

*"As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."
John 17:18*

*"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you are going,
because you might not get there."
Yogi Berra*



Dear Morning Star Lutheran Church:

When Jesus prepared to leave his disciples, he didn't leave them aimless. He sent them into the world. Scripture is ripe with stories of the apostles being sent out to tell the story of the Risen Lord. This was the basic modus operandi of the early church, to spread the message of salvation and introduce the world to a loving and gracious God. This was its mission. This was its purpose.

A wise mentor once taught me that a church without a mission is dead. Like a sailor without a destination or no clear idea where to go, the sailboat meanders adrift. It's dead in the water. The sailor requires a destination or a goal to adjust the sails relative to the winds of the sea. Morning Star Lutheran Church is no different.

As we enter the New Year, I am reminded that we too are like sailors embarked on an urgent mission to share the Gospel. Yet we must be certain of our destination. As such, it is time to examine the navigational charts and adjust our sails accordingly. To accurately plot the course, we must all participate in checking the winds and listen to the Holy Spirit.

The very first part of this course-plotting activity is for each Morning Star member to complete a congregational health inventory. This document titled, *"Strength at the Center: A Congregational Health Inventory,"* is a research tool developed by Senior Consultant, Roy M. Oswald, of the Alban Institute. I invite you and any Morning Star voting members of your household to follow the instructions on page one of this document. This may also be completed online by activating the QR code below.

Please take time to provide a candid assessment of each area of our ministry together. There are no right or wrong answers. In many cases, you may not know how to rate a specific item in the inventory. In those situations, please leave the response blank. For your convenience, these may be completed and submitted online. Hard copies of the completed inventories (sent to each home) may be returned to the church office or the Lobby area when you arrive for worship. If you require an additional hard copy of the inventory, please contact the church office. The summation of these completed inventories (due February 1) is the very first step in enabling our *"At The Crossroads Strategic Planning Team"* to construct the next steps of our planning process.

In case you are wondering, strategic planning processes do not provide quick fixes or easy answers. In many ways, the church of today is not the same church many of us grew up in, let alone five years ago! The world has changed. Family patterns are different. New challenges in the culture have arisen. But we trust that God is always doing a new thing. As such, I pray that this process be one of deep discernment and prayer on the part of our congregation. We have no idea what tomorrow will bring, except to know that God has a preferred and promised future for Morning Star Lutheran Church.

Thank you for taking time to engage this first step of our strategic planning process. Your generosity of time, prayers, and thoughtfulness are treasured. In the meantime, please take note of the following key events you are invited to participate in below. Remember, the greater our congregation's participation, the more effective this planning process will be. So, not only do I invite you to mark these upcoming events on your calendar, but I encourage you to see yourself as a fellow sailor assisting us in the navigation of opportune seas of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 8^{AM} - 4^{PM}
Friday 8^{AM} - 12 Noon
Closed Major Holidays

Worship Times

Saturday Worship 5:30 PM
Sunday Worship 10:00 AM
Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pr. Chris

(continued)

At The Crossroads Planning (Now through Lent)

Sunday, January 25th - Historical Reflection Event and Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall following worship

February - At the Crossroads Small Group Meetings in the home and at church. Sign-up information forthcoming

February - Strategic Planning Committee conversations with key community leaders

February 11th (Wednesday) Large Group Gathering and Meal "Norm Identification Session"

Wednesdays during Lent - Meals and Fellowship before Holden Evening Prayer worship with Strategic Planning conversations and updates

QR Code (Health Inventory)



Annual Reports

Attention Morning Star committee leaders and ministries. Annual reports to the congregation are due to the Church Office by January 5 for inclusion in our annual congregational meeting report. Thank you!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregational meeting will be held Sunday,
February 1 at 11:15 AM following worship.



The prayer list will reset January 11. If you have someone who needs to remain on the list, please contact the Church Office. Thank you!



Omaha Lutheran Campus Ministry's Evensong

Evensong is NeLCM's annual fundraiser held on January 25, 4:30 PM at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church. Enjoy chili, bid in a virtual silent auction, and stay for the Grand Choir concert. More info at www.nelcm.com.



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!

Dear Morning Star:

Each year, our congregation is very generous in providing end-of-year bonuses for our staff. This is a wonderful gift for those of us in the trenches, often engaged in the visible and not so visible tasks of ministry. It is an absolute joy to serve our congregation, its people, and our Lord. Thank you very much for your generosity and for recognizing our staff in such a meaningful way at the end of the year.



Thanks

Pr. Chris

Thank you so much for hosting Crossroads Connection on November 16th for us! We appreciate all you did with the message and meal and great fellowship! Blessings to you all this holiday season and we hope to partner again in 2026!

Teresa, Crossroads Connection

Thank you for your gift given through your synod for the Lutheran Disaster Response. Your gift is a reminder that our work of faith and labor of love are not done alone. We give thanks for our shared work and our shared hope, which inspire ELCA churchwide ministries, in partnership with congregations and synods, to make God's love real in exciting and ever-changing ways. Thank you! May the God of all good gifts continue to work among you.

