

Services

Sundays

Coffee 10:00 am
Worship 10:30 am

2nd Wednesday

Worship 7:00 pm



January 5

***“The View from Here:
Grief and Guilt”***

*Part 1 of 4 on the future
of Nora Church*

January 8

“Resolved”

7:00 pm Service

January 12

No Service

January 19

***“In the Arc or In Our
Hands”***

January 26

***TBA Program
Committee Sunday***

MERE LYS

January 2020 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

A View From the Hill

I hear “twenty-twenty vision” is going to be the cliché of the coming year, so I’m getting in on the ground floor.

How’s your vision, heading into the New Year? Where do you see 20/20? Where do you need corrective lenses? What do you see with great clarity? What’s a bit fuzzy? Any double vision? What’s beginning to come into focus?

When it comes to planning a vacation or retirement or even dinner, do you struggle to focus in on the details but visualize the big picture in your mind as easily as viewing a map or a snapshot of the food set out on the buffet?

Maybe you see others’ beauty and worth and gifts and strength in bright color and fine detail, but your own through a dingy film. Or maybe the other way around? You see others’ faults with laser-like vision but need a magnifying glass to get a good look at your own.

Does the way through the next twelve months look like a slog through hate, hyperbole, and uncertainty? But can you also see hope and possibility as the election approaches and alliances form to get out the vote, and discuss issues, and make positive change at all levels of government (that double vision thing: “yick” and “maybe”).

Turning inward, what’s coming into focus for you as the lights go out on 2019? Do you see change coming—in the ways you spend your time and money and energy? Perhaps a heretofore hidden longing or talent is emerging. Or when you picture contentment do you see life pretty much as you have been living it?

Whatever’s in store before our 2020 vision becomes hindsight a year from now (to throw in another cliché for good measure) we’ll be together here at Nora, showing one another the way in love.

-Lisa

Thanks From the Board

Plenty of thanks to go around...

Thank you to Abe Kahleh, Jordan Rathmann, Elise Allen and Ryann Kaim for wonderful musical contributions in December.

Thank you to David and Sally Anne Benson, Brett Lehman, Lucia Reyes, Louse Guggisberg, and the bakers for help with the Winter Solstice event.

Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Sunday, January 19, following the service.

Wednesday Services Update

The board discussed the topic and has decided to continue with the Wednesday services on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Please use your calendar to track the Sunday off each month.

Turn in Those Surveys!

January 5 is the last day to return your Smorg survey. If you've lost it, please notify Jeanie as soon as possible. The future of smorg depends on your input.

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 5th. If you can lend a hand for any amount of time, it would be appreciated.

Donation Rotation Redux

As you undeck your hall after Christmas and New Year's, set aside any unwanted decorations. Bring them to church on Sunday, January 5, 2020. They might be just the treasure someone else has been searching for!

Lunch Bunch

It's become a tradition for the January Lunch Bunch to honor members who have January birthdays and all others who will have birthdays in 2020. So if this includes you, we hope you will join us on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 11:30 a.m., at Plaza Garibaldi, 1707 N Broadway, New Ulm, for a birthday bash. See you then.

Lunch Bunch is a monthly social gathering open to all.

Speaking of Vision

Rev. Lisa Doege

Our board of trustees asked me to spend some time, this church year, reflecting on and addressing the future of Nora Church, in light of declining membership and the rapidly shifting (read 'shrinking') religious landscape in the country.

I will do so in a series of four monthly sermons, over the course of January-April. On January 5 I'll talk about where we're at now. In the subsequent sermons I'll present three different visions of what the future might hold for the church we love.

Supper Club

Supper Club will be Wednesday, January 15 at 6:30. Watch the order of service and grapevines for location.

Hanska Community Meal

Wednesday, January 29 is our first Hanska Community Meal for the church year. The Community Meal is a free event for the purpose of encouraging community connections for and with the residents of Hanska, free will offering will be accepted. Serving 5:30-6:30 at the Hanska Community Center. We need bars, cooks, servers, and cleanup crew. Willing workers—get in touch with Jeanie!

Lisa On The Loose

Lisa on the Loose is tentatively set for 11:30, January 21 at Jubilee Market and Peace Meals in Mountain Lake. Watch Grapevine for confirmation and updates.

