

Services

Sunday Services

10:30 am

*Streamed on Facebook Live
(or Zoom, as noted)*

April 1

***Maundy Thursday
Vespers, 7:00 Zoom***

April 4

***“Alleluia, Because”
Easter Service***

April 11

***“Who Deserves to
Live?”***

April 18

“Loved Into Being”
*A service from our
Unitarian Universalist
Association*

April 25

***TBA, Guest Speaker
Rev. Kelli Clement
Program Committee
Sunday, Zoom***

***Join all services on
Facebook Live at 10:30
Sunday mornings or later
on YouTube (or Zoom, as
otherwise noted).***

MERE LYS

April 2021 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

A View From the Hill

What a sorrowful year this has been. Last year the sudden explosion of coronavirus in this country coincided with the season of new life and rebirth. Cruelly so. I don't think any of us imagined, when we gathered with UUFM for a zoom Easter service, that our celebration would be virtual again this year. But this is my 12th COVID-era newsletter. I no longer know how to write anything that does not in some big or small, deliberate or off-hand, way reference the coronavirus and COVID-19. Privileged and healthy, still I find the pandemic permeates every waking moment of my day, and every word of my writing. I wanted this month to be different. I wanted to approach Easter with hope trending toward joy, as vaccination numbers rise and yesterday (as I write) Minnesota reported zero deaths from COVID-19 for the first time since *last* April.

Alas, it is not to be so. Not yet, anyway.

Because yesterday also brought news of ten dead in a mass shooting in a grocery store near Boulder, Colorado, even as we are still reeling from the deaths in the shootings in Atlanta. Because for all the pervasiveness of coronavirus, this year, this spring 2020 to spring 2021 year, we've also found ourselves thrust simultaneously into naming and reckoning with several other viruses or epidemics: white supremacy, gun violence, systemic inequities in access to health care, technology, educational and financial resources. Some of these viruses have been laid bare by the coronavirus pandemic—like news that while everyone's life expectancy dropped in 2020, the largest drops were in Black and Hispanic males--but all of them have been with us for a long, long time.

A pandemic surging in Europe and parts of the U. S. The United States both suffering disproportionate numbers of COVID deaths and utilizing disproportionate doses of COVID vaccine. Violent death, murders in the season of new life, of budding trees, blossoming flowers. Countless poets, preachers, wise teachers tell us that as people of faith we are called to resurrection (small r) even now. Remind us, in fact, that death must precede resurrection. Yes. Yes, and I'm grateful I don't have to record my Easter message for ten more days. Time still to sit with the death, so I will be ready for the birth of hope.

—*Lisa*



Sunday Services

Join Sunday services on Facebook Live at 10:30 Sunday mornings or later on YouTube. Program Committee Sundays will be hosted on Zoom.

In-person services anticipated to resume May 2nd. Watch for updates.

Be sure to sign up for our Grapevine emails to receive updates, and changes. Sign up by emailing the church at norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

Board Meeting + Special Meeting.

The March board meeting is Tuesday, April 13th at 7:15 pm, on Zoom.

News From the Board

Going to church in Covid times has been an evolutionary process. First was the technological hurdle. With the link Lisa provides in e-mail it has become easy-peasy to click on and magic happens. Then Darrell purchased external speakers and now we appreciate much better sound quality. I used to “do church” at varying times of the week when I made time for YouTube but now I like keeping to Sunday morning at 10:30. It feels right, and the live chats during the service help me feel connected knowing others are watching at the same time. I’ve appreciated the variety of musical performance. The experience transports me to Nora. Its people, surroundings, and spiritual message carry me through the week. Today’s images of Algot, Norma, Carol, Lara, Nancy, Shannon, Lui, and many, many, more friends along with images of the dormant trees, slough, cemetery, vistas to the north and east, the tulips breaking ground, become the picture prayer that Lisa spoke about. I feel the presence of Nora’s hallowed space and pray that our church community is sustained through this separation and returns to a new normal that we cannot yet envision.

I’ve spent many zoom hours with talented UU staff and congregational leaders hearing about how church experiences will be altered after Covid isolation. There have been many benefits to online services. Snowbird church members attend their home congregations from hundreds of miles away. In northern climates there is the convenience of not risking bad roads or making difficult decisions to call off church due to weather. For some who have mobility issues, church comes to them, making it safer. There’s a convenience to fit church

A Note From the Treasurer

February Income and Expenses

Income: \$ 4,692

Expenses: \$ 6,475

Income and expenses presented at the last board meeting. Income does not include memorials and gifts.

into your personal schedule and to participate from your living room couch. Newcomers find church services that appeal to them when they might never had made the effort or taken the risk to attend in person. Not everyone however has sufficient technology to obtain church remotely, and online is not the same as being in person, so somehow we will be trying to engage in “multi-platform” programming, a mixture of online and in-person experiences. Online may take on new directions. Some congregations are having good luck with book or movie discussions, or adult RE, or a variety of shared programs with other congregations.

