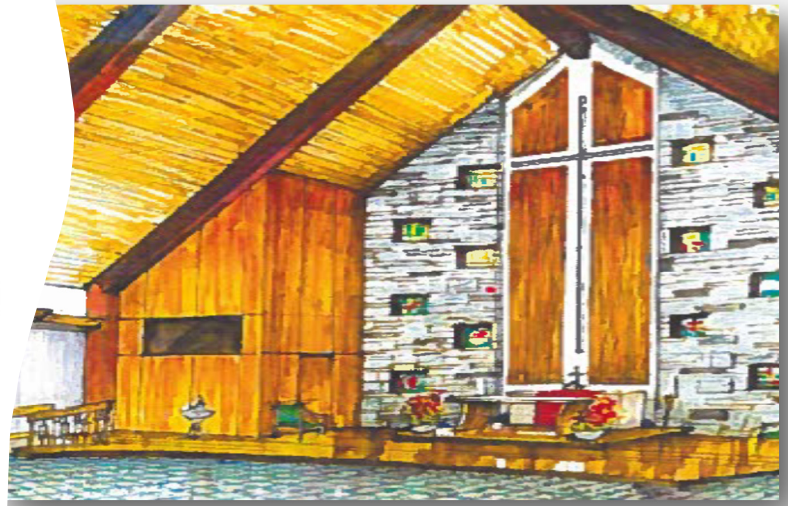




**MORNING STAR**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# NEWS *letter*

December 2023



## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHRIS

***When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."***

***Luke 2:15***

In the story of Christmas, the ordinariness of the world is confronted by the extraordinary nature of God's power. Shepherds meet angels. A small town in Judea gets put on the cosmic map of God's creation. Word is made flesh. Human fear is transformed by divine presence.

Here, in this juxtaposition of ordinary and divine, we retell the story of Christ's birth. It is a story that speaks a promise. That in the monotony of daily life there endures the powerful presence of a God who chooses, out of great love, to reveal himself to us. It's the story about a God who makes sacred the things that seem like nothing. It's a God who can turn a backwater town into the world's last best hope. It's a God who, in the twinkle of an infant's eyes, can glimmer light into the darkness.

The ironic truth is that God unveils his power in things which seem humble. Think about it. If the power of the incarnation was revealed in God's ability to move mountains, perform tricks, or rebuke nature in some awesome way, it would not make sense. We wouldn't relate. Instead, God reveals his power through the ordinary, in the least of these, to make much of the very little. Through such ordinary stuff, Christ becomes magnified for all to see. For all to believe!

Let's face it. Christmas has become a time of great expectation. The decorations get brighter. The gatherings get bigger. Commercial ventures capitalize on the synthetic joy of conspicuous consumption. Much of this is fun. But does it tell the story of two young weary travelers who had no place in the inn?

Do our seasonal celebrations, with all their merry and might, convey the story of a Christ child wailing in the darkness? Will our hustle and bustle help us to remember the hopeful cries that pierce the still of a Bethlehem night? Will our stressful calendars allow us to hear the cries of promise from a Calvary cross?

This season, amid our wanting and waiting and for the highly anticipated and expected, perhaps we should remember to also make some room for the ordinary. After all, I'm reminded in the Christmas story that in the ordinary we encounter the unexpected. It's in the familiar where we become the most surprised. Even in the dimmest, loneliest places of our lives, God's light can shine brilliantly. Remember, it's in these places that God chooses to encounter us.

The prophet Isaiah's words seem so poignant this time of year. He says, *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined!"*

My prayer is that whatever place or station you find yourself at this season, you will experience the great light of God's promise that comes into our world in the baby Jesus. May the light that glimmers from the Christ child brighten your days and give you hope for all your tomorrows.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pastor Chris



**Morning Star's Candlelight Christmas Eve Service**  
**Sunday, December 24 at 5 PM**

***No Sunday Morning Service. Advent 4 will be celebrated on Saturday, December 23!***

Each year we show our appreciation to the dedicated Morning Star ministry team with a Christmas bonus. If you would like to contribute to this end-of-year gift for our staff please place your donation in the offering, the mail, or online by December 20. Thank you for your continued generosity!