Daniel Rift, Director of Congregational Generosity
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Thank you for your church's recent gift to Lutheran Family Services. During this time of reflection and gratitude, we are truly grateful to count you as part of our community. Your support during this season of giving helps us continue to provide our core services of Behavioral Health, Children and Family Services, and New Populations. We hope this season brings you warmth, joy, and the same sense of fulfillment that your generosity has given to us.

Chris Tonniges, President & CEO
Lutheran Family Services

Thank you to all for the very kind expressions of sympathy, love and thoughtfulness as we said goodbye to my sister/aunt. Your support has been very meaningful and appreciated.

Pam Chelesvig and Alec Stevens

Thank you so very much for all you do for me! I'm especially grateful for the Christmas gift provided to all the staff. What a blessing you all are to me. Thank you for being such a great family!

Susie Syx

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

January Green Envelope

Each day, our neighbors struggle to find the nutritious food they need. Food insecurity is a real problem in our region, and its effects are devastating. Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Omaha, Food Bank for the Heartland has a vital focus: to provide food to children, families, seniors, and veterans facing hunger in Nebraska and western Iowa, to ultimately eliminate hunger, and to serve our neighbors with respect, integrity and urgency. The Food Bank serves 93 counties—77 in Nebraska and 16 in western Iowa. They see the fight against hunger as an ongoing, collaborative effort working with individuals, organizations, food manufacturers, grocery stores, the USDA and Feeding America to procure food. They purchase food to supplement donations. Volunteers help keep the 76,000 square-foot warehouse running quickly and efficiently. Ninety-six cents of every dollar they receive, goes back into the community. Your Green Envelope offering will go to the Food Bank for the Heartland.



It's Cereal Bowl Time where we will stock the Food Bank for the Heartland's pantry with new, dry breakfast cereal (boxed or bagged ~ flakes or puffs). We at Morning Star like to make this a little competition to see who can bring the most cereal. Place your donation in the bin based on the first letter of your last name. All ounces added up per team. Those with last names A-L are on "Team Flakes" and those with last names M-Z are on "Team Puffs". The real winners here are the families served by Omaha's Food Bank for the Heartland!

CAROL JOY HOLLING CAMP
EARLY BIRD SAVINGS

REGISTER BY
JANUARY 31, 2026

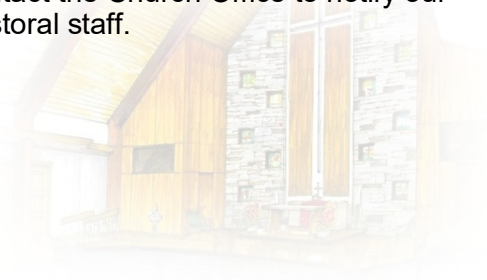
The **Early Bird \$50 discount** applies to all full week sessions at CJH Camp. The **FIRST 300** campers registered by January 31, 2026 will receive a CJH Camp beach towel!

The bottom half of the graphic features a yellow banner with the text 'CAROL JOY HOLLING CAMP' in red, surrounded by various camp-related icons. Below the banner is a photo of seven campers wearing blue helmets and smiling.

We ALWAYS need help with Communion, scripture reading, ushering and serving coffee & donuts. 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.



ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to be a sponsor, contact the Church Office.



Flower Sponsors

Bulletin Sponsors

DATE	FLOWERS	FLOWERS	BULLETINS
Dec. 7	Dana Wiebers	Dana Wiebers	Sandy Heskett
Dec. 14	James & Shaila Clark	Tim & Lori Mueller	AVAILABLE
Dec. 21	Sharon McGrath	Jon & Sabrina Beck	Gary & Sandy Byers
Dec. 28	Dick & Sharon Zahm	Dick & Sharon Zahm	AVAILABLE

The cost of the Altar Flowers is \$45 per arrangement. Bulletin sponsorships are \$30 per week. Thank you for continuing to sponsor the beautiful flowers that adorn our altar. We are collecting the containers the flowers come in for a hopeful discount. Please return to the Church Office if you are able.



January Worship Assistants

Sunday, January 4

Comm: Betty Fiddelke, Sarah Lieske & Donna Walter
Reader: Donna Walter
Usher: Dean Mathisen & Jim McGill
Acolyte: Bryce & Grace Peterson
Altar: Diane Meyer

Sunday, January 11

Comm: Rod Anderson, Todd & Jill Moeller
Reader: Bob Gilmore
Usher: Todd & Deb Washburn
Acolyte: Anna Moeller & Quinn Warner
Altar: Lauren Gilmore

Sunday, January 18

Comm: Kim Hawkins, Dave & Lynn Blagg
Reader: Kim Hawkins
Usher: Brian & Bryce Peterson
Acolyte: Addi Hawkins & Hallie Tonniges
Altar: Lynn Blagg

Sunday, January 25

Comm: JoAnn Wollenburg, Kyle & Arielle Wolfe
Reader: Kyle Wolfe
Usher: Chris & Theo Hedican
Acolyte: Nina & Michael Lierler
Altar: Bev Hartman



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



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



Omaha New Hope Chapter DBSA

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



Scholarship Applications

2026-2027 Winstrom Youth Service Scholarship
applications are now available. Get one from the
worship center, online or contact the Church
Office for one. Accredited tech schools DO
qualify! **APPLICATION DEADLINE is May 31!**

COFFEE & fellowship



We need help setting out donuts & coffee. It's a pretty easy gig and everyone **LOVES** the donut person! Contact Marguerite Diane or Jan if you can help!



