

MERE LYS

February 2018 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

Services

Coffee 10:00 am
Worship 10:30 am



February 4
“Not This Year”

February 11
“Of Four Letter
Words”

February 18
“Everything About
God”

February 25
Program Committee
Sunday, TBA



A View From the Hill

Meditate an hour a day, the wise ones advise. Unless you are very, very busy; on those days meditate for two hours. And when the world, or at least our country, spins in ways that generate uncertainty, fear, frustration, rage, I say it might not be a bad idea to meditate three hours a day. Or at least, take a solid three hour news media fast each day.

Fasting is part of many religious traditions. One of the traditional fasting times is upon us this month. February 14 marks the beginning of Lent. Yep. Valentine’s Day and Ash Wednesday are one and the same this year. A bit daunting to consider giving up one or more pleasures of the flesh on the day dedicated to celebrating (mostly romantic) love. Chocolates! Conversation hearts! Wine paired dinner for two! A news media fast is the perfect alternative.

After all, the ‘giving up’ of Lent isn’t primarily about abstaining from sugar, carbs or alcohol as a matter of self-improvement or self-control of self-denial. It is about eliminating, for a time, habits and practices, that, in the course of everyday life, get between us and our understanding of ourselves as children of God in relationship with the Holy (non-theistic UUs read that phrase ‘between us and our understanding of ourselves as spiritual beings in relationship with the Mystery or interdependent web of all existence’).

Anything that interrupts our autopilot—*oops, can’t eat that/drink that/play that game because it’s still Lent*—offers us a chance to move through and in the world with an altered awareness of ourselves and our place in existence. This year I’m betting *oops, no BBC World, no All Things Considered, no npr.org because it’s still Lent* will be the interruption I need to call me back to a more thoughtful relationship with the Divine, a more deliberately spiritual approach toward living in the world.

The drama of “breaking news” banners aside, not so much happens in the course of a day that a brief morning and evening check of the news won’t suffice to keep me well informed and well-prepared to offer prayers and light candles of joy and sorrow. In between I can attend to my work and my family with my spirit lighter, clearer, increasingly refreshed as hyperbole, innuendo, attacks and counter-attacks, facts and opinions masquerading as fact, sensationalism and the sheer volume of human folly claim less and less of my headspace and heart space. And music, poetry, conversation and silence take up residence.

Join me if you will. See you in church.

-Lisa

Thank You!

From the board...

...to NUMAS Haus for providing a place for the homeless families in our area.
...to Bev and Wally for the Christmas open house.
...to the Visioning Committee for their work.
...to the Endowment Committee for their work.

Board Meeting

Nora Church Board will meet again Sunday, February 18, following the service.

Congregational Discussion

On February 4, following the potluck, the board will lead a discussion of the report from the visioning committee and the recommendations the board is considering. No final decisions will be made at this time, but it is an opportunity to exchange ideas and consider all possibilities as we move ahead to plan for the future of Nora Church. We will consider financial issues as well as congregational needs and Lisa's needs as minister and employee of the church. We hope many members and friends will consider staying for a while after potluck to engage in this important discussion.

Lunch Bunch

In honor of the amazing "Super Moons" we were treated to in January, the moonstruck Lunch Bunch gurus have chosen the New Grand Moon Buffet, 1702 Westridge Rd., New Ulm, for the February venue.

Date: Thursday, February 8, 11:30 a.m. Hope to see you there.

Lunch Bunch is a monthly, social lunch gathering, open to any Nora members, friends or visitors.

A Note From the Treasurer **December Income and Expenses**

Income:	\$10,940.00
Expenses:	\$ 9,903.56

Income and expenses are listed for the full month prior to the publication of the newsletter, not including special collections or memorial gifts.

Art with Attitude

February dates for Art with Attitude are the 9th and 23rd. In March we'll meet on the 9th and 23rd. Everyone is always welcome, the coffee is always hot!

We are planning on having a soup exchange on February 9th, see more details below!

From Nancy, "I may be going to Pennsylvania to take care of Jared. He's having surgery on Jan. 26 to replace his baclofen pump. When he is strong enough to be able to transfer himself from bed to wheel chair I may stay with him, so Jana can go back to work. I don't know when that will happen so check with others to see if someone will be there."

Membership at Nora

We will hold an Ingathering of New Members one Sunday in February or March. If you're ready to sign the book please speak with Lisa so we can schedule a date that will work for all.

February Soup Swap!

On February 9th, during the meeting of the Art with Attitude group, we are hosting a soup exchange. There will be a signup sheet at church. The first time we will do this with 6 people.

Each person that signs up must list the kind of soup they will be making. We will provide the containers to each person for a \$2 charge. Each container will hold 2 cups so each person will bring six containers. Make a big batch of soup and exchange, instead of eating the same leftovers for days!

If there are others interested we will do it again!

Lisa on the Loose

Lisa will hold "office hours" at area coffee houses. Join her for drop-in conversations in New Ulm, Mankato and Windom.

During February you can find Lisa in Mankato and New Ulm.

Wednesday, February 7 from 10:00-11:30 at the Coffee Hag.

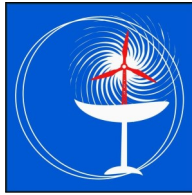
Thursday, February 22 at Oak Hills, Hillside Haven Room, at 3:00.



Pastor Lisa's Schedule

Pastor Lisa has Mondays off.
Friday is sermon writing day.
She can be reached on her
cell when not in the office:

507-766-7822.



Flower Fundraiser!

The kids at Nora are taking part in a spring fundraiser through Dutch Mill Bulbs. From now through March, you can order bulbs and plants to help raise money for our church. You can choose from plants and flower bulbs like hostas, gladiolas, lilies and more. Each package costs \$10 and Nora keeps \$5 of that. Order as many or as few as you like and please tell your friends and neighbors!



Folks can order online and see the offerings at:

<https://groups.dutchmillbulbs.com/shop/?affiliates=norauuchurch>
(shortcut: <http://bit.do/NoraUU>)

or through the order forms we'll have at church.

Note: If you order online, there is a shipping fee. If you order through the brochure at Nora and we order at least 25 packages total, all of the plants and bulbs are shipped to the church and you can pick up your order with no shipping cost. The online orders are perfect for out-of-town folks to support Nora but if you attend church regularly then you can order through the brochures and skip the shipping fee by picking up there.

We'll have order forms at Nora on Sundays so you can take a look and place your orders.

Opportunity for Service

The Brown County Public Health Advisory Board is seeking a new member from the faith community. If you live in the county, have an interest in public health and would be willing to represent Nora Church in this way, please ask Lisa for more details.

Hanska Community Library Fundraiser

Music upstairs, silent auction downstairs. On Saturday, February 17, from 7:00-9:00 pm enjoy entertainment by "Molly & Sonny Boy." Silent auction will run 6:30-9:30 pm. Snacks and coffee will be offered at intermission. This fun duo will cover a wide range of music, including some originals.

Please join us in supporting YOUR library; a safe space to learn, succeed, develop, experience and even dialogue. Hanska Community Center Upper Level, 201 Broadway Street.

Inclement Weather

In case of Sunday morning inclement weather the decision to cancel church service will be made no later than 8:00 a.m. At that time a Grapevine will be sent out, an announcement will be posted on the Nora website and Nora Facebook page, and the cancellation notice will be sent to KNUJ and KTOE. When church is not cancelled, you are responsible for your own safety. We love to see everyone at church but we would rather know every one is safe. Please do not drive to church when road conditions, high winds or frigid temperature feel *unsafe to you*. We'll see you the next Sunday, or the next month or in April!!

Prayer

"It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story."

—"The Name of the Wind" by Patrick Rothfuss

Notes from the Nora Office...

Order Of Service ~ content due Thursdays

Please send content of any kind, for the newsletter or order of service to the Nora email. Announcements generally run for two weeks.

March Mere Lys ~ content due

Monday, February 19

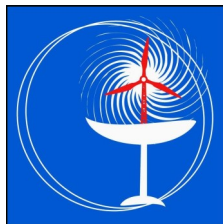
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Phone: 507.439.6240

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
In the office Tuesdays and Fridays.*

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Wanting to Break Free

"Remember to get carried away. To be grounded is for plants."

—Tarriona "Tank" Ball, Tank and the Bangas

I'm often accused of being "too reserved," and there's truth at the heart of that. On the spiciness scale, my expressiveness is on the mild end. I'm sure that stems from my disdain for being the center of attention. Still, I'm frequently advised to "loosen up," and offered the clarification, "That was a joke."

It makes sense. As children, the older Black folks around would warn us to not "show our color." Later, I learned to not be too feminine either—whatever that means. These responses are clearly rooted in fear. Just to be clear, I don't mean to minimize the reality that authentic self-expression is still often bold and dangerous for too many people. But fear, however justifiable, is central. So, here I now am, unable to fully live into the freedom of self-expression for fear that I might not be taken seriously.

Like many people, I discovered Tank and the Bangas through their 2017 NPR Tiny Desk Concert. I immediately fell in love, so when one of my choir members informed me they'd be performing a concert in town, I quickly bought a ticket.

When the concert finally came, I loved it. However, I didn't dance or scream, sing along or... do much of anything beyond standing there and soaking it all in. That didn't feel strange to me, at least not in a conscious way.

At the end of the concert, while saying goodnight to the noisy and appreciative crowd, the band's lead said, "Remember to get carried away. To be grounded is for plants."

She was speaking directly to me. She clearly wasn't... but she was, and I felt it.

The following Sunday, our congregation opened worship with the hymn "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use

Me." I wanted so badly to break free and let loose on it. However, looking out at our (we'll call them) upright congregation, I just couldn't. Most of them wouldn't have minded, but still: I was stuck in my own false ideas of their expectations of me.

Luckily, as with many of life's developments, there's still time.

Home Fire Preparedness Campaign

Seven times per day, someone in the USA dies in a home fire.

Go to geta smokealarm.org to schedule a FREE smoke alarm installation or call the installation HOTLINE 612-460-3674.

Intercultural Competency Workshop: Who Are Our Neighbors?

Friday, April 13, 7-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 14, 9:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Hosted by Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato, (507)388-5022, uumankato@gmail.com.

Overnight home hospitality offered with UUFM families Contact Tricia Nienow for home hospitality requests (home) 507-625-5912, (cell) 507-340-7263, tnienow@hickorytech.net.

Snacks: Friday and Saturday. Meals: Saturday Breakfast and Lunch. Registration Fee: Make checks payable to UUFM, \$20.00 Before March 30th, \$25.00 After March 30th.

[See flyer on the bulletin board for more information.](#)

Prayer

That which is in us and all around us and which constantly draws us to our holiest selves, remind me that my freedom, fully expressed, gives freedom to others. As I wander among the trees, accept my silent gratitude for not having their stationary life. And, most of all, please remove from me any tendency, by action or in spirit, to quiet the expression of others. Amen.

-DeReau K. Farrar (Braver/Wiser)

To ♥ Keep In Touch

If you know of anyone needing our assistance or attention, please call one of the **Caring Committee** members:

Georgine Tepley (chair): 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm)

Shirley Olson: 354-1866

Carol Chambard: 354-2242