



# MERE LYS newsletter

## Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

December 2011

### VIEW FROM THE HILL



My dad loved to rouse the household on Christmas morning blasting *Joy to the World* from an LP that was old even in my earliest memories.

Those jubilant strains capture the essence of “the holidays” for me. So much of the popular message of the season is about joy.

Unbounded, gleeful anticipation of children awaiting Santa’s arrival. “The most wonderful time of the year.” Reunions and homecomings embellished with tears of joy. *The Hallelujah Chorus*. The sun’s triumph over darkness. Oil for one night burning for eight nights in the newly reclaimed, rededicated temple. Sleigh bells ringing. Twinkling lights. Gasps of surprise on Christmas morning.

It *can* be the most wonderful time of the year, joy oozing with every heart beat.

It can also be exhausting, this overload of joy--or more accurately, this overload of the expectation of joy. Sometimes these weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years, whether we call them the holidays or Advent and Christmas or Yule or Solstice or just December or December plus Hanukkah, sometimes these weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years seem nothing more than six weeks of stress or unmet expectation or loneliness or grief or commercialism, piling up, accumulating by the hour until we are buried, lost to the world and to ourselves.

To quote an old song quite unintentionally, It doesn’t have to be that way. Even if I am the twenty-first century embodiment of Scrooge.

Even if jingle bells jangle my nerves. Even if I’m having a blue, blue Christmas without you (or worse yet, having a blue, blue Christmas despite being surrounded by my loved ones). Even if “the Christmas carols sound like blues But the choir is not to blame”. Even if I’m not Christian, not Jewish, not Pagan. Even if I’m too rational and scientific to tolerate the nonsense about Santa and holy nights and miracles involving oil lamps. It doesn’t have to be that way.

There is another sound that captures that essence of the holidays for me--one quite different from *Joy to the World*. It is the echo in my mind of my late minister reading the final line of a story each Christmas Eve of my childhood (come to Nora’s Christmas Eve service if you want to hear the entire story): “To my heart,” he said, “there came a whisper.”

It isn’t easy to shut out the clamor of joy. It takes effort to maintain calm without resorting to *bah humbugs* or taking to bed. But we can breathe deeply. And remind ourselves that the whispers of our hearts have as much claim to the season as the songs and shouts of joy. We can come to church where we are guaranteed silence following the meditation. We can seek out the dark and the quiet and listen therein. We can cling to our sanity, our beliefs, our personal approach to the season as steadfastly as the shepherd in that story clung to his crook (you gotta come hear the story!). And we will be rewarded by peace, and perhaps even holy joy.

-Lisa



## THANKS FROM THE BOARD

We've had another very successful bake sale and couldn't have done it without help from all the lefse makers, cookie and goodie bakers, workers and of course, the shoppers. So a big pat on the back and many thanks to all of you!

Also a very special thank you to all the workers and contributors of cake and salad for Bob Schmitt's memorial service.

## LUNCH BUNCH

The Jolly Lunch Bunch Elves will be enjoying a pre-Christmas repast at Martin Luther College Cafeteria on Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 11:30 a.m. As always, everyone is invited to join the group for fun and food.

## CHRISTMAS EVE READERS NEEDED

Please contact Lisa if you'd like to read during the candle-lighting service on Christmas Eve. Lisa will provide the reading; you provide the voice!

## CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE

Breaking with tradition, Nora Church will take just one Sunday off this December/January. There will be no church service on Sunday, January 1, 2012. There WILL be a service at 10:30 on Sunday morning, December 25, 2011. If your family is far away, if your traditional festivities take place the night before, if you just love church, join Lisa and others in the sanctuary for readings and carols and a brief message.

## MEN'S RETREAT

Unity Church-Unitarian's Annual Men's Retreat will be held on Saturday, December 3, beginning with a pancake breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and ending with a worship service at 8:00 p.m. The theme of the retreat, "Building a Nurturing Community" will include hands-on workshops and presentations, the sharing of individual spiritual journeys, and a celebration of the power of music. This will be an opportunity to build new relationships as well as gather inspiration and ideas to bring back to your own congregations. Thank you for your time and consideration. 732 Holly Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104  
Webpage: <http://www.unityunitarian.org/men.html>  
Online registration: <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=91c77a>

## NEW ADDRESS

"Thank You" to all those who helped me with my move back to New Ulm. I appreciated all the help I received. Thanks again to everyone! Monica Sturm, Orchard Hills, 1223 Karl Drive, #208, New Ulm, MN 56073 507-233-9642  
[monicasturm@nutelecom.net](mailto:monicasturm@nutelecom.net), new email address



**UU Jewelry Sale**  
at the Church of the Larger Fellowship's  
Online Shop!  
[www.QuestForMeaning.org](http://www.QuestForMeaning.org)

**Pewter sale**  
through February 2012

20% discount offered on  
→ pewter pendants  
→ pewter lapel pins  
→ enamel lapel pins

Go to [www.QuestForMeaning.org](http://www.QuestForMeaning.org)  
Click on **CLF Shop**, place your order,  
and simply write the discount code words  
"Quest for Meaning"  
in the **Add Comments** field!

Your 20% discount will be processed within a week  
and offered as a credit card refund  
Questions? 617-948-6150

All jewelry sale proceeds support the many UU ministries of the  
Church of the Larger Fellowship  
[www.QuestForMeaning.org](http://www.QuestForMeaning.org)

Quest for Meaning!

## To Keep In Touch

♥  
Congratulations to Troy and Katy Riddle Tepley on the birth of their daughter, Lola Kate. Lola was born on October 30th. Grandparents are Eugene and Georgine Tepley of New Ulm and Mike Riddle of Coon Rapids.

♥  
Our sympathies go to the family of Robert Schmitt who passed away November 11th

♥  
If you know of anyone needing our assistance or attention...please call one of the committee members:

Georgine Tepley (chair)  
359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm)  
Shirley Olson - 354-1866  
Carol Chambard - 354-2242

**THANK YOU! - Caring Committee**

# NORA CHURCH CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 2011

Parsonage: 507-439-6240



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service RE POTLUCK	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service RE	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service RE	19	20 Newsletter articles due	21	22	23	24 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service
25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>  10:00 Coffee Time 10:30 Service	26	27	28	29	30	31  <b>NEW YEAR'S EVE</b>

**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

MUSICIAN	SERVERS	GREETERS/USHERS
4 Mimi Kamleiter	POTLUCK Wayne & Janet Johnson Ellen Byro	Shannon Weiss
11 Sally Hanson	Wally & Beverly Wellman	Karen Farrell
18 JoAnn Huss	Scott & Angie Becker Kudelke	Jerry Peterson
24 Muffy Rathman	CHRISTMAS EVE	volunteers needed
25	CHRISTMAS DAY	volunteers needed



### PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Lisa will have Mondays off.

Friday will be sermon writing day.

She can be reached on her cell when not in the office:

507-766-5682



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

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Hanska, MN 56041

Happy  
Holidays!



EMAIL  
norachurch@sleepyeyetel.net

WEB SITE  
<http://www.norauuchurch.org>

## Nora Church Sunday Services DECEMBER 2011

**Coffee 10:00 AM**

**Worship Service 10:30 AM**

Dec 4 ~ "It Came Just the Same"

Dec 11 ~ "Why Believe?"

Dec 18 ~ "Holy the Dark"

Dec 24 ~ 5:30 PM Candle Lighting Service

Dec 25~ "Glad Tidings of Great Joy"

Jan 1, 2011 - No Service - HAPPY NEW YEAR!

