



331 S. 85th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68114
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www.MorningStarOmaha.org



WORSHIP WITH US!
Saturdays at 5:30 PM ♦ Sundays at 10:00 AM ♦ Anytime at www.MorningStarOmaha.org

February 2023 Newsletter

Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – ourselves, our time and our possessions – signs of your gracious love...

Each week in worship, we celebrate the gifts that God has given us by sharing a portion of these gifts with the church. Thank you to all who have shared and continue to share of yourselves, your time, and your possessions for the purpose of our collective ministry and mission at Morning Star.

As we approve our mission budget for the 2023 fiscal year, please know that your financial gifts, no matter the amount, are important. Your generosity represents a faithful response to what God is up to in this congregation and community.

This past fall, we embarked on a stewardship journey titled, “*Building a Culture of Generosity.*” Thank you to all who have responded and continue to respond by offering a plan for giving this fiscal year. Communicating your household’s giving intent is extremely powerful in guiding our leadership in stewarding a budget to address all the ways the Holy Spirit is guiding us in ministry.

As we embark upon tax season, I’m reminded that there are specific strategies to assist in providing planned giving to Morning Star. We are thankful to the wisdom and experience of our Treasurer, Lori Mueller (CPA) for these helpful tips. I invite you to review the following strategies and/or to visit with Lori with any specific questions you might have.

Thank you for being a partner in ministry and a steward of God’s amazing gifts!

Pr. Chris

Give to Morning Star Lutheran Church Using Tax Smart Strategies

1.) Use your Individual Retirement Accounts:

Why - Lets you & your heirs save income taxes & inheritance taxes.

How - a) Change your beneficiary designation form with your broker to include Morning Star as well as your loved ones.

b) Use a Qualifying charitable distribution (QCD) - those who are 70 1/2 and older can donate up to \$100k per year of their Required Minimum Distribution (RMD.) This strategy can reduce the taxability of your Social Security Benefits, reduce Medicare Premiums, increase deductibility of medical expenses & avoids income taxation of the RMD.

c) Those 59 1/2 and older can take out IRA funds and then donate them to Morning Star. As long as the individual or couple are itemizing, there is potentially no current taxation of the withdrawal.

d) If you no longer itemize your deductions, those who are receiving RMDs from IRAs may gain a tax advantage by making annual charitable contributions by way of a QCD from an IRA.

2.) Bunch your charitable donations (& medical expenses & real estate taxes) into every other year:

Why - This strategy allows you to itemize one year and take the standard deduction in the next year. Over time, a taxpayer can realize significant tax savings depending upon their tax situation.

3.) Establish a charitable remainder trust at death to provide a noncharitable beneficiary with a fixed annuity for a set number of years (not to exceed 20) or for life, with the remainder going to Morning Star.

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any of these tax saving charitable techniques & their applicability to your tax situation, please contact me.

Lori K. Mueller, Treasurer
402-960-0777



Ash Wednesday

February 22
Noon & 6 PM



Hol ead Evening Prayer

LENT

A SEASON OF REFLECTION,
RENEWAL, AND PREPARATION

March 1 ~ 6 PM
March 8 ~ 6 PM
March 15 ~ 6 PM

March 22 ~ 6 PM
March 29 ~ 6 PM

SMALL groups

We have some small group meetings geared around our redecorating and proposals coming in the next few months. Your input is valuable in conversation and fellowship for these meetings so we are hoping to get as many of our active membership involved as possible. Most meetings will take place at Morning Star. Please sign up as soon as possible in the Gathering Space or call the Church Office!

Council Highlights & CELEBRATION

- Lenten service times set.
- Budget approved for recommendation for the congregation.
- Small group meetings scheduled.




The Metro East Spring Gathering of the Nebraska Women of the ELCA is Saturday, April 1 from 9 AM to 3 PM at St. Michael's (13232 Blondo St.). Registration is coming soon!



"Open My Heart, Lord", a Women's Pre-Lenten Retreat at Kountze on Saturday, February 18 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Cost is \$10 (payable day of the retreat) with a salad lunch provided. All supplies provided and childcare is available. Our time will

be spent learning new faith practices that can be continued through the Season of Lent, and taking time to share our faith journeys as women of the church. Please register by Wednesday, February 8 with Greta!

