



# MERE LYS

## May 2024 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

### Services

1st & 3rd Sundays

*Potluck follows 1st*

*Brown Bag Option 3rd*

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



### Schedule

May 5

*“On Loneliness and the Longing to Belong”*

*Guest: Rev. Sara Smalley*

May 19

*“Readying the Soil for the Seeds of Transformation”*

*Guest: Meleah Houseknecht*

### Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

12333 155th Ave.,  
Hanska, MN 56041  
507.439.6240

[norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net)  
[www.norauuchurch.org](http://www.norauuchurch.org)  
[www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU](https://www.facebook.com/NoraChurchUU)

### The Oak Tree

A mighty wind blew night and day  
It stole the oak tree's leaves away  
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark  
Until the oak was tired and stark

But still the oak tree held its ground  
While other trees fell all around  
The weary wind gave up and spoke,  
"How can you still be standing Oak?"

The oak tree said, "I know that you  
Can break each branch of mine in two  
Carry every leaf away  
Shake my limbs, and make me sway.

But I have roots stretched in the earth  
Growing stronger since my birth  
You'll never touch them, for you see  
They are the deepest part of me.

Until today, I wasn't sure  
Of just how much I could endure  
But now I've found, with thanks to you  
I'm stronger than I ever knew.

—Johnny Ray Ryder Jr.

### May Services

#### May 5 "On Loneliness and the Longing to Belong"

We are in the midst of a loneliness epidemic, says the US Surgeon General, and it's negatively affecting our physical, mental, and spiritual health. The cure is connection. Join Rev. Sara as we reflect on the painful reality of loneliness and the joyful healing that can happen when we gather in authentic community.

Rev. Sara Smalley is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield.

#### May 19 "Readying the Soil for the Seeds of Transformation"

Poet Yehuda Amichi writes, "From the place where we are right, flowers will never grow in the spring. The place where you are right is hard and

trampled like a yard.” If we want to plant the seeds of a more loving and just world, we will need to till the soil of our hearts and communities so that our seeds can take root and grow. We all love to be right, but insisting on our own righteousness usually comes at the cost of being an effective force for change. Our ability to cultivate the fruit of transformation may depend on the degree to which we can take pluralism seriously and “embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.”

Our guest speaker will be Meleah Houseknecht. Meleah is following her call to Unitarian Universalist ministry and is in her third year at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. A life-long UU, she spent two decades engaging stakeholders in environmental policy development and implementation. She holds a master’s degree in environmental management from the Yale School of the Environment and was a part of the 2019–20 cohort of the Humphrey Policy Fellows. Meleah serves as a trustee for Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice and as an active member of First Universalist Church of Minneapolis. The title of her sermon is “**Readying the Soil for the Seeds of Transformation.**”

**March Board Meeting**

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, May 15th, 7:00 pm on Zoom.

**New Ulm’s Own**

On May 11 we celebrate World Fair Trade Day to recognize the benefits that fair trade purchases provide to workers in third world and developing countries. Fair Trade purchases give hope to many hard workers trying to earn a livable wage, a sustainable income, and decent working conditions. Respect for the environment is another principle of the fair trade movement. The use of repurposed material and organic farming practices help save our climate.

New Ulm’s Own will be celebrating World Fair Trade Day on Saturday, May 11, 10:00 to 4:00. Find beautiful products from Haiti, the Phillipines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal, Ecuador, Peru, and more. Every purchase makes a difference!

**The Finches**

The ears stung with cold  
sun and frost of dawn  
in early April comes

the song of winter finches,  
their crimson bright, then  
dark as they move into

and then against the light.  
May the year warm them  
soon. May they soon go

north with their singing  
and the season follow.  
May the bare sticks soon

live, and our minds go free  
of the ground  
into the shining of trees.

by Wendell Berry



*A Note From the Treasurer*  
**Income and Expenses**

March Income: \$5,470  
March Expense: \$3,090

*Income/expenses presented at the last board meeting(s). Income doesn't include memorials/gifts.*

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

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

**Please send content of any kind, for the  
Mere Lys, grapevines etc. to the Nora email**

*Working in office 1xweek and from home. No set 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*