

Services

Sunday Services

10:30 am

***In person &
Facebook Live***



October 4

“Sating Our Hunger”

October 11

“Derusuib”

October 18

“Let It Be a Prayer”

October 25

To Be Announced

Unless announced otherwise, services will be held simultaneously in the church and on Facebook Live. Our COVID protocol remains in place: masks must be worn, members of separate households must sit at least six feet apart from one another, no receiving line or social hall, all parts of the building other than the sanctuary and the entryway restroom are off limits. Thank you.

MERE LYS

October 2020 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

A View From the Hill

Somewhere along the line someone tried to teach me never to write or preach about the process of writing or preaching. If I ever learn to apply that rule to my writing and preaching, both will improve ten times. In this instance, however, it is important to acknowledge right up front two facts about this column:

It is the sixth pandemic-era newsletter column I've written. It is also the sixth pandemic-themed newsletter column I've written.

This is ridiculous. It is way past time to be writing (not too mention thinking and talking) about something other than coronavirus/COVID-19/pandemic. I'm tired of it. You're tired of it. There's more to life than just the virus. Enough already.

Except, wait a minute, right now as September 2020 turns to October 2020, the coronavirus pandemic *is* at the edge, and often the center, of everything—the way we grocery shop to the way we'll vote in the November election, from where we're working to where our children and grandchildren are learning, from how we vacation (or not) to how we worship (or not). From A to Z. From morning to night.

I never advocate stewing over difficult circumstances and situations, refusing to lift our gazes to the horizons now and then, circling around and around in our very real misfortune, anxiety, fear, confusion and pain. And I'm not advocating that now. We need to notice the fall colors. Watch the MLB play-offs. Laugh at funny videos. Donate food or dollars or diapers to neighbors in need. Sing or dance along to favorite music. Write, call, Zoom, drive-by family and friends. Because life is colorful, exciting, competitive, funny, unjust and unequal, music filled, and populated with people who love us. The pandemic hasn't taken any of that away.

But the pandemic has changed the ways we're able to see colors, watch sports, view entertainment. Exaggerated and amplified injustice and need. Made concert tickets not worth the paper they're printed on. Separated us from the ones we love. And ignoring the impact or trying to pretend it's insignificant or a hoax or bound to disappear any day now, refusing in any way to accept that the coronavirus has changed everything, will prolong the pandemic, worsen the pandemic, and destroy any chance we have of shaping the post-pandemic world into a brighter, more colorful, musical, just, funny, possibility-laden world than even existed before we first heard the word.

This is my sixth coronavirus column (8th or 9th if I include the ones I've written for the St. James Plaindealer and Madelia Times-Messenger). And it's not my last.

—*Lisa*

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Board Meeting

The next church board meeting is October 14 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

News From the Board

Ballots Counted

There are two significant items of news from the board this month. First, is the result of the ballot to reduce cost of ministry by 50% in the 21-22 church year. Twenty-nine ballots were counted with the result of 27 in favor of the reduction and two voting against. This decision obviously has great repercussions for the life of the Nora congregation, for Rev. Lisa, and for how we do church in the future. We are establishing a relationship with Rev. David Pyle from UUA MidAmerica region. His experience in helping other declining churches will be a valuable resource to us as we move forward. During this time of uncertainty due to the Covid pandemic, this change in ministry makes one more challenge for us to face. The board will do all it can to hear everyone's viewpoints, communicate well, and move forward in a conscientious and deliberate manner.

Painting Contract

Our effort to get the church exterior painted is underway. The board made the decision to hire Bill Thormodson for the painting of the church building for a price of \$4,500. This bid did not include removal of the storm windows or painting of the window trim. Inclusion of windows is an additional \$80 per window. If we receive sufficient donations for the window trim we will have Bill do that as well.

This plan necessitates our painting of the fellowship hall and kaffestua with volunteers. We began work on September 27th.

Eleven Nora folks (and one dog) spent several hours scraping and painting parts of the social hall this morning and early afternoon—some bundled

A Note From the Treasurer

August Income and Expenses

Income: \$4,492.00

Expenses: \$7,573.61

Income and expenses presented at the last board meeting.

against the cold wind and some asking “cold, what cold?” We talked books and family, politics and life journeys—in other words, the camaraderie so many association with Smorg prep was present in abundance. We still have about half the social hall and all of the Kaffe Stua to go.

Anyone wishing to spend a few hours outdoors with a paint bucket and brush is encouraged to call Warren, Scott Chambard or Darrell and someone will be out there with you to assist. We have brushes and paint at the ready.

We just need YOU!

New Program Committee

Sally Ann Benson, Colleen Hokenson, and Brett Lehman have agreed to serve as program committee for the 20-21 church year. They will be planning services for those Sundays when Lisa is not scheduled to perform worship. If you have suggestions or ideas for program please let one of the committee know. Thanks very much to Sally, Brett and Colleen for being so gracious and willing to serve in this capacity.

All the work you might not have seen.....

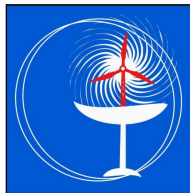
In the mid weeks of September many hard hours of labor were contributed by a diligent work crew. Darrell and Lee saw to it that bad siding was replaced on the church and kaffestua in preparation for the painting. Darrell and Warren also worked on a drain problem in the parsonage. Other help in powerwashing, weeding, and other miscellaneous tasks was contributed by Dave Benson, Scott Chambard, and John Masengarb. Gentlemen, your tireless effort is not unnoticed. We thank each of you for all the hours you've contributed especially when for two of you it has meant hours of driving to be part of the crew.

October Food Shelf Month

One month a year Nora Church takes its turn to provide volunteer staff for the New Ulm Food

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.



Shelf. We share the month's responsibility with United Church of Christ. We only need to cover Monday night Oct. 5, and afternoon of Oct. 28. Volunteers have already been recruited for Oct. 5. If you can help out on Oct. 28 please let Jeanie Hinsman know.

Lisa at Large

Lisa has resigned from the board of directors of the United Way of Brown County in order to spend more of her ministry time focused directly on Nora Church. She continues to serve as president of the board of directors of NUMAS Haus, and to write occasional columns for the Madelia paper and the St. James paper. Once in a while, if the column is too long for the space allotted in the Madelia paper the publisher prints it as a letter to the editor instead, and runs it in the Hanska Herald, too.

Member, Family and Friend Updates

Kristy Paulson has moved to Oak Hills in New Ulm for the next stage of rehab following a recent fall.

Mimi Kamleiter is in hospital in Mankato with pneumonia.

Pam and Brandon Rathman (Joy's son and daughter-in-law) welcomed baby Cody on September 14.

Send your news to Brooke or Lisa for the next newsletter and for Grapevines in between!

Nora History

As I (Lisa) re-familiarized myself with the story of the tornado earlier in our church's history, I was struck by this line, written by Arline Schmiesing:

"They did not expect more contributions from the American Unitarian Association in Boston, but were determined to build a small meeting house using what materials remained and depending on their own means. When contributions from the East began to come again, the plans were conse-

quently changed, and the erection of the present church was commended in the fall and completed the following year."

For many years the Unitarian Universalist Association or the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or both, would send out appeals in the wake of natural disasters. Minister and congregational leaders would forward those appeals along to members. Special collections would be taken on Sunday mornings or mailing addresses would be provided so members could send checks to special funds designated for rebuilding hurricane or fire or flood ravaged buildings. More recently the UUA has established an on-going, umbrella Disaster Relief Fund. You can learn more about the Fund [here](#), and make a donation [here](#). It's a way of paying forward those donations from the East that help build our building so many years ago.

Daily Poetry Reflection on the Nora YouTube Channel

Lectio divina sessions are uploaded **Tuesday-Friday**. 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 v invite us to breathe together.

Notes from the Nora Office...

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

**Since there will be no printed orders of service,
please send announcements for Grapevines via
email, or pass along to Rev. Lisa for me.**

Please send content of any kind, for the newsletter
and more, to the Nora email.

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
Working from home and in the office Tuesday*

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>

Braver/Wiser: Begetting Community

"In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it."

—Marianne Williamson

Not atypical of Buffalo, there's a vacant house next door. And not atypical of vacant houses, it has a garage with a missing window. It became home to woodchucks, skunks, and cats. I recognize the first two as forces of nature, but the cats are invasive. When I moved into my house, neighbors told me that a former occupant had fed the feral cats. "Yeah, not me," I said. I'm a bird lover. Feral cats decimate song bird populations. We were not pleased, but we were patient. This is the texture of an urban environment. I felt more inclined to live with it than change it.

Peering out the kitchen window one morning, we saw kittens bounding through the yard.

A tabby watched them. "Oh," I thought. The feral cat begets more cats.

A colleague referred me to a local nonprofit which advises the community on humane ways to deal with feral cats. They call it trap-neuter-vaccinate-release. You trap cats, bring them for spaying and neutering, the vets vaccinate them, and you bring them back. OK, I thought. If it needs to be done, let's do it.

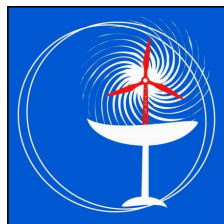
So I began to trap the feral cats. This is not something I foresaw myself doing. I borrowed the traps, used time off from work to get them to the appointments, cared for them in my garage, and released them when it was time. It was a process that took three weeks. Training them to go into the traps meant that we've started feeding them and giving them water. The kittens went through growth spurts. After releasing two males, and watching one of them stick around, I realized that I've accidentally become the caretaker of this colony. Our decision to be the neighbors who take the lead on this problem means that we will now own it in our community.

Part of being in community is noticing what's needed. Part of being in community is doing what is necessary but unclaimed. Being part of a community means being willing to own what might not be easy or comfortable. I also learned that being part of a community means being willing to own one's power, which required me to stretch beyond what I thought I'd be willing to do.

By Christine Slocum (Braver/Wiser Sept. 16, 2020)

Prayer

May we be open to being the force of change our communities need, be those changes small or large.



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