

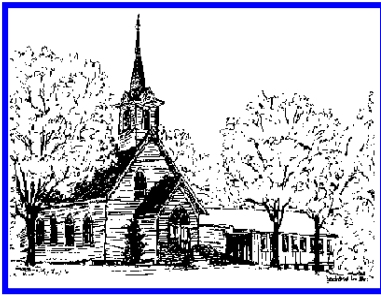


MERE LYS newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

February 2007

VIEW FROM THE HILL



Lisa Friedman, parish minister to our sister congregation in Mankato, will be speaking at Nora on February 4. (We're exchanging pulpits that Sunday, so I'll be leading the service at UUFM.) You'll want to be in church that day, for Lisa is a good soul, colleague and preacher.

Lisa's visit has me thinking about the importance of maintaining connections, as in the case of our two congregations. But there are many other kinds of connections: connections to the inner world as well as the outer; connections to the past as well as the present; connections to

family, friends, nation and world.

If my experience and observations are in any way typical, connections are not a maintenance-free proposition. To choose to be tethered to a belief requires that we remain open to new truth. To choose to be tethered to a person requires that we remain open to the inevitable changes that affect both partners. And to choose to be tethered to a group is to remain open to evolving relationships of many kinds.

February, the "month of love", is a swell time to reflect on the state of our various connections, for what are connections if not the choice to risk loving of some sort, in some way? And what is loving if not the choice to enter into the risky, blessed, aggravating business of connection?

Connections can be severed by all sorts of things: time, distance, change, truth, fear, frustration, death. Connections are fragile things. They are not a maintenance-free proposition.

I invite you to join me in reflection on the state of your connections. In my own case, I've some work to do in this area - some connections, old and new, that need more attention than I've been giving them. So, here's to our connections and the God who teaches and reaches us through them. May we give and receive, ever mindful of our need for one another.

Happy Valentine's Day,
Don



SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING



Loose change on the 2nd Sunday of each month will go to "Food For All"

HEALTH UPDATES

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of Wes Hromatko's father, A.J. His was a long and active life, and we wish his family and friends strength and peace as they go through this difficult time. His funeral was Saturday, January 27 at Chandler, MN.

Jane Thompson, who has been living with cancer, has returned home and is in good hands. Although her disease is deemed terminal, we continue to support Jane and her partner, Dan, as well as daughters Sena and Miranda. Don will continue to give email updates as events unfold.

THANK YOU

Our thanks to Noah Rosenbloom for agreeing to pinch-hit for the ailing Rev. Fred Doty for our January 14th service.

SOULFUL SUNDOWN CONTINUES



Soulful Sundown continues on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month, at Rhein River Arts Center, 208 N. Minnesota (New Ulm) at 6:30 P.M. Facilitated by Don Rollins, the format is music, silence, meditation and sharing. If you haven't tried it, come check it out!

(And tell somebody else, too.)

LUNCH BUNCH



Watch the bulletin for announcements.

MINISTERS TO INCARCERATED UUs

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), a cyber-space congregation providing Unitarian Universalism to isolated religious liberals, offers a 2 spiritual lifeline to incarcerated UUs.

Almost 300 prisoners across the US have joined the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship, with more every month. With no access to the web or UU Sunday services, prisoners' only way of learning more about UUism is through written publications, and letters exchanged with CLF staff and other UUs.

Sadly, dozens of CLF prisoner-members have been waiting for many months to be matched with a UU penpal through the CLFs Letter Writing Ministry. Members of any UU congregation who might like to write to a CLF prisoner-member are invited to visit the CLF website: www.clfuu.org, click on Prison Ministry. (see flyer on resource table for more information)

BUDGET TIME

The date for submission of committee budgets is Feb. 4. A timely response helps the board begin preparation of the church budget for Fiscal Year 2007-8.

BOARD NOTES

New items to come before the Board were creation of a monthly Board recognition of a member or members who have done a special service for Nora Church.

Bylaw changes were another major item. The Board voted to put changes for dates of electing board members and reducing the size of the board to seven before the congregation for a vote. The special congregational meeting is scheduled for Feb. 4, 2007. (see the separate item by President Sheldon Rieke for more details).

It was also noted that the Minister's Discretionary Fund is depleted, and contributions are welcome.

In other business, committee reports were received. The RE Committee is planning to have a monthly Children's Chapel. It also urges families to make increased effort to attend Sunday services.

The Pledge Committee, headed by Doug Anderson, will meet following the service on Feb. 11.

THANKS FROM THE BOARD

The Nora Church Board of Trustees has decided to give special recognition to church members who have performed special services for the church. The January honorees are the individuals who planned, prepared and served the dinner for the Children of Iraq. They put in many hours of effort to make this event a success. There are too many to name, for fear of overlooking someone, but you saw them selling tickets, helping in the kitchen and serving. On behalf of the congregation, the board thanks you all for a job well done and a job well worth doing.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY A SUCCESS

Despite blustery weather, members of Nora church as well as some friends from the UCC church pulled off a welcoming, informational, and sustaining event. With approximately 100 people in attendance, the excellent spaghetti dinner (organized by Jeannie), and subsequent music (provided by Don as well as Dick Kimmel), and enlightening talk by Dr. Hamed Sallam on Moslem/Christian Dialogue made for a successful evening.

Thank you to all the Nora members who pitched in to make this event possible. As we write this we prepare to gather as a committee and finish the summarizing and totaling of dollars raised for not only the Iraqi Children burn victims, Church World Services, but also the orphanage Lee Schmitt has connections to in Iraq.

FOOD FOR ALL



Mark your calendar. Saturday, March 10th (2nd Sat. of the month) will once again be our quarterly commitment to the Food for All Project in St. James. Volunteers get to spend a couple of hours that morning distributing food and conversation to those in need. This is one of the three congregational goals related to Social Justice.

MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

The minister's discretionary is nearly empty. This is a fund set up to assist persons in legitimate hardship. If you'd like to donate to the fund, please write your check to Nora Church, and designate it "Discretionary Fund". Thanks for any help you might be able to offer.

GMCC JUSTICE CIRCLE

Working for justice in the criminal justice system is the focus area for the Criminal Justice Initiatives of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. (GMCC) collect and distribute information to judges on the impact on individuals, families, and communities made by offenders so they can receive appropriate consequences for their actions. To simply release those who offend without consequences is not treating them or the people and communities they have hurt with worth and human dignity. (see the Reverend Dr. Gary B. Reirson of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches "President's letter" at the resource table for more information)

PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT

Registration material for the 2007 Prairie Star District Annual Conference will be available in February. This year's conference "Nurturing Our Faith Communities" will take place in Minneapolis, April 13-15. Keynote speakers will be Rev. Dr. Laurel E. Hallman, Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas and nationally acclaimed family therapist Dr. William Doherty, professor, University of Minnesota Department of Family Social Science. Also, this year UUA staff members will be at the conference to meet with youth and adults as part of its "Consultation Ministry to and with Youth." You'll find timely, practical, and fun activities, including multigenerational workshops on nurturing our faith communities. More information is available at www.psdouua.org or by calling the District office 612-870-4823. Check back for registration materials which will be posted by mid-February.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

If you haven't yet turned in your boxes, envelopes, etc, please do so immediately. Thank you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On February 4th there will be a short Congregational meeting following the regular service to consider some by-law changes. As we keep growing and working we hopefully find better ways of doing some things. Some of this change is simply adapting to changing times and conditions around us. Some is just finding better ways to allow the talents in Nora to express themselves. Nora is like any living thing, if it doesn't change even in little ways, it becomes less vital. Please check out the article on the By-law Changes and call if you have any questions.

BY-LAW CHANGES

On February 4th the Board of Trustees asks that you vote on these changes to the By-Laws of Nora.

The changes are indicated by the underlined words below. These changes can be voted on as one item or the two items they break down into.

The first Item is to change the number of Trustees to seven as seen in Article III, Section 1. The fact is that most boards function just fine with seven board members. Nine board members simply ties up two more people whose work for Nora could be better spent at the committee level.

The second Item is to elect New Trustees and Officers for the coming church year in February as seen in Article III, Section 2 and Article VI, Section 2 & 5. By electing these people in February we allow them the chance to go to either Prairie Star or General Assembly to learn more about Board leadership before they take office. Also, if elected to serve as an officer they have the chance to learn from the outgoing officer. Either way we get Trustees better able to hit the ground running and with more knowledge about how to do their job.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. The business and general management of the church shall be by a board of Trustees consisting of seven members elected by and from the voting membership of the congregation. Two trustees shall (normally) be elected each year for 3 year terms. Every third year three trustees shall be elected for a 3 year term. No trustee shall serve continuously for more than two such full terms.

Section 2. As soon as practical after the February Trustees election, the new Board of Trustees shall meet to organize by choosing from its members the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, for the coming church year.

ARTICLE VI

Section 2. At the Annual Meeting, full, complete and accurate reports shall be presented by each and every department of the church and a budget for the church year shall be passed.

Section 5. A congregational meeting will be held the last Sunday in February for the purpose of electing trustees for the coming church year to take office in July.



RELIGIONS EDUCATION

We are trying something new for the kids February through April. It is called **Children's Chapel**. **Children's Chapel** will occur one Sunday a month, usually the third or fourth Sunday. All the children will go downstairs at the start of the worship service for their own service. Don will be downstairs to help with the **Children's Chapel** service and then will return upstairs for the remainder of the adult service. Our **Children's Chapel** services and following activities will be based on ideas from the **Holidays and Holy Days** curriculum. The RE Committee is excited about this new program. It will provide the kids an opportunity for some time with Don. They will also be involved in their own mini worship service, which we hope will be a fun learning activity for the kids.

Children's Chapel will replace RE Wednesdays. We found attendance for RE Wednesdays to be declining as the ages and interests of the children has changed over the years. The service projects that were done during RE Wednesday will be incorporated into Sunday School class time.

Thinking of service projects - the first batch of letters/pictures to our friends at our partner church (es) in Romania will be mailed soon, if not already. Pictures were taken of each of the kids kindergarten through 7th. grade. The kids have written information about themselves and/or drawn pictures that will accompany their personal pictures. They also learned a little about Romania and saw pictures of children from the partner church(es) Christmas programs. It will be fun to see where this all leads.

There a few curriculum changes for the remainder of the year. The Young'Uns and Juniors are done with learning about different Bible stories. The Young'Uns will be doing activities from the UU preschool curriculum, **Celebrating Me and My World**. The focus of this curriculum is helping the children learn more about themselves and what they can do, and how they can interact with each other and their world around them. The Juniors will continue to learn more about UU history, people and beliefs. **A Lamp in Every Corner** will be the primary source for stories for the Juniors. Activities will be drawn from a variety of resources including: **The UU Kids Book; We Believe; and My Unitarian Universalist Journey Workbook**.

FEBRUARY RE SCHEDULE

4th. Young'uns - Celebrating Me and My World # 13 - I Can Ask Questions. Teacher - Shannon Weiss

Juniors - Questions, Questions, Questions. The kids will begin to learn more about UU views on different topics, such as the Bible, God, Jesus, etc.. Teacher - Joy Rathman.

Tweens - In Our Hands #8 - Creative Conflict Resolution Part 1. Teacher - Jeanie Hinsman

11th. Young'Uns - Valentine's Day story and projects. Teacher - Bonita Blomquist

Juniors - A Lamp in Every Corner - Muddy Children - Hosea Ballou - a Universalist view of God. Teacher - Brenda Wiger.

Tweens - In Our Hands # 9 - Creative Conflict Resolution Part 2. Teachers - Pat Kunerth

18th. No Sunday School - President's Day weekend.

25th. Children's Chapel : Chinese Dragon Ceremony. Teachers - Warren and Kristine Paulson

Thank you to all who have volunteered to teach Sunday School.

To Keep In Touch
 ♥
 If you know of someone who needs special mention, please let us know.
 ♥
 Please keep our military personnel in your prayers. They need our support.
 ♥♥♥
 Caring Committee members:
 Georgine Tepley (chair)
 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm)
 Shirley Olson
 439-6879
 Carol Chambard
 354-2242

Sign up by February 15th, 2007 (deadline extended)!
Limited to 35 UUs in Prairie Star District...

Social Justice Training for UUs!

Friday, April 13th 1:00 – 5:00 pm

(before Prairie Star District Annual Conference starts Friday evening...)

First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

900 Mount Curve (up the hill from the Walker Art Center)

www.firstunitariansociety.org

\$35 per person

**Strengthening UU Justice-making:
linking community service & social change,
and deepening UU leadership**

Trainer: Rev. Valerie Ackerman



Whether members of your congregation are active in service work in the larger community, or doing social change organizing and policy work – or both! - this training is for you. Join UUs from across Prairie Star District in learning about connections between community service and social change work; deepen your understanding of the role of reflection in finding our UU moral voice; & look at ways UU leadership can be strengthened for more effective social justice partnerships and outcomes.

Trainer: as a UU community minister, Rev. Valerie Mapstone Ackerman provides spiritual support to domestic violence victims, directs Peace House-Tulsa, organizes the Oklahoma Rural Freethinkers, serves as president of Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and consults with congregations and social change groups. She has been a parish minister, social worker, adjunct professor, politician, therapist, counselor and life-long dissident and heretic.

This training is co-sponsored by Prairie Star District Social Justice Network, Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance, and First Unitarian Society Social Action Committee.

