

# MERE LYS

## April 2022 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

### Services

Sundays 10:30 am  
Coffee Hour 10:00 am

April 3

*“No Poetry in  
Money?”*

April 10

*Musical Service  
Program Committee*

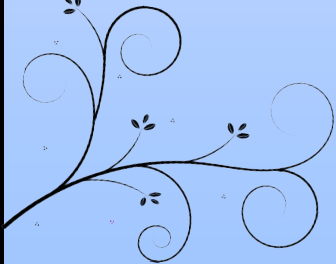
April 17

*“Dance Toward  
Jesus, Glory In Our  
Skin”*

*Easter Breakfast 9:30*

April 24

*No Service*



*All services are in  
person in the  
Sanctuary. Rev.  
Lisa’s services will  
also stream live on  
Facebook.*

### A View From the Hill

In one of my many favorite books, a professor and a group of children spend a day preparing for a clambake. As each stage of the preparation wraps up the professor says with excitement, “Now we can begin!” When they’ve dug the clams, when they’ve gathered the seaweed, when they’ve built the fire to heat the stones, and when they’ve dug the hole for the barrel. “Now we’re ready to begin!” As the day progresses one of the children, Lydia, gets increasingly frustrated, and protests, “How can this be the beginning?” The professor obliging rephrases: “this is the beginning of the middle” or when he has eaten his first bite of steamed, buttery deliciousness, “this is the beginning of the end.”

I’m feeling a bit like Lydia this year, with regard to cultural and religious observance of the beginning of the season we may or may not be in. On February first we had Imbolc marking the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, celebrated by pagans and others as the beginning of lambing season, the time when what has lain dormant begins to quicken. In other words, the beginning of spring. Then on March first we had meteorological spring, the date of convenience on which the year is divided into four tidy seasons of exactly 3 months each. Next March twentieth brought the first day of astrological spring, with equal hours of sunlight and darkness here in the northern hemisphere. Except, as you will know if you follow minutes of sunlight as closely as I do, here in Minnesota sunrise and sunset occurred exactly twelve hours apart on March 17, because the northern hemisphere is a big place, so astrological times are not precisely the same throughout.

At least three first days of spring so far, and now April brings Easter. I know we don’t call Easter the first day of spring. But we definitely celebrate it as the epitome of spring—the occasion of birth, new life, resurrection. So just how many times can spring, new life, begin?

Well, that’s the central message of Easter, in my theology. As many times as there is death or seeming death or dormancy, there follows new life, resurrection, the first day of spring, Easter.

It takes a lot of first days of spring to bring a land fully back to life after winter. Our human lands—our hearts and our spirits and our communities—experience lots of winters, dormancy, seeming death. I’m eternally amazed that Easter unfailingly comes again and again to bring us back to life, and that we set aside one Sunday each year to sing *alleluia* in praise and celebration of all those Easter resurrections. It will be so good to be together this year.

—Lisa

## Easter Breakfast Returns!

Join us for a Potluck Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 17 at 9:30 am. Bring whatever morning dish you would like to share—egg dish, fruit, sweet bread, your choice!

Easter bonnets optional!

## News From the Board

The board will meet April 20th at 6:00 p.m. in person at church. On the agenda will be the proposed budget for 2021-2022, and continued discussion of the purchase of a large screen smart tv for use for next year's programming. We are also looking at extending wi-fi service from the parsonage to the fellowship hall and church sanctuary.

Reminder: There are three vacancies on next year's church board. Zoom meetings increase flexibility for scheduling and ease up the need for driving to meetings. Jeanie Hinsman offers to assist with zoom technology for anyone not familiar with this app. It's really easy.

We have returned to Sunday morning coffee hours before service. We need volunteers to prepare coffee and bring treats on April 3, 10, May 1 (potluck Sunday); May 15 and June 5. Please let Jeanie Hinsman know if you can help out.

Jeanie Hinsman

## Cyber Services

Nora members and friends who depend on the internet for access to our Sunday services miss their connection to our congregation on the weeks Lisa does not preach. Streaming the service live is a relatively simple task. It requires a newer smartphone, access to Facebook, and presence at the service.

If you (or a teenage grandchild you know) are able to undertake this part of the ministry of our church, please be in touch with Lisa.

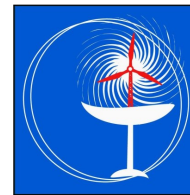
## All About the Music

The Program Committee is planning the service on April 10. After a couple years of limited music, we will have a service emphasizing music!

Please, join us to sing some of our favorite songs, hear some beautiful piano playing, and be uplifted by music. If you have some favorite

### *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.

song requests from Singing the Living Tradition, please contact Brett at 507-329-1654, before Wednesday April 6.

## Earth Day April 22nd

Unitarian Universalism's seventh principle:

*"Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"*



## Lisa on the Loose

Lisa on the Loose updates will be sent out via Grapevines!

### *A Note From the Treasurer*

#### **February Income and Expenses**

<b>Income:</b>	\$ 7,075.57
<b>Expenses:</b>	\$ 4,694.23

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

## ***Braver/Wiser: The Defiant Spark***

By David Kohlmeier

March 9, 2022

*"In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity. God, then, does not sustain a figurative resemblance to [humankind]. It is the resemblance of a parent to a child, the likeness of a kindred nature."*

—William Ellery Channing (1828)

In family systems theory, there's a concept called "the identified patient," where the thing you think you're talking about is a manifestation of a deeper issue. When congregants ask me whether Donald Trump has inherent worth and dignity, for example, I think there's a bigger question at work: Can I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person when some people are intentionally cruel, and seem to derive great pleasure in the harm they cause?

When Channing helped theologians define American Unitarianism in the early 1800s, it was in sharp contrast to the Calvinist theology that dominated New England. Human nature, he argued, isn't primarily sinful. If we're "in the image of God," then our core nature is holy. Sacred. Worthy. And he took the Biblical idea of our being "children of God" literally: our souls are literally made of the same "stuff" as God; we bear "the likeness of a kindred nature."

Or to put it another way: you and everyone else on the planet are worthy by nature: you didn't earn your worth, and you can't lose it. Because you exist. Period. That's what "inherent" means.

I want to believe what Channing preached. I find it liberating—healing, even. With all the messages telling me I have to earn my worth, that I'm not good enough, our claim of inherent worth has given me back my humanity again and again.

And it's challenging—especially when I think of torturers and murderers, those who lead pogroms—but I defiantly do it anyway. To me,

it's about action more than beliefs: behaving as though. I get to choose whether or not I treat people as if they have value. I can choose to reject the lie that some people's lives are more important than others—if for no other reason than to preserve my own dignity.

In a world where so many are dehumanized, where so many want to dehumanize me and those I love, I will be different. I won't let them make me into their image. I aspire to conform to a higher image.

## ***Prayer***

O Inner God, O Defiant Spark within Myself, still there even though at times everything tries to convince me to deny you; I feel crushed by the weight of all the cruelty and chaos in my world. Remind me there is more to me, to us, than this. May I stop being shaped by the mold of those who dehumanize. Free me, that I might grow instead into the likeness of Love beyond belief.

*"April hath put a spirit of youth  
in everything."*

- William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's  
Sonnets, Sonnet XCIV*



### **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  
Office days are Tues. or Wed. and most Fridays.*