**THE MORNING STAR MINISTRY TEAM**

<i>Pastor Christopher Hawkins</i>	<i>Lead Pastor</i>
<i>Pastor Glenn Schacht</i>	<i>Assistant Pastor</i>
<i>Susie Syx</i>	<i>Director of Administrative Ministry</i>
<i>Sarah Dumke</i>	<i>Director of Preschool &amp; Childcare Center</i>
<i>Simone Weber</i>	<i>Music Minister</i>
<i>Rick Jacobi</i>	<i>Organist</i>
<i>James Creason</i>	<i>Facility Manager</i>
<i>Art Lorenz</i>	<i>Sound Engineer</i>
<i>Kyle Wolfe</i>	<i>Video Technician</i>
<i>Pastor Sara Jensen</i>	<i>Pulpit Supply</i>
<i>Jean Johnson</i>	<i>Saturday Pianist</i>







### December Green Envelope

Our Green Envelope offering continues this month for Lutheran Family Services who express God's love for all people by providing quality human care services that build and strengthen individual, family, and community life. Your green envelope donations help them achieve their mission in the following areas:



**Behavioral Health** ~ Supporting individuals and families through the highs and lows of life.

**Children Services** ~ Providing for the needs of children and teens through prevention, intervention, permanency and well-being.

**Family Services** ~ Building stronger families through parent education, child support, and early detection and intervention.

**New Americans** ~ Welcoming refugees and immigrants through career, housing, legal, and translation support.

Thank you for being the LIGHT to all Creation through Lutheran Family Services!



### December Worship Assistants

#### **Sunday, December 3**

Comm: Betty Fiddelke, Sarah Lieske & Susie Syx  
Reader: Jan Zarestky  
Usher: Dianne Misiunas & Nick Saitta  
Acolyte: Renny Maxwell & Hailey Neussendorfer  
Altar: Diane Meyer

#### **Sunday, December 10**

Comm: Rod Anderson, Bob & Lauren Gilmore  
Reader: Bob Gilmore  
Usher: Dan & Laurel Mooney  
Acolyte: Mason Rue & Jackson Post  
Altar: Lauren Gilmore

#### **Sunday, December 17**

Comm: Kim Hawkins, Dave & Lynn Blagg  
Reader: Kim Hawkins  
Usher: Joel Rohde & Jim McGill  
Acolyte: Hattie & Anna Moeller  
Altar: Lynn Blagg

#### **Wednesday, December 24**

Comm: Susie Syx, Kyle & Arielle Wolfe  
Reader: Kyle Wolfe  
Usher: Todd & Deb Washburn  
Acolyte: Will, Charlie & Luke Beck  
Altar: Marguerite McGill & Susie Syx

#### **Sunday, December 31**

Comm: Dianne Misiunas, Nick Saitta & Donna Walter  
Reader: Donna Walter  
Usher: Chris Hedican & Jim McGill  
Acolyte: Abigail Karnish & Brynn Wiebers  
Altar: Tim, Dawn & Abigail Karnish



**We need help to read  
scripture, serve communion  
and usher!  
Contact the Church Office!**



Thank you to Dan & Laurel Mooney, Deb Washburn, Pam Chelesvig, Deb Bruckner and the crew at Westside Boys & Girls Club for their help in distributing

the 150+ meals for Thanksgiving! A very special thanks to all of you for helping to make this happen!



Lutheran Women of Omaha will meet Tuesday, December 12 at 12 Noon at Luther Memorial (61st & Western). Cost is \$7 for lunch and this month features the Faith Partners with Pastor Glenn Schacht and Reverend Eulish Moore. RSVP by December 10 to Ruth Johnson at 402-397-9521.



*Welcome new members Diane Meyer, Ben & Analise Nore! Not pictured: Mary Ziska*

The 2024 calendar is up for flower & bulletin sponsors! See the bulletin board in the Gathering Space or call the Church Office to reserve your special day. Thank you for continuing to provide beautiful flowers for the altar!



Altar Flowers  
& Bulletins  
Ministry Opportunity

If you would like to be a sponsor, see the calendar in the Welcome Center or call the Church Office. Thanks **Piccolo Florists** for providing our Altar Flowers at a reduced rate and thanks to **Great Harvest Grain Company** for free Communion Bread every week.

#### Flower Sponsors

#### Bulletin Sponsors

December 3	Karen Hawkins	Karen Hawkins	<b>Available</b>
December 10	Karen Hawkins	Karen Hawkins	<b>Available</b>
December 17	James & Shaila Clark	Karen Hawkins	<b>Available</b>
December 24	Sharon McGrath	Karen Hawkins	<b>Available</b>
December 31	Dick & Sharon Zahm	Karen Hawkins	<b>Available</b>





*We would love to have you help read scripture, serve communion or usher/greet! Contact the Church Office TODAY to find out more information!*



I wanted to thank you and your staff for making Mary's services so special and memorable. Your message was very comforting and fit Mary and her life in a very special way. God bless you!

