

MERE LYS

February 2020 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Sundays

Coffee 10:00 am
Worship 10:30 am

2nd Wednesday

Worship 7:00 pm



February 2

“Lingering”

Part 2 of 4 on the future of
Nora Church

February 9

“Wounds and Band- aids”

Guest Speaker: Rev. Rita
Capezzi

February 12

“Love, of Course!”

Wednesday 7:00 pm

February 16

No Service

February 23

“Prophetic Words”

A View From the Hill

As it happens this year, I’m writing this February column, in which I usually address some aspect of love, on Martin Luther King, Jr. day. And I’m pondering what meaning to make of that coincidence, and also of the fact that year after year Valentine’s Day and Black History share the month of February.

White moderates and progressives are fond of quotes from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr that invoke the redemptive power of love. I’ve seen any number of them on social media today (and I’ve used some of the more familiar in worship over the years). But my on-going learning about white supremacy culture makes clear to me that easy, popular, usually out-of-context quotes from Dr. King (including love quotes) silence the broader, more incisive and challenging message he carried about justice--economic as well as racial--and erase his radical nature. So those quotes won’t be the unifying thread I weave through my message this month.

Yet *love*--that is to say, seeing, knowing, acknowledging, embracing, and celebrating the wholeness of a person or institution or culture, critically, honestly, affectionately, unreservedly, such that the person or institution or culture thrives, developing ever more fully into itself--*love* might be the heart of Black History Month.

Without ever really giving it much thought, I’ve always assumed Black History Month (as if the history of any group of people can be comprehensively recognized and celebrated in just one short month; as if ‘black history’ is a single history) was primarily about education and a little bit about making a drop-in-the-bucket gesture toward correcting the lack of black people, stories, and achievements in history as it is routinely taught in our schools. But what if education and symbolic correction are entirely beside the point?

What if Black History Month is a love poem? Romantic and raw, tender and lyrical, sensual and wondering, silly and searching, extravagant and adoring. Spray-painted on underpasses and water towers, scribbled in journals, or scrawled on the gift-tag attached to a heart-shaped box of chocolates. An unapologetic love song to Black History from black people, unashamed to have others hear or read or witness the declaration of love mostly because they can’t be bothered to be concerned with others.

What if Black History Month were like that? What if that’s why Black History Month is in February, not because it is the shortest month of the year, but because the observance and celebration of Black History is a Valentine a long time in coming, one that year after year, decade after decade was lost in the mail or, worse, not sent at all, its place in the mailbox claimed by hate mail and letter bombs? What if we act as if it were this way? And what if our only role this month, as white allies, is to remove barriers from and

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stay out of the way of a love story destined to make the Beloved Community whole?

-Lisa

Thanks From the Board

Thank you to all the helpers who took down the tree and Christmas decorations.

Thank You!

Board Meeting

February board meetings are tentatively set for the 2nd and 23rd, watch for updates.

On Wednesday Night Services

Monthly, 2nd Wednesday worship continues through May. These services have familiar elements including joys and sorrows, a meditation, and offering. Three sets of reading-reflection-silence-music replace the sermon portion of a typical Sunday morning service. Nora members who have attended these services find them a calm and welcome break in midweek. Carpools are available for those who prefer not to drive after dark. Please join us on February 12th for *Love, Of Course!*



Lunch Bunch

Dig out that Perkins discount card and join the Lunch Bunch at the New Ulm Perkins Restaurant, 1727 S. Broadway, on Wednesday, February 12, 11:30 a.m. Good company, good food, and a time to honor a great president, Abraham Lincoln. Hope you can be there, and the weather cooperates.

Lunch Bunch is a monthly social gathering open to all.

Supper Club

Supper Club will meet 6:30 pm, Wednesday, February 19 at Turner Hall, New Ulm. Hope you can join us!

Vision Sermon Series

On January 5 Lisa preached The View from Here: Grief and Guilt. Her series on alternative visions of the future of Nora Church continues February 2 with *Lingering*. On March 1 she will consider *Celebrating*. And the series will conclude on April 5 with *Transforming*. Titles subject to change if/as the spirit works.

Hanska Community Meal

Wednesday, February 26 is our next Hanska Community Meal. 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, sponsored by Nora Unitarian Universalist Church.

We need bars, cooks, servers, and cleanup crew. Willing workers—get in touch with Jeanie!

Wounds and Band-aids

Guest Speaker February 9

We welcome Rev. Rita Capezzi Sunday, February 9, with her sermon *Wounds and Band-aids*. Sometimes we try to cover up our wounds. What might it be like if we could acknowledge that it is our brokenness that enables community?

