

## Services

Sundays 10:30 am

Coffee 10:00 am

*In the Church Sanctuary*

**October 3**

***“Mysterious Unitarian  
Universalists”***

***Guest Speaker: Rev. Wes  
Hromatko***

**October 10**

***“Events Have  
Overtaken Us”***

**October 17**

***No Service***

**October 24**

***“Dismantling Into  
Wholeness”***

**October 31**

***“Drag, Disguise,  
Masquerade”***

*Lisa will be in costume, and  
invites you to be, too.*



# MERE LYS

## October 2021 Newsletter

***Nora Unitarian Universalist Church***

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

I’ve been weeding the collection at the Hanska Community Library, and as part of that process have stamped “discarded” in scores of books. That simple, repetitive (and in my hands, surprisingly messy) task creates lots of space for thinking. And not just the predictable ministerial musings about weeding clutter from our lives or what it means to label something (or someone) ‘discarded’.

I think about the librarians who purchased the books and the patrons who checked them out (but not in the past three years; that’s my criterion for weeding). I wonder why some of the books were checked out ten or fifteen times and then not at all for three or more years. Did they get lost on crowded shelves or fall out of fashion? I wonder even more about the ones that were only ever checked out one or two times--were they a bad fit for this community, and does that mean the original purchase was a waste of money and shelf space? Or did those one or two readers get enough joy or ideas or satisfaction or escape from the books to more than justify the purchase price and the shelf space?

Mostly, though, I think about playing office. Until I was about ten years old my grandparents ran a nursing home attached to their home. They kept their books, and did paperwork, from built-in, side by side desks in the lobby of their living space, and my siblings and I loved playing office at those desks. *Playing office* mostly meant rubber stamping bits of scrap paper. Grandma and Grandpa had at least half a dozen rubber stamps, and stamp pads in red, black, and blue. This was a good decade or more before the craft-craze of stamping. And to us, it wasn’t arts and crafts; it was grown-up work.

I’ve seen lots of memes recently about what it means to be an adult or grown-up: to get out of bed when you don’t want to and to go to bed when you don’t want to; to have the ‘we have food at home’ conversation with yourself; to have to plan dinner every night for the rest of your life. In other words, lots of funny-because-it’s-true observations about the realities of adulthood. Yet right alongside plenty of if-you-don’t-laugh-you’ll cry moments, sometimes adulthood really *does* mean doing the things that looked fun or important when you were a kid. Like using rubber stamps in your paid job. Or voting. Or acting on priorities that differ from those of your parents or friends or teachers. Or making the home, and creating the family, that surrounds you with security, peace, and love.

Every age of life has its gifts and its trade-offs. And so does every season of society and every era of history. It’s hard to see the gifts sometimes in the midst of a particularly challenging age, season or era. But they are there, I promise you, even in the turmoil of 2021, even in this time of great change here at Nora. And we’ll continue to discover and celebrate them, together.

—Lisa

## October Board Meeting

The next Nora Board meeting will be held Wednesday, October 20.

Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Time and location (virtual or not) are flexible month to month.

## Pastor Lisa's Schedule Updates

Lisa takes Monday and Tuesday off, and Saturday and Sunday of the weeks she is not preaching at Nora. She responds to messages and phone calls, and holds meetings on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Friday continues to be her writing day.

## Organ Repair Update

In October 2019, we had organ repair expenses of \$432. The organ is again in disrepair and not able to be played. The board has decided not to have it repaired at this time. If any member or friend of the church is willing and able to cover repair expense, we will reconsider this decision.

## News From the Board

At our August Board meeting which was not held until the 30th of the month we realized we had a checking account balance of \$ 1,770.75. Because we were not able to meet bills and expenses, we authorized a \$5,000 withdrawal from savings. This was the second withdrawal that was authorized this summer. Fortunately, the tides turned in September. NWS gave their annual pledge of \$5,000 and a most generous donor gifted the church with \$10,000. We did not dip into savings and with the return of in person services member pledges have resumed in a timely manner. The reduction in ministerial cost will help somewhat in bringing the church budget in balance with income but only if our contributions maintain past giving standards.

I don't wish this to be a dire plea for replenishing church coffers. What I do wish for is a realistic roadmap for future planning. At our annual meeting in June, we distributed a straw poll asking members' best guess as to the number of years Nora can maintain a presence on the hill. The choices were three years to 2024; five years to 2026; and ten years to 2031. There were 16 responses. Five indicated 2024; four chose 2026; and seven chose 2031. That's not a strong consensus for any one scenario.

### *A Note From the Treasurer*

#### **August Income and Expenses**

<b>Income:</b>	\$ 3,197
<b>Expenses:</b>	\$ 3,632

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

The decision is not only a financial one but also based on the vitality and people power needed to maintain a viable church program. As we face another season with Covid precautions still affecting all we do it's hard to plan opportunities for dialogue. Like many of you I miss coffee hour, potlucks, and the time to just be together. I think about the remaining months I have on church board and wish that unsettled feelings about our future could magically resolve. We are fortunate to have a program committee to arrange for the Sundays when Lisa is off. We are fortunate that willing church members are dedicating time and interest to bring us presentations for some of those Sundays. We are fortunate for those of you who choose to attend in person or on Facebook or YouTube. We are fortunate that Sally Hanson and her grandson Abe are willing to share their musical talents. We are fortunate for those who generously share their monetary gifts.

We will carry on thru spring 2022 with our modified calendar and less ministry. Let's stay open to all the ways the future may unfold.

Jeanie Hinsman

## October 3rd Guest Sermon

**"Mysterious Unitarian Universalists" Guest Speaker: Rev. Wes Hromatko**

UUs have been famous for writing serious literature, but they have also written popular mysteries and have had to do with true crime and early forensics. Find out about the mysterious UUs and learn what mystery has to do with our way in religion.

Our speaker lives and operates a Century Farm. He grew up there and attended a one room school without plumbing and a crank phone in the 1950 before there was kindergarten. After high school

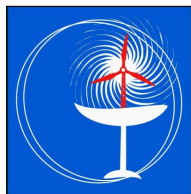
### ***Pastor Lisa's Schedule***

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Friday continues to be her writing day.

She can be reached on her cell when not in the office: 507-766-7822.



in Lake Wilson he went to the University of Minnesota and then on to our Meadville Lombard seminary and University of Chicago. He served UU congregations in the Midwest and Massachusetts. He has published in denominational publications and has been listed in Who's Who.

### **Mail Your Pledges!**

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!

### **Church Directory**

If you have any changes to the current directory please send them to the church email!



### **Zoom Opportunities!**

#### **Virtual Adult Education**

One of the blessings of the on-going pandemic (and one of the curses) has been Zoom, allowing us to gather virtually, often over great distances. Several Minnesota and Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist congregations are opening their adult education classes and discussion to members from neighboring congregations. Find information about two opportunities below. I'll pass along information about others as it becomes available. I hope you'll consider joining one or more.

### **Soul Matters: UU Writers Group**

Facilitated by Rev. Julianne Lepp, Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Eau Claire

When: 6:30-8pm, Second Thursdays through May.

Where: Meets on Zoom

This group will meet monthly from September through May on second Thursdays via Zoom from 6:30-8:00pm. Writing is a long-loved path to personal insight, spiritual discernment and self-expression. The course will be centered in the Soul Matters themes, and each month will draw from a new Soul Matters curriculum. There will be chances to write within the class as well as bring material to each class for sharing and gaining insights.

Sign up here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNJcyma4aAZDmg79dK8k0hJqsQE1tQinjinwooHj7UDZSEUlg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

### **Widening the Circle of Concern: Yearlong Study and Practice Group**

Rev. Laura Thompson, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Bloomington, Minnesota

Highly recommended for all, and especially for congregational leaders

11 sessions: 4th Tuesday at 7pm, through May and 2nd Sundays at 2pm in Oct. and March

All session on Zoom

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

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

**Weekly order of service content should be  
submitted by Thursdays.**

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.*

Appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in 2017, the UUA Commission on Institutional Change served through June 2020. Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change represents the culmination of the Commission's work analyzing structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism and makes recommendations to advance long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism.

Buy the book: <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Widening-the-Circle-of-Concern-P18686.aspx>

Read free online, get free PDF or listen for free online: <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>

Clicking on each chapter will give you an option for listening to an audio reading of that chapter

As this is a yearlong study, it is understandable that you might miss a session or two, in those circumstances, please connect with Rev. Laura to get a copy of discussion you will miss, that you may reflect on in your own time; [minister@mnvalleyuu.org](mailto:minister@mnvalleyuu.org)

A Zoom link for the sessions will be sent to all participants prior to our first meeting. Please be sure to sign-up with an email address that works best for you.

Sign-up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044EABA823A0FE3-widening>

### 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

## 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.

## 2021 NUMAS Haus Annual Fundraiser

Who: NUMAS Haus

What: Annual Fundraiser with live music from Jason Gray & his band.

Where: New Ulm Event Center (and live stream on Facebook)

Why: To help provide emergency shelter and support services to homeless women and their children in the Brown County area

When: October 23rd

5pm Social Hour & music with Andrea Lyn and the Wildflower Duo

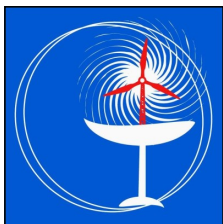
6pm Dinner by Lola's

Followed by Guest Speakers, Live Auction and Musical Performance from Jason Gray & his band

Can't make it? This event will also be live-streamed!

*Tickets available on the website soon!*

<https://numashaus.org/2021-2/>



## Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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