- Lyman Larsen

### Poinsettias

To order a poinsettia, complete this form and place it in the offering plate with your check or bring it to the Church Office. The cost is \$15 per plant. Orders will be accepted through **Wednesday, Dec. 20**. Poinsettias can be taken after the December 24<sup>th</sup> service.

☐

(Qty.)

Poinsettias x \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐

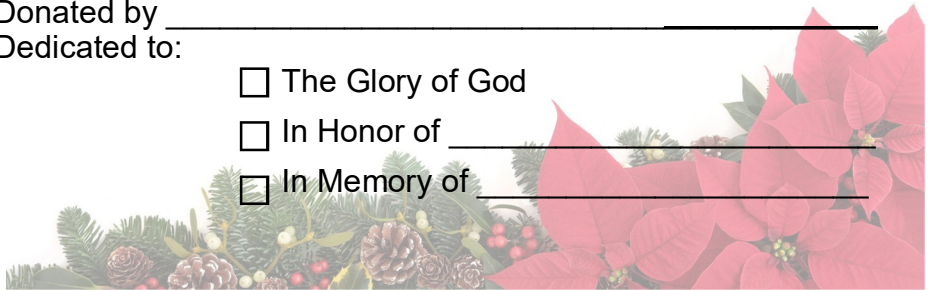
Check here if you wish to remain anonymous.

Donated by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dedicated to: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ The Glory of God

☐ In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_



### Advent Wreath Kits

The Faith Formation Team will offer Advent wreath kits again this year. The kit includes a candle holder, candles, devotion book, and a few other materials to make your Advent practice at home meaningful this year. Advent devotionals and a new set of candles are available if you received a kit previously. Greenery can be easily purchased at a local nursery or artificial wreaths are available in the Christmas section at most stores. Request your kit at the display in the Gathering Space or by contacting the Church Office.



### **Angel Tree Time!**

This time of year can be hard on families struggling to make ends meet. You make such a difference in the lives of the families served by Lutheran Family Services and the Westside Boys & Girls Club with your gifts. Pick an Angel or two off of the table after church.

**All gifts must be back by December 17.**

Email Lindsey Tonniges with any questions at [LindseyTonniges@gmail.com](mailto:LindseyTonniges@gmail.com).

2023-2024 Winstrom Youth Service Scholarship applications are now available. Pick one up at the information center in the Gathering Space, go online or contact the Church Office for one. Accredited tech schools DO qualify!

**APPLICATION DEADLINE is March 1!**

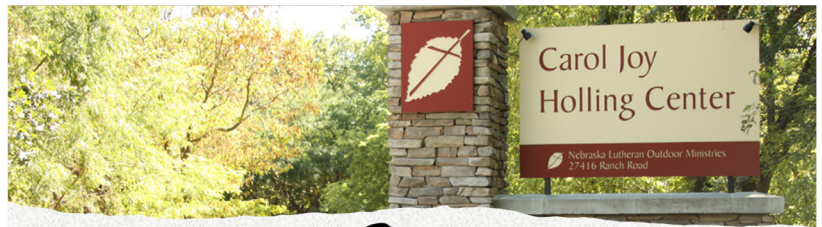


# Kids & YOUTH

## THE HOLE STORY

Bible story time and donuts for all generations  
9:30am in the Chapel on First and Third Sundays

December 3 Naomi & Ruth  
December 17 David & Goliath



Camp brochures are out and available in the Gathering Space. Campers can get \$50 off by registering by January 31. Morning Star has camp scholarships available!

Join us on  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17** For  
★ THE NO STRESS ★

# CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

WHERE EVERYONE IS A PART OF THE STORY!  
IN 10AM WORSHIP  
(NO REHEARSAL REQUIRED, JUST SHOW UP)

## 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

# CREATED

**TO BE** MYLE  
the tAble Young Adult Gathering

**JULY 16TH-20TH 2024**  
**NEW ORLEANS**  
8th-12th graders (fall 2023)

Register NOW for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering July 16-20, 2024!

Morning Star seeks a group of excited high school youth (incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders included) to join Pastor Chris and thousands of high school youth from around the country for fun, worship, and fellowship in the Bayou! We will be flying! Contact Pastor Chris with questions!



**MORNING STAR**  
Preschool & Child Care Center  
*Let's Play!*

Our Nativity Play is Thursday, December 7 at 4:30. This annual event features some of the cutest cows, sheep, wise men, shepherds, and Holy family acting out the Nativity story as read by Pastor Chris.

Families of the Preschool purchased books during their book fair raising \$474 worth of free puzzles, books and STEM materials for the Preschool to use.

We held our annual visit from Santa featuring Pastor Glenn as Santa on December 1. The children were excited to see him!

The Preschool will be closed from December 25-January 1 for the Christmas and New Year's break.

The staff of the Preschool wishes all of you a season full of joy and memory-making moments! Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



*Pastor Glenn helps with Preschool's Visit from Santa!*

# December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9 Quilting Group 5:30 Worship
<b>3</b> 9:30 The Hole Story 10 Worship	<b>4</b> 5:30 Faith Partner's Meeting 7 Outreach Committee	<b>5</b> 9 Preschool Rehearsal 9:30 Staff Meeting 5 Exec Team Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>6</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	<b>7</b> 4 Preschool Nativity Play 7 DBSA	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 5:30 Worship
<b>10</b> 10 Worship 12 Blue Christmas Service 4:30 Table Grace Reserved  	<b>11</b> 4:30 Enlighten Committee 6:30 Church Council Mtg	<b>12</b> 9:30 Staff Mtg 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>13</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	<b>14</b> 12:30 Sarah Circle Luncheon 7 DBSA	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 5:30 Worship
<b>17</b> 9:30 The Hole Story 10 Worship & No Stress Christmas Program  	<b>18</b> 6 PM Neighborhood Town Hall Meeting 	<b>19</b> 9:30 Staff Mtg 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>20</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only	<b>21</b> 7 DBSA	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 5:30 Advent 4 Worship  
<b>24</b> No Morning Service 5 Christmas Eve Service 	<b>25</b>  <b>Church Office &amp; Preschool are closed</b>	<b>26</b> 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>27</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only	<b>28</b> 7 DBSA	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 5:30 Worship
<b>31</b> 10 Worship	<b>Church Office &amp; Preschool are closed</b>		<b>Preschool is closed</b>			





# MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue

*Address Correction Requested*



*From your partners in ministry,*

*Pastor Chris Hawkins*

*Pastor Glenn Schacht*

*Simone Weber*

*Sarah Dumke*

*Susie Syx*

*Rick Jacobi*

*James Creason*

## Prayer Requests

Rae Austin  
Mike Behm  
Donna Crouse  
Addie Elshire  
LouAnn Henkens  
Virgene Kobold  
Neil Lindquist  
Bev McCollum  
Emily McWhirter  
Laurel Mooney  
Rev. Kent Morse

Don Page  
Nick Saitta  
John Walter  
Mary Ziska  
Ashley  
Bob & Family  
Bruce  
Christian, Brennon & Family  
Danny Karnish  
Darrell & Barb  
Dave

Don Bromm  
Eulish Moore  
Gordon Soderberg  
Joyce  
Karly Throckmorton & infant  
son, Theo  
Kenny Grimes  
Kim  
Mark Albanese  
Mary Clare & Jim  
Melodie Ryan

Pr. John Merkel  
Richard Webb & Family  
Rylee Koers  
Sara  
Steven  
Terry, Jennifer & Karen  
Whitney Dahir & Family

## December Birthdays

Kaylie	Ring	12/01	Robert	Kellams	12/11	Frances	Ruh	12/25
Karen	Bertelsen	12/02	Cam	Corbett	12/13	Michael	Bowman	12/26
Sydney	Winstrom	12/02	Kathy	Jochim	12/15	Gina	Ladd	12/26
Jerry	Bertelsen	12/04	Cip	Engel	12/17	LouAnn	Henkens	12/28
Pamela	Chelesvig	12/04	Riley	Maxwell	12/17	Owen	Moeller	12/28
Nancy	Sweetwood	12/04	Carol	Bowley	12/18	Thomas	Gutheil	12/29
Beverlee	McCollum	12/06	Lester	Rygg	12/18	Todd	Moeller	12/29
Lillian	Scherer	12/08	Lynn	Hedell	12/21	Diane	Ervin	12/30
Joel	Page	12/10	Carter	Tonniges	12/23	Gregory	Foote	12/30
Lisa	Smith	12/10	Sherri	Oltmans	12/25	Timothy	Mueller	12/30
						Lynell	Stafford	12/30

If you don't see your birthday or anniversary in the monthly newsletter, contact the Church Office as we do not have it in our records.



## December Anniversaries

Jesse & Kylie Warboys	12/06
Matthew & Jennifer Longley	12/09
Sharon McGrath & Paul Worcester	12/27
Dick & Sharon Zahm	12/28