



MERE LYS

December 2022 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

10:30 Services

First & third Sundays



Schedule

December 4

“Holding Out Hope”

*Video Guest Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley*

December 18

**“Lessons from Gate
A-4”**

*Video Speaker: Pacific
Western Region Staff*

**Nora Unitarian
Universalist
Church**

12333 155th Ave.,
Hanska, MN 56041



Christmas Day

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had
come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and
deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to
men."

Social Hour

Coffee hour will continue after the service. The first Sunday of each month will be the traditional potluck Sunday. The third Sunday bring a sack lunch and stay for coffee and conversation, as your schedule allows.

News from the Program Committee

December 4 Holding Out Hope
Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley video sermon

Potluck will follow the service.

**December 18 Lessons from Gate
A-4 Pacific Western Region Staff
Team video sermon**

Brown bag lunch to follow. In her poem "Gate A-4", Arab-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye shares an account of distress, compassion and community as she is called to interpret Arabic for a fearful traveler at an airport. As many of us take to the highways, airways and railways this November and December, the PWR Staff has put together a worship service that touches on the themes of the poem, and questions such as Who are we called to care for? When do we answer the call to serve? Where might we be surprised by grace?

December Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Wednesday, December 21 at 8:00 pm, via Zoom.



Thank You!

Thank you from the board ...

...to the Program Committee for all the hours spent planning services for Nora. They have been wonderful!

...to those members that have agreed to be part of the team to work with the Ukrainian family as we welcome them to our parsonage for a few months and to those of you that have made monetary donations to the fund for their initial living expenses.



Ukrainian Effort

Here's a summary of what we've learned and done in our effort to sponsor a Ukrainian refugee family.

Nov. 9 Brett Lehman, Lara Fletcher and Jeanie Hinsman did a zoom orientation with Steph Koehne from ALIGHT. ALIGHT takes responsibility for recruiting and training sponsors. Things we learned:

125,000 Ukrainian refugees are coming to the United States on a 2 yr. humanitarian visa. Minnesota will be home to 5,000. As of our meeting date on the 9th, approximately 2,500 of the 5,000 had sponsors. Most families are women with children and often include a grandmother. Most men are serving in some military capacity unless they have a disability or 3+ children.

As sponsors we are responsible for immediate needs of housing, clothing, food, enrolling school age children in school, and getting the families needs met through a variety of resources. Typically, within 8 to 12 weeks the family should have employment and become self-supporting. When they become financially self-supporting, they may

choose to move to different housing or to a different town or city. As sponsors we do not have long term commitments past the time the family can support themselves. Most families have some English-speaking ability. Families are now in Poland and we will be able to interview our family on SKYPE before arrival.

The board gave approval to move ahead with the sponsorship at their Nov. 15 meeting. At that time we had \$3,000 pledged from church members and non-church friends. As of Nov. 22 that amount is \$3,500. With a \$5,000 suggested budget that means we need to raise an additional \$1,500. We have not yet completed the application and knowing that housing costs use up a large portion of the \$5,000 we may not need the entire \$5,000. We are required to have a team of 4 to 6 members who take responsibility for caretaking of the family. ALIGHT provides a weekly calendar of tasks that need to be met. Our immediate go to is the Minnesota Council of Churches thru their Mankato office. It is their duty to oversee resettlement of all refugees.

At this time the team consists of Joy Rathman, Julie Peck, Lisa Erspamer and Jeanie Hinsman. Team members are required to complete a registration with ALIGHT and pass a background check. Other church members and community volunteers may assist but in the initial weeks it's best if the family has just a few contacts with whom they build relationship and comfort, so they are not overwhelmed. In time we may choose to do a community gathering to introduce them to the larger Hanska community.

The team anticipates having our application complete by Dec. 4. The application process is conducted by an organization called Welcome.U.S. After accepting our application, they match us with families suitable for our situation. We conduct an interview on SKYPE as mentioned above and if the interview result is satisfactory the placement continues through processing. This includes completing sponsorship papers with the government so that travel documents can be issued. From the time of the application being submitted to arrival is generally four to five weeks.

Issues to resolve: Will the church office need to be moved to the fellowship hall? Can we find someone to do snow removal to meet the family's needs? Transportation issues—either we do a lot of driving or see if we can find a loaner car and if

there is an eligible driver in the family. How do we cover car insurance? We can get furniture from a service called Heart to Home in New Ulm but will need to make sure there are other furnishings such as linens, towels, TV, computer, etc. as well as clothing.

On Nov. 10 a presentation “A Glimpse into the Ukraine” was given in New Ulm by Dr. Leonid and Mrs. Kathleen Skorin from Albert Lea. They are of Ukrainian descent and have spent much time in the country. It was very informative. There was a Ukrainian refugee couple in attendance that has been sponsored by Martin Luther College. I have visited with Alla Skroenkyy and learned some helpful things about the refugee experience. It is nice to know we have her as a resource as we move ahead. This will be an overwhelming experience for our newcomers. The personal losses they must reconcile along with the moves from Ukraine to Poland to the U.S. and the unknowns about their future are emotionally exhausting. Whatever love and support we can share are just a small step but a vital step on their road to recovery.

If you would like to pledge, offer help, or have any questions or comments please reach out to Jeanie Hinsman.



Notes from the Nora Office...

Mere Lys Newsletter content due the 20th of each month.

Order of Service content due Thursday prior to the service.

Please send content of any kind, for the newsletter, grapevines, and more, to the Nora email.

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
In the office 1-2 times a week, generally Tuesday and Friday, as well as working from home.*

A Note From the Treasurer

October Income and Expenses

Income:	\$4,003.00
Expenses:	\$2,010.00

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



Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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