



Message from Pastor Chris

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

~ 3 John 1:2

Dear Member(s) of Morning Star Lutheran Church:

It has been some time since we have been able to gather with one another for worship. For the past several weeks we have been in isolation. We have experienced inconveniences and uncertainty. We have been frustrated by the inability to move about freely or safely in our world. For many of us, we have not been able to visit friends and loved ones in the ways we would prefer, if at all. So many of us grieve, anxiously long for community, and look forward to a return to 'normal.'

The truth of the matter is that, as your Pastor, I miss you. I miss not being able to visit with you on Sunday mornings. I miss the interchanges, the sharing of joys and sorrows, the handshakes, the laughter, the lively fellowship amongst worshippers. As many of you grieve the loss of worship, please know that I grieve along with our staff for the missed opportunities to connect with you. This time has not made for easy ministry.

Because of the untenable nature of these circumstances, we desperately wish we could return to the way things were and not have to worry about an invisible enemy, Covid-19. For the near term however, we it will be necessary to take precautionary measures. Not only do we have to consider our own personal health and wellbeing, we are ultimately called to love and serve our neighbor. That love for your neighbor involves caring for and helping to protect others' health as we think about returning to corporate worship.

Soon, our Council appointed Covid-19 Task Force will make recommendations on the best practices for returning to worship in our beautiful sanctuary. At our Congregational Council meeting in July, much of the new business on our board's agenda will be to discuss the thoughtful considerations and recommendations of this task force. As a part of this task force I can assure you that there has been considerable thought, effort, discussion and prayer about, not only the virus, but specifically the dynamics of our own congregational context, i.e. worship space.

We have evaluated everything from the parking lot and entrances, movement in worship, singing, communion, worship, restrooms, to the safest and most efficient methods for the exit of worshippers from our building. Further, the task force's work has relied on the most accurate data and information we have from science, including the CDC and the Douglas County Health Department. We are very fortunate to have the expertise of Morning Star member, Terry Micheels, who is an Epidemiologist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Many thanks to Terry as well as to Kyle Wolfe, Marguerite McGill, Lynn Hedell, Laurel Mooney, Kim Hawkins Jr. and Pastor Glenn for their leadership in this regard.

To be certain, the recommendations made by this task force to our council will be well thought out and provided in July with the intention to keep you and/or your family and fellow worshippers safe. It is what our mission of Sharing the Light of Christ with All Creation must be about. It is what Jesus' ministry of hospitality and love for our neighbor and one another demands.

Please know that despite all of these forthcoming safeguards and protocols, I remain hopeful that this cautionary reality will be temporary. I am also thankful that this time has provided us with another tool for sharing the Gospel. For that, we have been blessed by our staff for their continued work and diligence in providing worship opportunities for our congregation! So, until we approach that day when Covid-19 is no longer an extreme concern, let us continue to pray for our congregation, for one another, and for our nation. God's blessings to you!

Your partner in ministry,

Pr. Chris



MISSIONS & OUTREACH

Morning Star...a light in the heart of Omaha & Beyond



Gods Reach
Envelops Every Need

Green Envelope Offering

July's Green Envelope special offering goes to Scatter Joy Acres! Founded in 2006, Scatter Joy Acres provides "A Place of Rescue...A Journey to Peace". Since people naturally identify with animals, they use interactions with animals to teach people how to behave towards other people. They provide a program for at-risk youth through AAT (Animal Assisted Therapy) to help turn kids from the inner city into protectors instead of abusers.

In addition to their work through AAT, Scatter Joy Acres also offers a petting zoo with wide open spaces, fresh air, recreation and relaxation. Bring your camera, a picnic and enjoy the peacefulness of their country setting. Visit scatterjoyacres.org for more information including hours of operation.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE MIDLANDS

In an effort to continue providing for the youth in our community, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands handed out meals to Club families at 8 pickup locations across the metro and Iowa. Each day, over 700 meals have been distributed. This would not be possible without YOUR support!

Hosting a food drive and cash donations to support our COVID crisis efforts is truly appreciated. Your support makes a true impact in the lives of our club members!

With gratitude, Elizabeth Donner & Ivan Gilreath



SCHOOL SUPPLY

& BACKPACK DRIVE

Help us fill backpacks with school supplies for children in need.

Please keep in mind our July collection of backpacks and supplies for the Boys & Girls Westside Club! Drop off your donations (or funds to purchase supplies) at the church. There is a bin on the bell tower patio for your contactless convenience. Let's make a huge difference in the lives of Club members as they head back to school prepared for the year ahead!



A message from Greta, your new Director of Faith Formation & Family Ministry:

HELLO!

Hello everyone! I have had a lovely first week at Morning Star! The more people I meet, the more excited I get to be in community with you all. Until I can meet you each in person, please feel free to reach out for a Zoom or phone conversation with me. I'd love to meet you. My email is Greta@morningstaromaha.org and my office line, where I do check messages, is 531-301-5579.

Also, as I settle into work at Morning Star, my office is getting repainted, and I could use your help! Head to [Facebook.com/MorningStarLutheranOmaha](https://www.facebook.com/MorningStarLutheranOmaha) to vote on to poll about which color combo to use in the office!

Blessings,
Greta Carlson



Virtual Bible Study

Join us via Zoom conference call
on your computer or phone

Join us on Wednesdays usually at Noon for Bible study via Zoom or Facebook LIVE with Pastor Chris and Pastor Glenn. Contact the Church Office for the Zoom link. You can always watch later at your convenience online at www.MorningStarOmaha.org.

I want to thank Pastor Chris for his phone calls and prayers and the Morning Star staff for the online services which I've really enjoyed. I would like to thank my Lydia Circle and Morning Star friends for the cards, calls, well wishes, and prayers during my recovery from hip replacement surgery. I look forward to seeing everyone when we can get together again.



Judy Hollander



Thank you to so many of you who have purchased supplies for the church in preparation of our reopening. We are still having trouble finding disinfecting wipes (Lysol, Clorox, store brand). If you happen to see these while shopping and would like to donate a tub or two we would greatly appreciate it!



Our amazing music department has gone above and beyond to minister to all of us worshipping from home! Very special thanks go out to Bev McCollum, Simone Weber, Art Lorenz, Kyle Wolfe and the many talented musicians and singers who have made worship something special. May you continue to see the light of Christ through these virtual sessions!

If you do not have internet access, please contact the Church Office for a DVD of any of the services you may have missed.

Consecrated Holy Communion kits given contactless in the front drive of the church!



DRIVE THRU

Communion

July 17 ♦ Noon - 3^{PM} and
July 18 ♦ 9^{AM} - Noon

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Drive up and remain in your vehicle.
- Tell us how many communion kits you need.
- We will pass them to you on a tray.
- Join us LIVE on Facebook Sunday at 10^{AM}.



There are many ways to join us in Worship virtually...

- ★ watch LIVE on FaceBook every Sunday at 10 AM!
- ★ watch on YouTube (soon we will stream LIVE)!
- ★ watch on our website www.MorningStarOmaha.org!
- ★ request a DVD to be mailed to you!



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68114

Address Correction Requested



Council Highlights

1. Council is extremely pleased to announce its new Executive Team:

- *Jackie Froendt, President*
- *Laurel Thiel Mooney, Vice President*
- *Kim Hawkins, Secretary*
- *Lori Mueller, Treasurer*

Your new Executive team is wonderfully talented, ambitious and committed to Morning Star's Mission! We're excited and blessed to have their leadership and service!

2. Council analyzed and discussed the work of the Task Force formed to develop a safety-driven plan to reopen the Preschool and Child Care Center for the children of Essential Workers. Recognizing that (i) the Task Force had the input of accomplished medical/healthcare experts; (ii) the important role that the Preschool and Child Care Center plays in Morning Star's Mission; and (iii) the worthy goal of supporting Essential Workers, Council voted to authorize an enrollment-capped reopening of the Preschool and Child Care Center pursuant to the Task Force's plan and consistent with the Health Department's directives. At such time as the Covid-19 infection curve cooperates and the Health Department loosens current enrollment limitations, we look forward to being able to have the Preschool and Childcare Center operating with full enrollment.

3. Council analyzed and discussed the work of a separate Task Force formed to develop a safety-driven plan to permit Worship within our building. We all share a strong desire to again gather together and worship and we're working to make that happen as soon as we believe it can be done safely. While the Preschool operation benefits from separate classrooms, constant monitoring and other structural protections, gathering for worship presents different challenges. The recent experience at St. Margaret Mary's informs us that we must proceed with maximum care for the well-being of our Members, Pastors and Worship leaders. We anticipate that the Task Force will soon be communicating with each Member directly in furtherance of their work to help us achieve our goal of meeting together for worship as soon as we can safely do so.