



MORNING STAR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

March

NEWS letter



FROM PASTOR CHRIS

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:4-8

I was anxious. The time had come to implement the long-awaited building assessment. Through our front doors arrived an army of tradesmen, engineers, and architects, all with special expertise and purpose to assist us in making the best decisions possible on Morning Star's emerging building project.

No stone would be left unturned as this cadre of caretakers toiled to determine the health and condition of an aging 65-year-old building. Before any designs could be drawn or further plans hatched, we needed to know the condition of bones and systems that supported the sacred space we call our church home, Morning Star.

A moment of truth arrived. Frankly, I just needed to know. Can this wall be torn down or not? The answer was yes! I was ecstatic. This was one of the critical keys to the entire remodel dream!

My theory was this: get rid of the barrier and open the space between the narthex and the nave and possibilities would come alive. Not only could we change the welcoming feel of our worship space, but we could also place a living water baptismal font at the foci of an architectural "Cross" in the floorplan.

Today, not one sauntering soul scurrying through our main entry can overlook a sacred gift. Baptism. Its presence in this space is unmistakable. Water spilling out from an upper vessel to fill a lower well creates a magnificent sensory spectacle of grace, abundance, and promise. Symbols adorning the outside walls and inner floor all aim to point to one sacred truth-everlasting life.



Out of all the intricacies of the entire enterprise entitled our Enlighten Project, with all its necessary updates and transformations of Morning Star's campus, our new baptismal font is what I am personally most proud of. It is the premier symbol for our faith and our mission as a congregation. Here is the primer on what it all means.

Baptismal Font Structure

The upper vessel of our living water font has eight sides with a purpose. The octagon vessel is quite intentional in its symbolic nod to eternal life. Saint Augustine once described the "eighth day" as the day of everlasting life because it was on this day that Christ was Risen. This event also loosened the bondage of death in promising eternal life for a new creation.

Study our font closely and you'll notice that the recycled water is supplied through a small outlet on the north facet of the octagon. This recycling signals the ever flowing and everlasting nature of God's daily cleansing of sin. Water is the emblematic essence of life itself. As God's promise, its providential, life-giving source never ends.

From the upper vessel of the font flows water down a spillway on the east facet of the octagon. This demonstrates how God's promise spills abundantly and continuously into the world. Notice how it flows directly and urgently into a circular vessel that emulates a classic well adorned with the same marble stone affixed on our church building.

The intent of this lower vessel is twofold: yes, it signifies the world with its desperate need for the urgent flow of life-giving gifts of God. But the lower vessel recalls the story of the Samaritan woman who is met by Jesus at the well in *John 4:1-42*. Read the story. It tells the story of a divine encounter that provided this child of God "new life." It was healing and hope through the "living water" of Jesus Christ. How might Morning Star be a well of hope and new life in our ministry together? How might we use this powerful symbol to remind us of our missional calling to be a well of living water for Omaha?

Outer Symbology

There are three symbols outside the living water font that warrant attention. The first, carved into the white granite facet and adorned in gold leaf, renders the Greek letters *Alpha* and *Omega*. It's located on the north and south facets respectfully. These are traditional symbols signifying the eternal nature of God as written in Revelation 1: 4-8 (see the header scripture above.) Just as *Alpha*, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *Omega*, the last, God encapsulates the entirety of life. All of Creation. All of time. There is nothing in the cosmos that stands absent or apart from God's powerful presence, including each of our lives. Powerful.

The second symbol is referred to as the Paschal symbol. It's engraved on the west facet of the font. Again, it is adorned in a gold leaf finish. This is a favorite of mine, rich in meaning. Again, two Greek letters overlaid in a nearly "cruciform" manner. The Greek *Chi* and *Rho*, the first two letters of the Greek word "*Christos*" or Christ. This symbol is typically placed on the tall "Paschal" candle which is purposefully lit during the season of Easter (also during baptisms).

There is much more depth to the Paschal story that recalls the Passover story in Hebrew scripture. Nonetheless, Easter, or Paschal, is the story of our New Creation and is scripturally indicative of our "*third exodus*," Christ's rescue of humanity from the bondage of sin and death.

The third symbol outside the living water font is intentionally missional in nature. In fact, it is directly related to the Morning Star congregation itself. Take note of the tile floor upon which the font sits. There is nothing subtle about it. It is a star.

