



# Message from Pastor Chris

*So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God*

**Ephesians 2:19**

Family Systems guru, Rev. Peter Steinke, shares an important story from Robert Persig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Interestingly enough, Persig describes how monkeys are captured from the wild in India.

Imagine a coconut shell hollowed out and chained to a stake. The shell is filled with rice. It's a delightful delicatessen for the monkey. The hole is whittled out just wide enough for the monkey's hand to enter through. Yet it's far too narrow for a monkey fist full of rice to exit.

As the illustration goes, the primate's hand is trapped by its own stubbornness and rigidity. There is no possibility of compromise for the hungry hand. Without sacrifice, he wants it all! As the author notes, the monkey cannot think clearly enough to understand that *"freedom without rice is more valuable than capture with it."* He just wants the darn prize!

I invite you to think about that for a moment. What are the things in your life that have become so vital to your sense of value, your ego, or your sense of self-worth in this material world that you'd risk becoming stuck in the hole of a coconut? What fistful of loot appears more valuable than an empty fist of freedom without it?

I wonder about the age we live in. Yes, Covid-19 is enough! Yet, we'd be incredibly naïve to suggest that this year will only be remembered because of a virus. Now, as we enter the height of another contentious election cycle, I can't help but notice how political divisiveness is plaguing, indeed crippling our relationships with one another. We are all aware of the cultural pressures of being on the correct side political certainty and truth! Right or Left. Conservative or Progressive. Blue or Red. We're all aware of the political divides. Yes, they even exist in the pews of a wonderful congregation like Morning Star Lutheran Church!

The truth is that rigid divisiveness has become an overwhelming and ubiquitous dynamic everywhere we turn. In this era when we need to be "right," (or perhaps to prove others "wrong"), accusatory fingers have been pointed towards everything from Congress, to City Hall, to the talking heads on cable television. Even friends on social media have had become alienated. It's hideous. It concerns me. After all, the need to be "right" or to "win," has become like the intoxicating and urgent pursuit of a foolish monkey who simply cannot grab enough of himself. He will do whatever it takes to reach his open hand deeply into the coconut of a personal justification of self-worth. But in his own rigidness, he will never be able to let go!

Regardless of political posture however, the hungry monkey won't heed the warnings. He definitely won't listen to another point of view. He doesn't care if the other might have a valuable point to share. The freedom to be in relationship with another who might be different from him is worth far less than his hunger power grab to be right. In such primal need (or greed) for victory of a glorious loot of self-righteousness, he forgets about what is most important to his life...a loving relationship with God and with his neighbor. He's turned in upon himself. This is the essence of sin.

As we approach an important election cycle, I am reminded that Jesus could care less about how you are registered to vote. He doesn't care if you consider yourself a Progressive or a Conservative. He doesn't care if you live in a blue or red area. None of that matters when we confess our faith together and remember ourselves as citizens of the Saints living in the gracious Kingdom of God.

Instead, what our Savior does care about is how you convey love for your neighbor. Jesus cares how you are oriented to **Live** among God's faithful people; **Hear** the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper; **Proclaim** the



good news of God in Christ through word and deed; **Serve** all people following the example of Jesus; and **Strive** for justice and peace in all the earth.

As Baptized children of God, we are called to be better than the monkeys chasing the futile coconuts of self-aggrandizement in this life. We are called to be disciples regardless of political persuasion. We are called to listen to others. We are called to see value in those whom we disagree with. We are called to be enriched by our differences, strengthened by our diversity, and justified by God's gracious love for all of Creation regardless of skin color or political creed. This is what it means to be a citizen with the Saints! It's what it means to be a disciple.

I don't know what the outcomes of our next election cycle will be on November 3. Neither do you. But what I do know is that Jesus died on the Cross for you. He died for your neighbor. He died for this wonderful world that is full of its wonderful diversity and differences and even its brokenness and sin.

So regardless of how you plan on marking your next election ballot, please know that God will continue to care immensely for how we care for one another in this world and in our community of faith. I pray that our Lord will continue to give us the wisdom to get over ourselves so that we might get on with sharing the fruits of His kingdom with the world. This is the coconut worth striving for.

Your partner in ministry,

*Pastor Chris*



There are many ways to join us in Worship...

- ★ *join us in person!*
- ★ *watch LIVE on FaceBook every Sunday at 10 AM!*
- ★ *watch on YouTube!*
- ★ *watch on our website [www.MorningStarOmaha.org](http://www.MorningStarOmaha.org)!*
- ★ *request a DVD to be mailed to you!*



**Friday, September 11 • Noon - 3<sup>PM</sup> &  
Saturday, September 12 • 9<sup>AM</sup> - Noon**

**FOLLOW THESE STEPS:**

- Drive up and remain in your vehicle.
- Tell us how many communion kits you need.
- We will pass them to you on a tray.

Our newest Confirmation class is about to start! If you have a student entering 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade or older who hasn't yet gone through Confirmation, contact Greta Carlson, Pastor Chris or the Church Office.

**Confirmation**

Congratulations to Travis & Kristen Garges who welcomed a baby girl, Tinsley! Welcome to the Morning Star family, Tinsley!

Congratulations to Torrie Dannehl & Philip Niewohner on their upcoming wedding on September 12!

Congratulations to Miranda Haun & Nolan Zimmer on their upcoming wedding on September 26!





# MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH YOUTH

## YOUTH MEET-UPS A SUCCESS!

I've officially been at Morning Star for over two months now! Time flies when you're having fun.

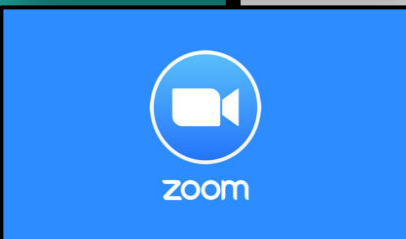
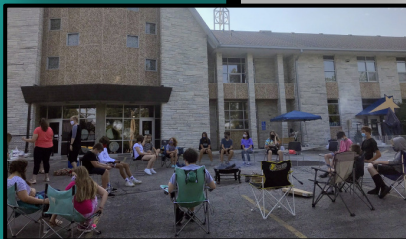
Here's some awesome things that happened in August:

- ★ On August 5, we hosted *Yard Games for All Ages*, a fun day on the lawn with 12 youth playing pool noodle tag, a chalk drawing competition, and yoga movement prayer.
- ★ On August 9, the youth broke in the new fire pit with a *Back to School BBQ*. Seventeen youth made it out to roast hot hogs on a fire pit, catch up with each other, and for many of them, meet me for the first time. As we head into fall before it gets too cold, we plan to have many more fire pit gatherings.

This next month on September 13 we will be kicking off our new Sunday School year for Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Fill out a survey (<https://forms.gle/AVAAEyH7wCvSEmDC9>) to let us know what you need from Sunday School this fall!

### Upcoming Dates:

- ★ Rally Sunday ~ September 13
- ★ Middle School & High School Parent Meeting ~ September 13 in the evening via Zoom
- ★ High School Youth Group ~ September 14 at the church
- ★ Service Project ~ Saturday, September 26 (more details coming soon!)



The smiling faces of the preschool children are back! We reopened on June 18 with new policies and safety measures in place. A Task Force was formed of staff,

Morning Star Preschool  
& Child Care Center  
402-393-8215 • [Preschool@MorningStarOmaha.org](mailto:Preschool@MorningStarOmaha.org)



parents in the medical field, church members and Pastor Chris. They established everything that needed to be in place before reopening. This includes taking child and staff temperatures before they enter the building.

The teachers have been amazing in their adaptations to make the children feel welcome, loved, and safe in a fun environment. Some activities such as water play have been individualized for safety. Each child has their own container of water to explore with!

We have added some portable walls in the Fellowship Hall in order to keep classes separate. We have also established a drop-off and pick-up system so that parents are not entering the building. Many thanks to all of you for all that you do to help us be there for the families of our little ones!

Greta@MorningStarOmaha.org

531.301.5579 Direct  
402-393-5553 Church

Facebook.com/Morning-Star-Lutheran-Omaha-Youth

www.MorningStarOmaha.org

# Join us for

## “God’s work. Our hands.”

A dedicated day of  
service in our community.

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13



Join us for this ELCA-wide day of service! Morning Star members will have several opportunities to serve from the church or their own home with these projects...

- Youth/Adult Pen Pal Correspondence
- Phone Call Campaign
- Mobile Communion Delivery
- Kountze Pantry Donations
- Building Tasks (weeding, dusting, window washing, clean out storage room, more)
- Stuffed Socks for Homeless Vets

Sign up for **God’s Work, Our Hands** on our website, the sign up sheets in the Gathering Space or by visiting [www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4FAAAE2DA7FFC43-gods!](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4FAAAE2DA7FFC43-gods!)

# Be the Light of Christ to ALL Creation

Thanks for your generosity with the altar flowers and bulletins. If you would like to sponsor them, see the calendar in the Welcome Center or call the Church Office.

*flowers & bulletins*

**Flower Sponsors**

**Bulletin Sponsors**

	<b>Flower Sponsors</b>		<b>Bulletin Sponsors</b>
September 6	Fred Zabel	<b>Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
September 13	The Beck Family	Ric & Pam Miller	<b>Available</b>
September 20	Sharon McGrath	Francy Van Meter	Don & Bonnie Daubman
September 27	Jan Zarestky	John & Lynn Davis	John & Lynn Davis

# MISSIONS & OUTREACH

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



Gods Reach  
Envelops Every Need

## Green Envelope

**Food4Friends** is an original Morning Star ministry that provides a complete Thanksgiving dinner to the “working poor” families of the Omaha Metro area. We typically deliver to over 170 people during a time that can be financially draining to families barely making ends meet. The time and cost associated with this outreach is entirely sustained by Morning Star. We hope to raise several thousand dollars in the next few months to continue this beloved and necessary outreach event. Thank you, in advance, for being the LIGHT of Christ to all creation!



A FOOD TRUCK FOR ALL  
402.965.1276  
WWW.MOBILEGRACEFOODTRUCK.COM

**Menu:**  
**Burgers & More**



## **KIDS EAT FREE**

**Wednesday, September 9 ♦ 3-7 PM**

Habitat ReStore ~ 10910 Emmet  
and

**Saturday, September 5 ♦ 11:30-1:30**

Southwood Villas ~ 9501 Brentwood Dr.

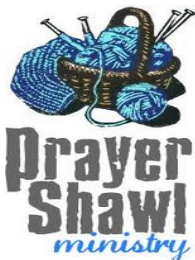
*Free-will donations accepted!  
Cash & Credit Cards accepted (no EBT).*

- Please follow one-way signs and cones for parking instructions.
- We will have drive thru and walk up order options!
- Masks required and will be provided if you don't have one.

*This project or activity was supported by funding from the Coronavirus Aid Relief & Economic Security (CARES) Act from the US Department of Treasury and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA Number 21.019.*



**The Church Office & Preschool  
will be closed Monday,  
September 7 for Labor Day!**



Hand-crafted blankets are available for those in need. Healing and God's peace have been prayed over each one. Feel free to take one!



### Bulletins for Home Worship

If you would like to continue receiving (or start receiving) the bulletins in the mail for worshipping at home, please contact the Church Office at [Office@MorningStarOmaha.org](mailto:Office@MorningStarOmaha.org) or 402-393-5553. Thank you!

Join us on Wednesdays usually at Noon on Facebook LIVE or watch later online at [ww.MorningStarOmaha.org](http://ww.MorningStarOmaha.org).

## Virtual Bible Study

Join us via Zoom conference call on your computer or phone

## PRAYER LIST

We will reset the prayer list on September 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have someone who needs to remain on our prayer list, please contact the Church Office.

# Council Highlights

- Our Sunday 10 am services have been going well and attendance has continued to increase. Thank you to our members for following all of the established protocol to keep everyone safe. We continue to offer our online service for members wishing to worship from home. Pending guidance from the Taskforce and Pastor, Council approved the option to add a Saturday evening service.
- Our preschool has done an excellent job navigating COVID and continuing to care for children and keep them safe. The Council is proud of the work of our preschool staff and their leadership.
- God's Work Our Hands (GWOH) is scheduled for September 13. The Outreach Committee is planning safe ways for us to serve the church and others in need. Watch for additional information on how you can help.
- The Council is scheduled for its Fall Retreat on Saturday, September 19. We'll review Morningstar's strategic plan and set goals for the coming year.