The Prayer Shawl Ministry provides hand-crafted blankets given to those that need comfort. Prayers for peace and healing are prayed over each one as they are made. The shawls are available in the Welcome Center. Feel free to take one.




Check out our **Little Free Library** located on the parking island next to 85th Avenue.


Take a book or leave one. As always, all books are free!



Alcoholics Anonymous are people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. It is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. Two different groups meet at Morning Star on Tuesdays at 5:30^{PM} and 8^{PM}.



Al-Anon is a group for those who are worried about someone with drinking problems. An Al-Anon group meets at Morning Star on Wednesdays at Noon.





If you've ever been at the church on a Thursday night, you've run into the DBSA, Depression, Bi-Polar Support Alliance. They meet at Morning Star every week at 7^{PM}. This meeting is open to anyone in need! Call 402-502-HOPE for more information.



Experience a *Drawn to the Word* worship and artistic experience where Artist and Pastor Paul Oman will paint a larger-than-life sized mural before your eyes at Morning Star on Sunday, March 12 at 10 AM. This story will unfold artistically, musically, narratively and Scripturally during the event. All are welcome. Come and see! For more info, go to www.drawn-to-the-word.com.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

It's that time of year again! Winter weather can sometimes become a burden. To keep our congregation safe when the snow flies, our Congregation Council has recently revisited Morning Star's weather cancellation policy. Remaining in effect will be our weekday cancellation policy. When local school districts e.g., OPS and Westside, cancel school due to weather related incidents, all scheduled congregational activities will also be cancelled. Our Morning Star Preschool will continue its cancellation policy on a case-by-case basis.

On weekends, when inclement weather affects the potential safety of worshippers traveling to and from church for worship, Pastor Chris and our Executive Committee will determine cancellation on an individual basis. Factors that affect these decisions include forecasted precipitation, hazardous road reports, extreme wind chill, and/or the ability to clear our parking lots and sidewalks of ice and snow for the safety of our worshippers and staff.

We will aim to communicate any worship cancellation at least two hours in advance by "robo" call to our membership as well with WOWT (Channel 6 online/television).

Morning Star Preschool & Child Care Center The children were so excited on Indoor Snow Day to have real snow to drive trucks through in the sensory table. They also played hockey, slid penguins on ice, built snow forts and had snow ball fights with stuffed snow balls. In February, we will talk about Groundhogs Day. We are also looking forward to "Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day" and valentine parties. The children also create special valentines for Retirement Home residents.

Worship Assistants for February

| | <i>Communion Assistants</i> | <i>Lay Reader</i> | <i>Greeter/Usher</i> | <i>Acolytes</i> |
|------|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2/5 | Sarah Lieske, Betty Fiddelke & Kyle Wolfe | Kyle Wolfe | Dan & Laurel Mooney | Anna & Hattie Moeller |
| 2/12 | Donna Walter, Arielle Wolfe & Greta Carlson | Greta Carlson | John & Lynn Davis | Ella & Jackson Post |
| 2/19 | Rod Anderson, Bob & Lauren Gilmore | Bob Gilmore | Joel Rohde & Terri Micheels | Sam & Kate Lieske |
| 2/22 | Pastor Glenn, Susie Syx & Greta Carlson | Susie Syx | Neil & Cindy Lindquist | Addi Hawkins & Brynn Wiebers |
| 2/26 | Kim Hawkins, Dave & Lynn Blagg | Kim Hawkins | Todd & Deb Washburn | Hailey Neussendorfer & Addi Hawkins |

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

| | <i>Available</i> | <i>Available</i> | Neil & Cindy Lindquist |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| February 5 | <i>Available</i> | <i>Available</i> | |
| February 12 | Jan Zarestky | Jan Zarestky | <i>Available</i> |
| February 19 | Don & Bonnie Daubman | Jon & Sabrina Beck | <i>Available</i> |
| February 26 | <i>Lent ~ No Flowers</i> | <i>Lent ~ No Flowers</i> | <i>Available</i> |



Youth Group **Wed Feb 1**
7:30pm
 conference room

Youth Group Project: College Care Packages in the Conference Room (this is a new location)!



