forgot.***

*The men were old/how could they know/of a mother's needs/or a child's appetite?/But as they kneeled/the child was fed.****

I recently watched the first two seasons of *The Americans*—Fox's series about Phillip and Elizabeth Jennings, deep cover agents raising their family and spying for the Soviet union in Fall's Church, Virginia in the 1980s, at the tail end of the Cold War. In the second season their teenager Paige joins a Christian youth group and becomes enamored of and active in the social justice ministry of the church. Elizabeth is proud of her daughter's passion for making the world a better place but dismayed to the point of fury that that passion is fueled by a fantasy of supernatural, fairytale superheroes, instead of real, flesh and blood human (Communist) heroes.

Now, I love a good spy story. And I feel for Elizabeth—torn between her parental pride and her deeply held ideology—but she's got it all wrong. When Paige protests a military base and the youth pastor is arrested for chaining himself to the gate, that Jesus-centered passion for justice is all about real, flesh and blood humanity. The flesh and blood humanity they want to save from nuclear warheads (again, 1980s), and the flesh and blood human, Jesus, whose teaching inspired them.

I tell the story of the Nativity on Christmas Eve because it is Christmas Eve. And I read the story from the Christian Scriptures because it is Christmas Eve. And I read the pieces excerpted at the top of this column (and others like them) because it is Christmas Eve—the time we, as Unitarian Universalists, celebrate the birth of a *human baby to human parents*.

This season is a festival of fantasy, fairy-tales, legends, songs, poetry and stories, celebrating miracles from the return of light to the birth of a savior in the most unlikely of places and forms. And the core is neither supernatural nor other-than-human. The season revolves around the miracle of the flesh and blood and spirit human capacity for bringing peace and joy, and the miracle of the creation's own renewal of light, year after year despite all human fear and disbelief.

Come to church this season. Bring your family, friends and neighbors. Tell them (and yourselves) that here you can sing the songs of the season, hear the stories of the season, with all your desire for miracles, all your faith in science, all your longing to believe in human goodness. None of it at odd with any of the rest of it. All of it holy.

*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, by Barbara Robinson

**Mary, by Bertolt Brecht

***The Gift, by William Carlos Williams

-Lisa

From the board... *Thank You!*

... Daryl Hrdlicka for teaching Sunday school.

...to the Doeges for donating three autumn maples in honor of family members

Board Meeting

The next Nora Board meeting will be on Sunday, December 13th after church.

Keeping the Roof Over Our (or in this case, Lisa's) Head

As many of you are aware, earlier this year, the Board, in consultation with the Building and Grounds committee, decided to re-roof the parsonage. There were damaged and missing shingles and the remaining shingles were at the end of their 20/30 year life. In the course of re-roofing, damage to the roof decking and the balcony railing was discovered, necessitating the replacement of the damaged areas. This increased the cost from approximately \$12,000 to just over \$16,000. The Board had cashed in a CD (\$12,043.67), but with the increase in the cost, this is not sufficient to cover the expense. Therefore, I come to you with a request for money. \$5000 will cover the cost of the repairs and the 50 year-life shingles which were installed, with a minimal surplus, which will go into the General Fund.

Those of you who carefully observe the figures published in the newsletter each month and the order of service each Sunday will know that our expenses (while modest to the point of frugality) often outpace our income. Please be assured that our Board members take their fiduciary responsibility to the congregation seriously and are in regular conversation with the minister about meeting Nora's long- and short-term financial needs. You will hear more about those discussions and any proposals that may emerge from them, from the pulpit, in the newsletter and at congregational meetings as the church year progresses.

To contribute, simply make out a check to Nora and write "Roof" in the memo area. Thank you for your continued generosity as we work to keep our beloved church and parsonage in working order.

Karen Farrell
Congregation President

Deck the Halls!

Time to deck the halls and get ready to trim the tree. Join us Thursday, December 3, starting at 3:00 p.m. to put up the Christmas tree and do other church decorating—inside and out.

