

MERE LYS

February 2022 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Sundays 10:30 am
In the Church Sanctuary

February 6
“February Face”

February
13, 20
No Services

February 27
“Widening the
Circle”
Zoom, Details TBA



Next Service
March 6th



A View From the Hill

“February is a suitable month for dying. Everything around is dead, the trees black and frozen so that the appearance of green shoots two months hence seems preposterous, the ground hard and cold, the snow dirty, the winter hateful, hanging on too long.” —Anna Quindlen, One True Thing

The last time I was in the pulpit I said, “today, all is not well. All is pretty darn awful. All is scary and sad and hateful and uncertain and precarious, even if each of us does have moments of laughter and hope.” I spoke of my belief in the truth of Julian of Norwich’s words *all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well*. I reminded us (reminded myself) that the mystic’s assurance speaks of a time *in the future* when all *shall* be well. I said that in the meantime, it is cruel to demand that we push away our grief, anger, despair, rushing us to find joy or blessings amidst the awfulness.

Little has changed, on the pandemic, political, or congregational scope of things in the weeks since then. So I want to be clear, I’m writing today not to dismiss any part of the awfulness but to acknowledge the truth about winter and spring here in the northern hemisphere, as we approach the midway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox: there will be green shoots from almost all that seems dead just now.

We’ve seen hundreds, thousands of inches of snow in our lifetimes, weathered countless days and nights of life-threatening temperatures, been fooled by early thaws and late blizzards. We know that the harshness of a Minnesota winter is more than the appearance of death. It is the reality of death and possible death. *And* we’ve witnessed spring after spring after utterly miraculous, utterly natural spring, not despite the death but because of it. Because in the way of the natural world new growth, new life depends on death. Still, for all our familiarity with the cycle of seasons, knowing spring will come and delight us when it does doesn’t make winter any less harsh, sometimes dreary, often dangerous.

I believe in the possibility of new life after COVID, after the collapse or near collapse of American democracy, after the vibrant church we once knew Nora to be. This winter-like period is long and dreary, harsh, and sometimes dangerous. And spring might not come in two months’ time—it seems all but impossible that the pandemic or political vitriol and congressional deadlock or congregational decline will give way to anything new, fresh and beautiful by April. Nevertheless I am curious (and therefore trying to be patient) about what lies buried, frozen, dormant, in our individual, congregational and national soul.

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I'm tired and irritable and suffering a dearth of creativity. It helps just a little to know we're halfway through winter, and to imagine that we might also be halfway through sickness toward health, through hate toward love, through grief toward hope (even if the half that lies ahead is as long as the half we've just endured). May it be so for you as well.

—*Lisa*

February 27 Zoom Service

Widening the Circle. A service on Zoom in cooperation with the Headwaters Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Bemidji. Watch forthcoming Grapevines for link and details.

Zoom Check Ins

Join Lisa and Nora members and friends for the return of Zoom chats. We'll meet at 7:00 on Wednesdays: February 9, and February 23. Link sent out in Grapevines.

January Board Meeting

The February Board meeting will be held Wednesday the 16th at 8:00 pm, via Zoom.

News From the Board

The board activity that currently has our attention is doing an update to our Congregational Record for the upcoming search. Since this was written initially for the 2020-21 church year, we need only make updates to this document.

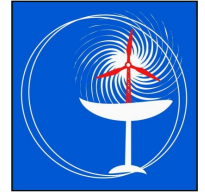
In December we had a generous donation from Eunice Bisbee Johnson in recognition of her Torgrimson grandparents. We are looking at something to add to the cemetery with a portion of this donation.

The board spent a great deal of conversation on all the social gathering we are missing—Sunday morning coffee, lunch bunch, supper club, pot-lucks. We are hopeful that we can gather for an Easter breakfast. With the frigid weather we've been experiencing it sure is nice to be talking about spring!

A special thank you to Dave and Sally Anne Benson for inspiring the December bell choir.

Pastor Lisa's Schedule

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.

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

We were fortunate you shared your family's heirloom bells with us. Thank you to Susan Allen for helping put up and take down the Christmas tree and to Lee Drogemuller for his help in dismantling.

Hope to see many of you on February 6.

Jeanie Hinsman

Free Tax Preparation

IRS-certified tax preparers will be available in the lower level of the New Ulm Public Library. Appointments will be made for Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning February 8 through April 14th, 2022. This service will be by appointment only by calling 507-276-3186.

If you have any questions, please visit our website or call our office at 507-354-6512.

Minister's Discretionary Fund

Nora Church's Minister's Discretionary Fund exists to allow the minister to meet (confidentially) limited financial needs of Nora members and friends or members of the larger community. In the past Lisa has been able to as-

A Note From the Treasurer

December Income and Expenses

Income:	\$ 2,257
Expenses:	\$ 6,512

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

sist with prescription medicine costs, utility bills and gas money. If you know of need in our community (or need assistance yourself), please be in touch with Lisa. If you can contribute to the discretionary fund, beyond your regular pledge to the church, please mail a check to the church office with “minister’s discretionary fund” written on the memo line.

