

# MERE LYS

## June & July 2020 Newsletter

### Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

### Services

**In person Sunday & Wednesday**

**Services Cancelled**

Zoom services for the month are listed, along with daily reflections.



**June 7th**

**Flower Ceremony**

10:30 am on Zoom

**June 10th**

**“Bonds of Love; Gates of Freedom”**

7:00 pm on Zoom

**Sunday Zoom Meetings**

12:00-12:30 pm

**Daily Poetry Reflection**

*On Nora's You Tube*



### **A View From the Hill**

I just asked Lucia what she thinks you all need to hear from me in my column this month. She didn't know. And for a while, I didn't know either. Then I did know. In this extended *Groundhog's Day* movie that our lives have become, we all need to hear what we always need to hear: you are precious; you are loved; it will all be alright.

You are precious. A child of God. Possessor of inherent worth and dignity. Source of joy and sustenance to all who love you. Nora Church would be less without you in it. My life would be less without you in it. Your voice and laughter. Your grumbled opinions and your willing work. Your signature potluck offering and your offerings of joy and sorrow for family, friends, the world we inhabit. And most of all, the church would be less, my life would be less, without the ineffable spirit, soul, something that is you...

...for the you-that-is-you--indescribable and unalterable--is loved. I love you. Your companions in this faith community love you. I watch them love you. I hear them love you. They worry about you when you are far (and sometimes when you are near they still worry about you). Their faces light up when you are near, and their breath becomes deeper and slower. They, we, become more ourselves when we are assured that you are among us--that's love. And greater even than the love I and we have for you, you are loved by the Love that holds us all, that declares us whole and holy just as and who we are.

Finally, my faith in the Love that holds us all, that declares us whole and holy just as and who we are (in other words, the Universalist strand of my Unitarian Universalist faith), undergirds my knowing, without proof or guarantees, that it will be alright. We will be alright. Nora Church will be alright. *Alright takes different guises at different times. The alright that emerges as we continue on in life upended by pandemic will be unfamiliar and might not immediately feel alright. The same is true for the next alright after that. But our preciousness doesn't change. The love (human) and Love (divine) that holds us individually and as Nora Church doesn't change. Thus it is, unalterably precious in our very being and unshakably bound in our love, that we ourselves will (and already do) transform whatever comes into alright. Alright for us. Alright for one another. And alright for the whole of the interdependent web within which we exist--in unknown and unknowable ways.*

You are precious. You are loved. It will be alright.

—Lisa

## **News From the Board**

The Nora Church Board met on May 12. The major discussion centered on the proposed budget. All voting members will be receiving a copy of the proposed budget with directions for our annual meeting on Zoom scheduled for Sunday, June 7 at Noon. This will be an abbreviated annual meeting for the purpose of complying with our church by-laws. Since we reduced board to five members there is only one position that is expiring. Dick Gurska's term is up. He has served one term and is eligible and willing to serve another term. Nominations can also be made from the floor on June 7. We made every effort to reduce our budget proposal. It is 3.7% less than the 19-20 budget. A major area of savings is in Rev. Doege's professional expenses and reduction in dollars allotted for church members to attend regional and annual UUA events. It is likely that more events will be online rather than in person reducing costs and travel expenses.

We applied for and received \$11,000 in PPP funds due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This money is specifically targeted to cover employee wages.

We've arranged for the wind turbine to have routine maintenance in June. Mark and Brenda Wiger have made a generous donation to help defray part of the maintenance expense.

Jerry, Jana, and Jerod Brown will not be having an extended stay in Hanska this year as previously planned. Jerry had previously offered to paint the church exterior if he was in the area. We'll discuss Plan B in the near future.

This was our third board meeting on Zoom. It works pretty efficiently. We're learning to adapt as we all must to the new normal. It's been a pleasure to see church members who attend the Sunday check-ins. It's a nice half hour to forty minutes of joys and concerns, check-in with each participant, and often a joke or two to lighten the day. Changing circumstances require us to be resilient, try new things and new ways. If you have the equipment that will run Zoom I strongly encourage you to use Lisa's tutoring or Gil Hanson's assistance to enable you to join in.

The board will be discussing the issue of safely opening the church to in person worship. A Covid Preparedness Plan has to be put together including measures for sanitizing, safe distancing, personal protection, and safe practices within the service

itself. You may have heard that singing, hymnal use, and passing the plate for collection are all considered risky for virus transmission. We'll keep you posted as we begin preparation and consider timelines for any church events. We welcome your comments. No matter when or how we meet, it will always be your decision regarding what is appropriate for you.

Hope to see you June 7 on ZOOM!!!!

Jeanie Hinsman

## **Nominating Committee Report**

Dick Gurska's first term on the Board of Trustees expires on July 1st. Dick is willing to serve another term. Respectfully submitted, Nita Gilbert & Edith Beckius

## **Annual Congregational Meeting**

Our by-laws call for us to hold our annual meeting on the first Sunday in June. The on-going pandemic makes it impossible for us to meet in person safely—or even lawfully at the present time. The annual meeting of Nora Unitarian Universalist Church will take place at approximately 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 7th, 2020, via Zoom (meeting number 972 541 6879). Detailed instructions for participation were sent out in the mail to voting members.

At that time the congregation will vote to approve the 2020 - 2021 fiscal year budget (also sent out; as well as voting on the election of Dick Gurska for complete three year term on the Board of Trustees; lastly, consideration of a motion to hold a subsequent congregational meeting for the purposes of receiving reports and conducting other church business when it becomes prudent to do so in person. Such meeting would be scheduled at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, and notification made in accordance with by-laws.

## **Flower Ceremony**

Not knowing, at the time, when we would be able to resume in-person worship (and still not knowing), I committed Nora Church to joining Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato for a joint, virtual Flower Ceremony on Sunday, June 7, at 10:30. Rev. Rita and I are still in the planning stages. The service will probably be largely music and poetry and images. The office administrator I worked with in Indiana has sent a video of himself (a lovely baritone) singing the doxology our congregation sings each Flower Sunday. We'll probably

*In Memoriam*

**Arline M. Schmiesing**

July 22, 1923 - May 18, 2020

be adding other music, either from UUFM or Nora musicians or from the growing selection of UU pieces available for use on-line (pieces for which copyright permission has been granted). One highlight of the service will be a montage of images and stories. We need your images and your stories. Please send in a flower or garden photograph that is important to you for one reason or another, along with a sentence or two telling the story of your photograph. You may email your submissions to [norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net).

This worship service will take place in Rev. Rita’s Zoom room. Here’s the important info. I’ll send it again on Saturday, June 6.

Zoom Information

UUFM Sunday Morning Virtual Worship 10:30 am. Gathering begins at 10:15 am.

Join Zoom Video Meeting by clicking <https://zoom.us/j/340634083>. Or, join by opening your Zoom icon (which you can download at <https://zoom.us/>) and entering the Meeting ID 340 634 083 where it says “Join A Meeting.” Or, join an Audio-Only Meeting by dialing on your phone 312 -626-6799, then entering the Meeting ID 340 634 083 followed by #.

Our password for worship is 883666. For security reasons, you will then enter a Waiting Room. The Morning Host will let you in once we know you are there for worship.

One way to ensure our Morning Host knows who you are is to change your Zoom Screen Name. To do this, launch your Zoom app, select the “settings” icon on the Homepage. This will take you to the Zoom website. From the menu on the left, select “Profile” under “Personal,” and make your changes. Funny sounding names and profile pictures are a tip-off of a “zombomber,” so please choose a screen name judiciously.