*A special thank you for the love and prayers shown to us at the loss of our son and brother, Brad Johnson. Morning Star friends are special and we are grateful for all of you. Thank you to Pastor Chris for his support and presiding at the graveside service. Blessings to all!*

*~ Ruth and Virgil, Michelle and Scott, & Jill and Todd*

*Thank you for the invitation to come study the Word of God with you and for giving us the opportunity to share about our work with Mission Aviation Fellowship on Wednesday. We enjoyed the discussion and hope we can join again before our time in Omaha comes to an end.*

*~ Nathan & Laura Beth*

*Thank you for supporting Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands and our mission. Thank you for your gift of \$205 plus all of the school supplies you provided to support youth we serve!*

*Elizabeth Donner, Chief Development Officer  
Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands*

# September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Women's Council (Lg Conf Rm) 5:30 PM AA Meeting (Chapel) 6:00 PM Exec Comm. (Zoom)	<b>2</b> 12 Noon Bible Study	<b>3</b> 5 PM Task Force Meeting 7 PM DBSA (Chap, Lg Conf, Lib)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 
<b>6</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>7</b> 7 PM Outreach Committee (Zoom)	<b>8</b> 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM AA Meeting (Chapel)	<b>9</b> 12 Noon Bible Study	<b>10</b> 5 PM Task Force Meeting 7 PM DBSA (Chap, Lg Conf, Lib)	<b>11</b> Noon-3 PM Communion Pick Up 	<b>12</b> 9 AM-3 PM Comm. Pick Up 3 PM Wedding 
<b>13</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>14</b> 6:30 PM Church Council (Lg Conf Rm)	<b>15</b> 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM AA Meeting (Chapel) 5:30 PM Personnel Comm	<b>16</b> 12 Noon Bible Study	<b>17</b> 5 PM Task Force Meeting 7 PM DBSA (Chap, Lg Conf, Lib)	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9 AM Council/Staff Retreat (Camp Carol Joy, Holling)
<b>20</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM AA Meeting (Chapel) 5:30 PM Lydia Circle (Library)	<b>23</b> 12 Noon Bible Study	<b>24</b> 12 PM Sarah Circle (Gathering Space) 5 PM Task Force Meeting 7 PM DBSA (Chap, Lg Conf, Lib)	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 2 PM Wedding
<b>27</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>28</b> 	<b>29</b> 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM AA Meeting (Chapel)	<b>30</b> 12 Noon Bible Study			



# MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Omaha, NE 68114

Address Correction Requested

### Prayers

Lindsay Bowley	Virgene Kobold
Rich Fiddelke	Larry Kochen
Ken Hagemann	Eunice Levisay

### Friends & Loved Ones of Morning Star

- Debbie & Tom (*friend of the Moy's*)
- Don (*JoAnn Wollenburg's brother*)
- Jose and Lidia Sanchez (*friends of Kim & Karen Hawkins*)
- Joseph (*friend of the Wollenburgs*)
- Lois Blake (*Kim Moy's cousin*)
- Virginia Flathmann (*Greta Carlson's grandmother*)

### Sympathies

-Lori Mueller, Kory & Kyle Stewart



### September Anniversaries

Jon & Sabrina Beck	9/1
Alan & Alyce Berk	9/1
Virgil & Ruth Johnson	9/1
Nolan & Miranda Zimmer	9/12
Lee & Judy Hollander	9/13
Michael & Patsy Behm	9/18
Jim Olmsted & Denise Stange	9/22
Troy & Jean Gutheil	9/23
Nolan & Miranda Zimmer	9/26
Todd & Jill Moeller	9/27

### September Birthdays

Isaiah Boyd	9/2	Sabrina Beck	9/17
Alex Johnson	9/3	Trevor Potter	9/18
Sarah Davie	9/4	Kevin Nelson	9/20
Bill Palmer	9/5	Adam Hedican	9/23
Jeremy Ring	9/6	Bill Ervin	9/24
Mitchell Krohn	9/9	Betty Kellams	9/25
Sarah Lieske	9/9	Jan Zarestky	9/25
Torrie Dannehl	9/10	Bob Gilmore	9/26
Sheryl Cuba	9/13	Josh Bowman	9/28
Leslie Palmer	9/13	Charles Beck	9/29
Laura Ring	9/13	John Davis	9/29
Alec Stevens	9/14	Stacie Neussendorfer	9/29
Charles Bowman	9/15	Susie Syx	9/29