

# MERE LYS

## May 2022 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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### Services

Sundays 10:30 am  
Coffee Hour 10:00 am

May 1

*“In a World Without  
Small Print”*

May 8

*No Service*

May 15

*“Say[ing] It With  
Flowers”*

*Our annual Flower  
Ceremony. See note.*

May 22

*Clean Up Sunday*

May 29

*No Service*

June 5

*Potluck & Annual  
Meeting*

*Services are in per-  
son in the Sanctuary.  
Rev. Lisa’s services  
will also stream live  
on Facebook.*

### A View From the Hill

Members of Nora Church recently received a letter announcing my intention to conclude my ministry here at Nora Church on July 20, 2022, following my annual vacation from June 20 to July 20, 2022. [You may read the letter here.](#) President Jeanie Hinsman has addressed important dates, and next steps elsewhere in this newsletter. Planning for the future of the church has moved out of my hands—but not my heart and prayers.

News just yesterday of the deaths of two life-long Nora Church members, with memorial services that will bookend the first week of May, makes clear to me that one of our essential tasks throughout these 13 years of ministry together has been grieving. We’ve lost many Nora members and friends, some through death, some through dissatisfaction, and some through moving on or moving away, and we’ve grieved them all, continue to grieve them all, as a congregation and as individuals.

Our choir grew smaller and then disbanded. We grieved the loss of its sweet music that added depth and meaning to our worship all out of proportion with its size. Sunday School and Youth Group waxed and waned and ultimately faded completely away. We grieve the absence of babies and children and teens—their energy and disruption and joy. Art with Attitude disbanded when Nancy returned to Pennsylvania, and the artists and the chatterers grieved its ending. The pandemic took away Lunch Bunch and Supper Club and coffee hour and Smorg, and for a while all worship services, and then for a long time, in-person services. We’re still actively grieving all those losses. The transition to half-time ministry brought another dimension of loss and grief. My resignation brings another ending and more grief—to many of you and to me.

Reviewing our time together as I just have could lead us to believe that these past thirteen years have been mournful without end. That isn’t so. To grieve so deeply and so broadly means only that we have loved deeply and broadly (and still do). As C. S. Lewis observed, "The pain [we] feel now is the happiness [we] had before. That's the deal."

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church has had nearly 141 years of happiness—and has more happiness yet to come. You and I have had nearly 13 years of happiness as congregation and minister, and have a couple more months of happiness to come, even as we begin saying good-bye. My faith says that the happiness (genuine, messy, subtle, ringing happiness, not distraction, or forced or superficial cheeriness) is always worth the pain of loss. May we find it to be so in the weeks we have left together, and as we eventually go our separate ways.

—Lisa

## **Potlucks to Look Forward To!**

May 1st

June 5th

*We hope to see you there!*



### **News From the Board**

The board enjoyed being together for our April meeting. It was only the second time this year that we met in person. It was a very full agenda with many important concerns. Please mark your calendars and help/attend as much as possible.

**May 1:** Regular service with Lisa preaching her next to last service of the year. There will be a traditional potluck following service.

**May 15:** Flower Communion Service—Lisa's final service with us. The budget proposal for 2022-23 will be presented after the service.

**May 22:** Clean-up Sunday. Primary focus will be grounds work but feel free to take on tasks that you enjoy in church if you prefer.

**June 5:** Annual meeting will convene in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30. Potluck after the meeting (approx. noon.) Read more about the annual meeting agenda elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.** program in church followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall in honor of Rev. Lisa's thirteen years at Nora.

Thank you to Abe Kahlil for the outstanding music he performed for Easter Sunday and to Nita Gilbert, Sally Anne and Dave Benson, Brett Lehman, and Sally Hanson for the music focused service on April 9. The energy lifted our spirits.

## **Clean Up Sunday May 22**

**Many hands make light work!**

**Our primary focus will be grounds work but feel free to take on tasks that you enjoy in church if you prefer.**

### **What about next year?**

### **Is this end of life planning for Nora Church?**

As of April 20 there are 133 vacancies for ministers on the UUA job board. This includes 14 full time openings, 5 assistant ministers, 64 part-time minister positions (ten in the Midwest) and fifty interim openings. Our half time position has been open online since the end of January and there has not been any response. Hiring processes are often full of twists and turns and surprises so there could be a chance that a good candidate might surface but in fact we need to plan for next year with the reality that we will not have a minister.

We need to know how we can address the spiritual needs of those who come to Hanska on Sunday mornings. What meaningful experiences can we create to sustain our church community? This and more will be addressed at our annual meeting. We will first conduct the routine items: approval of minutes, budget, reports from the cemetery board, buildings and grounds, and election of new board members. After those items we will divide the time into three areas for discussion—Program, Facilities, and Management.

#### **Program:**

What schedule of Sunday meetings do we want? How many Sundays should be outside speakers and/or ministers? What lay led programming would be appealing? What about viewing services online in a communal setting? Realizing that ministers are much less available especially to small congregations the UUA has been creating online services to help meet this need.

## Facilities:

How do we prepare for the care and maintenance of the church and grounds with less available manpower? Do we budget for more hired help? What about church contents and museum contents? Do we look for a new home for items of historical value? Who will do this work? Would it be more practical for the small number of attendees to hold services in the parsonage rather than the sanctuary?

## Management:

Without a minister present the board will need to assume the task of directing Brooke's work. Do we expand the role of a paid position to help facilitate program planning?

*We are still looking for board members.*

*Our annual meeting will be a time for sharing and problem solving. We look forward to your input.*

Jeanie Hinsman

### *In Memorium*

***Kenneth Merle Chambard***

*November 19, 1927 - April 25, 2022*

### *In Memorium*

***Larry Eugene Bakken***

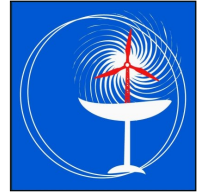
*May 27, 1943 - April 25, 2022*

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

Lisa takes Monday and Tuesday off, and Saturday and Sunday of the weeks she is not preaching at Nora. Friday May 13 is a writing day.

Please be in touch with her, via email or her cell phone, if you want to arrange a time to meet with her before June 20. Wednesdays and Thursdays are the best times for these appointments, also Friday, May 20 or May 27.

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



### ***Lisa on the Loose***

Lisa holds "office hours" at area coffee houses. Join her for drop-in conversations.

We'll meet at River City Eatery in Windom at 11:30 on Tuesday, May 10.

### ***May 15 Flower Ceremony***

The service on Sunday, May 15 will include our annual Flower Ceremony. Please remember to bring a cut flower for each member of your family attending service that morning. You won't want to miss the beauty we create together and then carry home with us that morning.

### ***Braver/Wiser: Return and Remember***

*By Summer Albayati*

*March 30, 2022*

*"And celebrate the name of God, morning and evening."*

*—Surah Al-Insan, 76:25*

Many years ago I experienced a serious crisis of faith. I felt buried by pain and suffering, and I wasn't sure if I would ever dig my way out to see the sun rise again. This crisis of faith took me on a journey to find myself, and to come to an understanding: in my suffering, there was a holy and sacred space.

Since the Prophet Muhammad first received a

## ***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 news-  
letter and more, to the Nora email.

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant  
Office days are Tues. or Wed. and most Fridays.*

revelation of the Qur'an in the Cave of Hira—  
Ramadan is a celebration of this fact—I tried to  
embrace my crisis as an entrance to a cave that  
the divine had opened up for me. All I needed  
to do was enter, to seek refuge, and this I did.

It's always a challenge to feel a sense of the  
holy when I go through difficulties. But it's at  
that exact time that I need to find more time for  
prayer, study, and meditation. When the holy  
month of Ramadan approaches, it becomes a  
beautiful reminder to return to myself, and re-  
member who I truly am and what the divine is  
calling me to become.

Ramadan is a time of going deeper into a spir-  
itual oasis, like entering a cave for a few hours  
while I fast from bodily nourishment. It's an  
invitation to pause for a whole month while I  
find spiritual awakening by studying the  
Qur'an more deeply, and performing embodi-  
ment prayers five times a day. It becomes a ho-  
ly retreat from the mundane, even in the midst  
of the ordinary.

For thirty days, I fulfill my spiritual needs as if  
in great hunger for the divine spirit and, hope-  
fully, I emerge from the cave transformed. This  
holy experience is the healing. This sacred time  
is an abundant act of love. And this is what I  
seek each year during this most blessed of  
months, so I can answer the call of the divine  
spirit.

What if I were to find spiritual nourishment by  
entering whatever doors opened up to the di-  
vine spirit on a daily basis? What if each day I  
awakened and began it in theological reflection,  
or praising the name of the divine each morn-  
ing and evening? Who would I become?

## ***Prayer***

*Bismillah ir rahman ir rahim—Oh Blessed One,  
the One with Many Names, Holy Divine, an-  
swer our call as we seek doors to know you bet-  
ter and caves to provide us with spiritual res-  
pite and healing. Ameen.*

### ***A Note From the Treasurer***

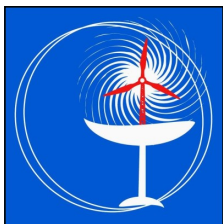
#### **March Income and Expenses**

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Income:</b>   | \$ 7,171.30 |
| <b>Expenses:</b> | \$ 6,033.62 |

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

### **To ♥ Keep In Touch**

If you know of anyone needing our assistance or atten-  
tion, please call one of the **Caring Committee** mem-  
bers: Georgine Tepley: 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm),  
Diane Becken: 354-3103, Carol Chambard: 354-2242



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