As we remember our baptism, we also remember our congregation's missional calling to be the light of Christ in the world. This star also echoes the stars in the stained glass of the north and south walls of our narthex. As a missional symbol, it furthermore echoes what you have become through Christ and his Cross. Cosmic. Divine. Brilliant. It's there as a reminder for you to share your light! Pretty cool.

Lower Vessel Terrazzo

The story behind this design is quite intriguing and needs to be told. Our aim was to create something powerful and definitively divine on the floor of the lower font vessel. Essentially, we demanded such a prominent floor feature to be a bold representation of the Holy Spirit. (This is why you consult artists.) Thus, we began this decorative

journey in Milan, Italy. Why not? These were the folks who have crafted designs for some of the most prominent cathedrals and churches in both Europe and America.

For several weeks, our architect and I, along with key members of the Enlighten Committee, including Karen Hawkins, interfaced remotely with the Italians. Again, the charge was to design a readily visible and inspiring rendering of the Spirit. We wanted the image to come alive beneath dancing water and light, especially as people strolled past the font area. After several meetings, we simply felt that nothing was quite fitting for Morning Star. We turned the page.

Next, we targeted a prominent mosaic and stained-glass artist in St. Louis, Missouri. After some key conversations, we were encouraged to fly our Designer, Cindy Smith, Architect, Kevin Strehle, Karen Hawkins, Jim Olmsted, and myself to St. Louis for a more in depth, focused conversation with the artists. It was not only important to meet face to face with the creators, but also to tour their studio facility and discuss contractual issues. It was a delightful July day. But in the end, cost considerations and concerns about the long-term viability and integrity of mosaic tile immersed in water over time produced too many reservations.

Frustrated, Karen proposed a brilliant idea. Why not duplicate the circular stained-glass image of our chapel peak on the floor of the font? It was the perfect suggestion. It was just the right image of the Holy Spirit, and it was right under our nose the entire time! How about that for the Holy Spirit at work? If only we would just listen to it more often!

So, this is what we settled upon. It's what is currently sparkling underneath the water of this living water baptismal font. It's a terrazzo tile rendition of one of my favorite stained-glass windows in the entire church. It checks all the boxes and is an exceptionally fitting touch for what I believe is one of the premier baptismal fonts of any worship space in our local area. Take a guess where it was created?

Omaha, Nebraska.

As we journey through the season of Lent, I invite and encourage you to spend time interacting with our brand-new living water baptismal font. As we journey toward the Cross and remember the Passion of our Savior, my hope is that this font will become a central focus in your worship experience. Touch the water. Make the sign of the Cross on your forehead. Don't be shy. It's your gift. It's redemption. It's eternal life.

May our font's living waters provide opportunities not only to remember your own baptism, but also remind you that you are a child of the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, enveloped in Christ's powerful and personal promise of new life. And may that amazing star remind you of your urgent calling to shine Christ's light in the world, beginning right here. In Omaha, Nebraska.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pr. Chris

P.S. The Enlighten Committee is currently welcoming gifts for this amazing baptismal font as memorials to the Saints in Light. Please see me or a member of the committee if you are interested in providing a gift in memory a loved one or family member.



JOURNEY WITH JESUS



I am

Join us every Wednesday evening throughout Lent for mid-week services featuring Holden Evening Prayer Service on a Journey with Jesus: I AM! Fellowship is at 6 PM with worship starting at 6:30 PM.

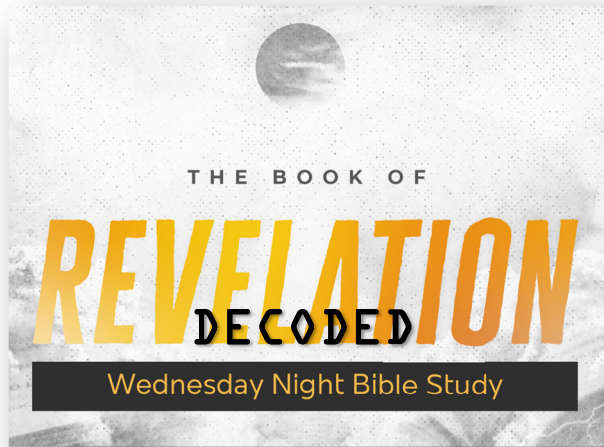
March 12	I AM the Bread of Life	John 6:35-40
March 19	I AM the Light of the World	John 8:12-20
March 26	I AM the Door	John 10:1-10
April 2	I AM the Good Shepherd	John 10:11-18
April 9	I AM the Resurrection and the Life	John 11:17-27

Save the Date for these special services:

April 13	Palm Sunday	Worship at 7:00 PM (no fellowship or class)
April 17	Maundy Thursday	Worship at 7:00 PM (no fellowship or class)
April 18	Good Friday Tenebrae	Worship at 6:30 AM
April 20	Sunrise Service	Worship at 8:30 & 10:30 AM
April 20	Easter Celebration Services	

Ash March 5, 2025
Wednesday

Imposition of Ashes
12 Noon & 6 PM



**Stick around after
worship on Wednesdays at 7 PM for
“Revelation Decoded”,
a Bible study led by
Pastor Chris during Lent.**

ENLIGHTEN
the Spirit in Morning Star★



331 South 85th Ave • Omaha, NE 68114 • 402.393.5553 • morningstaromaha.org

Enlighten Campaign

We are back in our beautiful newly remodeled space and your gifts are needed now more than ever! If you haven't already done so, fill out the pledge form on the right and return to the Church Office. Thank you for your continued generosity!

Thanks We recently received your church's gift to Lutheran Family Services in support of LFS' Dana Village Transitional Living Program. This gift of hope will make a huge difference for people in need as we head into the new year. Your donation allows us to support individuals and families through our core umbrella of services: Children & Family, Behavioral Health and Refugee & Immigration. Thank you for believing in our mission. Your generosity means the world to our community, and you are helping us make a positive impact.

Christ Tonniges, President & CEO
Lutheran Family Services

Thank you for your donation. Contributions like yours are vital as we continue our work of “Nourishing Hungry Bodies & Souls”. Because of the support of people like you, Table Grace is able to sustain its mission year after year through our Community Café, Music Ministry, healthy fellowship, Job Experience Program and Mobile Grace Food Truck. Thank you, again! With your help we will be able to continue dishing out Grace by the plate for all those in need.

Matthew & Simone Weber
Table Grace Café

Thank you for your recent contribution to RISE. Every act of your generosity helps us further our mission of help all people find freedom from the cycles of incarceration.

Charita Dailey, Director of Development
RISE



VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

Table Grace Voices of Empowerment Gala 2025

Table Grace's annual fundraising gala is Friday, March 7, 6-9 PM, at the Livestock Exchange Ballroom and features Frontier Strings from OCM, a cocktail hour, silent auction, hors d'oeuvres, program and live auction. The gala helps raise money for those who are hungry and helps provide meals with dignity and an opportunity to start a new life with training and job experience. Entertainment with the Frontier Strings, Table Grace the musical cast, Simone Weber and clips of their successes. To sponsor a table or purchase tickets, go to TableGraceCafe.com.

St. Patrick's Day Dinner & Event

Join the new graduates and job trainees from Table Grace Café on Monday, March 17, 6-8 PM, for dinner and live music at First Christian Church (66th & Dodge). Participants in Table Grace Cafe's 10 day job experience program will be working to put this event together. It's an opportunity to showcase their new skills and celebrate together! Come help them support the job trainees and graduates on their way to success! Tickets at TableGraceCafe.com.

Heart of Camp Gala

A benefit for Carol Joy Holling Camp, the Heart of Camp Gala ensures that no camper is turned away because they cannot afford the camp fee. In 2024, Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries provided over \$1 million in camper financial assistance. Join us Saturday, April 5, 2025 at A View West Shores, Waterloo, NE. Purchase tickets, make donations and learn more at NLOM.org/gala!

Easter Lilies



Cost is **\$15*** per plant. Place your order by **Sunday, April 13** (you may pick them up after the services on Easter). Complete & place in the offering plate with your check or return to the Church Office.

I would like _____ Easter Lilies at \$15* per plant!

Donated by _____

Check here if you wish to remain anonymous.

Dedicated to: The Glory of God _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____



**Net proceeds benefit designated Outreach programs!*



March Green Envelope:

Our Green Envelope for March 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. 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.

