



Message from Pastor Chris

*Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,
"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"*

~ Mark 9

Every once in a while, I like to geek out on Bible stories. Okay, it's more than once in a while. Maybe you've come to expect that from your pastor. Who knows? What I do know is that I have genuinely come to appreciate the season of Epiphany, that 46-day season of light and revelation between Christmas and Lent.

So often in the church year, Epiphany has seemed like a bit of a let-down, an afterthought following all the energy, celebration, and hullabaloo made of the birth of Jesus. But the truth is that we need Epiphany. We need to hear the stories presented to us and the church during this season. We need them not only for how they reveal the nature of the Word made flesh in Jesus, but also for the way in which they speak the truth about our own lives of faith.

Because I'm excited, I want you to be excited, too! After all, in the weeks between the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan to that mystical mountain top experience in the Transfiguration lies a treasure trove of lessons, stories, and ponderings that feed the faith. Join me now as I take Epiphany week by week in what we might look forward to experiencing in the story of salvation before us this season!

January 10, The Baptism of Our Lord: We hear again the story of John's baptism of Jesus in the Jordan (Mark 1:4-11). In a glorious encounter with the Spirit, Jesus hears a voice from heaven, *"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."* On this day, we remember our own baptism and the significance that Jesus is baptized with us!

January 17, Epiphany 2: The call story of Samuel is part of our readings this week. His mentor, the priest, Eli, helps Samuel to interpret the voice of the Lord who calls out to him, *"Samuel! Samuel!"* When Samuel finally positions himself to listen, God reveals new plans. If only we were always capable of humbling ourselves before the Lord in order to listen to the new things he is about to do through us and for us. (1 Samuel 3:1-10)

January 24, Epiphany 3: If you want to read an entire book of the Bible in one sitting, I invite you to turn to Jonah. This week, we read the entire third chapter! Jonah has just been spat up on the shore from a fish and is about to approach the city of Nineveh. While there, he prophesies the message God had commanded him to speak. Eventually Nineveh changes its ways and witnesses God change God's own mind about the calamity that he was threatening to bring upon those wretched people. I wonder, does God really change God's own mind?

January 31, Epiphany 4: This week, Paul is concerned about food sacrificed to idols. I will explain this one in our weekly Bible Study on Wednesday. What really fascinates me is Mark's story about Jesus teaching in the synagogue. There, a man with an unclean spirit speaks and actually confesses who Jesus is as the *"Holy One of God."* Imagine that! Scribes and disciples remain perplexed about Jesus, yet an unclean spirit knows exactly who Jesus is in the cosmic order. Go figure. (Mark 1:21-28)

February 7, Epiphany 5: It's Super Bowl Sunday. There's no better way to prepare for gameday than to consider the story of Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law as well as several others with illness and demons. Famished from a full day of ministry, Jesus goes off to pray. But he cannot seem to escape the need to stay



focused on mission. Even in the middle of the night, Jesus travels on to neighboring towns throughout Galilee to proclaim the Good News. I just hope Patrick Mahomes has that kind of energy left in the fourth quarter as he leads the Chiefs to victory!

February 14, Transfiguration Sunday: I love this story. Imagine being Peter, James, or John experiencing this incredible scene where Jesus not only turns dazzling white, but Elijah and Moses come out of nowhere to talk to him. If Moses epitomized the prophets of the old, Jesus represents something new. Echoing the voice of the divine in baptism, the cloud proclaims, *"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"* Again, we might ask ourselves how well we are ready to listen to him when we come down from the mountain and enter the valleys of life below.

I can't wait to encounter these stories and more once again! I hope you will join us in worship!

Your partner in ministry,

Pr. Chris

Sharing financial gifts has been difficult with being closed to in-person worship. We have many options to help you! You can:

- ★ Mail your gifts to Morning Star.
- ★ Utilize your banks bill-pay option.
- ★ Scan the QR code on the right for secure giving.
- ★ Donate online at MorningStarOmaha.org/Give
- ★ You can use your debit card, credit card or checking account!

For your convenience donations can be deducted automatically every month. If you have questions, contact the Church Office for more information!



We asked "What is something you have celebrated this past year?" Here's what you shared:

Family & Health!

Cancer free & newly retired!

Our 55th wedding anniversary in April!

God's grace and MSLC online worship services and bible studies from staff during pandemic!

Our 50th wedding anniversary and being a cancer survivor for 2020!

Continued good health!

Continued blessings!

Surviving COVID-19 so far and for incorporating "positive solitude" into the new normal. Special thanks for

Another year of life!

Too many blessings to name. I am so blessed!

The strength of family & faith!

Health & uninterrupted employment and school during covid!

Being at Morning Star!

Good health!

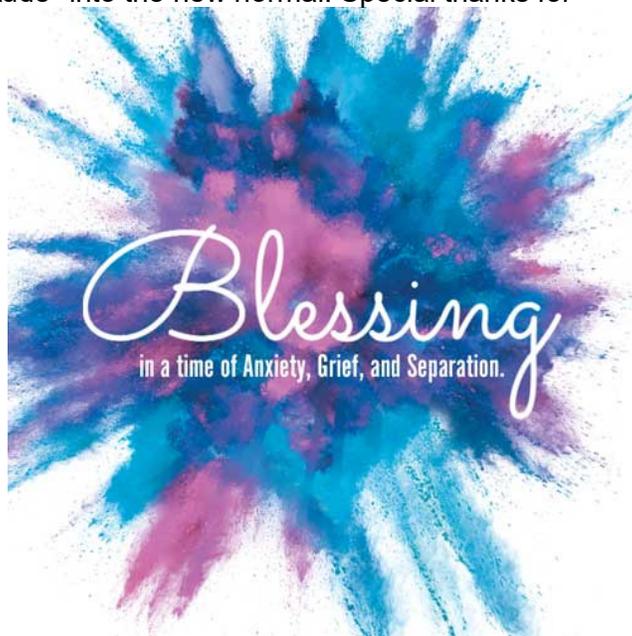
Birth of a great-granddaughter and love of the triune God!

Family, friends & good health!

Family birthdays following COVID-19 rules!

My son continuing to learn and grown in his faith!

50th Wedding Anniversary!



Message from Pastor Glenn

As 2021 is unveiled there are two questions that I have been tasked with providing leadership for congregational teams seeking answers that will help us move forward as a congregation. The first question is, "How do we reopen for

in-person worship now that vaccines have become available?"

The second question is one that strikes close to my own heart. It can best be expressed in two separate, but intimately related, questions. First, how can we as a congregation better support and care for persons and families who have been afflicted and affected by addiction? Second, how can we as a congregation work to help prevent addiction from taking root in our families and communities?

The Covid Task Force, which was established back in March 2020, will be addressing the first question. We are meeting. Please address your thoughts and questions regarding reopening the church for in person worship to me either via email or regular mail and I will forward them to the rest of the team. This will help inform our discussions and recommendations to the Church Council.

The Faith Partners team, which has been on hiatus because of the Covid pandemic, will be involved in team training beginning Thursday, January 7 and continuing the next two Thursdays, from 7 to 9^{PM}. Again contact me if you are interested in attending any or all of the sessions.

Peace,

Pastor Glenn

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Annual reports will be available Sunday, January 17. We will mail out a digital copy to everyone along with the Mid-Week update. If you do not receive those or want a hard copy, please contact Susie in the Church Office.

Zoom info coming soon!

Virtual congregational MEETING

Sunday, January 31
after the 10^{AM} Worship Service

End of Year
**GIVING
Statements**

Your 2020 giving statements will be mailed to you January 25. Contact the Church Office with errors.

Altar Flowers & Bulletin Sponsorship

Many dates in 2021 are available! Call the Church Office to reserve your special day!

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

The Morning Star calendar is online and regularly updated. Go to MorningStarOmaha.org/calendar and click on "See Complete Calendar"! Email Susie in the Church Office to add information.

Attention College Students

MORNING STAR YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 1
PICK ONE UP TODAY!

In the office, the Welcome Center, or online at morningstaromaha.org/scholarship

 **MORNING STAR**
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Ministry Investment Funds

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

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



Green Envelope

The Green Envelope offering for January is for the Morning Star Youth. Despite the challenges of 2020, our young people have been able to meet in uniquely with Greta

Carlson, Director of Faith Formation Ministries throughout this past year.

While we are not out of the woods yet, your donations will help Greta to plan to make 2021 memorable for our young people.

Thank you for "bringing the Light to ALL creation"!

January Service Project

It's time for our annual Cereal Bowl! This year will look a little different due to the pandemic. We will collect cereal (ALL kinds) from now until February 7 for the Kountze Pantry. You are on Team Flakes if your last name begins with A-L; and Team Puffs if your last name begins with M-Z. Volunteers are available for you to drop-off your cereal on Saturdays, 9^{AM}-Noon (unless we have inclement weather) on January 23, January 30 & February 6



Communion pick up will also be available during those times. Call the Church Office to arrange drop off if those times are not convenient. Let's stock the pantry at Kountze!



Thank you so much for sponsoring children from our program for the holidays. Your generosity has made the holidays brighter for these families!

Thank you Lindsay & Chris for organizing & delivery! Wishing you all a safe & happy Christmas season!

Susan Pawloski,
Lutheran Family Services

Dear Morning Star friends,

I have been blessed to serve our Church for the past 15 years as the Director of your Child Care Center. The Center is ranked one of, if not the best center in Omaha. This could not have been done without your support and trust. Together we have accomplished so much. We have worked as a family. Your generosity and your friendship will last forever.

On February 1, 2021, I will be retired. A new team takes over, a new era begins. I know that they will appreciate your continued support. As a member of Morning Star Lutheran Church, I will see you on Sunday's when this pandemic is over. Again, so many wonderful memories and so much appreciation to all of you.

Susan Snow M.Ed., Director
Morning Star Preschool & Child Care Center

Morning Star Preschool & Child Care Center



402-393-8215 • Preschool@MorningStarOmaha.org

The preschool is ringing in the new year with some fun winter themes including Penguins & Polar Animals, Ice & Snow and Winter Hibernators. One of the highlights this month is Indoor Snow Day. Children will skate on paper plates, slide penguins on ice, play hockey, shovel (fiberfill) snow and throw stuffed snowballs.

The children will have the opportunity to use their imaginations on Frozen Dress Up & Music Day. During the week of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we foster positive relationships and Interactions with our theme "We Are the Same, We Are Different".



The Faith Formation Team will meet on Monday, January 11 at 6^{PM} via ZOOM. Greta will send out the link.

The High School youth will have a hang out this month so stay tuned to your mailboxes to find out when & where!

Parish Ministry Associates



We gather annually for study at PMA Convocation.

We treasure PMA fellowship and friendships.



Congratulations to
Ric Miller
upon completion of the
Parish Ministry Associates program.

Ric was installed as a PMA on Sunday, January 10 at Morning Star during the worship service! We were blessed to have Bishop Brian Maas and Pastor Juliet Focker to help with the installation. Blessings to Ric and Pam and the ministry the Lord has called them to!

Council Highlights & CELEBRATION

- We look forward to celebrating Susan Snow's 15 years of leadership as our Preschool Director. Susan plans to retire the end of January!
- Our Food for Friends program provided 163 meals to families. Our thanks to Dan & Laurel Mooney for their leadership of this program!
- Our PPP loan was forgiven. We used the loan to sustain the Preschool during the period it was closed in spring and summer!
- We've received the Healthy Places Grant for Centers of Worship from the State of Nebraska!
- The Congregation Annual Meeting has been scheduled for January 31 and will be held virtually after the service.
- As the year wraps up and the Council reflects, we are so proud that our congregation has continued to move forward and thrive during a challenging year. Members are worshipping on-line and continuing to support the mission through giving. We are blessed!

Thanks for your generosity with the altar flowers and bulletins. Call the Church Office for sponsoring information.

~flowers & bulletins~

Flower Sponsors

Bulletin Sponsors

	Flower Sponsors	Bulletin Sponsors	
January 3	Carol Smith	Carol Smith	Carol Smith
January 10	Ric & Pam Miller	Ric & Pam Miller	Available
January 17	Available	Available	Available
January 24	Available	Available	Available
January 31	Available	Available	Available

Christmas EVE



MORNING STAR
LUTHERAN CHURCH



THANK
YOU

This season is a time to remember all that we are thankful for, and YOU are one of them! Thank you for your generous Christmas gifts. We are blessed beyond measure by each and every one of you!!! Have a safe, happy new year!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Chris Hawkins, Pastor Glenn Schacht, Susie Syx, Greta Carlson, Susan Snow, Beverlee McCollum, Simone Weber, Susan Beeghly, Art Lorenz, & James Creason



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	1	2
3 10 Virtual Worship	4 7 Outreach Comm	5 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting 6:30 Exec Comm	6 10 Bible Study	7 5 Covid Task Force Meeting 7 DBSA 7 Faith Partners Meeting	8 Annual Reports Due	9
10 10 Virtual Worship & Installation of Ric Miller, PMA	11 5:30 MIF Committee Meeting 6 Faith Formation Meeting 6:30 Church Council	12 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting	13 10 Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation Class	14 7 DBSA 7 Faith Partners Meeting	15	16
17 10 Virtual Worship	18	19 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 Personnel Committee Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting	20 10 Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation Class	21 4:30 Covid Task Force Meeting 7 DBSA 7 Faith Partners Meeting	22	23 9-12 Cereal Drop Off & Communion Pick Up
24 10 Virtual Worship	25	26 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting	27 10 Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation Class	28 7 DBSA	29	30 9-12 Cereal Drop Off & Communion Pick Up
31 10 Virtual Worship 11 Annual Meeting						



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68114

Address Correction Requested

Prayers

Lindsay Bowley
Gary Byers
Janice & Greg Gienger

Ken Hagemann
Virgene Kobold
Eunice Levisay

Friends & Loved Ones of Morning Star

- Ben (*Rich & Betty Fiddelke's nephew*)
- Brittany (*Preschool staff member*)
- Debbie (*friend of the Moy's*)
- Don (*JoAnn Wollenburg's brother*)
- Mary Ellen & Suzanne Byers (*Gary & Sandy Byers*)
- Dorothy, Elois & Michael (*family & friends of Michelle Miller*)
- Dylan, Laura & medical staff (*Hass's family members*)
- Goranson Family (*a Preschool family*)
- Jennifer & Whitney (*Gloria Miller's cousin & granddaughter*)
- Jim Mooney (*Dan Mooney's father*)
- Jolene Sanders (*sister-in-law of Marilyn in Preschool*)
- Jose & Lidia Sanchez (*friends of Kim & Karen Hawkins*)
- Joseph (*friend of the Wollenburgs*)
- Lois Blake (*Kim Moy's cousin*)
- Margaret (*friend of Lori Mueller*)
- River (*grandcousin of Jan Zarestky*)
- Shelley Anderson (*Carol Anderson's daughter*)



January Anniversaries

Lynn & Royan Hedell	1
Rod & Cindy Anderson	30

January Birthdays

Mara Baker	1	Julee Kruse	9
Quinn Garges	1	Miranda Zimmer	11
Julia Jackson	1	Don Page	14
Jacob Johnson	1	Francy Van Meter	16
Sawyer Kempenar	1	Robert Walla	16
Lynden Kempenar	1	Emerson Ladd	17
Henry Klaasmeyer	1	Teggy Maxwell	17
Annalise Nore	1	Coby Karnish	21
Grace Peterson	1	Shirley Beier	23
Bryce Peterson	1	Luke Lieske	23
Taylor Roemmich	1	Delores Albanese	24
Tristan Roemmich	1	Deb Hysack	26
Jackson Rohde	1	Sue Quast	27
Clark Rue	1	Hannah Hysack	28
Michael Shehan	1	Lori Mueller	28
Judy Hollander	2	Mary Wahl	29
Erin Davie	3	Kathleen Bruckner	30
Garland Jessen	3	Jean Gutheil	30
Sandy Heskett	7	Michaela Tolo	31
Margery Morgan	7		



The Faith Partners ministry team will meet on Thursdays, January 7, 14 & 21 from 7-9^{PM} in the Sanctuary. Masks are required as well as physical distancing.