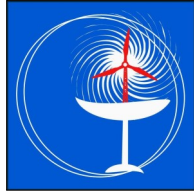
Rev. Rita Capezzi answered the call in 2018 to serve the Unitarian Universalists Fellowship of Mankato. She and her spouse have settled into midwestern life after 25 years in Buffalo, NY. It's not the snow, it's the cold that makes winter new and refreshing for them.

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 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 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!!

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.



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.

The Body of Love

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ...If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

—1 Corinthians 12:14-17 and 26

We're part of an interdependent web of existence; sometimes that interdependence is physical. In 2015, my dad almost died of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (medical for "your lungs are turning into scar tissue and we don't know why"). In August,

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

Income:	\$ 7,756.75
Expenses:	\$11,060.67

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

he told me what hymns he wanted at his funeral. We watched him slip away, getting weaker and weaker. But one night in December, a stranger died—and my family and several others on organ waiting lists got a call. The day after the Winter Solstice, my dad received a life-saving transplant.

I remember the cycles of hope and fear: waiting for the organs to arrive from out of town; sharing an ecstatic family hug when the surgery was successful. It was disruptive and strange to spend Christmas in the hospital, living on endless cups of coffee and constant hand-washing; even more so to know that someone had died to bring this hope, and to wonder how the donor's family mourned at the same time we rejoiced. This gift of new life wasn't just warm and fuzzy. It came with disruption and responsibility. Something was forever changed in our family.

Something also changed in how I understand human connection. One day, about a year and a half later, I spotted a man wearing "Donate Life" gear—on a walk with his mother—and I stopped them: "Hey, this is weird, but I saw your hat and just wanted to see what your connection is. My dad is a transplant recipient." The man told me his brother had died young, and they chose organ donation. They kept getting notifications, his mother said: his eyes were in Tennessee. His lungs were over here. He had been a small person so his heart went to a child. They think sometimes about how those living pieces are still living all over the country. I told them I would probably never meet or know my dad's donor family, and asked if I could thank them. And I did.

Christian teachings use the image of one body to describe the beloved community. This is part of what this means to me now: organs and tissue con-

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.

necting strangers across time and space. We need one another to survive, not just abstractly but in our flesh, in our blood, in the choices we make to give life even amidst death.

What would change if we—if I—lived with this knowledge? If my cousin's heart kept your child alive? If my O- blood saved the life of the religiously conservative man in your neighborhood? If your uncle's lungs breathed air into my dad's body the day he met his granddaughter? How would I act if I really knew that we are not isolated individuals, but parts of each other's being? What grace—messy, vulnerable, and disturbing—might come to dwell among us?

Elizabeth Bukey (Braver/Wiser)

Prayer

Oh God whose name is Love: hold us close in this season of waiting. Rejoice with us in every instant of hope breaking in to our world. Open our hearts to the messy reality of our interdependence. Guide us into living vulnerably and bravely in that truth. Teach us to love each other as part of one body, so that each and every one of us may survive and thrive.

From Broken Parts, Whole

Shards of glass can cut and wound or magnify a vision. Mosaic celebrates brokenness and the beauty of being brought together.

—Terry Tempest Williams, "Finding Beauty in a Broken World"

I made a beautiful piece of art in a mosaic class this summer, but there were times when I was frustrated at my own limits. The teacher used the tools with ease. When I used them, it was clumsy. Still, the teacher showed me how to use the tool; she never offered to do it for me—which meant that by practicing, I figured it out for myself.

I also learned that there were two ways for us to turn large sheets of glass into smaller, usable pieces: the intentional precision of a pistol-handled

glass cutter, or using a ball-peen hammer and a thwack of force. Each method renders very different results, both of which are necessary. The beauty of our mosaics emerged from a mixture of precision and chaos, control and surrender.

I had arrived to class with a design in mind but the further along I got—transferring the design from paper to wood—the less the mosaic looked like my original drawing. Which was all for the better. Vision is essential, but I had to hold mine loosely so the final project could reveal itself to me along the way.

From this class, I gleaned plenty of wisdom for life beyond the artist's studio:

As much as you can, surround yourself with skillful teachers, no matter what you are learning. Let them teach you, but don't let them do it for you. That learning is yours to do.

Respect the fragments and shards, whether they're multi-hued glass or your life's own story. Yes, they offer the occasional sharp cut, but they can offer also beauty and new ways to perceive the world.

Resist the urge to fully map out the future. Instead, cultivate humility: a sign of strength, not weakness. Find within you the capacity to trust, no matter how small; grow that.

Karen G. Johnston (Braver/Wiser)

Prayer

May you get through this life not unscathed, but with all your broken parts available for you to piece together into a beautiful whole.

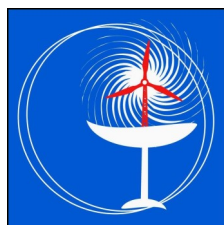
To ♥ Keep In Touch

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



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