Bowling Down Barriers
Bowling Faith Formation Adventure
 Sunday, February 19, 2:45 - 5 PM
 Maplewood Lanes (3030 N. 101 St.)
 Cost is \$20 for 4th-6th grade, includes pizza



2023-2024 Winstrom Youth Service Scholarship applications are available. Pick one up at the information center in the Gathering Space, contact the Church Office to have one sent to you or go online at MorningStarOmaha.org/Family. New this year, accredited technical schools **DO** qualify! **Deadline is March 1!**

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June 18-23, 2023 Pastor Chris and Greta will lead a service and justice trip to DC. High School youth (current 8-12th grade) will learn and experience faith in action in our country's historical, political, and urban sights. Return completed registration form by March 12 with \$50 to secure your spot! The total cost of the trip is \$399 and can be made with a payment schedule. Talk to Greta or Pr. Chris with questions!



Send your kids to Summer Camp! Carol Joy Holling Camp in Ashland, NE offers a variety of excellent Lutheran camp options for kids in first grade through high school. This year the theme explores (un)Equal: the three equal but different parts of the Holy Trinity. Register at CarolJoyHolling.org. Talk to Greta if you are interested and want to know more about going with a Morning Star group! Morning Star offers a \$50 campership for youth from our church.

Youth from across Omaha's Lutheran congregations will gather for fellowship, creative learning, bowling, and pizza! Friends are welcome as long as they register. Treats and water provided. Register and pay with Greta by filling out the Parental Consent form by Thursday, February 9.



Bible story time and donuts for all generations

- Second and Fourth Sundays at 9:30am**
- February 12- The Way We Treat Each Other
- February 26- Adam and Eve Eat the Apple
- March 12- The Woman at the Well
- March 26- What Happened to Lazarus?
- No Hole Story on April 9- It's Easter!
- April 23- Who's That on the Road to Emmaus?
- Final Class: May 7- God's House



Missions and Outreach

Bringing the Light of Christ to ALL Creation

Green Envelope

Our Green Envelope for February goes to Habitat for Humanity of Omaha. To address the need for quality housing in our community, Habitat for Humanity of Omaha builds and renovates homes, repairs existing houses, takes down blighted structures and advocates for better laws and systems. They work with families to help them acquire the access, skills and financial education necessary to become successful homeowners.



Since 1984, Habitat Omaha has partnered with more than 2,149 families and individuals in our community to provide affordable homeownership and home improvement opportunities. Thousands of donors and volunteers have worked together with future homeowners to make these opportunities a reality, building stronger neighborhoods and effecting measurable change in the community. Habitat Omaha has revitalized properties with very little taxable value, resulting in approximately \$839,300 in property taxes paid by Habitat Omaha homeowners in 2020.

Thank you to all who helped tie blankets for the patrons at Table Grace Café. Simone let each of them know that the youth and families at Morning Star made these blankets for them and to please take one if they could use them. Everyone that took one was very grateful! They were all people that are living in the shelters or on the street. The guy with the tie dye blanket was so excited. He kept saying how awesome this is! Thank YOU for being the Light of Christ to ALL Creation!



Table Grace Ministries wants to thank Morning Star for being such a wonderful partner! They are getting ready to launch a new breakfast program at Table Grace Cafe and are inviting you to donate mittens, gloves, or other winter outerwear to patrons who come for breakfast. Items will be blessed at the February 2 Worship Service at Table Grace but donations will be received through February 14. Thank you for your prayers, presence and support of the mission of Table Grace! Contact Simone (917-992-8574 or simonegweber1@gmail.com) with questions.

Beginning February 6, Table Grace Café, (1611 1/2 Farnam Street, Omaha), will be from 7 AM to 2 PM for breakfast and lunch (closed Wednesdays & Sundays). They will serve specialty coffee, pastries, bagels, pizza, soup, salad, and daily specials. You can always pay it forward by donating anytime at [PayPal.me/tablegrace](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://tablegrace.org).

"Save the Date March 10th 2023"
Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls
Voices of Transformation

Merry Christmas
FROM THE TABLE MINISTRIES

Date March 10th, 2023
 Time 5:30 - 8:30 PM
 Location: St. Thomas Lutheran Church
 17007 Q St, Omaha, NE 68135

Table Sponsorship available
 402.965.1276

HAPPY NEW YEAR

TABLE GRACE CAFE
 Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls


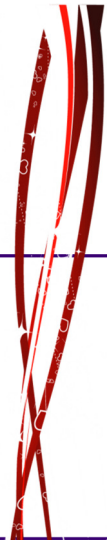







Table Grace Café's Annual Fundraiser & Silent Auction

Date: March 10, 2023
 Time: 5:30-8:30 PM
 Location: St. Thomas Lutheran Church
 17007 Q St. ♦ Omaha, NE