Prayer Shawl Ministry



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.



Poinsettias



To the Glory of God

From Jan Zarestky
From Delores Albanese
Pam & Ric Miller

Tributes

In honor of our 62nd Wedding Anniversary
In honor of Grandpa Virgil & Grandma Ruth Johnson

from Dick & Sharon Zahm
from Todd, Jill, Owen, Hattie & Anna Moeller

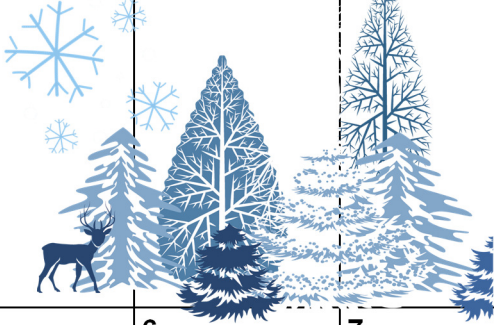

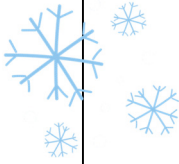
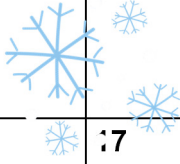
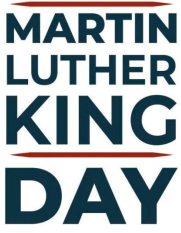
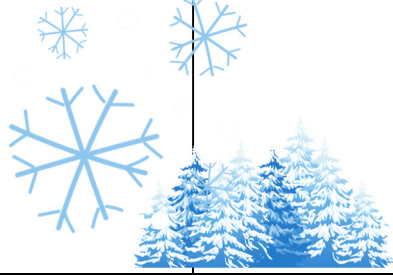
Memorials

In memory of Kevin
In memory of Sylvia & Clayton Toftness
In memory of Lela & Ben Zahm
In memory of Nadine Chelesvig
In memory of our parents
In memory of Brad
In memory of family
In memory of George & Helen Bergstrom
In memory of our parents
In memory of Alan Moeller
In memory of Brad Johnson

from Tim & Lori Mueller
from Dick & Sharon Zahm
from Dick & Sharon Zahm
from Pam Chelesvig
from Virgil & Ruth Johnson
from Virgil & Ruth Johnson
from Mark Carnevalo
from George & Marcia Bergstrom
from Dan & Bev Hartman
from Todd, Jill, Owen, Hattie & Anna Moeller
from Todd, Jill, Owen, Hattie & Anna Moeller

Thank you to those that sponsored a poinsettia this Christmas!

January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 NO DBSA  Church Offices Closed	2	3 9 Quilting Group 5:30 Worship
4 10 Worship	5 5 Outreach Committee Meeting	6 5 Exec Team Meeting 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	7 10 Bible Study 12 Al Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	8 7 DBSA	9	10 5:30 Worship
11 10 Worship 	12 4:30 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting 6:30 Church Council	13 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	14 10 Bible Study 12 Al Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	15 7 DBSA	16	17 5:30 Worship 
18 10 Worship	19 	20 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	21 10 Bible Study 12 Al Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 5:30 Faith Partners Meeting	22 12:30 Sarah Circle 1:30 Lydia Circle 7 DBSA	23	24 5:30 Worship 
25 10 Worship	26	27 5:30 AA Grp 1 7 Dancers Practice 8 AA Grp 2	29 10 Bible Study 12 Al Anon 5:30 AA Women Only 6:30 Confirmation	29 7 DBSA	30	31 5:30 Worship



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

331 S. 85th Avenue

Address Correction Requested

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!



January Anniversaries

Lynn & Royann	Hedell	01/01
Bryan & Jaime	Trummer	01/13
Rod & Cindy	Anderson	01/30

January Birthdays

Luke	Nabity	1/1	Ainsley	Pierce	1/14	Delores	Albanese	1/24
Judy	Hollander	1/2	Francy	Van Meter	1/16	Deborah	Hysack	1/26
Bryce	Peterson	1/6	Benson	Allen	1/17	Mark	Hawkins	1/27
Sandy	Heskett	1/7	Emerson	Ladd	1/17	Sue	Quast	1/27
Margery	Morgan	1/7	Teggy	Maxwell	1/17	Lori	Mueller	1/28
Julee	Kruse	1/9	Quinn	Garges	1/18	Kathleen	Bruckner	1/30
Jack	Green	1/13	Luke	Lieske	1/23	Jean	Gutheil	1/30

