

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

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

Mere Lys *(More Light)*

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<http://www.nora-uu.church.org>

Address Service Requested

Sunday Services JANUARY 2004

Social Hour: 10:00 A.M. Worship Service: 10:30 A.M.

January 4 – No Services

January 11 – “Our Past; Stepping Stone to the Future.”

Reverend Mark Yackel-Juleen

Servers: Noah & Janet Rosenbloom, Gene & Georgine Tepley

Musician: Ben Marti

9:00 Adult Discussion Group

9:00 Board Meeting

11:30 POTLUCK LUNCH

January 18 – “The Rumble Within”

Reverend Luke Markve

Servers: John & Julie Schmitt

Musician: Sally Hanson

9:00 Adult Discussion Group

January 25 – “Human Nature’s Changing Reputation”

Reverend Wesley Hromatko

Servers: Joy Rathman, Susan Evers

Musician: Ben Marti

THE CORNER

Mark
Yackel-

Juleen is a specialist in rural ministry who was chosen to lead Nora members through interim reflection and visioning during the transition of ministers. The following is a letter from Rev. Yackel-Juleen reflecting what topics he will be leading during his visits to Nora Church.

As stated, participation is vital and we hope you will join in supporting Rev. Yackel-Juleen's mission here at Nora.

Points of transition in the lives of congregations are ripe for reflection and visioning. Nora is at such a point. As you work through the process of identifying and calling a new minister, the leadership of Nora recognized the opportunity and the need to enter into an intentional process of reflection and visioning that will offer some direction for the congregation. Thus, I have been invited to facilitate such a process over the next few months in a series of gatherings we're calling "The Future of Nora."

I have lived and ministered in southwestern Minnesota since 1989. I am the founder and executive director of Shalom Hill Farm, an organization which educates and advocates on behalf of small town and rural life, ministry, and care of the environment. Shalom Hill is located 12 miles north of Windom, Minnesota. Though I am an ELCA Lutheran minister, our organization works with 14 different denominations, including Unitarian Universalist. I have in-depth training and experience in working with small town and rural congregations and have consulted with more than 100 different congregations of a variety of denominations since 1997.

Currently I am completing a Doctor of Ministry dissertation on the factors impacting clergy satisfaction and effectiveness in small town and rural settings. My family and I, spouse Margaret and three children, live at Shalom Hill Farm – a beautiful place amidst restored prairie and farm fields.

The rhythm for the Future of Nora meetings will follow this general outline:

History Review (January 11)

Purpose: To identify historic patterns as well as assets and liabilities from the past.

Community Assessment (February 1)

Purpose: To define the local service field and understand the current demographics and economics, future trends, and ministry potential in that area.

Congregational Assessment (March 7)

Purpose: To understand current congregational demographics and economics, future trends, and ministry needs and potential.

Visioning and Recommendations (April 18)

Purpose: To draw together all the learnings of the study and discern what needs to be done and what can be done to sustain and enhance the mission of Nora Church in the future.

I commit myself to making these gatherings fun and enlightening. But your participation is vital. Your input is needed to shape the vision for "The Future of Nora."

... Blessings,
Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen
Shalom Hill Farm

TRANSITION

While the search for a new minister continues, the Board of Trustees made some arrangements to cover the absence of a minister. Voicemail has been added to the church office phone so messages can be retrieved off-site. A person to call in emergencies will be part of the voicemail greeting. The email address and regular address will be the same.

END OF AN ERA

Nora Church bid a fond farewell to our minister for the past 12-plus years, Rev. Dr. Sarah Oelberg and her husband Jerry.

On Saturday, December 6, we hosted a well-attended open house brunch in the Fellowship Hall for the Oelbergs to give church members and people from the Hanska community an opportunity to say their goodbyes. The congregation presented the Oelbergs with a scrapbook covering their years at Nora, composed of stories and pictures from members. These were attractively put together by Jeanie Hinsman and Vicki Sieve, who put in many hours planning and compiling the articles. Our thanks to them and to Norma Breu, Shirley Olson, and Julie Peck who chaired the open house, to Beverly Wellmann who did the decorating, to Bonita Blomquist and Lorraine Becken who handled the invitations and to all who worked to make this a success.

And special thanks to Sarah and Jerry who presented the church with two portraits for our Ministers Gallery.

On Sunday, December 14, Sarah gave her final sermon: "Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow," in which she spoke of the need for both the congregation and minister to let go of the relationship. She said that while it may be difficult to search for a new minister in the middle of the church year, "this is the best time for me to

leave. After all, the Christmas season is the time of hope and of looking ahead to take advantage of the new birth.

The New Year is a time for looking forward, making plans and resolutions about how to improve things, set goals for the future."

At the end of the sermon, Rev. Oelberg symbolically returned the pulpit to the congregation to make way for the new minister. Congregational president Carol Chambard then presented Rev. Oelberg with a certificate proclaiming her Minister Emerita of Nora Church, and the congregation presented Sarah and Jerry with monetary gifts.

So ends the era of one of Nora's longest-serving ministers since Amandus Norman. May we be so fortunate again with our next minister.

LETTER FROM SARAH

Dear Friends at Nora:

Our time in Hanska is getting short. We are almost packed, and the movers come on December 30th. As we find things while packing that remind us of our time here in Hanska and at Nora, twinges of wistfulness hit us, and sometimes I have to stop and just think and reminisce for awhile. There is no regret, however – either over being here, or leaving now. Both feel right.

Once again, I want to thank all of you for the many expressions of love and generosity we have been the recipients of over these years. Our retirement party and the gifts many of you gave, and especially the wonderful scrapbook, will be in our memories forever. We can't possibly thank everyone personally, but know that we will think about each of you often.

I also want to thank you for being such a trusting congregation. My work here was made much more pleasant and easy because of the level of trust we shared. You trusted that I was doing my job, at least tolerably well, and that was nice. In turn, I trusted that you would tell me if there was something I needed to know, that you would take care of the "church business," and that you would continue to love and support one another. I can leave knowing that you will take care of one another and this church we all love, and that makes leaving much easier.

We will arrive in Milwaukee on the 31st, spend New Year's Eve with our daughter, and begin work on our house January 1. The address, in case you are in the area is: 1437 S. 76th St., West Allis, WI 53214. If you come to the Wisconsin State Fair, we are one block away. Perhaps our paths will cross again someday.

Love,
Sarah and Jerry

Quote to Think About

"The Eskimos have fifty-two names for snow because it was important to them: there ought to be as many for love."
... Margaret Atwood

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We'd like to send a special thank you to Sally Hanson and Kristine Paulson for their help during our Children's Christmas Service. Next year we hope to enlist the help and participation of a few more adults to make it more of an intergenerational service. Thank you to all of the children for sharing their talents. Finally, thank you to the parents and grandparents for sharing your children and letting them stay late and come early for practice.

Our plans for January include learning about the fourth principle. We are posting the principles as we talk about them, so be looking for the principle posters. We will learn more about Martin Luther King, Jr., and his importance to humankind. Shirley Olson and Ardis Wellman both have ideas for the banner for the children to make for the church. We hope to begin work on that this month. Our bible story for January will be Noah and his ark.

MISSING: We have found one of our candles for our Sunday school chalice lighting. We are still missing one - it is a small pillar candle in a glass mason jar inside a wrought iron candle holder. If you see it somewhere, please place it on the counter in the dining room by the back kitchen. Thank you.

Thank you, too, to Shirley Olson for supplying us with another enclosed candle for the children to use for sharing their joys and concerns. They really enjoy this activity.

LIFE LIVING SERIES – 2004

The Life-Living Series will begin their 28th year of Learning Together starting Monday, January 12 with "Touched by the Muses," a presentation by *Tilting at Windmills* Theatre Group. On Monday, January 19, Mary Pauluk will present "Living to a Great Age: Aging and Spirituality." Monday, February 2, Virginia McCone will tell the story of "Butterscotch Sundaes – My Mom's story of Alzheimer's." Monday, February 9, Kit R. Welchlin will speak on "What Do You Say When You Talk to Yourself." These sessions take place from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at the New Ulm Public Middle School Auditorium at Center and State Street.

NORA WOMEN'S SOCIETY

In December, the Nora Women's Society packed and distributed Christmas boxes for the shut-ins. Members baked cookies or brought other treats for this traditional occasion. Special thanks to Jane Thompson who donated some of her hand-made glass window hangings for the recipients.

The officers of the Women's Society decided not to have a meeting in January.

TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Condolences to the family of Walter "Bud" Anderson who died December 13, at age 88. Bud was a long-time Hanska businessman. He owned Hanska meats with his wife Norma. He served in the Navy in World War II and was a survivor of the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was active in the Hanska community, serving as Volunteer Fire Chief for about 25 years, Scoutmaster and was active in the Businessman's Association, the Lions Club and American Legion.

Congratulations to Tessa Makepeace and Janney Rieke for being on the "A" honor roll at New Ulm Middle School.

Family and friends of Lee Schmitt held a going away party for him prior to his departure for active duty in the National Guard. He reported to Fort McCoy for training before being sent to Iraq. His address is: 1SG Lee R. Schmitt, Btry E 151 FA (TAB), 1654 S. 11th Ave., Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5125. Email address is: lee.schmitt@us.army.mil

MT. PISQUA CEMETERY UPDATE

The response we received from our December newsletter request for a small contribution to the Cemetery Fund was far beyond our expectations. As of December 24th, we have received and deposited \$1530.00

Thank you very much to all who answered our call. We do appreciate.

... Algot Blomquist, Secretary/Treasurer

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**Happy, Healthy New Year
to All**