



MERE LYS

March 2025 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

1st & 3rd Sundays

Potluck Follows 1st

Brown Bag Option 3rd

www.norauuchurch.org



Schedule

March 2

“The Stories We Tell”

Rev. Sara Smalley

March 16

***“Hope” is the thing
with feathers”***

Rev. Wesley V.

Hromatko, D.Min

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View from the Hill

Twice in the last week I have been reminded of how essential it is during this bizarre time in our country, to work together, how we need each other more than ever. After watching the insanity unfold in our Country the last 4 weeks, I needed to gather with others. On Tuesday afternoon, February 18, I went to the rally at the State Capitol. The rotunda was packed, both upstairs and downstairs. I estimated about 1,500 people. The focus was communicating to our State leaders that we want to *Fund Our Future*, a future with justice, diversity, safety for minority populations, and a chance for all to succeed financially... Everything that we value as UU's. Attorney General Keith Ellison gave a rousing speech. (As you may know, he was one of 12 Attorneys General that has filed a lawsuit challenging Elon Musk's access to sensitive government data.) In the rotunda, we lifted our voices in song calling out for equity, protection for our public education and the need for both local and national leaders to follow our Constitution and the Law. Our voices were loud and clear. Maybe you even saw footage of the gathering on the news that night. We wanted the people of MN to know that we are paying attention and we will fight for our democracy and a compassionate society. I left feeling empowered and feeling not -so- alone.

As you may have heard, funding for food shelves has been cut by the Trump Administration. The food shelf nearest to my house, where I go twice a month to get food for our two Ecuadorian families, sent out an email that their funding has been cut \$60,000 this current year. Already food shelf usage is way up as the price of food keeps rising. I wondered how my husband and I were going to be able to continue to help our Ecuadorian families. I decided to take a chance and sent out to my neighborhood network a request for additional food. And the food, laundry soap, diapers, the milk and cereal and frozen fruit poured in. Our living room quickly turned into our own food shelf. Boxes and bags stacked everywhere. The freezer full. Everyone wanted to be able to help in some tangible way to ease the suffering that has started to descend, in one way or another, on us all. I ended up spending three, full exhausting days driving around the neighborhood and picking up donations, sorting them and communicating with all those who offered to help. One couple asked what was still most needed and arrived four hours later with a little car that was stuffed to the roof. I cried, more than once, with the outpouring of generosity and kindness. And with the cash gifts that were given, I think I can make sure that these families have enough to eat through the month of March. And, finally, I met people in my neighborhood that are amazing. I had the opportunity to invite several of them into our home and learn a bit more about them. It turns out that one woman owns a small soup and bread company and she has made a commitment to make pots of soup twice a month for our Ecuadorian families.

I could never have done this much myself. And even if I had done it all my-

self, it is far better to have reached out. These families are being held now by more hands and more hearts.

Dear ones, do what you can to take care of those you love and when you can, stretch to connect and ease the way for others. Pace yourselves; this is a marathon, not a sprint.

Love Will Guide Us. – Rev. Laurie

March Services

March 2 “The Stories We Tell”

Rev. Sara Smalley

Stories are not meant to live inside of us; they are meant to be told. This is true for us both as individuals and as Unitarian Universalists. Join Rev. Sara for an exploration of the stories of our lives and the stories of our faith, and what happens when we share them.

Rev. Sara Smalley is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield. Her ministry is guided by wonder, joy, authenticity, and a fierce belief in the power of community—life is hard, but we don't have to go it alone. She is the mom of two young adult children and lives in Minneapolis.

March 16 “Hope” is the thing with feathers”

Rev. Wesley V. Hromatko, D.Min.

Wesley will be speaking on Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope is the thing with feathers" and its relevance to our religion. She wrote it in a time of great political and social turmoil in our country and the world. It seems an appropriate time to think of it again.



Notes from the Nora Office...

Newsletter content should be sent by the 20th of each month. Orders of service content by Noon the Thursday prior to service. Please send content to the Nora email.

In Memorium

Kristine S. Paulson

November 15, 1940—February 9, 2025

Wesley lives on and operates the family 1911 Century Farm He has served congregations in the Midwest and on the East Coast and speaks in the area of the old UU Tri State Cluster. He spoke as part of a UUMA panel of ministers ordained for fifty years. He started his education in a one room school, graduated from the University of Minnesota and Meadville/Lombard affiliated with the University of Chicago, but he says his education just goes on.

Mark your calendars for guest speaker Phil Lund, on April 6, and Rev. Laurie Bushbaum back with us on April 20, for the Easter service.

March Board Meeting

The next Nora board meeting will be held Wednesday, March 19 at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, via Zoom.

News from the Board

Members of the congregation will be receiving a survey as to their opinion on the future of Nora Church. Look for that soon. All feedback is valuable, important and welcome!

Braver/Wiser: Anchored to Hope

“[Hope] transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. Hope...is not the same as joy that

A Note From the Treasurer

Income and Expenses

January Income: \$4,533.44

January Expense: \$3,077.24

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

In Memorium

Shirley Olson

June 22, 1933—January 25, 2025

things are going well...but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.”

—Vaclav Havel

My apartment looks out on the Mississippi River, where I watch barges travel back and forth each morning. But on nights when I wake up after midnight, scared and uncertain about what the months and years ahead will hold, I find my mind drifting from river barges back to my adopted hometown of Baltimore, of oceans and sailing ships.

Usually I think of anchors as something to keep us in place, to hold us steady as the world around us moves. But there's at least one other use for an anchor. Imagine an old sailing ship: on a big, 150-foot schooner, there aren't any motors or oars on the boat itself. The ship is designed to work with the wind; when you're out in the open sea with the wind at your back, it cuts through the waves fast and straight.

But how does the ship get out of port? What do you do when the wind isn't at your back, but coming straight at your face? Maybe you're stuck, no wind to be had at all.

There's at least one other way to use an anchor, called warping. The crew of a becalmed ship would take a kedge anchor and put it in a rowboat. A crew rowed it as far as they could out in front of the ship, and dropped the anchor. The crew aboard the ship hauled on the anchor—not bringing it up, but bringing the ship slowly overtop of the anchor. Then they pulled the anchor up, put it back on the rowboat, and repeated the process. It's not fast, and it takes an enormous amount of work from many people working together, but in this way even the largest sailing ship can move forward without any wind.

I think of an anchor as a kind of motivation when the wind is against us. Hope doesn't require that the wind be at our backs; it's not moored to a certain understanding of the experienced world. Hope

is challenging, if not impossible, to grasp alone. Hope, in this sense, is a discipline to anchor myself to something that I can't quite grasp yet, but I trust is there—and a discipline to pull towards that goal together, one day at a time.

By Oscar Sinclair, Braver/Wiser Jan. 29, 2025

Prayer

God of all that is spoken and all held too close to be said aloud, help us to hold on to hope. When we find ourselves becalmed, remind us to drop an anchor over the horizon; pull along with us as we haul toward a more hopeful horizon.

Things to Consider

by Jim Johnson

January: the trails of red-backed voles in the snow.

February: the snow letting go, first around the tall pines along the slope.

March: the geese-flecked sky, sky open like a geode.

April: male mergansers throwing back their hair like tango dancers.

May: the wink of a twinflower.

June: the brightness that comes into a stone when it is wet.

July: horsetails switching in the wind.

August: thimbleberry stains on your very thumb and forefinger.

September: much to do with rhubarb.

October: deer hair and balsam fir turning gray as the grayest days.

November: unfolding a map in the wind.
And the way things change.

December: ice luminaries at solstice melting.

