

MERE LYS

January 2019 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

A View From the Hill

... all in all/I'd say this year in flight together has been a good, good one/What say we make one more circle...around the sun...

Unitarian Universalist singer/songwriter Peter Mayer issues this lovely invitation—an invitation we literally cannot refuse. Every day our hearts pump blood and our lungs draw in air and our brains snap with electricity, we begin one more circle around the sun. Nevertheless, at birthdays, anniversaries, and New Year's Day we tend toward reflection, and acting as though we're making a decision or accepting an invitation to enter another year (circle round the sun).

It's hard to sit here in late December 2018 and agree that all in all this year has been a good, good one. Recordbreaking wildfires in California not only claimed life's and destroyed homes and business, an entire town, they also produced as much air pollution as does the generation of a year's worth of electricity in that state. A tsunami hit a couple of Indonesian islands yesterday. The US government has been partially shutdown—again. Our church, our families, our communities have suffered loss—through death and relocation and estrangement. The US economy is booming by all accounts, *and* we're looking at the worst December for the US stock markets since the Great Depression. Wet conditions and trade wars were hard on farmers. What's to label *good, good?*

Here's the thing, however: I don't know when Peter Mayer penned One More Circle, but I'm willing to bet it wasn't following a year in which he and loved ones suffered no losses, in which natural disaster didn't claim lives, destroy homes, devastate communities multiple places around the globe, in which no coups d'tat toppled governments or oppression regimes restricted civil liberties of citizens, in which prosperity characterized financial states of all countries and all classes in all countries. I bet he wrote those lyrics, "all in all, it's been a good, good one" at the end of a year much like 2018. Some babies were born and marriages entered into. Business launched. High school and college seniors set out to conquer the world, or at least their lives. Crops flourished. Stocks showed slow, steady gains. And all the other stuff happened that year, too—the divorces and deaths, financial setbacks and business insecurities, coups and partisan bickering threatening the welfare of real people. Because that's life. That's year in the life of... well, a year in the life of just about anyone.

Some rare years—from January 1 to December 31, or from birthday to birthday, anniversary to anniversary—might stand out as especially hard or extraordinarily good. But all in all, if we're breathing, if we embrace and are embraced in return by a handful of loved ones by whatever name we call them, if we have medical care when we need it, if we have food when we're hungry, if our days are filled with meaningful occupation (paid or volunteer), if we're woke enough to recognize injustice and resourceful enough to address it in one way or another—then we've had a good enough year to accept the invitation

Continued on Page 2

Services

Coffee 10:00 am
Worship 10:30 am



January 6

"Going Home Another Way"

January 13

"Hawks on Lampposts"

January 20

"The Word of the Year"

January 27

*TBA Program
Committee Sunday*



for one more circle around the sun.

Let's take it together, one more circle, while we love one another tenderly and fiercely, work for justice, protect our neighborhood of the planet, gather in fellowship and worship, spread the good news of Nora Church throughout our several counties and raise the funds to preserve our building for more good, good years.

-Lisa

Thanks From the Board

Many, Many hours of labor were furnished recently on behalf of the congregation. The board recognizes the following:

Thank You!

...Warren Paulson for taking care of snow issues inside and outside the church and his constant vigilance for heat, garbage removal, and general caretaking of the property.

...Julie Peck, Lee Drogemuller, Cami and Darrell, for building the parade float.

...Julie, Louise, Lisa and Jeanie for walking in the parade and taking down the float.

...To food shelf workers in December: Scott, Colleen, Georgine, Norma and Roger, Jeanie.

...To all the bakers for UCC church community meal: Joy, Julie, Colleen, Georgine, Shirley, Kristine, Jeanie, Vicki, Louise, Norma, Susan.

...For help putting up the Christmas tree: Susan.

...Darrell: for putting up the snow fence.

...To Diane and Georgine for delivering items to our shut-ins.

It takes a village to maintain a church community! We appreciate all that is done by many folks who are not recognized.

Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Sunday, January 13, following the service.

Supper Club

Wednesday, January 16 at 6:30, location to be announced; although, I do hear rumors about Chubby's, Hanska, being the destination.

Undeck the Halls

Thanks to everyone who helped with putting ornaments on the tree. We can use some after Christmas elves to help undo decorations. We'll plan to start after potluck on the 6th. If you can lend a hand for any amount of time, it would be appreciated.

Sacred Places Grant Update: Appeal Letter

By now most if not all of our readers have received our appeal letter to raise funds for the match to the Sacred Places grant. Some responses were very prompt! Our thanks to all who consider Nora Church a significant presence for both our current mission of being a liberal religious community and our historical presence as a Nordic heritage site. We know we have missed connections to families who have members buried at Mt. Pisqua. If you can help us identify and/or locate others who may wish to support our financial appeal, please let Lisa or Jeanie know.

Lisa on the Loose

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

In January find Lisa:

Tuesday, January 15 at the Coffee Hag, Mankato, 10:30-Noon

Tuesday, January 29 at River City Eatery, Windom, 11:00-12:30



Common Read

Last call! Rev. Lisa will be placing the book order January 8th. The initial book discussion is potluck Sunday, February 3; additional sessions may be added. Please e-mail or call the church office to reserve a copy. Expected price is \$16.



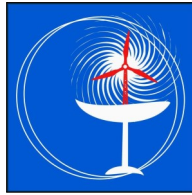
A Note From the Treasurer
November Income and Expenses

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Income: | \$ 7,994.10 |
| Expenses: | \$ 6,352.97 |

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 at Large

Each month Lisa participates in a various forms of public ministry, study, regional and/or Associational life beyond the Hill. In December Lisa participated in the monthly gathering of the New Ulm Area Ministerial (at Immanuel Lutheran Church in rural Courtland this time), and the board meeting of NUMAS Haus. She, along with other Nora Church members, planned and presented the solstice celebration at Flandrau Park. Her December Mere Lys column ran as the Pastor's Column in the Madelia Times Messenger on 12/20.

Lunch Bunch

Happy New Year to all. It's been a Lunch Bunch tradition to celebrate a certain January birthday at Plaza Garibaldi. It turns out there are a lot of January birthdays—you know who you are, and so do we, thanks to the great new church calendar prepared for us—so the tradition will continue. The celebrants will meet on Wednesday, January 23, 11:30 a.m., at Plaza Garibaldi. 1707 N. Broadway, New Ulm. I don't know if the restaurant has enough huge birthday hats for all, but we can take turns. See you there.

Lunch Bunch is a monthly social gathering open to all.

Notes from the Nora Office...

February Mere Lys ~ content due
Monday, January 21

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.

Church Email: norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

Phone: 507.439.6240

Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
In the office Tuesdays and Fridays.

Hanska Community Meal

The board is in early stages of planning a community meal for the last week of January. We would like to serve at the Community Center so people could easily walk over for a simple meal. It would be a free event for the purpose of encouraging community connections for and with the residents of Hanska. We have notified UCC that we will not be doing desserts during this time. If you are interested in helping with a Hanska community meal please let Jeanie know.

Bridal Shower

You are invited to a bridal shower in honor of Candi Lemarr and Jeremy Schmitt, Sunday, January 6 from 1:00-3:00 pm at the Comfrey Community Center. RSVP 507-227-6625 or connieknutson1956@gmail.com

Pastoral Care

Please be aware that privacy laws prevent hospitals from calling churches and pastors when members are admitted—unless specifically asked to do so by the patient. If you or a loved one is hospitalized, and you would like a call or visit from Lisa, please call/text her at 507-766-7822, leave a message on the parsonage voice mail (507-439-6240), or ask a family member to do so on your behalf. You can also let us know (via any of those ways) if you'd like the church membership to be notified by Grapevine.

Minister's Discretionary Fund

Lisa has a small sum of money at her disposal to use to meet emergency financial needs of Nora church members and friends, or members of the surrounding community. In the past she has been able to pay utility bills, purchase prescription medications, and cover the cost of a tank of gasoline. If you have a need, please be in contact with Lisa. If you know of a need, please be in contact with Lisa, or suggest that your friend or acquaintance be in contact with her. The minister's discretionary fund is outside of the annual operating budget of the church and is replenished by gifts made to the church marked clearly "for the minister's discretionary fund". Please consider making this fund the beneficiary of one of your holiday or year-end charitable contributions.

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. Announcements will be made via Grapevine email, posting on the Nora website and Facebook page, and a 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!!

Larry Bakken Update

Greetings Family and Friends! We wish you a wonderful holiday!! Latest news about Larry: As of the PET Scan on December 7, Larry is again in remission. He may be continuing the ibruvicia for possibly another 12 months. Oncologist said the longer he stays on the meds, the longer his remission is likely to be. Also on December 7 he had 2 CT scans to see what is in his lungs. That showed nothing and the bronchoscopy today showed his lungs to be perfect! Don't know why he continues to cough up blood and phlegm in the morning. Not in the lungs so it's coming from somewhere else. Sinuses? Don't know. According to the CT Scan, there is something weird in his brain. The MRI showed nothing. A brain?? Possibly!! Knee pain (like so many of us) too. Larry is feeling well but was disappointed – no deer this year. We appreciate your support and hope that Larry's remission is a long one this time. Have a wonderful Christmas with family and friends! Be thankful for God's blessings!

Too Much of Everything

There they were, ten preschoolers in suits and fancy dresses, each holding one letter of MERRY CHRISTMAS.

I know that they must have started out the morning with at least fourteen kids, because their long-suffering choir director would not knowingly drag them onto the chancel to spell out ERRY CHIM SA in front of the whole caroling congregation.

I had gone to church that morning specifically to see

Mel, my friend's daughter. She had campaigned for—and won—the coveted role of the first **M** (for Mel), the one that starts out the whole production, and she was ecstatic about her stage debut.

ERRY CHIM SA, the letters proclaimed. If you looked carefully, you would see that Mel and her M were not actually missing. She was indeed up there at her rehearsed mark, far on stage left, lying prostrate on the floor, gold tulle dress flipped upside down over her face, both fists flung out ahead, the carefully glittered, crumpled **M** unceremoniously smooshed into the carpet under her body.

Later she clearly explained, "It was a little bit too much of everything. I just needed it to stop for a minute. Next time I will take calm breaths." And I wondered if Mel had just solved the holidays once and for all.

There is so much anticipatory joy and more than a little gumption in having the grandiosity to show up for the party in gold tulle in the first place. And such self-possessed wisdom in lying down and pulling it over your face when everything is too much.

And it is too much, isn't it? Sometimes the final days of the unexpected pregnancy find you in a strange place where they tell you there's no room in the inn. In real life, sometimes grief looms largest in December. Sometimes there's one too many dress-ups and the gold tulle makes your legs itch.

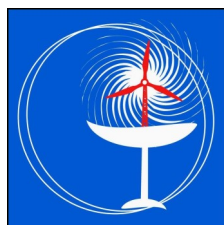
"I just needed it to stop for a minute. Next time I will take calm breaths."

Rev. Misha Sanders (Braver/Wiser)

*"Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares
which will not withdraw from us."
—Maya Angelou*

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



Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

12333 155th Avenue, Hanska, Minnesota 56041

Phone: 507.439.6240

Email: norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net Website: www.norauuchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU