



Services

Sundays 10:30 am

In the Church Sanctuary

June 6

***“Four Sentences
Toward Wisdom”***

June 13

***“The Delicate Art of
Deadheading”***

*Our annual Flower
Ceremony. Please bring a
cut flower for each
member of your family in
attendance this morning.*

June 20

***“What Strength There
Is In Laughter”***

*Outdoor service and
annual picnic.*

***Coffee Hour 10:00 am,
Sundays June 13 & 20.***

***Nora Church services
will resume in August.***



MERE LYS

June/July 2021 Newsletter

Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

A View From the Hill

Every day a story on the news media I most frequently consume says the same thing in different ways: the CDC’s new mask ‘guidance’ a few weeks back has left us confused. Too much space left for interpretation. Collision of intent and impact. Opportunity for deceit and distrust. Enforcement placed in the unwilling hands and hearts of business owners. Wishful thinking vs facts. All with an overlay of the politicization that has incredibly characterized the pandemic in this country from its earliest day.

The decision we here at Nora made last fall to cut the budget for professional ministry in half has left us in a similar state of confusion, as became apparent at our recent congregational discussion meeting. We attached vastly different meanings to that decision: some of us assumed it meant crisis averted, the future of the church indefinitely secured; some of us assumed it was merely a stop gap measure, buying us time to proceed deliberately toward closing the church in the not too distant future. Both groups thought their interpretation was so obviously the correct one as to be not so much interpretation as fact. And some of us probably didn’t (consciously) attach meaning to the decision, rather wondering about the significance of it on the day to day life of the church: what will the minister no longer do and who will take up those tasks; will someone who knows me bury me; will we still have church every Sunday?

The reconciliation of our differing interpretations will take time. And love. And courage. The courage to speak, each one of us, from our hearts. In the coming months the board will ask us for our input on the future of the church, probably in a variety of ways. If a board member calls you or asks to meet over coffee, please accept the invitation and speak candidly. If we have, when we have, congregational discussions and small group discussions, speak candidly. We all need to know what each of us is thinking and feeling, not just the few who routinely speak out. It’s the only way out of the confusion. And it is our only chance of deliberately and faithfully creating Nora’s future, instead of allowing it to happen through inaction and chance.

Nora’s future is in our hands—as it has been in the hands of those who have been the church since before its formal beginning 140 years ago. We have the time. We have the love (so much love for one another and this church). We have the courage. The future we claim for our beloved place and people and institution will be the right one. Whatever it is.

—Lisa

News From the Board

Happy joyous summer! As we begin to enjoy being out and about, catching up with friends and family, our church year draws to a close. We have several significant upcoming events that we hope you will participate in, as you are able. Thank you to those who attended our May 16 budget meeting and discussion. The board has plenty to chew on as we start to plan for next year's program.

May 30: Work Day—Seven members are on board to do grounds work, so far, cleaning and painting on our “service to Nora” service day. Others have signed on for work days later in the summer. If you are planning to help with the last of the painting or other grounds work on a different day please let Darrell or Jeanie know so we can coordinate supplies, tools, or other assistance. It's good to know who is doing what, and when.

June 6: Annual Meeting—The board will meet on June 2, to come up with proposals for next year's half time ministry. If you were unable to attend on May 16 and/or have strong feelings about what next year should look like, please get in touch with Jeanie Hinsman.

Covid Update: We are gradually relaxing restrictions at church. Please be aware that some attendees may not be vaccinated. You can and should make your own decisions about masks. We will continue to avoid singing and out loud recitation of chalice lighting and extinguishing the chalice. Social visiting is best done outdoors. Several people have stated how much they miss potluck Sundays. After the June 6 annual meeting, those who wish can bring their own lunch to church. We'll have social time in the fellowship hall after the meeting. On June 13 and 20 we will have coffee hour at 10:00 in the fellowship hall. In July we will schedule a Supper Club event at an outdoor venue. We remain cautiously optimistic that life at Nora can be back to “normal” when we reconvene for the 2021-2022 church year.

Enjoy a glorious summer and stay safe!

Jeanie Hinsman

Updated Covid Response Plan

- ◇ Masks are no longer required indoors or outdoors at Nora Church. Please remember, however, that not all members of our community have yet been fully vaccinated, either due to

A Note From the Treasurer

April Income and Expenses

Income: \$ 6,742.00
Expenses: \$ 8,209.67

Income and expenses presented at the last board meeting. Income does not include memorials and gifts.

eligibility or other reasons. Out of your care for fellow Nora members you might consider wearing a mask when not seated in your pew. At the conclusion of the service please move outdoors for conversation. Do not gather in the aisle or the back of the room or the entry way.

- ◇ We have resumed passing the plate for the offering.
- ◇ Hymnals will be replaced in the pews; singing and responsive readings and recitation of the words for extinguishing the chalice are not yet allowed.
- ◇ Social distance is still recommended. Please leave empty pew between you and other households.
- ◇ Windows will be opened in the sanctuary to facilitate ventilation.
- ◇ Following the service and annual meeting on June 6 we will have a bring-your-own-brown-bag lunch; not a potluck.
- ◇ On June 13 we will have coffee hour at 10:00, if someone responds to this email indicating their willingness to serve.
- ◇ On June 20 our final service of this church year will take place outdoors, around the gazebo.

Board Meeting

The next Board meeting is Wednesday, June 2nd at Nora, at 5:30 pm.

Nominating Committee Report

Lee Drogemuller's first term as Secretary on the Board of Trustees expires on July 1st. Joy Rathman's first term as Treasurer on the Board of Trustees expires on July 1st.

Respectfully submitted, Nita Gilbert & Edith Beckius

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.



Summer Schedule:

Lisa will be on vacation in July, as she is most years. The August newsletter will contain detailed information (as yet not worked out) about her half-time schedule, the worship calendar and other aspects of church life affected by the move to half-time professional ministry.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual meeting of Nora Unitarian Universalist Church will take place at approximately 11:35 a.m. on Sunday, June 6th, 2021. At that time the congregation will vote to approve a budget for the 2021/2022 church year, elect members to the Board of Trustees, and undertake other business as set forth in the agenda or proposed from the floor.

Flower Ceremony

The service on Sunday, June 13 will include our annual Flower Ceremony. Please remember to bring a cut flower for each member of your family attending service that morning. You won't want to miss the beauty we create together and then carry home with us that morning.

Supper Club

July outside Supper Club planned on the patio at Green Mill—watch the order of service and grapevines for more details.

2020 in Poems

Shelter in This Place, an anthology of poems, prayers, and reflections from Unitarian Universalists about their experiences of 2020, contains two pieces by Lisa, and will soon be available from www.uuabookstore.org. Orders of ten or more copies receive a 10% discount. If you'd like to purchase one or more copies, please let Brooke know by June 15. If we reach ten, we'll place a group order and ask you to send your check to the church office. If our interest doesn't reach the ten

copy threshold, we'll let you know so you can order a copy on your own.

Exhaling in Community

By Christine Slocum, Braver/Wiser, May 19, 2021

*"Your breath is always with you."
—common meditation prompt*

Remember when we used to breathe all over each other? Pre-pandemic, we stood behind each other in the grocery line, chit-chatted before meetings, or sat next to each other in church. There was a clear line of sight to each other's noses, and the sounds of our voices were unobstructed by fabric. My unrestricted exhales didn't put me out of right relationship with those around me.

The virus changed how we understood the consequences of breathing. I used to breathe without thinking. If I was breathing mindfully, it was in the context of meditation or yoga. Breath was life force, or a tool of centering oneself. Now we know: the way we take up space includes where our breath goes.

But breath is also a vector of illness. With over a half a million people deceased, and many in my community, I could not ignore the potential power I had to spread illness. I didn't like how something so fundamental to my being could cause harm. I also couldn't deny it.

Masking up became so normal, I felt naked in pub-

Notes from the Nora Office...

Next newsletter is for August.

**Mere Lys Newsletter content due
the 20th of each month**

Since there will be no printed orders of service, please send announcements for Grapevines via email, or pass along to Rev. Lisa for me.

Please send content of any kind, for the newsletter and more, to the Nora email.

*Brooke Knisley, Office Assistant
Working from home and in the office Tuesdays or
Wednesdays.*

lic without it. I learned to cross the street whenever I saw anyone on the sidewalk. I chose to forego unneeded interpersonal interaction. It's been a lonely year. My own understanding of personal space aligned with the collective revision to six feet. Even after receiving the vaccine and the requisite time elapsing to immunity, my instincts to avoid other people are still very sharp. I could still harm.

I miss the innocence about how we existed in each other's presence. I miss the ease and lack of caution. What I understood to be true—the safety I perceived—was because I did not have the complete perspective.

Committing to right relationship means being willing to revise our practices when we learn that previously accepted habits might be harmful. It's true of the language we use and the ways we practice power. Now we know: the way we steward our breath matters. I will leave the pandemic with a better understanding of how to protect people around me from illness. May I recognize this awareness as a gift, and use it to express care for the people around me.

Prayer

May we embrace new understandings of how to be in right relationship to each other, even if we don't like what we learn.



To ♥ Keep In Touch

If you know of anyone needing our assistance or attention, please call one of the **Caring Committee** members:
Georgine Tepley: 359-3060 (weekdays after 5 pm), Diane Becken: 354-3103, Carol Chambard: 354-2242

General Assembly June 23-27

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates

The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. Let's reach record-breaking attendance June 23-27, 2021!

Registration for virtual GA 2021 is now open! Registration is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app.

You can look on uua.org. Registration is open for the all-virtual 2021 General Assembly (though I think it is crazy to even think about it yet). You could put that in.

[Register now!](#)

[GA Website](#)

Direct Deposit for Pledges

Direct deposits for pledges become even more pertinent during this time of distance worship.

To initiate this, anyone interested would need to set this up with their bank, much like an automatic payment for a utility or credit card.

If you would like to make electronic pledge payments, please contact Julie Peck for Nora Church account information.



Nora Unitarian Universalist Church

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