



MERE LYS

December 2017 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Coffee 10:00 am

Worship 10:30 am



December 3

“Joy in Unlikely Packages”

December 10

“The World in Solemn Stillness Lay”

December 17

“One More Light”

December 24

Candle Lighting Service 5:00 PM

December 31

No Service, Winter Break



A View From the Hill

O little town of Bethlehem...the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Like most of us, I suppose, I’ve sung those words over and over again nearly every December of my life without really considering their meaning. But upon reflection, *hopes and fears* is a pretty succinct and laser-accurate summary of our spirit’s condition this time of year.

We hope, year after year, that this season will be magical, that Christmas will arrive, bringing with it joy and delight, color and light, generosity and surprise, love and reconciliation, peace on earth and good will toward all. We long for magic, and fear instead that Christmas will be only human, touched by greed and disappointment, moments of loneliness and isolation, bittersweet memories of holidays and loved ones long past, crowds and debt and impossible expectations.

Our fears grow out of our years of experience with this holiday season. We’ve seen it all before. Charlie Brown peers hopefully into a mailbox in search of Christmas cards, only to hear his disappointment echo out of the emptiness. A community awaits a savior, a prince of peace, and is offered instead a baby born in stable.

However dissimilar the particulars may be, I think the hopes and fears of all the years which meet on Christmas Eve (throughout the season, really) are the same at the core. We hope for love, for connection, for the assurance that someone knows us well enough and cares for us deeply enough to discern our heart’s desire and try to give it to us.

And we fear it will not be so. We fear that the caring will not be deep enough to wash away the greed and commercialism and disappointments of the season, that the love will not be strong enough to triumph over separations of distance and estrangement, adolescent moods and dishes that must be washed Christmas or not. We fear that our shortcomings as a parent and flaws and failures as a friend, child, mate stand firmly in the way of our successfully demonstrating our loving and caring to those dear to us, and render us unworthy of receiving any love or caring from them. We fear that we will be forgotten, that there is no one left anymore to receive and return our love and affection.

Yet, the hopes endure. Despite it all, the fear hasn’t won. We still envision the world another way, and have the spirit left alive to hope it will be so, if only for a season. It is no small thing. To live lives which at times, in ways known only to us, are so difficult we barely make it through, and still hope, if just a tiny bit, if only secretly, for magic at Christmas, is a feat worthy of celebrating. To love despite forces in society conspiring against love, and to care for others despite the risk of disappointment, is cause for celebration.

Within each of us, perhaps hidden deep away, there is a child whose heart skips with delight at the sight of Santa Claus, whose breath catches with wonder as the tree is lit for the first time each year, who sings carols unconcerned with the language and hears the truth behind the theology and mythology of beloved stories, who wants to love with grand extravagant gestures and does so instead, unknowingly, in simple ways, who is wise enough to see past the glitter and the neon to the beauty of falling snow and stars in the night sky. Christmas is the celebration of the birth, again and again, of *that* child, into a world of human imperfection and wonder and love. A holy time indeed.

-Lisa

From the board...

Thank You!

...to the people who pay their pledges regularly and generously.

...to the Becken family for the memorials.

Board Meeting

Nora Church Board will meet again Sunday, December 17, following the service.

Congregational Meeting

There will be a brief congregational meeting following service on Sunday, December 3rd. The purpose of the meeting will be electing members to the Endowment Committee.

Cookies and Community and Christmas

If your plans allow, please join other Nora members, family, and friends for coffee, cider, treats and holiday cheer in the social hall following the candle lighting service on Christmas Eve.

Winter Break

There will be no Sunday service on December 31st, as we take this time for our winter break.

Christmas Elves Spotted!

The elves were spotted decorating the church this week! (Thank you!) Now the tree will be ready for youth—and those young at heart—to do the decorating following the potluck on Sunday, Dec. 3.

Art with Attitude

We will be having only one Art with Attitude meeting in December. It will be Friday, December 8th. Bring a project to work on, or come for coffee and conversation. We will have a potluck luncheon to celebrate the upcoming holiday season.

Please let Nancy know if you'd like to make another scarf. We still have some beautiful fleece fabrics. Looking forward to a day of projects, good food, lively conversation and maybe a surprise or two! Ho ho ho!

As always everyone is welcome. Join us for coffee and good conversation.

Lunch Bunch

December can be a busy time for most people, so it's important to take a break now and then. The

Lunch Bunch Executive Committee invites you to relax with them on Tuesday, December 12, 11:30 a.m., at the newly reopened Pizza Ranch, 1927 S. Broadway, New Ulm. It will be an opportunity to exchange recipes, gift and decorating ideas. Hope to see you there!

Lunch Bunch is a monthly, social lunch gathering, open to any Nora members, friends or visitors.

Lisa on the Loose

Lisa will hold "office hours" at area coffee houses. Join her for drop-in conversations in New Ulm, Mankato and Windom.

Ridgeway on 23rd, New Ulm

Wednesday, December 13, 3:30 pm.

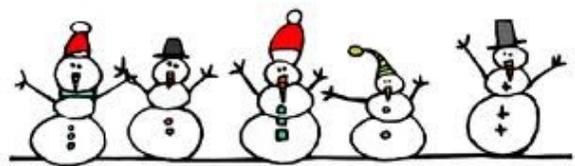
River City Eatery, Windom

Tuesday, December 19 11:00-12:30.



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 everyone 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!!



A Note From the Treasurer **October Income and Expenses**

Income:	\$7,877.75
Expenses:	\$7,162.80

Most of Nora Church's annual income comes in the form of pledge payments from members and friends.

Income and expenses are listed for the full month prior to the publication of the newsletter, not including special collections or memorial gifts.

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.



Lisa (and Lucia) will spend a few days each week in the Cities through early December. They will be at church most Sundays, and Lisa will continue to be available for meetings, a reduced Lisa on the Loose schedule, and pastoral care as needed.

New Ulm's Own Holiday Hours

Holiday hours at New Ulm's Own include Sundays 12:00 to 3:00 and Thursday evening December 14 until 8:00 p.m. Usual hours are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00am to 5:00 p.m.

Support fair trade artisans, NUMAS Haus and local artisans while also enjoying small town shopping.

2017-2018 Server/Volunteer List

Volunteers are needed for all Sundays that are not a potluck. Sign up in kitchen or when the sign up sheet is passed around in church.

If potluck assignments don't fit your schedule please call someone on the list to take your place. Contact information is in the Nora Directory.

Schedule changes, please let Lisa or Brooke know any schedule changes so the order of service can be corrected – norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net.

If your name is not on this list and you would like to participate, please call Susan Allen 359-2856.

ATTENTION PARTNERS:

Please communicate with each other regarding food provision, as necessary.

DECEMBER

3—Potluck—Edith Beckius, Lee Drogemuller, Colleen & Glenn Hokenson

JANUARY

7—Potluck—Kristine & Warren Paulson, Wayne Dean Johnson, Kristy Paulson

FEBRUARY

4—Potluck—Darrell & Jeanie Hinsman, Norma & Roger Breu

MARCH

4—Potluck—Julie Sellner, Susan Evers, Shannon Hoescht, Lee Schmitt

APRIL

1—Potluck—EASTER—Diane Becken, Janet Rosenbloom, Cindy Backman, Nancy Brudelic

MAY

6—Potluck—Sally Ann & Dave Bensen, Karen Farrell & Dick Gurska

20—Syttende Mai

JUNE

3—Potluck—Alicia Bayer, Nita Gilbert, Shirley Olson, Lara Fletcher



Notes from the Nora Office...

Order Of Service ~ content due Thursdays

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



January Mere Lys ~ content due

Tuesday, December 19

Please get me your content as soon as possible during this busy holiday time!

Church Email: norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

Phone: 507.439.6240

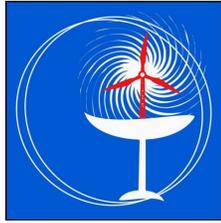
Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant

In the office Tuesdays and Fridays.

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Update from Larry Bakken

To Friends and Family, Larry came out of remission again. Sooner than we hoped but Mantle Cell Lymphoma is sort of like Mother Nature. Does what it wants, when it wants! Lymph nodes enlarged in the neck, torso, and groin plus a spot on his lungs which was just from a cold he was getting over; Still stage 4 of 4. Treatment plan is a specialty oral drug, ibrutinib that is taken 4 per day for at least 6 months. Again, trying to put the MCL in remission. Larry is feeling well and thrilled that he shot a deer this past weekend. Leaves tomorrow for another weekend of deer hunting; the last of the 2017 season. We appreciate your support as we work toward Larry's remission.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends! Be thankful for God's blessings! Thanks for your emails, cards and phone calls. They are all appreciated! Please do NOT send flowers. If you want to send cards, letters, etc., please send them to our home at 11900 175th St. W., Lakeville, MN 55044. Feel free to send emails to LBakken@frontiernet.net or just reply to this email. Larry would love hearing from you! Thanks again for your support! We feel truly blessed to have such wonderful friends!! - Larry and Vickie

An Adequate Christmas

You ever read those magazine articles about how to "survive Christmas"? As if Christmas were some kind of endurance event? To me, that all seems just a little extreme.

Then again, it can come from the other side, too — all those jangling jingle bells, with people wanting to put a Christmas sweater on you, and all of the

forced merriment. Maybe that's not where you're at, either.

What if it wasn't only a choice between misery or merry? What about a third option: an adequate Christmas. An adequate Christmas would have you calm and open, taking it in, accepting whatever is. Pique your interest? Here are three things that could help:

Notice those behaviors that you tend to do when you're wound up too tight. Could be overeating, could be drinking too much, could be picking fights with family members — just choose one behavior you know you've got in you. Don't need to change it. Just try to notice, and see what happens.

Say out loud what you want. Nobody can read your mind, right? People aren't magic. So if you've got particular expectations for the holiday season? Say them out loud. Say I'd like to do this, I'd like to go there, or I really don't want to do this. With what you want on the table, it's easier for everybody to figure out what to do. (I got that idea from my friend Carrie Contey.)

This last one's a doozy. Ready? Treat the holidays as sacred time. Turn your attention toward tradition, toward spiritual practice, toward encountering and welcoming God like you haven't before. Slow it all down like you might be, in some way, attuned to the pace of the Eternal. If you need to, you can fake it at first.

Prayer

God of creation, bless our becoming with grace enough that we can laugh at ourselves, our hearts glad for the sufficiency of the days we've been given. Amen.

-Rev. Jake Morrill



To ♥ Keep In Touch

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

Carol Chambard: 354-2242