

# MERE LYS

## October 2023 Newsletter

*Nora Unitarian Universalist Church*

### Services

10:30 Services

First & Third Sundays

*Potluck follows 1st*

*Brown Bag Option 3rd*

[www.norauuchurch.org](http://www.norauuchurch.org)



### Schedule

October 1

**“Struggling Upward”**

*Guest Speaker:*

*Rev. Sarah Oelberg  
Followed by potluck.*

October 15

**“What I Learned  
from my  
Transgender Son”**

*Guest Speaker:*

*Laurie Sieve*

*Back November 5*

**Nora Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church**

12333 155th Ave.,  
Hanska, MN 56041  
507.439.6240

### October Weather

There's a certain eerie sadness  
Tempered with exultant gladness  
In October weather.

Vanished is June's fertile sweetness,  
July's mellow rare completeness;  
August fleeing with September  
Leaves a beauty earth remembers  
In October weather.

The long rows of china aster  
Stiffly face a sure disaster,  
The vine grasped by the frost's keen  
fingers

Shrivels where it deserted lingers;  
Summer suns are mirrored brightly  
From the trees the frosts touch  
lightly

In October weather.

There's the courage of the moun-  
tains

And the daring of the rivers,  
There's the wisdom of the meadows  
Autumn holds and guards forever,  
And they give a ripened gladness  
Tinctured with a shadowy sadness  
To October weather

—Mabel Douglas Essay

### Services

**October 1: Rev. Sarah Oelberg**

Rev. Sarah Oelberg, minister at Nora Church for thirteen years, will be visiting us on October 1.

Her sermon “Struggling Upward” will address the history of a famous Unitarian, Horatio Alger, and why his beloved books were banned, leading to the current wave of book

banning.

Potluck will follow the service.

Sarah looks forward to catching up with friends at Nora.

**October 15: Laurie Sieve**

“What I Learned from my Transgender Son” is the topic of Laurie’s talk. Laurie and her family were members At Nora for 12 years.

Laurie has since earned her doctorate in public health nursing and has spoken on transgender issues nationally and internationally.

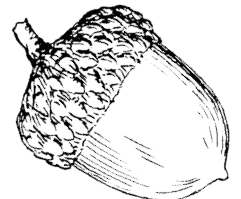
**If you wish to join a small group at an area restaurant after the service let Jeanie Hinsman know.**

**Nov. 5: Rev. Doak Mansfield**

Rev. Mansfield, currently an interim minister in New Jersey, is a serious history buff.

He is quite interested in Nora’s unique history and in the Dakota history of southern Minnesota.

Rev. Mansfield looks forward to a personal visit to our unique hilltop setting and we look forward to meeting him. More service info in the November Mere Lys.



## October Board Meeting

Monthly board meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of the month, via Zoom. Contact Sally for information.

### ***Braver/Wiser: Pulled by a Fragile Thread***

*"We are each other's magnitude and bond."*  
—Gwendolyn Brooks

5:00 a.m. A child is stirring... and up. Now I am, too. We call out to one another in the dark hallway. Call and response, we find one another. She crawls into our bed babbling about a turtle, then requests Cheerios. My phone buzzes with alerts. I pick it up, forgetting myself as I tell my wife, "There's been another shooting. Twenty dead. A concert."

She replies, "Oh God." Then a little voice asks, while crunching cheerios, "Who's dead?"

We tried to sleep but I knew: The number of dead would climb (I was shocked when I got out of bed an hour later and it more than doubled). Calls for gun control and prayers would battle it out on social media. We would sputter facts about mass shootings. I knew it would be a white male shooter. Deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, the ticker read\* — as if both a contest had been won and that it might yet shake us from shock. Amnesia was already sinking in. Wounded Knee did not matter to the news cycle.

When night came at last, with its bedtime rituals, one child asked me quite seriously, "Will this kill me?" as they gestured to a hot light bulb I said was "dangerous to touch."

Can I tell you about the world I long for? It does not include mass killings at concerts or schools, or black bodies riddled with lead all year long. It does not include lone wolves who seem part of a larger pack. It

#### *A Note From the Treasurer*

### **Income and Expenses**

August Income:	\$ 492.00
August Expenses:	\$2,992.01

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

does not include wondering "Who's dead?"

I want instead to live in the early hours where we find one another without knowing how, and crawl into warm beds with Cheerios and stories of turtles.

I don't want to be right or smarter. I just want the slaughter to end.

The tender thread that pulled us together before day-break led me all day long—fragile as it may be. I am tired and could go back to sleep, but then I remember all those mothers with an empty bed.

And then shock and then rage-spirals and then love once more. The tender, fragile thread.

I call the names into the dark hallway, whispers into desperation. Who is dead? I call the names of those with power to change this. I call my own. We, the willing, follow the threads to one another; past rightness and quips and tweets. We will find one another and persist past sunrise.

### **Prayer**

Gracious God, remind me of a love that is greater than unjust laws, greater than a gun lobby, and greater even than death. Let me wake in that love, live in that love, and move in its service. Amen.

*\*This claim isn't accurate: the Tulsa race massacre of 1921 was a large-scale, racially-motivated pogrom in which a group of whites attacked the black community of Tulsa, Oklahoma. More than 800 people were admitted to local white hospitals with injuries and the two black hospitals were burned down. The official count of the dead by the Oklahoma Bureau of Vital Statistics was 36, but other estimates of black fatalities vary from 55 to about 300.*

### ***Notes from the Nora Office...***

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

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

*Working in office 1xweek and from home.  
Noset in-office hours. I can be contacted through the Nora email. If you need to get ahold of me directly, or quickly, please connect with Sally.*

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant*