

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
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<http://www.nora-uu-church.org/nora/>

Address Service Requested

Sunday Services

APRIL 2004

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

April 4 – “A Choosing Religion, Not Chosen”

Reverend William Holden, U.U. Community Minister, LICSW

Servers: Wayne & Janet Johnson, Joy Rathman, Julie Sellner

Musician: Sally Hanson

9:00 Adult Discussion Group – Rev. Holden will lead a discussion on the evolution of ethics

11:30 POTLUCK LUNCH

April 11 – “The Spirit of Easter”

Reverend Wesley V. Hromatko

Servers: Easter Breakfast served by the Sunday School Children

Musician: Ryann Rathman

April 18 – “The Future of Nora”

Reverend Mark Yackel-Juleen

Servers: Mimi Kamleiter, Sandi Bengé

Musician: Ardelle Becken

9:00 Adult Discussion Group

9:00 Board of Trustees Meeting(change due to Easter)

April 25 – “Clean Up Sunday”

Bring your tools, wear your work clothes and help get the church and grounds ready for spring. We will start at 9:00 AM and go as long as there are things to do and people willing to do them. If you plan to stay through lunch, please bring something to share.

THE CORNER

On March 7th, Nora Church gathered for worship and reflected on ministry within the congregation under the theme—The Future of Nora: Mission and Ministry. Our reflections again were guided by Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen who is assisting us in a process of reflection and visioning regarding the future of our congregation

Rev. Yackel-Juleen began by presenting some statistical trends related to membership and stewardship. By taking the trends of the last 8 years and projecting them out ten years into the future, we get a picture of what to expect in the year 2013. Those figures are in the table below.

Congregational Economic and Demographic Trends Projected 10 Years

2003	% Change	2013'	
Adult Membership	since 1995	Adult Membership	
73	-35.4%	41	
2003	% Change	2013	
Pledging Members	since 1995	Pledging Members	
51	-36.3%	28	
2003	% Change	2013	2013
Pledge per Member	since 1995	Pledge per Member	Total Operating
\$871.00	36.3%	\$1,266.22	\$35,275.20
			20.6% Decrease
			in Operating Pledges
2003	% Change	2013	
Operating Expenses	since 1995	Operating Expenses	
\$58,426.00	3.8%	\$61,201.24	
2003	Inflated @	2013	
Operating Expenses	3% Annually	Operating Expenses	
\$58,426.00		\$82,380.66	

It was noted that there has been a steady decline in adult membership in recent years, which includes the number of members financially supporting the congregation. At the same time there has been a steady increase in financial support per pledge. However, this increase does not fully compensate for the decrease in giving members and the inflation of expenses. Thus, by 2013, expenses will exceed operating pledges by about 73% and that is based on the very conservative figure of only 3.8% expense

growth over the last 8 years. Looking at a more realistic projection of 3% annually, expenses will exceed operating pledges by more than \$47,000. There are basically three ways to counter that trend—grow in membership, grow more in financial support, and or decrease expenses. Based on a quick (and unscientific tally) those present in worship could think of 104 people that they knew who were not active in another congregation and could be invited.

Rev. Yackel-Juleen then engaged the congregation in discussion around two questions. The first was “In terms of ministry (tending to the well-being – spirituality, physically, emotionally, intellectually – of its members and the community at large) what assets and capacities does Nora possess?”

Many of the responses related to the fact that Nora is a congregation where different ideas about spirituality are accepted and not judged. People are encouraged to “think outside the box.” The beauty of the location was also emphasized. It was also underscored that the dedicated membership was a wonderful asset. Many are long-standing members, yet they are open and hospitable to newcomers. The second question was “What assets and capacities would you like to see Nora develop?” A prominent response to this question was the need to do more outreach and service projects in the community. There was also strong interest in having a more active youth program.

There was a desire to fellowship “play together” more. There was also a concern for more spiritual depth in the context of the worship. A complete list of the responses is available at the church for those who would like it. Everyone is encouraged to continue to reflect on these questions individually and in conversation with other members of Nora.

ALL COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be an all committee meeting on Wednesday, April 7th at 7:00 PM at the Church.

NORA WOMEN’S SOCIETY

The Women’s Society will meet on Wednesday, April 14, for a noon potluck lunch in the Fellowship Hall.

LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Monday, April 26, 11:30 AM, at Carl’s Corner in Essig. Everyone is welcome.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a congregational meeting on the proposed budget following services on Sunday, May 2nd.

PARSONAGE UPDATE

Thanks to volunteers who have spent two Saturdays at the parsonage tearing down the brick wall in the basement, pulling up floor coverings, sanding the wood floors, etc. in preparation for the renovation. The congregation has voted up to \$30,000 for remodeling the parsonage to include new kitchen cabinets, bathroom fixtures, floor coverings, wall and window treatments. There will be another work party on Saturday, April 3rd, starting at 9:00 AM.