Last year, with four of us working, it took about five hours. We can use any help even if for just a bit of time. I'll have a crock pot of soup to get us through the supper hour. On Sunday the 6th, during the potluck, youth can add the ornaments to the tree! Join in the fun, thank you, Jeanie Hinsman

December Lunch Bunch

Take a break from your Christmas shopping and join the Jolly Lunch Bunch elves at their December gathering. We're meeting early to leave everyone plenty of time for holiday preparations. Save the date for Friday, Dec. 11, at 11:30 a.m., at the Kaiserhoff in New Ulm. Ho, Ho, Hope to see you there! *Lunch Bunch is a monthly, social lunch gathering, open to any Nora members or friends.*

Caring Committee: Reaching Out

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 have a list of people we should visit. Please contact Georgine if interested, 507-359-3060. It is easier to reach me after 5:00 p.m. Thank you.

Nora's Blaze Maple Trees

Thanks to the Doeges for donating three autumn maples in honor of a family member. They have been planted around the church grounds. Three more have been planted and await adoption. The three blaze maple trees planted on the church grounds were donated by Kathy Doege and Chuck Cooke and Family, Chris Doege and Tammy Lofgren-Doege and Family, and the Reverend Lisa Doege in honor of Carma Doege's 75th Birthday, May 1, 2014 (better late than never!).

A Note From the Treasurer

October Income and Expenses

Income: \$5,868.83

Funds Transfer: \$12,043.67 (financing parsonage roofing)

Expenses \$12,326.48 (\$7,000 towards roofing)

The total cost of the parsonage roofing came to \$16,217.00 – more than \$4,000 over the initial bid due to the need to replace siding, roof decking and new railings.

A letter from Lisa

Almost six and a half years!

I arrived at Nora Church in August 2009, as your consulting minister. Two years later you installed me as settled minister. As part of our negotiations at that time the Board agreed to allow me to include those first two years in the accrual of years toward a sabbatical. So the time has come, here in our seventh year together, for me to embark on sabbatical.

I'm due six months away from ministerial duties for rest and renewal. I've decided for a variety of reasons to split my sabbatical into two chunks. I will be away from Nora (and the parsonage) from January 1, 2016 to February 29, 2016. I will take the remaining four months of sabbatical in early 2017.

- The program committee (Christopher Olson, Nita Gilbert and Karen Farrell) has been busy scheduling a line-up of great speakers to fill the pulpit for eight Sundays (there's no service the first Sunday in January). You'll hear Unitarian Universalist ministers as well as ministers and lay-people from other faith traditions.
- The Board is working on a plan to ensure that the parsonage is looked after in my absence.
- If necessary, congregation president Karen Farrell, in consultation with the scheduled speaker, will make the decision regarding weather cancellations.
- Brooke will continue to work five hours a week, generally Tuesdays and Friday.

I'm making arrangements for pastoral care coverage from Unitarian Universalist colleagues. **Information on the procedure for accessing pastoral care will be provide in the January newsletter.**

I will spend January and February in an apartment in Minneapolis, working on writing projects, deepening my spiritual practice, and enjoying the cultural life of Minneapolis and St. Paul. I anticipate returning to Nora rested, inspired, and oh so grateful for your generosity in granting me this time away from ministerial duties.

In our shared faith,
Lisa

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 Program December 19th

The Christmas program will be held on Saturday, December 19th at 2:00 p.m. "*The Light Has Come*" and the program will shine bright with the talents of musicians, poets and storytellers. Cookies and Coffee to follow. Donations will go to NUMAS Haus.

A Smorgasbord of Support

At the congregational discussion of Smorg, on Sunday, November 1st, the general opinion of all was to continue with our annual event. Seasoned folks will begin training in new folks on specific duties. It was also agreed that the new tent really made a difference.

Now that another successful Smorg is in the books, it's time for a big thank you for all that participated! We appreciate all the time and energy that every one of you gives to Nora every September and October. A huge thank-you to the lefse team, their donation saves the church almost \$1,000! Thank you Georgine, Ingrid, Nancy, Diane, Carol, Kristine, Susan Allen, Shirley, Bev, Wally, Dick, Karen, Louise, Janet, Bonita, Julie Grathwohl, Edith, Jeannie, Vicki, Colleen and Lara for your time and talents. Next year plans are in place for an evening session so more are able to join in the fun.

There are many people that year after year do contribute to Smorg that don't appear on the work list—they deserve an extra thank you. Georgine for the publicity and getting the cash ready for Sunday; Shirley for getting all the meatball ingredients ready and then delivering them to LaSalle; Wally for delivering the meat from LaSalle to the church on meatball Friday; Diane for delivering turkey and Norma the ham; Edith for the fall decorating; Darrel, Warren and Wayne for all the things you do to keep the church looking good and running well. Last but not least, my co-chair, Julie Sellner, for the first phone call in August reminding me we have to get the work list together and all the hundreds of phone calls right up to Sunday morning, thank you! -Joy

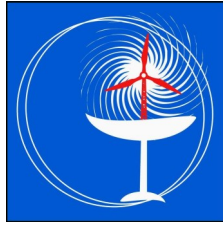
Inclement Weather

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 cancelation 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!!

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU

Coming in January: Great Minds, Artsy Times

When cabin fever begins to set in we will have just the right thing! Upon popular request for quilting skills, and more, Nancy is looking to get a monthly meeting of creative minds together. Beginning in January the *Great Minds, Artsy Times* monthly gathering will meet!

Looking for a creative outlet, or a way to inspire more creativity?! We'll work on quilting, basket weaving, stenciling and more, or bring along your own project to work in company with other creative minds! If this idea interests you talk to Nancy or email the office.

Religious Education for Children and Youth

Religious Education for children ages 3 and above takes place on a Sunday by Sunday basis. On the weeks a teacher is available children will be dismissed from the service after the Story for All Ages, to gather in the Iverson Room (basement of the social hall) for a story, discussion and craft.

Policy Adopted

The Nora Church Board of Trustees, at their November meeting, adopted a Disruptive Behavior Policy. The policy will be published to the Nora website shortly.

Notes from the Nora Office...

Please send announcements, and content of any kind, for the newsletter or order of service to the Nora email. Announcements generally run for two weeks.

Order Of Service ~ content due Thursdays

January Mere Lys ~ content due Dec. 18th

Church Email: norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant

Lisa on the Loose Suspended

Lisa on the Loose will return in march, after Lisa's sabbatical (and the busyness of December).

2015-2016 Greeter/Server List

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. Please let Lisa or Brooke know so the order of service can be corrected – norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net. ATTENTION PARTNERS: Please communicate with each other regarding food provision, as necessary.

JANUARY

10: Potluck—Colleen Hokenson, Norma & Roger Breu, Michelle Bethke

17: Joy Rathman, Christina Schmitt, Shannon Hoescht

24: Jordan Kuelbs, John Schmitt, Jeremy Schmitt

31: Jeanie & Darrell Hinsman, Vickie Sieve

FEBRUARY

7: Potluck—Susan & Jerry Allen, Scott Chambard, Louise Guggisberg

14: Kate & Jason Monnens, Cindy Backman

21: Georgine & Gene Tepley, Jordan Kuelbs

28: Norma & Roger Breu, Christopher Olson

MARCH

6: Potluck—Julie & Ron Peck, Scott & Tracey Schmiesing

13: Kristine & Warren Paulson, Wayne Johnson

20: Lynn & Lee Schmitt, Jeremy Schmitt

27: Easter—Edith Beckius, Diane Becken, Nancy Brudelie

APRIL

3: Potluck—Kristine & Warren Paulson, Kate & Jason Monnens, Kristy Paulson

10: Carol Chambard, Susan & Jerry Allen

17: Sally Ann & Dave Benson, Christopher Olson

24: Lee Drogemuller, Colleen & Glenn Hokenson

MAY

1: Potluck—Jeanie & Darrell Hinsman, Peter & Katy Hemberger

8: Beverly & Wallace Wellman, Julie Sellner

15: Syttende Mai—Nancy Brudelie, Kristy Paulson, Ellen Byro

22: Alicia Bayer & Daryl Hrdlicka, Joy Rathman

29: Julie Sellner, Christina Schmitt, Shannon Hoescht

JUNE

5: Potluck—Georgine & Gene Tepley, Karen Farrell & Dick Gurska

12 Nancy Brudelie, Lara Fletcher, Janet Rosenbloom

19 Sally & Gil Hansen, Nita Gilbert