

*Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
Sarah Oelberg, Minister
12333 155th Avenue
Hanska, Minnesota 56041-4310*

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit Number 2
Hanska, MN 56041

Mere Lys (More Light)

*norachuu@prairie.lake.com
<http://www.nora-uu-church.org>*

Address Service Requested



Sunday Services September, 2003

Social Hour: 10:00 A.M.

Worship Service: 10:30 A.M.

September 7 - "Remember When?" This morning we will honor the grandparents among us, and remember days gone by as we enter into a new church year and new horizons.

Servers: Gene and Georgine Tepley; Edith and Katie Beckius

Musician: Sally Hanson

9:00 - Adult Discussion Group

11:30 - POTLUCK LUNCH

September 14 - "Speaking the Truth in Love." Sometimes we need to say things others don't want to hear. How can we speak the truth without hurting people?

Servers: Lee and Lynn Schmitt

Musician: Ben Marti

9:00 - Adult Discussion Group

Board of Trustees

September 21 - "Beyond Categorical Thinking." Today our worship leaders will be Mary Esther Johnson and Jerry Carden. They will help us consider our hopes, expectations and concerns about a new minister, and how we can choose the best candidate.

Servers: Al and Dorothy Swanson

Musician: Ryann Rathman

9:00 - Adult Discussion Group

Everyone is invited to stay after the service for a light luncheon with our guests.

September 28 - "Tradition: Blessing or Burden?" Ole Jorgenson spoke on this topic years ago, and Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof claims tradition is what keeps a community together. Are there times when tradition outlives its usefulness?

Servers: Kristy Paulson and Kay Steffl

Musician: Ben Marti

9:00 - Adult Discussion Group

SARAH'S CORNER

It is hard to believe it is time to begin another church year. Jerry and I had a very nice summer. First of all, we bought a house in Milwaukee, so we really will be moving January 1! Then we drove our motorhome to visit our son and grandchildren in Pennsylvania, attended two square dance camping conventions, and stopped at various points of interest along the way. One stop was at Niagara Falls - the Canadian side, which we had not seen before. It was the high point of our vacation!

We arrived at the campground late afternoon, ate a quick supper, and took a shuttle bus to the falls. It was a perfect day - warm but not hot, clear and sunny with a few wispy clouds floating over the falls. It was that time of early evening when everything seems more intense than other times; the whites glisten and the colors bore into your soul. The falls were gorgeous! We walked leisurely along the promenade between the two sets of falls, stopping often to drink in the view and absorb the wonder of it all. We lingered as dusk fell, and then darkness, when the lights were turned on the water and the falls took on an ethereal look. We waited and watched as a full moon came up over the falls, and then fireworks played in the sky between the two. It was heaven on earth.

In the last few years, we have traveled quite a bit in Europe, where we (like everyone else) visit many old churches and cathedrals, marveling at the architecture, the lovely stained glass windows, the statues and the opulence. Each seems grander than the last. Each has a kind of "aura" that leaves one feeling humble and moved. You know these are sacred spaces; you feel they represent religion at its finest.

Yet, standing there before the falls and the full moon, I felt more awe and wonder and peace and inspiration than in any church. I knew I was, indeed, in the presence of something extraordinary, experiencing the marvelous beauty and order of the universe. I remembered a quote from someone long forgotten, who said that his God was too large to be contained in a mere church, or in any book, or even in one religion. His God was so large it took up the whole universe, and everyone in it. That is exactly how I felt standing there, looking at the falls.

I was not alone, of course. There were hundreds of other people from all over the world. East Indian women in bright saris and men with turbans; Arab women dressed in lovely silk pants and tunics, with filmy scarves around their heads, and some in full burkas with only slits to look out to see the world; South American families with flowered and decorated clothing; Africans in colorful native costumes. It was a melange of color and texture. Every language imaginable was being spoken. Every world religion was represented.

But all of us - every person there - had the same emotional and spiritual experience as we gazed at the falls while the evening closed in around us. It was obvious that the greatness of the universe included us all, no matter what our religion, nationality, or appearance. God was, indeed, larger than any single church, book, or religion. The same feeling of awe was present in every heart, visible in every eye.

I thought, as I stood there, how wonderful it would be if there were some way to transport this feeling we all shared into the halls of governments throughout the world, and into the hearts of the policy makers. It gave me some hope that, perhaps, there might be some way that we could put aside our differences and share common experiences and goals. I hoped that we could realize that individual religions and nationalities really do not matter much in this world when people come together in a sacred place and share the awesome power of nature. If only we could carry that feeling back to our respective countries and churches and use it as a basis for unity.

Ah well, one can always hope. I will always remember that wondrous night at Niagara Falls, and try to use it as a background against which I pursue my dreams and carry out my everyday life. It will ever remain as an image of that for which we strive, and a metaphor for life as it ought to be.

Meanwhile, we enter into another year together, pursuing our individual and collective dreams, working to try to make them come true. Welcome back!

Sarah



TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Two of our musicians have been in the hospital for extended times with back problems. Joanne Saxton had spinal surgery and reconstruction in Fairmont. Mimi Kamleiter fractured four vertebrae and her sternum in an automobile accident, and has been in the hospital in Mankato.

We will miss them both playing for us for awhile.

John Bauer had open heart surgery at Mayo. He is now home and doing well.

Two new lives came into the Nora community this summer. Shannon (Schmitt) and Kevin Weiss had a baby boy, Toby, on July 20, and Kristin and Christopher Bodick are the proud parents of a baby girl born July 8.

Vicki Chambard and Peter Torkelson are now officially engaged. Also, Charles Chambard (son of Glenn and Dolores) will wed Trina Rogers on Sept. 6. Congratulations to all!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Shalom Hill Farm, an ecumenical conference center and training facility for rural ministry, will hold its Fall Festival on September 6 from 3 - 8 PM. Hog roast at 5 PM for \$6. Music, fun and games, farmer's market, home canned garden produce, crafts and baked goods. Proceeds will help fund the ministry of Shalom Hill Farm. The PSD Board meets there every summer, and in October the UU ministers from the 8 states of the Prairie Star District will hold their meeting at Shalom Hill. It is 12 miles northwest of Windom and 5 miles south of Jeffers on County Road 3.

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The regular meeting of the NWS will be on Thursday, September 11. We will have a noon potluck in the church. There is much to discuss as we prepare for smorgasbord, elect new officers, and make decisions about the coming year. All women of the church are invited.

As usual in the fall, we will be getting ready for smorgasbord. Please be thinking about what you can do to help, and don't wait to be asked! Let Janet Rosenbloom know what you can make and when you can help out as soon as possible. This will save many hours of phoning and make planning much easier.

Heart to Heart: A Couple's Enrichment Weekend.

Heart to Heart is a program designed to enrich communication and intimacy in your relationship. It emphasizes personal reflection and couple dialogue. It will be held at Koinonia Retreat Center and is sponsored by Unity Church in St. Paul. It runs from 7:45 PM October 24 - October 26 at 4 PM. If you are interested, call Sarah soon - these weekends fill up fast!

DENOMINATIONAL DOINGS

Prairie Star District is sponsoring some interesting workshops this fall. First is for Presidents, Treasurers, and Membership Committees, on Sept. 26-7 at the White Bear church in Mahtomedi, MN.

October 10-12, "Planning for Growth for Small Congregations" will be held in St. Cloud. This would be a good opportunity for a "team" from Nora to get information to help us grow!



CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Our annual Tri-state UU gathering in Worthington was a great success again, thanks to the Swansons! AI reports that there were 18 from Hanska, 12 from Sioux City, 6 from Sioux Falls, 2 from Mankato, 3 from the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and 1 (Swanson's son) from Galveston, TX, for a total of 42.

Mark Sanderson from Sioux Falls recruited a contact person from each church to organize the event next year, and Rev. Wesley Hromatko agreed to conduct the service. Nora's contact person is Jerry Allen.

Books! Books! Books!

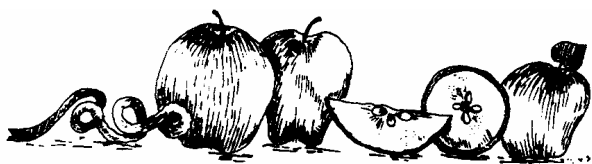
The library cart has been changed and replenished, so look for some new books to read that you may not find elsewhere! If you still have books from last year, this is the time to return them and start anew.

Also, Sarah is trying to sort out her books and begin packing. There will be books on a table in the Kaffe Stua. Please feel free to take and keep any of these books you might find interesting.