Lisa holds "office hours" at area coffee houses—join her for drop-in conversations in your area.

Notes from the Nora Office...

February Mere Lys ~ content due

Monday, January 20

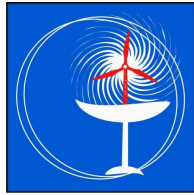
Order Of Service: Content due Thursdays

Please send content of any kind, for the newsletter or order of service to the Nora email.

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
Working from home, and in the office most
Tuesdays & Fridays.*

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.



Community Ed Class:

Towards An Honorable Death

Look for this listing in the District 88 Community Ed Catalogue.

You may register on the day of the class, online, or using registration form in the paper.

Towards an Honorable Death

Organized by: Rev. Lisa Doege, Nora Unitarian Universalist Church, Hanska, Jeanie Hinsman and Colleen Hokenson

Cost: \$5 per Class/Session Min 5/ Max 40

Location: New Ulm Middle School Room #228/ #228E

All sessions run 10:00am- 12:00pm

In this series, end of life professionals present and discuss some of the many aspects of dying in 21st century America. Each session has a unique focus. Participants are encouraged to attend all four but may choose to register only for those topics of interest. Sessions will include presentations as well as opportunities for discussion. A bibliography will be provided, and a resource table will be available for browsing at each session.

Session #1: Dying is a Biological Process:

- What dying looks like in the final days of life
- Advanced directives and what hospice can pro-

A Note From the Treasurer
November Income and Expenses

Income:	\$ 9,851.90
Expenses:	\$ 6,258.72

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

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Session #2: The Business of Dying

- Organ Donation
- Fiduciary and legal considerations

Session #3: Dying is a Spiritual Process

- Making Meaning of Life/Making Meaning of Death
- Finishing a Life's Work toward an Honorable Death

Session #4: Dying requires a Good-bye

- End of Life Conversations
- How do we choose to remember

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!!

Messy, Wildly Imperfect Love

Blessed are you
in whom
the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes—
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith
in stubborn hope
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.

—Jan Richardson, "[Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light](#)"

If I were going to write a book about my life as a minister, there would definitely be a part about last Christmas Eve, when I lost my sermon. My sermon was about big things coming undone, like our country, and the theory that when everything is falling apart around us, something new and beautiful is likely trying to get itself born. I learned this idea from the writer Anne Lamott, and while I'm not certain it's true, I really want it to be.

It turns out I had not lost my sermon. I had misplaced it by putting it carefully on the high pulpit. But I forgot. So as the service was happening I was searching frantically through my millions of papers in a state of escalating inner hysteria and humiliation, all while trying to appear calm and as though I were actually listening to the readings. When it was time to preach, I had to announce that my sermon was slightly missing and could the choir please go ahead and sing so I could keep looking.

By the end of the song, I figured out the sermon was already in the pulpit so I walked up there to preach it. The first words were, "Broken things have been on my mind lately." The entire congregation started laughing, including me, and my

shame slid free and disappeared into the laughter.

Every year on the Sunday before Christmas we have a Pageant in a Paper Bag. No rehearsal, and the only preparation is that we put the costumes in brown grocery bags, label them ("Camel, large, includes ears") and line them up in the aisles. People come to church, choose a bag, and join the story. Over the years, kids have started improvising their own costumes so we never know who will show up. There have been jaguars and bumblebees. One year Darth Vader was there and another year two tiny dragons walked everyone down the aisle to Bethlehem. All are welcome at our stable, we like to say.

Every year I give the congregation the same directions. I tell them not to worry about mistakes because there aren't any; there is only us, telling an old story about love getting born into this aching world. And love is messy and wildly imperfect and very beautiful. This is true for all of us: we are strong and fragile, broken and resilient, stunning and flawed. And somehow, improbably, love shines through us and illuminates every broken thing it touches. Even ministers who lose their sermons on Christmas Eve.

Rev. Elea Kemler (Braver/Wiser)

Prayer

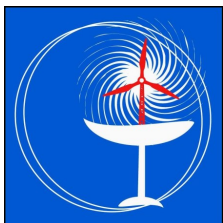
Love, shine through us. Help us to hold ourselves and one another in stubborn hope, in the fierce insistence that we are whole and wholly beautifully.

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



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