To register - contact Jo Haberman, jojane@juno.com, (612-822-8870) **Remember....sign up by February 15th.**

NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2007



Parsonage: 507-439-6240
Don's cell: 507-276-8464

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat															
				1 6:30 pm - Soulful Sundown - Rhein Rivers Arts Center	2	3															
4 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service Pot Luck	5	6 6:30 pm Committee on Ministry @ Church	7	8	9 Circle Sup- per Time ? @ Cham- bard's	10															
11 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	12	13	14 6:30 pm - Board meets @ Mkto UU Fellowship	15 6:30 pm - Soulful Sundown - Rhein Rivers Arts Center	16	17															
18 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	19	20 Newsletter Articles due	21	22	23	24															
25 9:00 Choir 10:00 Social Hour 10:30 Service	26	27	28	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MUSICIAN</th> <th>SERVERS</th> <th>GREETERS - USHERS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4 Muffy</td> <td>Wayne & Janet Johnson Algot & Bonita Blomquist</td> <td>volunteers needed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 Muffy</td> <td>Kevin & Shannon Weiss</td> <td>Sandi Benji, Mimi Kamleiter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18 Jordan</td> <td>Chris Olson, Vicki Sieve</td> <td>Gene & Georgine Tepley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 Mimi</td> <td>Alon & Carol Chambard</td> <td>Shannon & Kevin Weiss</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			MUSICIAN	SERVERS	GREETERS - USHERS	4 Muffy	Wayne & Janet Johnson Algot & Bonita Blomquist	volunteers needed	11 Muffy	Kevin & Shannon Weiss	Sandi Benji, Mimi Kamleiter	18 Jordan	Chris Olson, Vicki Sieve	Gene & Georgine Tepley	25 Mimi	Alon & Carol Chambard	Shannon & Kevin Weiss
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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
ARE DUE BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.

WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS
ARE DUE BY THURSDAY NOON

cindymo@sleepyeyetel.net
please be sure to include "NORA"
in the subject line
(507) 439-6380

20894 County Road 6, Hanska, MN 56041
Thanks for your help in getting articles to me.
Cindy Mosenden, Office Administrator

DON'S SCHEDULE

Don will continue with the same (more or less) schedule for the 2006-07 church year. Monday is his day-off and Fridays are reserved for sermon writing. While he continues to have other set commitments, don't hesitate to call to schedule an appointment.

EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL

Have you thought about receiving your newsletter over the internet through your email? If you're not sure you'd like it, give it a "trial period". You might just find it's better!!!

Let Cindy know if you'd like to give it a try: cindymo@sleepyeyetel.net **Please remember to put "NORA" in the subject line.**

Newsletter comment received: Thanks Cindy, It's so nice to get the newsletter on time. Just wanted to tell you that you really do a nice job! Nancy Brudelite.

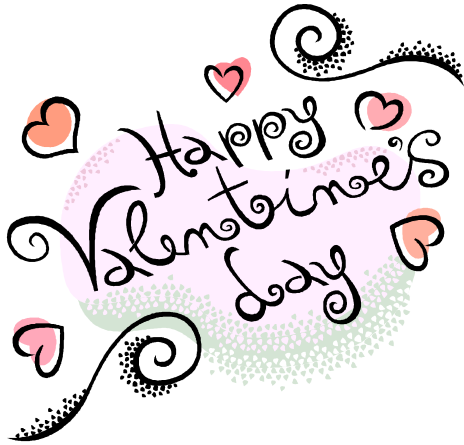


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Nora Church Sunday Services

FEBRUARY 2007

Social Hour 10:00 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM

February 4 "The Golden Rule" - Rev. Lisa Friedman, parish minister to our sister congregation in Mankato - I was once told I had been chosen to work with a group of people because my leader was confident that I would "do no harm." I immediately became overwhelmed. As good as it sounds to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, human relationships are fragile enterprises. How do we, in fact, do no harm? Given the challenges of interfaith dialogue in this era of history, what does the Golden Rule teach us about the nature of respect?

February 11 Watch for details in the weekly announcements. Plans are for the choir "Ovation" to be with us and a possible Soup & Sandwich to follow the service.

February 18 "Aging as Spiritual Guide" - Death and taxes, you know the drill. But beneath the jokes, complaints and limitations surrounding the aging process are some very important spiritual lessons.

February 25 "Poetry to Rock Your World & Soothe Your Soul" – It's been over a year since Don used poetry as the text for a service. This one, like the first, will both comfort and challenge the soul