

MERE LYS

March 2022 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Sundays 10:30 am
In the Church Sanctuary

March 6

*“Seasons Out of
Sync”*

March 13

No Service

March 20

*Speaking About
Faith, Speaker:
Dick Gurska*

March 27

*“When What We
Think We Know
Isn’t So”*



A View From the Hill

March is Women’s History Month. In 2010 (long before I became the mother of a daughter) I preached about women and girls on the Sunday closest to the International Day of the Woman, which falls in March. I preached about boys and men the next month. I even mentioned, from the pulpit, as I preached about women and girls, that I’d be giving boys and men equal air-time next month. Nevertheless, a visitor that morning asked someone if I always preach about women.

One of you recently mentioned that boys sermon to me, these many years later, so I’m pretty sure I didn’t phone it in. It wasn’t a B-side sermon of obligation. The visitor had no way of knowing that I’d take great care to offer a thoughtful, researched, quality consideration of raising boys in the 21st century. But, again, I had been clear about having a companion, complementary sermon in the works. So his implied criticism, his implied assumption that a female minister must always, or at least usually and too often, preach about ‘women’s things’, stuck with me, and I’ve not preached a women’s history or International Day of the Woman sermon again.

I know all yes-buts. *Yes, but he and his wife were raising sons. Yes, but he wasn’t used to seeing/hearing a woman in the pulpit. Yes, but he didn’t mean to belittle you.*

I have a yes-but of my own: *Yes, but those are exactly the reasons I did preach that sermon.* Fathers of boys need to hear sermons about the experiences of women and girls. In fact, male-identified children and teens and adults who aren’t fathers need to hear sermons about the experiences of women and girls and female-identified persons of all ages. And people of all genders and all ages need to see and hear women in pulpits and courtrooms and classrooms and lecture halls and operating rooms and in the United Nations and at NASA and on Wall Street, especially if they are not accustomed to noticing and paying attention to women in those places. And, perhaps most significantly, impact matters more than intent. It doesn’t matter that he didn’t mean to belittle me. (And, frankly he didn’t belittle me, personally, I’m tougher than that.) But he did belittle every female-identified preacher by assuming that while male ministers are generic ministers for all people, women ministers can only be women for women.

The “impact matters more than intent” truism is why I haven’t “done” Women’s History Month from the pulpit again. Because I love Nora Church, I haven’t wanted the *impact* of a sermon *intended* to celebrate women to be “there goes that anti-male woman minister again.” I probably could have come up with a more creative, less reactive approach!

We’re living in a time of tumult, awakening, reckoning, fear, daring, and backlash with regard not just to gender but also race and ability/disability

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and language and citizenship/immigration status and so much more. I'm again not preaching specifically about women this March, but I'll touch on gender in my sermon on March 27. Bring a friend to hear first hand what this white, cis-gender, queer, middle-aged, middle-class woman minister has to say about *When What We Think We Know Isn't So*. And in the meantime, find a way to celebrate the women in your life.

—*Lisa*

News From the Board

The winds of March bring more opportunities for gathering at Nora Church! Mark your calendars to include Sunday services on March 6th, 20th and 27th. It feels so good to return to familiar routines. Hope to see many of you back in the pews.

More good news—the board feels we can reinstate coffee hour in April and we do plan on an Easter breakfast gathering on April 17. Hope you will join in fellowship and community as we gather again on the hill. Bring guests too!

Nuvera is doing upgrades to the Wi-fi service at the parsonage which will speed up the computer processing. The board requested that we look into the possibility of extending Wi-fi to the church and fellowship hall.

Heads Up! There will be three vacancies on the church board at our annual meeting in June. The positions of Dick Gurska, Julie Sellner and Jeanie Hinsman are expiring. Each have served two terms and are not eligible to continue. We'd love for volunteers to step up. Neighboring churches closed due to lack of willing participants in church leadership. Let's not have that become our story. If you'd like to talk about the work of the board or your ability to participate, give me a call or talk to Lisa.

Hope your spirits are brightened as our days grow longer and the birds are singing to us again. Think spring!

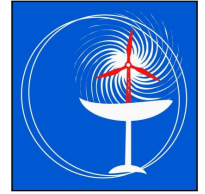
Jeanie Hinsman

March Board Meeting

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

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.

March 20 Service

Program Committee Sunday—Dick Gurska will be speaking again about his faith and Karen Farrell will be assisting with readings. Dick and Karen did the Nora service a few months ago outside, but the wind made it nearly impossible to hear, so they generously offered to provide their messages at an indoor service.

Abe Khelah will be the pianist, and the “Nora Hand Bell Choir” will provide special music.

Lisa on the Loose

Lisa on the Loose continues on hiatus as winter and COVID linger on.

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.

A Note From the Treasurer

January Income and Expenses

Income:	\$ 5,257.32
Expenses:	\$ 5,817.18

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

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 assist 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:

Thank you to all of you for your thoughts, prayers, cards, emails and visits.

It's now mid-February and Larry is doing well. His oncology doctor says the medicine is working and at last check, all his numbers were getting better. His cardiology doctor says he is doing well and it's possible that the damage to his mitral valve is not as bad as first thought. Another heart check-up in 3 months.

The one thing we cannot change is his cognitive thinking. He loves visitors and is still able to converse with them. So for the future, he will be staying at the The Moments (memory care unit).

The Moments: Attn: Larry Bakken, Ste. 227, 16254 Kenyon Avenue, Lakeville, MN 55044.

The phone number is 612-708-3967. If he does not answer, it means that he is out and around in the facility/ not in his room.

Still has his happy smile and enjoys talking with others, attending music concerts, games and activities with others. If you want to visit it's best if you do not go during meals. He is at lunch at noon and dinner at 5 PM. The Moments welcomes visitors, please wear a mask. When you get there, it's best to ask where Larry is as he is rarely in his room.

Thanks for your support! We feel truly blessed to have such wonderful friends!!

Larry and Vickie

*The March wind roars
Like a lion in the sky,
And makes us shiver
As he passes by.
When winds are soft,
And the days are warm and clear,
Just like a gentle lamb,
Then spring is here.*

- Author Unknown



Braver/Wiser: The Unexpected Sacredness of Things

By Tania Márquez

February 16, 2022

"Nothing here below is profane. On the contrary, everything is sacred."

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

It was one of those times in life when the wheel of life turned and I found myself in unknown terrain. I had made a difficult decision that was still painful despite the fact that it was my choice. After leaving a place that had meant a lot to me, I found myself immersed in the fog-giness that sometimes comes with the in-between spaces.

A week into this liminal space, I received an invitation to participate in a small business market in my city. It was a space offered through a Mexican/Chicanx organization, and the day of the event was only a week away. I spent the entire week getting ready for this event: making candles, preparing loose incense, putting together self-care ritual kits. This mindful work created a silence within me that, unexpectedly, allowed me to process a lot of what I was feeling. I felt saved by this holy work of giving all of my attention to the things that were in front of me.

The event was like no other I had been to. I felt welcome and in community as soon as I arrived. I met my neighbor sellers, rejoiced in the music the DJ was playing, and felt a great sense of pride for being part of the event. Then, right before the market was officially open, we, all the vendors, were invited to join a circle to bless the day and open the market. This ritual and sense of reverence was so unexpected. We called the five directions (north, south, west,

east, center), we received a blessing with copal incense, and felt a deeper sense of connection and community with the strangers that were now becoming familiar.

Now, every month I sign up to go and feel grateful every time I'm invited to be part of it. My teenage daughters also found a place here for them, either helping me or volunteering to help with the event.

For a long time, I have believed that the sacred can be found everywhere, yet every time I find it unexpectedly, I am filled with awe and surprise. And every time something like this happens, it makes me wonder what sacredness in life I have overlooked thinking the space was too ordinary, too familiar to be holy.

Prayer

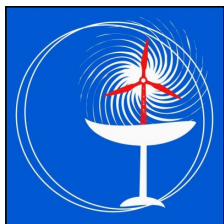
Divine Creator, May our hearts be always open to see the holy everywhere we are. And may we be filled with joy and awe when we find sacredness in unexpected moments and places.

*"No winter lasts forever; no
spring skips its turn."*

- Hal Borland

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



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