



MERE LYS

February 2023 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

February Service Alternative

No regular services in February.

There will not be a service in February, in-person or virtually at Nora. However, the program committee has made contact with the Spirit Lake, Iowa UU Fellowship regarding an upcoming service. In person, and online, addresses will be sent out via the Grapevine.

Iowa Lakes UU Fellowship Sunday February 12

“Preacher,” “congressman,” “negro-stealer”: Josiah Bushnell Grinnell was called all of those things during his life. He was called a negro-stealer because he participated in the Iowa Underground Railroad. J.B. Grinnell and other Grinnell residents helped at least 37 fugitive slaves who passed through their town before the Civil War. Cannon will tell a story of racism, noble actions and conflict. He will highlight abolitionist John Brown’s visit to Grinnell, and Grinnell’s first riot over the presence of fugitive slaves in the public school.

For those comfortable meeting in person, the program will be held in the Bay Hill Room at Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center. Coffee begins at 10:30 a.m. with the program beginning at 11 a.m. Visitors are always welcome and those who wish to attend via Zoom can request an invitation with the Contact Us link on the Fellowship Website



www.uuokoboji.com. The event is free and open to the public.

David Connon is an independent researcher and writer. He stumbled on to Confederates from Iowa while researching the Iowa Underground Railroad. During the season, he works as a historical interpreter at Living History Farms. A great-great-grandson of two Union veterans, his blog is Confederates from Iowa: Not to defend, but to understand.

Some thoughts on

MISSION: JOY – Finding Happiness in Troubled Times

Some Nora members gathered together in the sanctuary and others virtually on January 15 to view the documentary MISSION: JOY – Finding Happiness in Troubled Times. The film features the long-time friendship of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and their thoughts about happiness/joy. It was interesting that these two people have such a rich friendship in spite of their differences, one is Christian and the other Buddhist, one was raised in poverty among his family and the other raised in a palace by monks, one African and one Asian, and considering that they have only spent a handful of times together in person over the span of their friend-



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ship. Their love and respect for one another was obvious throughout the film.

Following the viewing, we had a free flowing discussion about what impressed people. Points noted included identifying that both men were very resilient and arrived to a place of joy even though both had complicated and painful childhoods and had directly been involved in social/political unrest (Desmond Tutu had experienced apartheid in South Africa and the Dalai Lama was exiled from Tibet following China's invasion). Another point observed was the importance of having love and compassion as well as courage when facing adversity in life; love/compassion can comfort us and ease pain, while courage can give energy to changing the circumstance that oppress and cause pain.

The video is now available to view on Netflix if you would like to see it again, or for the first time. All present on the 15th would encourage you to seek it out.

February Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, via Zoom.

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

Direct Deposit for Pledges

Direct deposits for pledges become even more pertinent during this time of distance worship.

To initiate this, anyone interested would need to set this up with their bank, much like an automatic payment for a utility or credit card.

If you would like to make electronic pledge payments, please contact Julie Peck for Nora Church account information.

A Note From the Treasurer

December Income and Expenses

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|------------------|------------|
| Income: | \$1,391.00 |
| Expenses: | \$1,589.00 |

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

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.*