A fund is being set up for contributions from anyone who wants to help buy kitchen and laundry appliances. Please contact treasurer Sally Hanson if you are interested in making a special contribution. Her address is 1622 Northridge Lane, North Mankato, MN 56003.

TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Tarrie Swenstad happily announces the arrival of her great grand-daughter, Jaelyn Haler, on March 12, 2004. Jaelyn’s parents are Mr. and Mrs. Rory Haler of Butterfield, MN.

Lee Schmitt’s new address is: 1SG Lee R. Schmitt, E/151/FA (TAB), LSA Anaconda, APO AE 09391

There will be a bridal shower honoring Pam Borth bride-to-be of Brandon Rathman, son of Joy and Gerard Rathman, on Saturday, April 17th, at the Grace Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, starting at 10:00 AM.

AN EVENING WITH JIM GILBERT

The Women of Lake Hanska Church have extended an invitation to our congregation to join them Thursday, April 29, 2004, for a program presented by Jim Gilbert who is heard each Sunday morning on WCCO radio.

This is a program for all ages, men, women, and children. There will be a potluck supper at 6:00 PM followed by Mr. Gilbert’s program at 7:00 PM at Lake Hanska Lutheran Church.

Jim is an instructor of Environmental Studies at Gustavus College, has been a public school teacher, has a degree in earth sciences from the Univ. of Oklahoma and has done postgraduate work in botany and ecology at the U. of M.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our plans for April are learning about the seventh principle on 4/4. On 4/11, we will read the Easter story and talk about it too. The children and their families will provide a breakfast on Easter morning for the congregation – more on that later. When Shirley Olson returns from her vacation she will help us with the banner on 4/18 and 4/25. The 25th is also Clean-up Sunday, so the children will have opportunities to help clean-up the Church and surrounding grounds.

The older kids will also be working on the seventh principle on 4/4. On 4/11 we will just relax after we clean up after breakfast. On the 18th we will work on the banner with the younger kids. Of course, on the 25th, we will all just pitch in on Clean-up Sunday.

Thank you to all of the children and others for their donations to the Food Shelf. There was a wide variety of products. It's always nice to share.

We are postponing the Secret Friend project until the fall after Smorg. Both adults and children expressed an interest, however had other commitments that made it difficult to participate.

Children's books with themes relevant to the UUism have been and are still being purchased for the children to check out to read. Sarah also left many children's books with important messages. The children each selected ones they wanted to keep. There are many left and should be shared. All of these books are on the book cart in the foyer of the Church. A sign-out list is located there. Please return the books within a month.

LOOKING AHEAD: We're still thinking about a fun activity away from the Church. Come on kids, what would you like to do for fun? Speak up and let us know!!!!!!

Several families have expressed an interest in helping with an Easter morning breakfast for the congregation. Since the children are helping it was recommended we have kid-friendly menu. Therefore, please join us for pancakes, scrambled eggs, fruit and beverages on Easter morning. Sheldon would also like sausages, so we'll throw those in too. We will start serving at 9:45 AM.

On May 9th, the children will be presenting the Sunday service. Since we have been learning and discussing the Seven Principles this past year, we will have a rainbow flower ceremony during the service. We will also present our banner that Shirley Olson designed and helped the children create. And, of course, we will celebrate Mother's Day.

KIDS, PLEASE TALK WITH ANNE AND SHELDON ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THIS SERVICE. WE NEED KIDS TO READ, PROVIDE MUSIC AND HELP THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE. EVERYONE DID A BEAUTIFUL JOB FOR THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM. THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO DO ANOTHER SERVICE.

REVEREND WILLIAM HOLDEN

Sunday, April 4th, Reverend William Holden will present "A Choosing Religion, Not Chosen." Rev. Holden is a U.U. Community Minister and a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. He has experience as a police chaplain, hospital chaplain, and a corrections chaplain. He is the only U.U. minister who has been a prison warden and has had a heart transplant. He goes by the nicknames – "Leggs, Stretch, Big Stoop, or High Pockets." He is 5 feet, 18 inches tall.

Rev. Holden will meet with the discussion group to talk with us about the "evolution of ethics." He encourages the Junior and Senior high school students to take part. He has been working with youth for a number of years and enjoys their participation. Everyone is invited to attend. We will meet in the Iverson Room at 9:00 AM.

PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT CONFERENCE

"Growing Season" is the theme for this year's Prairie Star District Annual Conference scheduled for April 23 – 25, 2004 in Kansas City, MO. Featured speakers are Rev. Peter Morales, Director of UUA District Services, and Rev. Dr. Tracey Robinson-Harris, Director of UUA Congregational Services.

**Visit the Nora Unitarian Universalist Church
Website: www.norauchurch.org**