



**MORNING STAR**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

December

# NEWS letter



**FROM PASTOR CHRIS**

***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.***

~ Isaiah 9

A favorite worship tradition on Christmas Eve worship is the singing of *Silent Night* with its lighting of candles. There's something moving about an illuminated sanctuary with dancing flames in the darkness. It all begins with one lit candle. Soon an entire community of festive worshipping light has grown exponentially. It's a simple but powerful illustration of how God's people are called to spread Jesus' light in a land of deep darkness, the world.

The birth of our Savior was not just a single light that entered the world one time on a dark Bethlehem night over two millennia ago. Christ's light continues to spread today. It dances and shine through each of us. Yes, you! Daily, we shine a single light of faith in a world that still struggles with darkness. Wherever God puts us, we have opportunities to shine the light of Christ at dark corners of injustice; weary shadows of human despair; dimly lit margins of the lost and the least.

Twentieth Century African American theologian and activist, Howard Thurman, wrote several short pieces on Christmas including a poem titled "*I Will Light Candles this Christmas.*" His poem invites us to consider how each one of us might use the power of the Christ light to make a difference in a land of deep darkness or shadows of the world. He writes:

***I will light Candles this Christmas,  
Candles of joy despite the sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all year long.***

As we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, with its festive hymns and inspiring flames of light, I encourage us to not simply see ourselves as passive observers. Rather, enter the brilliant reality of Christ's salvific light, trusting you have a vital light to shine in the darkness. Help us not only to be inspired by the magnificence of God's incarnate light but also to be transformed by its radiant warmth and love.

*I will light a candle this Christmas.* I pray you fire up yours, remembering you are one of Christ's precious lights. May you burn it this Christmas and may it shine all year long.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pr. Chris





From all of the staff here at Morning Star, a very Merry Christmas to you all and a blessed New Year!

*Pastor Chris Hawkins*  
*Susie Syx*  
*Rick Jacobi*  
*Art Lorenz*

*Pastor Glenn Schacht*  
*Simone Weber*  
*Sarah Dumke*  
*Jean Johnson*  
*James Creason*



Blue Christmas services are offered as an opportunity for people to come together with others in the community to express the grief and loss that has robbed their Christmas season of any sense of joy and peace. Traditionally, these services have focused on creating a safe space to express the feelings related to all of life's losses. This year, the Star of Hope team would also like to invite families for whom the joy and peace of Christmas has been interrupted as a result of substance use and other mental health disorders.

This year's Blue Christmas service at Morning Star will be Sunday, December 15, at 12 Noon. Table Grace Café will serve a light lunch in the chapel after the 10 AM worship service. Please feel free to invite a friend experiencing the Christmas blues. We would simply ask that you RSVP to the Church Office.

Thank you and God's peace,  
Pastor Glenn & the Star of Hope Team





### December Green Envelope: Lutheran Family Services

Lutheran Family Services (LFS) expresses God's love for all people by providing quality human care services that build and strengthen individual, family, and community life. LFS is committed to diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging. These foundational values are central to the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Morning Star's donations help LFS achieve their mission in the following areas:

- ★ **Behavioral Health:** Providing professional support and therapies for children, individuals, families, and groups
- ★ **Children's Services:** Providing for the needs of children and teens through prevention, early intervention, permanency and well-being.
- ★ **Family Services:** Building stronger families through parent education, foster care, adoption, early detection and intervention.
- ★ **New Populations:** Welcoming and guiding refugees and immigrants to self-sufficiency



### December Volunteer Activity

This time of year can be hard on families struggling to make ends meet. Morning Star helps bridge the gap for the families served by Lutheran Family Services and the Westside Boys & Girls Club with your gifts. Angels are available **NOW**. Pick an Angel or two off the tree. Gifts must be back by December 15. If you are donating money, please have that in sooner so that gifts can be purchased for this deadline. Email Lindsey Tonniges with any questions at [LindseyTonniges@gmail.com](mailto:LindseyTonniges@gmail.com). Thank you for your generosity and kindness!

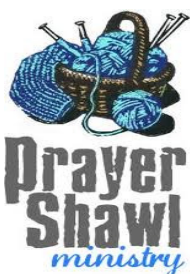


Congratulations to John & Jenna Placzek on the birth of Klein Lachlan, born October 16, 2024. Klein joins big brothers Watson & Fletcher!

Join your fellow Morning Star members on Saturday, December 14 at 9 AM as we prepare for Christmas by "Hanging the Greens". The more hands the merrier and this year will be even more exciting as we decorate our new space!



If you have pastoral care needs, please contact the Church Office to notify our pastoral staff.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry provides handcrafted blankets given to those that need comfort. Prayers for peace and healing are prayed over each one as they are made. Contact the Church Office to pick one up.



*Congratulations and blessings to **Walter Dean Gilmore** upon receiving the sacrament of Baptism on November 24, 2024. We welcome him into the Lord's family. Congratulations to Bob & Lauren Gilmore, parents, and Rod & Cindy Anderson, grandparents.*

Join us for  
The No Stress  
**Christmas  
Program**

No Rehearsals...**REALLY!**

Sunday, December 22  
during the 10 AM Worship Service  
Where **EVERYONE** is part of the story!

Senior High  
**SKI &  
SNOWBOARDING**

**FEBRUARY 14-17**  
WINTER PARK, CO  
GRAND LAKE

**REGISTRATION:**  
\$100 DEPOSIT HOLDS YOUR PLACE  
SPACE IS LIMITED...SIGN UP TODAY!

The cost for this event will be \$395 per youth. This cost represents a portion of the total cost per student which includes transportation, food, lodging, and snow adventures. Lodging will be at the cabin residence of a very good friend of Pastor's family on the southwest side of Rocky Mountain National Park. There is more than adequate space to host twenty or more youth and sponsors safely and comfortably. We need a parental permission and release form and registration for each student and your \$100 deposit by Sunday, January 6. The ski release and equipment rental forms will be forthcoming at a parents' meeting. The remaining cost will be due prior to our departure. Consideration is given to those who may need financial assistance. Contact Pastor Chris directly if you need assistance.

The preschool participated in Operation Christmas Child this year. The parents were very generous with their donations and we were able to fill 24 shoeboxes to bless 24 children. Since 1993, more than 220 million children in more than 170 countries and territories have received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. The project delivers not only the joy of what, for many kids, is their first gift ever, but also gives them a tangible expression of God's love.





# ENLIGHTEN

*the Spirit in Morning Stars!*



331 South 85th Ave • Omaha, NE 68114 • 402.393.5553 • morningstaromaha.org  
*You may complete this form and place in offering plate or turn in to the office.*

### **Enlighten Campaign**

See the worship table to see how you might participate in the Enlighten Campaign including pledge cards. Thank you for your consideration!

I/We wish to contribute toward the ENLIGHTEN CAMPAIGN of 2024:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Single Gift enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Gift, starting: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me a Donor Agreement where I may consider a pledge for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like someone from the Enlighten Committee to call me.

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



#### Flower Sponsors

#### Bulletin Sponsors

December 1	Alan & Alyce Berk	Tom & Deb Hysack	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
December 8	Tim, Dawn & Abigail Karnish	Tim, Dawn & Abigail Karnish	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
December 15	Gloria Miller	Tim & Lori Mueller	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
December 22	Sharon McGrath	James & Shaila Clark	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
December 29	Virgil & Ruth Johnson	Virgil & Ruth Johnson	<b>AVAILABLE</b>

### **December Worship Assistants**

#### **Sunday, December 1**

Comm: Betty Fiddelke, Sarah Lieske & Donna Walter  
 Reader: Donna Walter  
 Usher: Brian & Bryce Peterson  
 Acolyte: Charlie & Will Beck  
 Altar: Diane Meyer

#### **Sunday, December 22**

Comm: Dianne Misunias, Kyle & Arielle Wolfe  
 Reader: Kyle Wolfe  
 Usher: Todd & Deb Washburn  
 Acolyte: Nathan & Noah Hawkins  
 Altar: Tim, Dawn & Abigail Karnish

#### **Sunday, December 8**

Comm: Rod Anderson, Bob & Lauren Gilmore  
 Reader: Rod Anderson  
 Usher: Joel Rohde & Jim McGill  
 Acolyte: Jackson Post & Mason Rue  
 Altar: Lauren Gilmore

#### **Wednesday, December 24 ~ 4:30 PM**

Comm: Dave & Lynn Blagg  
 Reader: Dave Blagg  
 Acolyte: **HELP NEEDED**  
 Altar: Susie Syx

#### **Sunday, December 15**

Comm: Kim Hawkins, Dave & Lynn Blagg  
 Reader: Dave Blagg  
 Usher: Marge Morgan & Carol Smith  
 Acolyte: Nick & Zach Bowman  
 Altar: Lynn Blagg

#### **Wednesday, December 24 ~ 6 PM**

Comm: Susie Syx, Kyle & Arielle Wolfe  
 Reader: Kyle Wolfe  
 Acolyte: Bryce & Grace Peterson  
 Altar: Susie Syx

#### **Sunday, December 29**

Comm: Brian, Tarah & Grace Peterson  
 Reader: Bryce Peterson  
 Usher: Dan & Laurel Mooney  
 Acolyte: Asta & Anker Jensen  
 Altar: Susie Syx

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 22. Thank you for your continued generosity!

### **THE MORNING STAR MINISTRY TEAM**

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

### **Morning Star Shower**

To help stock our new kitchenette & staff break room, Morning Star has registered for a “bridal shower” at Target & Amazon. To purchase one or more of the needed items, go to the store or online and search for Morning Star under “bride” or Luther Church under “groom”. Purchase the item and bring by January 6 or have shipped directly to our interior designer, Cindy Smith & Associates



with Fellowship Coffee?

A few extra hands are needed on Sunday mornings to help with fellowship coffee. It's a low commitment, behind the scenes job that brings smiles to ALL! See Jan, Diane or Marguerite for more info!

Check out our **Little Free Library** located on the parking island next to 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Take a book or leave one. As always, all books are



I continue to enjoy my on-going Saturday visitations at Morning Star! It is a very congenial group and I look forward to “rejoining” in late winter. My blessings to you all!

~ Letoi Guy

Thank you for your continued generosity! Thank you for committing to the positive transformation

of our graduates and our community. We are so grateful to have your support!

~ Charita Dailey, Director of Development, RISE

Thank you for letting us have an AA meeting in your lovely church!

~ The Wednesday 5:30 PM Grey Fawn Group

Thank  
You

# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 10 Worship	<b>2</b> 6 Outreach Meeting	<b>3</b> 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 4:30 Enlighten Prayer Team Meeting 5 Exec Team 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>4</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	<b>5</b> 7 DBSA	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9 Quilting Group 5:30 Worship
<b>8</b> 10 Worship 4:30 Table Grace Christmas Party	<b>9</b> 5 Enlighten Team Meeting 6:30 Church Council	<b>10</b> 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>11</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	<b>12</b> 6 Preschool Nativity Play 7 DBSA	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9 Hanging of the Greens 5:30 Worship 
<b>15</b> 10 Worship 11:30 Blue Christmas Service & Luncheon 	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 4:30 Enlighten Prayer Team Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	<b>18</b> 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 Faith Partner's: Star of Hope Meeting 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	<b>19</b> 7 DBSA	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 5:30 Worship
<b>22</b> 10 Worship & No Stress Christmas Program 	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4 PM Christmas Eve Service 6 PM Christmas Eve Service 	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> 7 DBSA	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 5:30 Worship
		Preschool Closed				
<b>29</b> 10 Worship	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 8 OAC Meeting 4:30 Enlighten Prayer Team Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	Preschool Closed			
						



# MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Address Correction Requested



**Holiday Hours**

The Church Office is closed at noon on  
Dec. 24, closed on Dec. 25 & Jan. 1.  
The Preschool is closed Dec. 24-Jan. 1.

Rae Austin  
Mike Behm  
Marcia Bergstrom  
Donna Crouse  
LouAnn Henkens  
Neil Lindquist  
Bev McCollum  
Emily McWhirter  
Don Page  
Nick Saitta

Ronni Schacht  
Avery  
Bill  
Brian  
Bruce  
Cassie  
Christina  
Colleen  
Dan & Sherry  
Dave

Dylan  
Eulish Moore  
Fritz  
Gordon Soderberg  
Holly  
Irene Bruckner  
Jan Dewey  
Jaxon  
Judy Hopkins  
Kate Via

Linda Pauley  
Lindsey Bowley  
Lonnie Mefferd  
Lorraine P.  
Mary Lou  
Michelle & Kelsey Hanna  
Patty  
Patti & Traci  
Phil Glassman  
Rich Fiddelke

Rylee Koers  
Seth  
Sloan, Bill & Connor  
Theresa  
Tina  
Wally Koers  
Wendi

**Sympathies**  
The Family of Mary Ziska

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

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. Thanks!

### December Birthdays

Ring	Kaylie	12/01	Corbett	Cam	12/13	Hunter-Oltmans	Sherri	12/25
Bertelsen	Karen	12/02	Jochim	Kathy	12/15	Bowman	Michael	12/26
Winstrom	Sydney	12/02	Maxwell	Riley	12/17	Ladd	Gina	12/26
Bertelsen	Jerry	12/04	Engel	Cip	12/17	Moeller	Owen	12/28
Sweetwood	Nancy	12/04	Bowley	Carol	12/18	Henkens	LouAnn	12/28
Chelesvig	Pamela	12/04	Rygg	Lester	12/18	Gutheil	Thomas	12/29
McColum	Beverlee	12/06	Kochen	Joyce	12/19	Moeller	Todd	12/29
Scherer	Lillian	12/08	Hedell	Lynn	12/21	Foote	Gregory	12/30
Page	Joel	12/10	Tonniges	Carter	12/23	Ervin	Diane	12/30
Kellams	Robert	12/11	Ruh	Frances	12/25	Mueller	Timothy	12/30
						Stafford	Lynell	12/30

### December Anniversaries

Jesse & Kylie Warboys	12/06
Paul Worcester & Sharon McGrath	12/27
Dick & Sharon Zahm	12/28