Table Sponsorships Available
 402-965-1276

FEBRUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>5 10 Worship 4 Small Group Meeting</p>  | <p>6 7 Outreach Meeting</p>  | <p>7 9:30 Staff Mtg 5:30 AA Grp 1 6:30 Exec Team Meeting 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2</p> | <p>8 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 6:30 Confirmation Classes</p> | <p>9 7 DBSA</p> | <p>10 5:30 Worship</p> | <p>11 5:30 Worship</p> |
| <p>12 9:30 The Hole Story 10 Worship 2 Coffee with Greta</p> | <p>13 4:30 Building Meeting 6:30 Church Council Mtg</p> | <p>14 9:30 Staff Mtg 2 Preschool Valentine's Parties 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2</p>  | <p>15 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 2 Small Group Meeting 6:30 Confirmation Class</p> | <p>16 7 DBSA</p> | <p>17 5:30 Worship</p> | <p>18 5:30 Worship</p> |
| <p>19 10 Worship 2:45 Bowling Down Barriers</p> | <p>20 Preschool Closed</p>  | <p>21 9:30 Staff Mtg 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2</p> | <p>22 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 12 Ash Wednesday Service 6 Ash Wednesday Service</p>  | <p>23 11:30 Scatter Joy Board Meeting 12:30 Sarah Circle 7 DBSA</p> | <p>24 5:30 Worship</p> | <p>25 5:30 Worship</p> |
| <p>26 9:30 The Hole Story 10 Worship 2 Small Group Meeting</p> | <p>27 9:30 Staff Mtg 1 Lydia Circle 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2</p> | <p>28 9:30 Staff Mtg 1 Lydia Circle 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2</p> |  |  |  |  |



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68114

Address Correction Requested

Thank You!

Dear Morning Star Family,

Thank you so very much for the love and kindness you shared with us when my mother passed away. Faith in Christ was at the core of both my mom and dad. They firmly planted that faith in me and my brother. You gave them a faith home for many years for which I know they were truly grateful. It is only fitting that my mother's final gift of her final year is to Morning Star so that the faith that sustained her all her 95 years can help and sustain others.

With love, Heidi & Dan Rath



February Anniversaries

| | | |
|---------------|----------|------|
| Lynn & Royann | Hedell | 1/1 |
| Bryan & Jaime | Trummer | 1/13 |
| Rod & Cindy | Anderson | 1/30 |



February Birthdays

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|------|----------|----------|------|
| Judy | Hollander | 1/2 | Quinn | Garges | 1/18 |
| Bryce | Peterson | 1/6 | Shirley | Beier | 1/23 |
| Sandy | Heskett | 1/7 | Luke | Lieske | 1/23 |
| Margery | Morgan | 1/7 | Delores | Albanese | 1/24 |
| Julee | Kruse | 1/9 | Deborah | Hysack | 1/26 |
| Don | Page | 1/14 | Sue | Quast | 1/27 |
| Ainsley | Pierce | 1/14 | Lori | Mueller | 1/28 |
| Francy | Van Meter | 1/16 | Mary | Wahl | 1/29 |
| Emerson | Ladd | 1/17 | Kathleen | Bruckner | 1/30 |
| Tegwin | Maxwell | 1/17 | Jean | Gutheil | 1/30 |
| Gerald | Vanek | 1/17 | | | |

- Delores Albanese
- Eileen
- Rylee Koers
- Glenda Cannon
- Fred
- Scott
- Don Daubman
- Gary Rue
- Shelley Anderson
- Kim Hawkins, Sr.
- Harold
- Sherry
- Rick Jacobsen
- Jennifer
- Steven & Terry
- Ramona Klaasmeyer
- Julie
- Susan
- Virgene Kobold
- Karen
- Taren Clark
- Emily McWhirter
- Korrie Hall
- Teri & Family
- Rev. Kent Morse
- Kyle & Family
- Tim Jensen
- Don Page
- Laura
- Wanda Thompson's Family
- John Walter
- Lynn & Tom
- Will Steinaur
- Bob & Family
- Mallory Prucha
- Dixie
- Mark Albanese
- Duane
- Rick Weber