

## Services

Sundays 10:30 am  
*In the Church Sanctuary*

May 2

*“Halfway to...”*

May 9

*“The Hand that Rocks  
the Cradle”*

May 16

*“On the Importance of  
Claiming Our  
Heritage”*

May 23

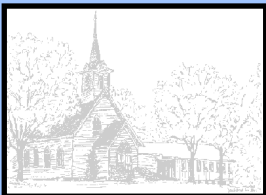
*“Bow in Service to  
Larger Story”*

May 30

*Work Day, No Service*

*See details inside the  
newsletter.*

*In-person church  
service resumes.  
Covid protocols remain  
in place.*



# MERE LYS

## May 2021 Newsletter

*Nora Unitarian Universalist Church*

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

I'm worried.

We're going to be back in the Nora Church sanctuary for worship on Sunday, May 2. We'll be physically distanced from one another, and wearing masks, and not singing. We won't have potluck or coffee hour. If we want to chat with one another after the service we'll do so outside, at a distance. And I'm worried. I'm worried that our decision to gather, even in these restrictive ways, means we are leaving out some of our community who for reasons they need not explain to us, still will not feel safe coming to church. Just as I worry that our Zoom and/or Facebook services over these past many months, have left out others of our community who could not or chose not to use technology as an avenue to worship.

I'm worried that yesterday's verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial was just that. One verdict in one trial. Not a harbinger of change on a larger scale. Worried that the real harbinger of things to come was the police killing of Ma'Khia Bryant even as the Chauvin verdict was being read--more black and brown lives cut down by police, every single day.

I'm worried about the ongoing repercussions of the not-yet-over pandemic. Worried about small businesses that are closing. Worried about renters being evicted and landlords not making their mortgages. Worried about teachers burning out. Worried that we still know so very little about the long term effects of COVID on those who seem to have recovered or partially recovered. Worried about the politicization of the virus--the politicization of everything.

I'm worried global climate change, and American gun violence, and inequities in our society along racial and class lines, about violence against women and the LGBTQI+ community.

I'm worried about my mom and my kid and the rest of my family and all of you. And I just now read a headline suggesting manufacturers and consumers “over-believe in recycling”. So now I'm worried about that, too. What will I, personally, do if I can't haul loads of stuff to the recycling center? And on what date, exactly, is our country due to collapse under the weight of the garbage we produce?

Worry has me in its grip. But I have a choice in the matter. These are all worry-worthy people and circumstances and issues. And I can't alleviate, ameliorate, relieve, change, heal, protect, or even draw useful attention to any of them if I am gripped by worry. Gripped--that is to say, bound against my will, unable to move freely and independently.

Worry is part of parenting, part of ministry, part of life. And it *can* motivate me toward productive engagement, *if* I stay out of its grip. I do that by following the wisdom of the ages and the many, many spiritual paths: eat good food, sleep, drink water, breath, pray, sing, weep, rejoice, ground myself in a community of love and faith, let go of the illusion of control, and remember that the future is not yet written. This month and all the coming months, may we individually and as a congregation, practice ways of freeing ourselves from worry's grip.

—*Lisa*

### Pastoral Announcement

Rev. Lisa Doege has made the decision to stay as Nora's minister for the 2021-2022 church year in half-time capacity. The board has discontinued our search process. For both Lisa and the congregation, there are new opportunities for us to shape the path of half time ministry. As with any major decision, this was fraught with positives and negatives but in the end stability and predictability won out. The board is pleased Lisa is sharing her gifts with us for another year. We know new challenges will emerge: fewer ministerial hours, remaining COVID implications, reduced members. Lisa knows us well. Her leadership, her love and concern for this community, will help determine new ways of being Nora.

### News From the Board

The lilt of the refrain from Camelot "in the merry month of May" is going through my head. It is indeed a merry month in that church services resume in person. That ear-worm could be annoying but I'd like to think good things will come this month. I look forward to seeing many of you in the pews! We will still be following our Covid protocols.

#### *A Note From the Treasurer*

#### **March Income and Expenses**

<b>Income:</b>	\$ 4,492
<b>Expenses:</b>	\$10,170

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

Here are the reminders:

#### **Wear masks.**

No coffee or food will be served in the fellowship hall.

There will not be singing or participatory readings.

Don't congregate in the aisles or entry. Remember to **SOCIAL DISTANCE**.

We want everyone to stay safe and well. Please help us be mindful of everyone's needs.

#### **Here's the line-up of May events.**

May 2: First Sunday of 2021 that we are back in the sanctuary. **Also road cleanup day.**

May 16: Budget for 2021-2022 is proposed after church service. We will also have a congregational discussion about implementing in person and virtual services. What ideas do you have for services on the Sundays of next year when we do not have a minister in the pulpit?

May 30: **Work Sunday.** Instead of attending service we'll **do** "service". The north side of the fellowship hall and kaffestua need to be painted. Most of the area is low and does not require ladder work. There will be other work, leaf cleanup, sticks to pick up, window washing, whatever job you'd like to contribute.

Thank you for your response to our pledge appeal. We appreciate all our members' participation. You are needed. You are loved.

Thanks, Jeanie Hinsman

## *In Memorium*

### *Algot Blomquist*

*March 20, 1930 - April 18, 2021*

### **Board Meeting**

The next Board meeting is 7:00 pm Wednesday, May 12.

### **Wednesday Zoom Meetings**

**May 5th and 19th.** Every other Wednesday we'll gather on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. for a chalice lighting and general conversation. Even as more people are venturing out to restaurants and other social gathering places, we're not ready to restart Sunday morning coffee hours. So, we're committed to continuing safe, distant gatherings via Zoom. Please join in. You'll see folks you've been missing. We promise! Clicking on the link sent in Grapevines, on your smart phone or tablet will connect you.

### **Lisa on the Loose**

Lisa will be on the church grounds on Tuesday, May 25 from 11:00 am- 12:00 pm. Bring your own coffee and join her for physically distant conversation.

### **Minister's Discretionary Fund**

The minister's discretionary fund allows the minister to help community members with unexpected or urgent expenses. Requests for assistance are kept confidential. The fund exists outside the church's operating budget, replenished by donations. If you or someone you know has a need, please be in contact with Lisa. If you'd like to donate to the discretionary fund, please send a check to the church office, payable to Nora Unitarian Universalist Church, with discretionary fund on the memo line.

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

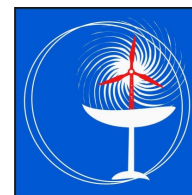
Registration for virtual GA 2021 is now open! Registration is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual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

[Register now!](#)

[GA Website](#)

### ***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**

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.*

## This Mutual Struggle

By Tuli Patel, Braver/Wiser, April 21, 2021

*“It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism.”*

—Angela Y. Davis

Since Christmas, our washing machine has been burping, spitting, and generally coughing. We are often witness to puddles on the floor of the laundry space. All four of us—ranging in age from early fifties to a young teenager—drop to our knees, in supposed supplication, but mostly to shine a flashlight on the innards of this device.

We are not always together when we come upon the shining pools of mirrored light. We might have been trying to find a lost sock or a clean set of underpants when we came upon the flooding waters. A loud shout summons the others, and we appear from the corners we had retreated to—mid-call, mid-document, mid-thought—gathering as one body to contemplate the steadily expanding morass. Sometimes a plumber joins us and we put on our masks, shooing the others away until only one of us shares the same air. Later, perhaps over a hastily assembled meal, we report on what we were told by the expert.

The regurgitation persists. There is no easy, obvious solution.

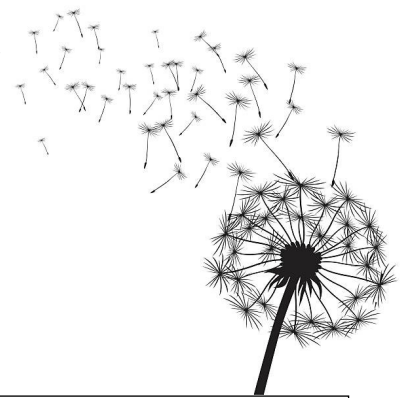
A year since physical distancing began, we find ourselves thrown together in a cramped laundry space: a shared purpose, a common problem, bringing us hip to hip and shoulder to shoulder with a stranger.

My mind spirals: *It's not so bad. We can always hand wash. At least we have power. Can you imagine what Hurricane Katrina was like? There's food in the fridge. Will there be mold in our walls now?*

I still my mind. Staring at the heads of my beloveds, bowing low to the ground, I pull on the faint cooing of gratitude and whispers of hope before they dissipate into silence: for this mutual struggle, for the collective witness to the spreading pool of damp, for the wisdom of crowds, for the warmth of these bodies that house precious souls, for the hope of a solution. I recommit to being present to those who do not have such proximate presences.

### Prayer

Spirit of abundance, may we be with one another in solidarity and struggle. May the presence of one another, across oceans of separation, allow hope and optimism to rise.



### Direct Deposit for Pledges

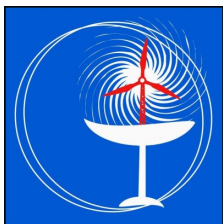
Direct deposits for pledges become even more pertinent during this time of distance worship.

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.

### To ♥ Keep In Touch

If you know of anyone needing our assistance or attention, please call one of the **Caring Committee** members: Georgine Tepley: 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm), Diane Becken: 354-3103, Carol Chambard: 354-2242



## Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

12333 155th Avenue, Hanska, Minnesota 56041

Phone: 507.439.6240

Email: [norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net) Website: [www.norauchurch.org](http://www.norauchurch.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU](https://www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU)