

MERE LYS

November 2021 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Sundays 10:30 am
In the Church Sanctuary

November 7

**“Judgement; It’s Not
All Bad”**

*Guest Speaker: Rev. Laurie
Bushbaum*

November 14

“Being Beacons”

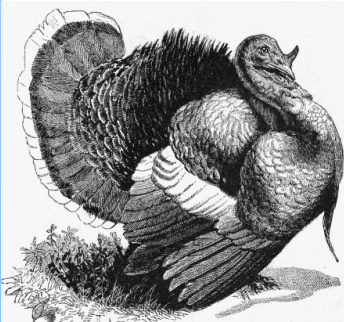
November 21

“Grief and Gratitude”

November 28

No Service

*Give
Thanks*



A View From the Hill

I don’t have a hierarchy of favorite holidays. Still, there’s no denying I really like Thanksgiving—and not just because I’d happily eat turkey dinner seven times a week. It’s that *plus* my affinity for giving thanks.

As I say most Novembers (and probably other times, too), gratitude comes easily for me. My life, the universe, really, is so full of phenomenon, creatures, people, music, art, food, jokes, stories, scents, textures I didn’t create or have any part of bringing into being. I’m grateful for this abundance of creation. And Thanksgiving brings the opportunity for me to be formal and deliberate about expressing my gratitude. And eat a really great meal.

So it is that I persist in calling the 4th Thursday in November *Thanksgiving*, even as some of my colleagues and many of the writers, activists and other religious/spiritual leaders I follow in social media have shifted to calling it *Thanksgiving*.

The story of the ‘First Thanksgiving’ bears so little resemblance to anything that really happened at Plymouth Plantation in 1621. It misrepresents the relationship between the pilgrims and the indigenous peoples. And our traditional (though changing) observances of the holiday fail to give any recognition to the harm that European settlers brought to the Americas, that their descendants continued, and still continue, to perpetrate for centuries after their arrival. There are ample reasons for renaming and reconceiving the holiday as a day of grief.

It’s unlikely an official name change will come any time soon. The myth of the kindly, generous Indians and the grateful, benign Pilgrims feasting together and playing games of skill will persist in marketing campaigns, if nowhere else, for some time to come. And I think we give up devoting a day to gratitude to the detriment of our spirits and our communities. But we can choose, as individuals and as a faith community, to start expanding our narrative of Thanksgiving: telling true, hard stories, challenging the easy falsehoods, adding rituals of mourning and repentance, alongside not in place of, our rituals of gratitude and giving thanks.

We’ll start in service on November 21. And I’ll provide some resources that might help you add some nuance to your family celebrations. We’re called, as Unitarian Universalists, to transform our ways of being in the world when new truth is revealed. This difficult reconception of the meaning of the 4th Thursday of November is one more gift for which we might give thanks.

—Lisa

October Board Meeting

The next Nora Board meeting will be held Wednesday, November 17 at 8:00pm via Zoom.

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

News From the Board

At the October board meeting (via zoom) we accepted a bid of \$1,710 from TNT Seamless Gutters, Sleepy Eye, for installation of gutters and covers on portions of the parsonage. With extended nice weather it is possible the project may be completed this fall but it could be next spring.

Thank you to Darrell for spending many frustrating months attempting to get bids from a variety of New Ulm, Mankato, and Madelia businesses before finally having luck with the Thompson brothers of Sleepy Eye. Next board meeting is November 17.

Jeanie Hinsman

November 7th Guest Sermon

“Judgement; It’s Not All Bad” Guest Speaker: Rev. Laurie Bushbaum

Nearly all of us were taught not to judge. Remember that passage from Matthew 7 that was frequently held up: “Do not judge, lest you also be judged?” But judgement is also a necessary human function, so what kind of a confusing message do we get about judgement? Rev. Laurie will attempt a bit of untangling.

Rev. Laurie Bushbaum is a recently retired UU Minister who lives in Minneapolis. Over her long ministry she served congregations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota and Colorado. When not outdoors cycling, skiing or hiking, she is at her sewing machine making another quilt. In her retirement she has helped start the first fabric co-op in the nation. She rescues feral cats and has a massive collection of childrens’ books. Maybe someday she will write one. And yes, she knows how to make lefse.

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,

A Note From the Treasurer

September Income and Expenses

Income:	\$14,847
Expenses:	\$ 5,734

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

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.

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 chanc-

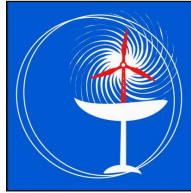
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She can be reached on her cell when not in the office: 507-766-7822.



es 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/1FAIpQLSeNjcvma4aAZDmg79dK8k0hJqsQE0tQinjnwooHj7UDZSEUIg/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 March

All session on Zoom

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

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>



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.*

Braver/Wiser: A Thousand Voices

By Tania Márquez

October 27, 2021

Every year around this time, there is a distinctive smell in the air and the trees sway like the whisper of a thousand voices. That's how I know they are coming. At that point the perpetual altar in my heart begins taking place outside of me, for a few days, and it dances with joy at the thought of their coming.

First, the table that will be the altar. A few boxes on top to create different levels. I begin to think about the pictures I am adding to my altar today; the beloved friend who didn't get to say goodbye, the one I loved, my grandparents, the cousin who left too soon. I allow myself to think about the ones whose pictures won't be on my altar, but that I still remember.

The fragrance of the *cemapsúchil* fills the air; Grandfather Sun-made flower, a ray of light guiding them back, calling them home. It is a long way here. It is good to have some food and drinks ready, so they may quench their thirst, so they may eat and gain strength for the way back. I love adding chocolate and drinking *chocolate caliente*. I imagine a moment of communion that transcends the world of the living.

Once the altar is ready, I behold the sight of this place of encounter: they will come and will know they are missed. All of the times we spent together, all of the memories come rushing to us. Our elders told us, "To remember is to live again." And that's

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

what we do when we allow ourselves to be surrounded by their presence and the stories of times we spent together.

My family and I gather. We tell stories, we laugh, we also cry a little, we rejoice in their company. Their stories come alive in our telling, and so does the love we still feel. I have learned to listen more often to things than to beings; to listen to my heart that knows a different way of knowing. My heart knows that the dead aren't really dead; their stories are perpetually being told by the world around us; like trees swaying, like the whisper of a thousand voices.

Prayer

Boundless Spirit, open our minds, our hearts, and all of our senses to a different way of knowing: the knowing of the heart that recognizes love transcendent, love everlasting, love that never dies.

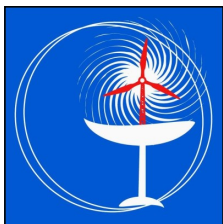


Direct Deposit for Pledges

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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Facebook: www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU