



Message from Pastor Chris

...By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Genesis 3:19

Mortality. I never used to worry much about it. But this time the ground was damp. There was a hole, and my foot was no match for the step beneath. Ouch! That actually hurt a bit. Funny as it might seem in hindsight, I can still remember my biggest concern in that initial fleeting moment. Whatever you do, don't lose your sandal, Hawkins!

Grimacing in a bit of pain, I carefully hooked and balanced the thong of that sandal between my two biggest toes. I saved it! Now I could attempt, albeit gingerly, a rescue of my bruised shin. After all, it was a menacing hole with a piece of unforgiving aluminum at the top. But I had to brace myself. It was slippery and there was no sense in allowing myself to fall completely down. Success! I stood up and looked down for a battle damage assessment. But that's when it finally hit me.

Have you ever had an experience in your life that happened to you so fast, it actually felt like it was happening in slow motion? I know. It's ironic. But that's how I felt when I raised, quite warily, the lower part of my leg out of that hellish hovel. At first it was the solitary stream of blood running down my lower extremity, across the top of my foot, and disappearing down into the heel of the infamous sandal, that caught my eye. Then, I noticed something I had never seen before.

For this episode, I sat down. Because in that ephemeral momentary glance at my leg, I experienced the simultaneity of frailty, finitude, and fortune all at once. But that's what seeing a clearly exposed left tibia will do to you. That's what happens to you when you fix eyes on the flesh of your own shin filleted away from its sinews—like a raw carrot. That's what happens when you witness your own flesh crumpled up like a potato skin at the top of a gnarly wound, exposing both bone and muscle. Indeed, it was a ghastly sight to behold in the foggy mist of what was a perfectly pleasant October afternoon.

I drove myself to the Emergency Room that day. After three agonizing, inconvenient hours and thirteen stitches later I think I may have finally learned a lesson from this life. Don't ever, under any circumstances, no matter what, adventure out in sandals on slippery ground. The second lesson might be this: I'm not as invincible as I used to be. As a mere mortal, as my wife and mother remind me, I never was.

The truth is, anything can happen to anyone, at any time, in any manner of splendid ways, on this treacherous rock we call Earth. Nobody escapes. None of us gets off of this quagmire of Creation without a few bumps or lumps. Nobody. Maybe that's why there's an old Jewish tradition that counsels each person to have a note in each one of two pockets. On one note is scribed, *"For you the universe was created."* In the other, a note reminds, *"You are dust."*

In a few days, we as Christians will recall that ever so grim reminder that we are, after all, mortal beings. We are susceptible to bad days, bare bones, and brokenness. We will have to confront the inconvenient truth that we will, at some point in time, be exposed to headaches, heartaches, and sometimes ashen ridden horrors of life. But it's not all bad after all.

Because the good news is that we are never separated from God's preference and promise. We can never be found apart from God's grace and guarantee of life forever with him in his kingdom! This, of course, is what I will joyously remember when that dirty ashen Cross is finally placed on my forehead later this month.



Yes, these ashes will serve to remind me that I am a mere mortal, that out of the ground I have come and to the ground I will return. Yes, I probably will not be able to help but take inventory of my life with all of its blessings and marks of this world I was born into on this particular Ash Wednesday. But I'm also thankful to get an opportunity to remember the lessons of this latest scar. That no matter how creepy that wound on my leg might have been, I still belong to God.

Interestingly enough, this newest scar on my imperfect and mortal existence of my own self it's in the shape of a V. But as far as I am now concerned, it's a V signifying the essence of "Victory." Is the sign of a promise that through the victory of Christ's wounds and scars on the Cross, I have been healed. Thank God, that despite my own wretchedness, recklessness, or wrecked sandals, I have been redeemed.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pr. Chris

PS. Please check out our plan for Lenten worship and faith formation in this newsletter. I look forward to seeing you soon!



Ash Wednesday and the Imposition of Ashes will look different this year. We invite you to pick up a small vial of consecrated Ashes along with home communion kits on Friday, February 12 from Noon to 3 PM or Saturday, February 13 from 9 AM to Noon. Please contact the Church Office if you need assistance or delivery.

We will also be offering the Imposition of Ashes from the safety of your vehicle on Ash Wednesday, February 17 from 9-11 AM or 12:45 to 2 PM. Please pull into the west circle drive, stay in your vehicle and the pastors will proceed with instructions.

Thank you for your flexibility this past year as we try to bring familiarity to worship! Blessings this Lenten season!

Council Highlights & CELEBRATION

- Susan Snow's 12 years of ministry!
- Our pledges for the year, already extremely generous from our congregation!
- Ric Miller's certification as a PMA!



Altar Flowers & Bulletin Sponsorship

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



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





MORNING STAR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

LENT

Ash Wednesday Service

Imposition of Ashes *(safely from your vehicle)*
(or pick up Ashes for home use)

Lenten Services

Wednesday, February 17 ~ Noon

**Wednesday, February 17 ~ 9-11^{AM}
& 12:45-2^{PM}**

Sundays ~ 10^{AM} Facebook Live
Wednesdays ~ 12^{PM} Facebook Live

Mid-Week Lenten Faith Formation ~ 6^{PM} on ZOOM

Join the entire Morning Star community on ZOOM *(by phone or computer)* to participate in this intergenerational study & fellowship. ALL AGES are invited!

H O L Y W E E K

Palm Sunday Virtual Service

Maundy Thursday Virtual Service

Good Friday Virtual Service

Easter Celebration

Sunday, March 28 at 10:00^{AM}

Thursday, April 1 (time TBD)

Friday, April 2 (time TBD)

Sunday, April 4 at 10:00^{AM}



Consecrated Communion Pick-Up

Friday, February 12 ~ Noon to 3^{PM}
Saturday, February 13 ~ 9^{AM} to Noon

and

Friday, March 26 ~ Noon to 3^{PM}
Saturday, March 27 ~ 9^{AM} to Noon

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

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



Green Envelope

This month our offering goes to Habitat for Humanity. Their mission is about tearing down walls and building bridges, offering hope and transforming lives while serving God by serving others. Faith partners are the cornerstone of Habitat Omaha's ministry to end poverty housing. From sponsoring and building homes, to Prayer Partners who help lift up the concerns of Habitat Omaha and its partners, there are many ways to serve.



With COVID, now, as much as ever, Habitat is seeing how important it is to have a safe, stable place to call home. If you are able to volunteer, limited construction operations are available with additional safety measures in place. Some key "no-contact" activities may also be available. The funds raised in our Green Envelope this month go towards building a home with the other members of the Faith House Faith Coalition.



Service Project

New Visions has not been immune to the hardships of the past year. This month we will collect supplies for the veterans housed at New Visions. The following have been requested by the New Visions Omaha Facility Director, Steve Roberts. You may drop off any of these items to the Church Office or during Communion pick up this month. Find out more about New Visions by visiting www.NewVisionshs.org.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Work Boots (men's sizes 9 thru 12) | • T-Shirts (M thru 3x) | • Long Johns (M thru 3x) |
| • Bath & Face Towels | • Boxers (M thru 3x) | • Sweat Pants (M thru 3x) |
| • Laundry Detergent | • Shower Shoes (sizes 9 thru 13) | • Sweat Shirts (M thru 3x) |



There's still time! Until February 7, we will collect cereal for the Kountze Pantry. Team Flakes if your last name begins with the letters A - L; Team Puffs if your last name begins with the letters M - Z. There are volunteers available for drop-offs on Saturday from 9 - Noon (unless we have inclement weather) on 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. Thank you for your amazing response to the Cereal Bowl this year. It will be a tight race but the real winners are the families served by the Kountze Pantry!



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!





Meet Kathy Widdershoven, Interim Director of the Morning Star Preschool & Child Care Center. Kathy has a Bachelor's degree from UNL and a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. She has served with us for 22 years. Her



knowledge and experience along with her warm smile makes her well respected amongst the staff and in our community. She is a great fit to fill in until a permanent director is found. Join us in welcoming Kathy to her new position!

The preschool children loved Indoor Snow Day this past month. As the children learn about Groundhog Day in February, we are hoping the groundhog does not see his shadow and we will see warm days ahead!

Children will be encouraged to explore and express themselves creatively as we start out the month with a Fairy Tale theme which will include learning some classic fairy tales, engineering a variety of materials for Build a Castle Day and dramatic play on Fairy Tale Dress-Up day.

Valentine's week is a child favorite because the children love to show their friends how much they care for them by sharing valentines and by creating cards using doilies, paint and glitter. Other special activities we will be celebrating this month are Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras and Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day.



TABLE GRACE CAFE

Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls

Fundraising Dinner & Silent Auction

FRIDAY, MARCH 5TH 7:30 – 8:30 PM

Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls

Voices of Creativity

Watch Gala at www.nhbs.cc/gala2021

Auction bidding at www.nhbs.cc/bid2021

Pick up Lunch(3/5 11AM-2PM) at Table Grace Cafe
1611 1/2 Farnam St. Omaha, NE 68102

Pick up Dinner (3/5 4-6:30PM) at Food truck
St. Thomas Church 17007 Q St, Omaha, NE 68135



Food Options for Gala

Pick-up 3/1-3/5

Take and Bake Option:

Chicken Bacon Baked Penne Carbonara

German Chocolate Brownies

Pick-up Day-of Gala:

Baked Apple-Goat Cheese Crostini

Maple-Bourbon Glazed Ham Balls

Seared Beef Tataki

Prosciutto Roulade with Greek Yogurt and Fruit Compote

Pesto Chicken Salad Tea Sliders

Desserts:

Mexican Chocolate Cake Bombs

Berry Clafoutis with Brown Butter Sauce

This Year's Fundraiser is in memory of Sean Blake

Sponsorship includes 8 meal tickets.

Meals available for pickup at Table Grace Café
or Saint Thomas Lutheran Church. Please Select
a time and location for food pickup.

☐ Platinum \$20,000 ☐ Gold \$10,000

☐ Silver \$5,000 ☐ Bronze \$960

☐ Tickets # ☐ Donation _____

Individual tickets \$60

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

☐ Pickup Take and Bake at Table Grace Cafe 11am-2pm

☐ 3/1 ☐ 3/2 ☐ 3/3 ☐ 3/4 ☐ 3/5 Serving # _____

Saint Thomas Friday 4-6:30 ☐ 3/5 Serving # _____

Pick-up day of Gala Serving # _____

☐ Cafe ☐ 11am-12pm ☐ 12-1pm ☐ 1-2pm

☐ Food Truck ☐ 4-5pm ☐ 5pm-6pm ☐ 6-6:30pm

☐ No Food Please

Table Grace Ministries is a 501c3 whose Mission is
"Nourishing hungry bodies and souls."

Purchase tickets at www.tablegraceministries.com
or return this form with your name and check to:

Table Grace Café

1611 1/2 Farnam St

Omaha, NE 68102

or call Simone at 402-965-1276.

Make checks payable to Table Grace Ministries.

Please reserve your tickets by 3/3/2021.

Message from Greta Carlson

Lent for Everyone: Reflections on the Heart

WHEN: Wednesday Evenings during Lent at 6 - 6:45 PM on February 24 and March 3, 10, 17, 24

WHERE: ZOOM from the comfort of your home

WHAT: In lieu of our Lenten meals and fellowship on Wednesday evenings, we will have a faith formation Zoom every Wednesday in Lent starting February 24. Families of all ages (really- **ALL** ages!) are invited to join for a time of fellowship, scripture, reflection, sharing, and coloring. We are calling this new program "Lent for Everyone," because it is for everyone! This will take the place of Sunday school videos during Lent. Supplies available for pick up February 12 & 13 (or through email). Please talk to me for any questions you may have and stay tuned for more details!



High school youth prepare care packages for college students on January 17 (*above*). Join us for a High School Youth Zoom on Sunday, February 21 at 6 PM. Greta will send out the ZOOM link soon!



Pick up consecrated Communion contactless from our circle drive on Friday, February 12 from Noon to 3 PM or Saturday, February 13 from 9 AM to Noon.

We will also have take-home ashes for a virtual Ash Wednesday service available during that time.

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






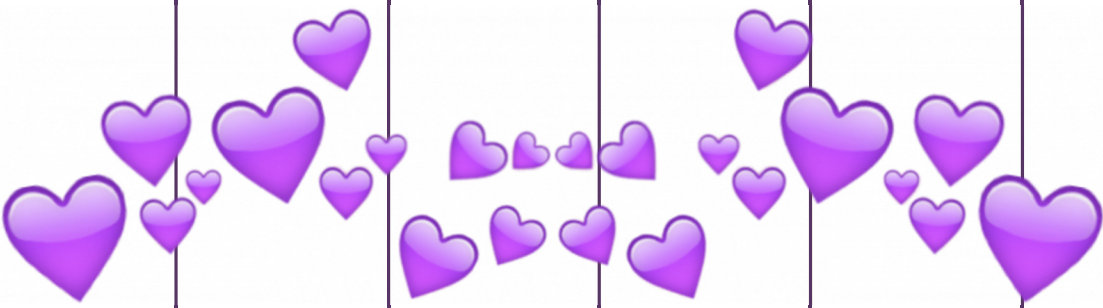
~flowers & bulletins~

Flower Sponsors

Bulletin Sponsors

February 7	Don & Bonnie Daubman	Jan Zarestky	Available
February 14	Michelle Miller	Michelle Miller	Jan Zarestky
February 21	No Flowers ~ Lent	No Flowers ~ Lent	Available
February 28	No Flowers ~ Lent	No Flowers ~ Lent	Available

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7 Outreach Comm	2 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting 6:30 Exec Comm	3 10 Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation Class	4 7 DBSA 7 Bell Choir	5	6 9-12 Cereal Drop Off & Communion Pick Up
7 10 Virtual Worship LAST DAY! 	8 6:30 Church Council	9 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting	10 10 Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation Class	11 7 DBSA 7 Bell Choir	12 	13
14 10 Virtual Worship	15	16 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting 5:30 Personnel Committee Meeting	17 10 Bible Study 12 Ash Wednesday Virtual Worship 1-3 Imposition of Ashes Drive Thru 	18 7 DBSA 7 Bell Choir	19	20
21 10 Virtual Worship 6 High School Youth ZOOM Hang-out 	22	23 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Meeting	24 10 Bible Study 12 Lenten Service 6 Reflections of the Heart ZOOM 	25 7 DBSA 7 Bell Choir	26	27
28 10 Virtual Worship						



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68114

Address Correction Requested

Prayers

Lindsay Bowley
Gary Byers
Janice & Greg Gienger
Ken Hagemann
Kayla Hawkins

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*)
-Sherri (*Glenda Cannon's sister*)
-Steve Denny (*friend of Wally Koers*)
-Todd Koers (*Wally Koers' son*)
-Will (*brother -in-law of Ben Byers*)



February Anniversaries

John & Lynn Davis	3
Jerry & Karen Bertelsen	9

February Birthdays

Zac Tonniges	1	Joyce Kochen	19
Todd Washburn	1	Larry Kochen	19
Don Daubman	3	Mason Rue	19
Lowell Gratopp	4	BreAnn Throckmorton	19
Kelly Throckmorton	5	Robert Throckmorton	19
Cindy Lindquist	6	Diane Konvalina	21
Gil Gadzikowski	7	Shelby Miller	21
Jeff Wegner	7	Ricky Throckmorton	21
Marcie Colombo	10	Jim McGill	22
Pam Miller	10	Alexandra Weber	22
Riley Hawkins	12	Jon Beck	23
Michael Behm	14	Kate Lieske	23
Anker Jensen	14	Jackson Post	23
Barb Schroeder	15	Noah Jones	24
Denise Stange	15	David Blagg	27
Olivia Washburn	16	Colleen Estee	27
Bonnie Daubman	17	Renny Maxwell	27
Joan Mathisen	18	Hattie Moeller	27
Dalton Bichlmeier	19		