Inclement Weather

In case of Sunday morning inclement weather, the decision to cancel church service will be made no later than 8:00 a.m. Announcements will be made via Grapevine email, posting on the Nora website and Facebook page, and a cancellation notice will be sent to KNUJ and KTOE.

When church is not cancelled, you are responsible for your own safety. We love to see everyone at church but we would rather know everyone is safe. Please do not drive to church when road conditions, high winds or frigid temperature feel *unsafe to you*. We’ll see you the next Sunday, or the next month or in April!!

Update From Vickie & Larry Bakken

Dear Family and Friends:

Larry was in Southdale hospital from December 18 to December 31. At first it was his heart and kidneys not working well together and retaining a lot of water so edema in his legs. Then they found his mitral valve had calcified and it could not be replaced. Before he left, they also found that his cancer had come back and he ended up needing a blood transfusion.

From the hospital he moved to the Apple Valley Village Transitional Care Center but they couldn’t give him the medication for his cancer. Medicare would not allow it.

Larry moved into The Moments (memory care unit) on January 13. His address is: The Moments: Larry Bakken, Ste. 227, 16254 Kenyon Way, Lakeville, MN 55044. Phone number: 612-708-3967. Please do not leave a voice mail because he may not be able to find it. He no longer has a cell phone or uses email. He will be starting physical and occupational therapy soon. He has lost a lot of mobility since December 18th. Still has his happy smile and was enjoying talk-

ing with his neighbor at breakfast this morning.

If you want to send cards, letters, etc., please send to our home at 11900 175th St. W., Lakeville, MN 55044. Larry would love hearing from you! Thanks for your support! We feel truly blessed to have such wonderful friends!!

Larry and Vickie

1.13.2022 5th treatment plan. Acalabrutinib
5.2020 4th chemo treatment plan. Ended
9.10.2021
1.2020 4th treatment plan - radiation
11.8.2017 3rd chemo treatment plan established
10.25.2017 out of remission
4.7.2016 in remission
10.08.2015 out of remission – Chemo #2
12.5.2013 open heart surgery to repair mitral valve and replace aortic valve – new cow valve
10-11.2013 hospitalization for heart
5.08-11.09 Rituxan maintenance
Feb-Mar 08 – finished chemo #1 treatments
11.8.07 open heart surgery
9.5.07 starts chemo #1
8.13.07 diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma

Braver/Wiser: Love is Showing Up

By Melissa Jeter

January 12, 2022

*“...When the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry...
—Rev. Howard Thurman*

You are not alone. I read these words in an article about grieving the death of estranged parents. While there are many people who died alone from Covid, there may be just as many people dying estranged from family members. I am not alone.

I read that there may be all kinds of reasons that people are estranged from their parents. I was tired of parenting my parents. I was asked to choose sides in their divorce and I chose me. That choice left me to build a new foundation.

The odd thing about the deaths of both parents is that they have been out of my life for more than twenty years—as long as I have been a Unitarian Universalist. I needed a community of people.

Relationships can be healing and therapeutic. I found people who sewed, knitted, and sang. Few people close to my family have been to church with me: my maternal aunt and my high school mentor. Both Black women are now deceased.

I keep questioning whether it's grief that I feel now, when I was cut off so long ago. I am grateful for every condolence post or card and basket of food that this community has given me. It really has been a beacon of light for me. By the light of this community, I grew; got my first pets. I have been able to put my ideas into words and share them out loud. This faith has been my home.

I recall one of the last times I spoke to my mother at Christmas. I told her that I would be spending Christmas Eve with a family going through homelessness. I said that we would cook dinner with them, stay overnight, and give them gifts in the morning. My mother said that this was something she could not be doing

She could not—and therein lies the difference. I could show up to extend love and kindness to strangers.

My heart has been broken open again and it hurts even while it beats. Showing up, serving, forgetting myself: Love showed up in me, for people with no home at Christmas, and it healed a few worlds. Every time someone showed up for me, I learned that love is greater than skin deep.

Prayer

Spirit of Life and Love, let us show up for those whose relationships are ruptured, and for the adult children who have the hard task of creating boundaries so that they may seek, find, and live in loving communities. For wherever the kindness to strangers shows up, there is your mercy and your grace. So be it. Amen. Àṣẹ.

Wild Geese

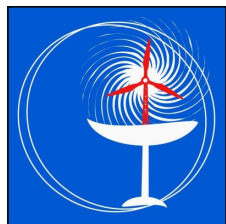
You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell
you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue
air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

-Mary Oliver



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

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