The board anticipates having in-person church on Sunday May 2. This will depend on the Covid rates at that time, but our hope is that most if not all church members will be vaccinated by then. There will not be coffee hour, or potluck, but we will be in the sanctuary. Later in May we will schedule the proposed budget for 2021-2022 and hope to have our annual meeting in June as we have in the past. We will need time to catch up with one another and to talk about how we shape church programming going forward. I hope my “picture prayer”, my Sunday morning vision of Nora members engaging in Lisa’s thoughtful message and finely crafted audio-visual experience is a shared one. If there is any way I can help enhance your participation in online church services, please reach out.

Thanks, Jeanie Hinsman

Guest Speaker April 25th

The Program Committee is planning the service for April 25 via Zoom. Rev. Kelli Clement will be our guest preacher, presenting information about the work done by First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis regarding abortion access.

Rev. Kelli Clement is Assistant Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. Kelli was or-

dained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in 2011. At First Unitarian Society her responsibilities include social justice and welcome. She is a frequent wedding and memorial service officiant. In a new partnership, Kelli serves as part-time minister for the St. Croix Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin.

Wednesday Zoom Meetings

April 7th and 21st. First and third Wednesdays we'll gather on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. for a chalice lighting and general conversation. Our February gatherings were small and intimate, giving a few of us a chance to go deeper but we're missing you!! We'll commit to sending reminders and posting them on Facebook, too. You commit to joining in. Deal? Please? Click on the link sent in Grapevines, on your smart phone or tablet will connect you.

Lisa at Large

I'd ordinarily be heading off to a MidAmerica Regional Assembly sometime in April. Last year the assembly was moved online. This year there isn't one. The pandemic is still reshaping the ways we do just about everything. General Assembly will be virtual again this year. Nora Church gets two delegates. Please let me or Jeanie know if you'd like to be one of them.

NUMAS Haus continues to be full, with a waiting list. Our new trailer for transitional housing is now ready for occupancy as soon as we have a program graduate who is unable to find suitable housing in the New Ulm area. We are in the process of reorganizing our staffing structure preparatory to hiring a second social worker.

Upcoming Social Justice Book Discussion

Thursday, April 22 6:30-8:30pm—Zoom information to follow. Please join Nora Unitarian Universalist Church and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato for a discussion of the [2020-21 UUA Common Read is *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* by Imani Perry](#). *Breathe* reflects on race, racism, and the hope that one's child will be wholly known and valued by society. It is "an unforgettable lesson in Black resistance and resilience." The *New York Times* calls *Breathe* "an elixir of history, ancestry and compassion, which, together, become instruction...a parent's unflinching demand, born of inherited trauma and love, for her children's right simply to be possible." Revs. Rita

Capezzi and Lisa Doege will co-facilitate the discussion, and we look forward to having our congregations together. More discussion dates may be added as needed. To order the book, please go to [InSpirit: UU Book and Gift Shop](#). Let Lisa know if you need assistance with purchasing a book. [Click here to register for this discussion.](#)

General Assembly Goes Virtual

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates. The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolu-



Notes from the Nora Office...

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

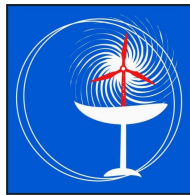
Since there will be no printed orders of service, please send announcements for Grapevines via email, or pass along to Rev. Lisa for me.

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 Tuesdays or
Wednesdays.*

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.



tion making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. Let's reach record-breaking attendance June 23-27, 2021!

Registration for virtual GA 2021 is now open! Registration is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app.

[Register now!](#)
[GA Website](#)

Earth Day April 22nd

Unitarian Universalism's seventh principle:

“Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”



Blessed Is the Sky

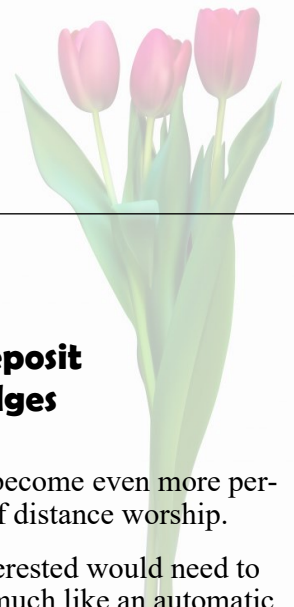
By [Eric Williams](#)

Blessed is the Sky,
And all that is warm and filled with light.

Blessed is the Air,
And all that is open and free.

Blessed is the Earth,
And all that is steady and firm.

Blessed is the Sea,
And all that is hidden and deep.

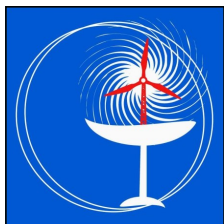


Direct Deposit for Pledges

Direct deposits for pledges become even more pertinent during this time of distance worship.

To initiate this, anyone interested would need to set this up with their bank, much like an automatic payment for a utility or credit card.

If you would like to make electronic pledge payments, please contact Julie Peck for Nora Church account information.



Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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