Saturday evening, September 20, there will be an important workshop given by the "Beyond Categorical Thinking" team. This workshop will help us to better understand UU ministry and how to choose the best candidate for us. [See the back of the serving list for more information.](#)

Two groups are coming this month to visit Nora and the museum. The Minnesota Historical Society Preservation Group will be here on the 19th. On the 28th about 45 folks from the Austrian Club of Wisconsin will visit. They will eat lunch at the Troll Hus, and come out to Nora about 1:15 PM. Anyone who would like to meet with either group is welcome to come, also.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



There are exciting plans afoot for our young people this year! The RE committee has come up with a basic monthly outline they plan to follow this year:

First Sunday - learn more about our UU Principles and how we can put them into practice.

Second Sunday - Put our principles into action by doing community service projects. We are looking for ideas, so please share ideas with us.

Third Sunday - take a closer look at Judeo-Christian religions of our friends, so we have a better understanding of what they are learning.

Fourth Sunday - learn more about famous UU people and their contributions to humankind.

Fifth Sundays the children will choose what we will do.

Of course, there are exceptions. In October, our service project will be the first weekend, of course.

We also plan to separate the children by age and gear lessons to the different age groups. The success of this will depend on the attendance of the children and the participation of adults, of course. If you can help by teaching, supervising the younger children, subbing, bringing children along to church when their parents can't come, or sharing ideas - don't be shy!

A good group of children from the church had a "day out" at the water park in Fairmont in August. If all these children would come to church, we could have a great RE program. Thanks to the Riekes for organizing it, and for being willing to teach this year, along with Brenda Wiger and (we hope) other volunteers.



SERVING LIST FOR 2003-4

Please note your assigned day(s) and save this list. If you cannot serve on the designated day, it is your responsibility to exchange with someone else. Thank you for being so faithful in providing this service to Nora Church. * = Potluck.

SEPTEMBER

- * 7 - Gene & Georgine Tepley
Edith & Katie Beckius
- 14 - Lee & Lynn Schmitt
- 21 - Al & Dorothy Swanson
- 28 - Kay Steffl & Kristy Paulson

OCTOBER

- 5 - Smorgasbord
- 12 - Doug Anderson & Nancy Dickson
- 19 - Tarrie Swenstad & Michelle Bethke
- 26 - Darrell & Jeanie Hinsman

NOVEMBER

- * 2 - Jerry & Susan Allen
Dave & Jean Wenk
- 9 - Algot & Bonita Blomquist
- 16 - Ardelle & Lorraine Becken
- 23 - Julie Grathwohl & Laurie Kunerth
- 30 - Wally & Beverly Jean Wellmann

DECEMBER

- * 7 - Elroy & Ardis Wellmann
Wayne Weinshenk; Pecks
- 14 - John & Anne Makepeace
- 21 - Roger and Norma Breu

JANUARY

- 14 - Janet & Noah Rosenbloom
- 18 - John & Julie Schmitt
- 25 - Joy Rathman & Susan Evers

FEBRUARY

- * 1 - Darrell & Jeanie Hinsman
Sheldon & Anne Rieke
- 8 - Warren & Kristine Paulson
- 15 - Gene & Georgine Tepley
- 22 - Vicki Sieve & Jane Thompson
- 29 - Brenda & Mark Wiger

MARCH

- * 7 - Algot & Bonita Blomquist
Norma & Roger Breu
- 14 - Jerry & Susan Allen
- 21 - Wendy Tuttle & Christopher Olson
- 28 - Michelle Bethke & Julie Grathwohl

APRIL

- * 4 - Shirley & Clayton Olson
Joy Rathman & Scott Chambard
- 11 - Alon & Carol Chambard
- 18 - Mimi Kamleiter & Sandi Bengé
- 25 - Wally & Beverly Jean Wellmann

MAY

- * 2 - Wayne & Janet Johnson;
Julie Sellner & Ellen Byro
- 9 - Lee & Lynn Schmitt
- 16 - Syttende Mai
- 23 - Nancy Dickson & Tarrie Swenstad
- 30 - Gil & Sally Hanson

JUNE

- 6 - Doug Anderson;
Janet & Noah Rosenbloom
- 13 - Ardis & Elroy Wellmann
- 20 - Vicki Sieve & Laurie Kuner