**Morning Star Green Envelope
2025**

	<u>Totals</u>
<u>January</u>	
Morning Star Youth - #2341	\$1,080
<u>February</u>	
Habitat for Humanity #2420	0
<u>March</u>	
Habitat for Humanity #2420	0
<u>April</u>	
Lutheran Family Services #2421	0
<u>May</u>	
Hope Foundation #	0
<u>June</u>	
Rise #2369	0
<u>July</u>	
ELCA Disaster Relief #2366	0
<u>August</u>	
Table Grace #2365	0
<u>September</u>	
Food For Friends - #2310	0
<u>October</u>	
Food For Friends - #2310	1,636
<u>November</u>	
Project Harmony #2344	0
<u>December</u>	
Good Gifts ELCA #	0
	<u>\$2,716</u>



Blessings to
Lindsay Bowley & Joseph Allen on the birth of their son
Benson Anthony Allen,
born January 17th! Congratulations also to Carol Bowley,
grandmother, and great-grandparents, Janice & Roger Hass!



Blessings to
Thayer James Clark
upon receiving the sacrament of Baptism on March 9, 2025. Congratulations to James & Shaila Clark, parents, as well as big brother and sister, Ralston & Ryan!

2025-2026 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 May 30!



Hey kids in 3rd or 4th grade or those ready for first communion! We will be having a class for those of you who haven't yet had First Communion. Keep your eyes open for a postcard coming soon! RSVP to the Church Office!

FIRST
COMMUNION
class





The Preschool is hosting a Shoe Drive Fundraiser to help them secure funds to improve classroom resources and provide enriching experiences for the children in their care. Your support will help to continue to provide a nurturing and engaging environment where every child can learn, grow, and thrive. To help just donate gently worn, used and new shoes which are given a second life by those in need through small businesses in third world countries who sell the shoes as a support for their families. The preschool gets a price per pound for the shoes. The more they collect the more they make. Bring donations to the preschool office by April 10. Thank you for your support!

Worship Tech Volunteers Needed!

Do you enjoy working high tech equipment, appreciate our music ministry and want to help us sound our best? We are seeking to expand our volunteer corps and train two additional volunteers to assist with our brand-new audio/visual system. If you are interested in supporting this ministry on Sunday morning worship, for concerts, and other events, please contact Pastor Chris directly.



If you would like to be a sponsor, contact 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

DATE	FLOWERS	FLOWERS	BULLETINS
Mar. 2	James & Shaila Clark	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE
Mar. 9	LENT	LENT	AVAILABLE
Mar. 16	LENT	LENT	AVAILABLE
Mar. 23	LENT	LENT	AVAILABLE
Mar. 30	LENT	LENT	AVAILABLE

March Worship Assistants

Sunday, March 2

Comm: Betty Fiddelke, Sarah Lieske & Donna Walter
 Reader: Donna Walter
 Usher: Dean Mathisen & Dianne Misunias
 Acolyte: Nick & Zach Bowman
 Altar: Diane Meyer

Sunday, March 16

Comm: Kim Hawkins, Dave & Lynn Blagg
 Reader: Kim Hawkins
 Usher: Todd & Deb Washburn
 Acolyte: Bryce & Grace Peterson
 Altar: Lynn Blagg

Ash Wednesday, March 5

Comm: Brian, Tarah & Grace Peterson
 Reader: Bryce Peterson
 Usher: Joel Rohde & Jim McGill
 Acolyte: Asta & Anker Jensen
 Altar: Susie Syx

Sunday, March 23

Comm: Rod Anderson, Bob & Lauren Gilmore
 Reader: Lauren Gilmore
 Usher: Chris Hedican & Nick Saitta
 Acolyte: Renny Maxwell & Hailey Neussendorfer
 Altar: Tim, Dawn & Abigail Karnish

Sunday, March 9

Comm: Dianne Misunias, Kyle & Arielle Wolfe
 Reader: Kyle Wolfe
 Usher: Marge Morgan & Carol Smith
 Acolyte: Nina & Michael Lierler
 Altar: Lauren Gilmore

Sunday, March 30

Comm: Angie Hawkins, Susie Syx & Dean Mathisen
 Reader: Gloria Miller
 Usher: Dan & Laurel Mooney
 Acolyte: Quinn Warner & Hallie Tonniges
 Altar: Angie Hawkins



The DBSA (Depression, BiPolar Support Alliance) meets at Morning Star Thursdays at 7^{PM}. This meeting is open to anyone in need!

Omaha New Hope Chapter DBSA

Alcoholics Anonymous is open to all! Groups that meet at Morning Star are:

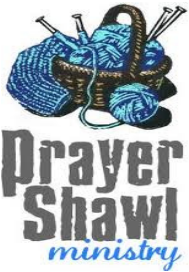
Tuesdays at 5:30^{PM}

Tuesdays at 8^{PM}

Wednesdays at 5:30^{PM} ~Women



Al-Anon meets at Morning Star on Wednesdays at Noon.



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.



Extra hands are needed 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 85th Avenue. Take a book or leave one. As always, all books are free!



Been visiting with us for some time and ready to make it "official"? Come to the New Member orientation class on March 9 at 9:30 AM. New members will be received in worship on March 16. RSVP to the Church Office today!



Thank you to all who pitch in each and every week to help make worship happen! We need help to read scripture, serve communion, set up and serve Fellowship Coffee and usher/greet every week. Contact the Church Office to find out how you can help!



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

Morning Star strives to be a healthy, vibrant, and welcoming community. Please remember, in order for our leadership to address concerns and feedback in an efficient, transparent, and constructive manner, it is requested that all communication be managed and received directly.

Please understand that our staff and leadership, including the Enlighten Team, have been instructed to decline all third party and/or anonymous feedback. Thank you for helping to keep Morning Star a safe, respectful, and an emotionally healthy congregation.

Your Partner in Ministry,
Pr. Chris

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, April 27th, at 3 PM Morning Star is hosting a concert, "Easter Joy", celebrating the Resurrection through music and scripture! This concert features musicians from Morning Star as well as the community. Watch for more information coming soon!





March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 6 Outreach Committee Meeting	4 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 5 Exec Team Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 5:45 Preschool CPR Training 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	5 10 Bible Study 12 Imposition of Ashes 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6 Imposition of Ashes 	6 7 DBSA	7	1 9 Quilting Group 5:30 Worship
9 9:30 New Member Orientation 10 Worship 	10 5 Enlighten Team Mtg 6:30 Church Council	11 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	12 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6 Lenten Fellowship 6:30 Holden Evening Worship 7 Revelation Decoded	13 5:30 Preschool STEAM Night 7 DBSA	14	8 5:30 Worship
16 10 Worship & Receiving of New Members	17 	18 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	19 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6 Lenten Fellowship 6:30 Holden Evening Worship 7 Revelation Decoded	20 7 DBSA	21	15 5:30 Worship 
23 10 Worship	24	25 8 OAC Meeting 9:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	26 10 Bible Study 12 AI Anon 1 Lydia Circle 5:30 AA Women Only 6 Lenten Fellowship 6:30 Holden Evening Worship 7 Revelation Decoded	27 12:30 Sarah Circle 7 DBSA	28	22 5:30 Worship
30 10 Worship	31	Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences				29 5:30 Worship
						



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue

Address Correction Requested



Prayers

Rae Austin
Mike Behm
Donna Crouse
LouAnn Henkens
Bev McCollum
Don Page
Nick Saitta
Avery
Bev Allen
Bill
Brian
Cassie

Christina
Colleen
Dan & Sherry
Dave
Donna Whisenand
Eulish Moore
Gordon Soderberg
Holly
Jan Dewey
Jaxon
John Herkenrath
Judy Hopkins
Kate Via

Kathleen
Kim
Linda Pauley
Lonnie Mefferd
Lorraine P.
Mary Lou
Michelle & Kelsey Hanna
Patty
Patti & Traci
Patty
Phil Glassman
Rich Fiddelke
Rylee Koers

Seth
Sloan, Bill & Connor
Tami Carlson
Tammy Chamberlin
Terry Crouse
Theresa
Tina
Wally Koers
Wendi

Sympathies

Todd & Deb Washburn
Ben & Analise Nore

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!



March Anniversaries

Jim & Anne	Jenkins	03/13
Travis & Kristin	Garges	03/18
Bill & Diane	Ervin	03/22

March Birthdays

Ruby	Engel	03/01	Dan	Hartman	03/07	Abigail	Nabity	03/20
Kristin	Garges	03/01	Sam	Lieske	03/07	Noah	Nabity	03/20
Sandy	Becher	03/02	Barrett	Mooney	03/07	Nick	Saitta	03/20
Betty	Goehring	03/02	Luke	Beck	03/10	Philip	Niewohner	03/22
William	Beck	03/03	Ellen	Olson	03/11	Nancy	Gadzikowski	03/27
Ande	Johnson	03/03	Sherry	Charf	03/13	Simone	Weber	03/28
Josephine	Johnson	03/04	Ruth	Johnson	03/16	Gabriel	Boyd	03/31
Lily	Karnish	03/05	Jim	Olmsted	03/16			
Mackenzie	Turner	03/06	Addi	Hawkins	03/19			