**Lisa at Large**

Stay-at-Home and Stay Safe have prevented me from being at-large geographically these past months, but my at-large activities have continued

apace. I met, via Zoom, a couple times with a large group of Minnesota UU clergy colleagues, near the beginning of the pandemic to discuss plans and share resources. I had lunch, via Zoom, with a group of Twin Cities women UU ministers. I’ve written pastor’s corner columns for both the Madelia paper and the St. James paper (The writing and submission process were unchanged since pre-corona virus, but the subject of the columns were definitely corona-related!). I’ve presided over 3 NUMAS Haus board meetings via Zoom. I’ve continued to supervise the NUMAS Haus shelter coordinator, via telephone and text, and maybe Facetime—it’s hard to remember! Masked and hand sanitized I went to Citizen’s Bank in New Ulm to sign PPP loan documents on behalf of NUMAS Haus. The United Way board has not met since the Stay-at-Home order was first put in place,

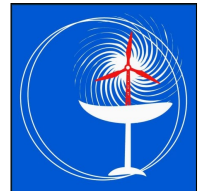
*A Note From the Treasurer*  
**April Income and Expenses**

**Income:** \$ 3,393.00  
**Expenses:** \$ 6,891.44

*Income & 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.



**Notes from the Nora Office...**

**Mere Lys Newsletter content due the 20th of each month**

**No July newsletter!**

**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.*

but I have responded via e-mail when it has been necessary for the full board to authorize the executive committee to act on our behalf. And, of course, I've collaborated with Rita Capezzi, via phone, Facetime, Zoom, text and e-mail, about joint UUFM and Nora worship services—that sort of straddles the line between at large and at home!

### **Sunday Zoom Meetings at Noon**

Because connection is our most urgent need in times of forced isolation, I will host a Zoom gathering each Sunday at 12:00 pm (after most on-line worship has concluded).

You will be able to join the gathering via your webcam or through a telephone. We will, for the most part, be able to see one another's faces and hear one another's voices.

I'll offer opening words and light a chalice. You may wish to light a chalice also (let me know if you need creative ideas for a homemade chalice). We'll share joys and sorrows, broadly defined. And engage in conversation until 12:30.

Join the call by clicking <https://uuma.zoom.us/join>; or by opening your Zoom icon and entering the Meeting ID 972 541 6879 where it says "Join A Meeting"; or by dialing 312-626-6799, then entering the Meeting ID 972 541 6879 followed by #.

Looking forward to seeing you!

(please note, if you click on the Zoom link anytime other than noon on Sundays I will not be there.)

### **Daily poetry Reflection on the New YouTube Channel**

Lectio divina sessions are uploaded daily. Links will be posted on Facebook. You can also search YouTube for Nora Unitarian Universalist Church and subscribe to the channel.

The session template is below. We had to cut the silence down to two minutes to fit YouTube's time frame. We welcome feedback and suggestions—

kindly offered.

Rev. Lisa Doege

### ***Lectio Divina***

Make yourself comfortable in front of your screen. You may wish to have a journal and pen at hand. I will welcome you and invite us to breathe together.

Then I will read the day's poem aloud three times. Two minutes of silence will follow each reading for reflection and journaling. The camera will focus on a chalice during the silence.

The three readings of the poem (or scripture passage) are typically designated: listen, ponder, pray (some Unitarian Universalists might say ask).

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that attracts your attention or 'jumps out at you'. Repeat it several times in your head/heart. Repeat it aloud.

Second Reading: Ponder why this word/phrase has captured your attention and how it might relate to your life. Can you express the relationship in a single sentence?

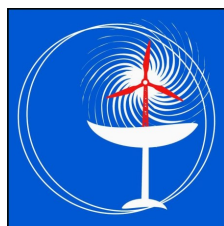
Third Reading: Ask what Life/God/the Holy is calling from you or for you, through the word/phrase? How will you live your response to your interaction with this poem?

After the third two minute silent period I will remind you that another video will be posted by 11:00 tomorrow, and then extinguish the chalice.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8WV1zYwpI7ILsQXE6iXXLw>

### **Mail Your Pledges!**

While we are not able to gather at our usual times, in our usual places, expenses continue as usual. We appreciate it, as you are able, to continue to send your regular pledges in the mail, or arrange direct deposit with your bank (contact Julie for more info on direct deposit). Thank you!



## **Nora Unitarian Universalist Church**

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