

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
**WEEK OF JANUARY 8, 2023**

**IN OUR PRAYERS:** Jim & Penny Cleveland; Jack & Lureen Vaught; Darlene Welsh; Walt & Carolyn Trier; Aiden Snyder; Bob Schneider

**VOTERS' MEETING** for the winter quarter TODAY, Jan. 8, at 9am.

**NO CHOIR REHEARSAL** the next few weeks. Thank you so much for singing on Christmas Eve! New music coming soon.

**YOUTH GROUP MEETS** tonight, beginning with supper at 6pm and games to follow. Join us! Bring a friend, too!

**UN-DECORATING:** TODAY, January 8, after the second service. Stick around and help out if you can! Light lunch fare provided!

**THE MEN'S GROUP** will meet this coming Saturday, January 14. Breakfast at 8am and fellowship to follow. Perhaps we'll discuss a book to read or a topic for study.

**DINNERS FOR EIGHT!** Thank you to everyone who participated in our first round of Dinners for Eight! With lots of positive feedback and a few more families who couldn't participate the first time, we're going to go again! Sign up on the tables—we'll draw names for new groups at the end of January!

**CALENDAR**

Sun. Jan. 8 (Epiphany)	8:00 & 10:00am Divine Service 9:00am Sunday School / Bible Study / Confirmation <b>9:00am Voters' Meeting</b> <b>11:30am Un-Decorate Church</b> <b>6:00pm Youth Group</b>
Mon. Jan. 9	8:30am Discussion of next Sunday's readings
Wed. Jan. 11	8:30am Matins 9:00am Book of Concord Study (Smalcald Art.) 7:00pm Divine Service
Thu. Jan. 12	7:00pm Bible Study (Genesis)
Sun. Jan. 15 (Baptism of Our Lord)	8:00 & 10:00am Divine Service 9:00am Sunday School / Bible Study / Confirmation
M-F Jan. 16-20	Pastor out of office in FW (still reachable/available)

## THE BACK PAGE

On this week's Hymn, "O Morning Star" (LSB 395):

Both text and tune are written by Philipp Nicolai, and the hymn first appeared in his devotional book, *Mirror of the Joys of Eternal Life*. Alongside this hymn appeared another, "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" (LSB 516). Together, these two Nicolai hymns are known as the queen and king of chorales, respectively. "O Morning Star" has an extra heading in the original German of Nicolai, which describes the hymn as "a spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ her heavenly bridegroom." Indeed, both of our Nicolai hymns invoke this imagery! Read them side-by-side to check it out.

"O Morning Star" has long been connected to Epiphany because of the star image. Yet we must remember the Star invoked in stanza 1 is not the star of Bethlehem, but Jesus Himself! (The "true" Star of Bethlehem?). In stanza 2, Nicolai uses the image of Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Church. We, Christ's bride, eagerly await the arrival of our bridegroom. The latter portion of stanza 2 summarizes not only difficult circumstances in the life of the Christian, but also the confident hope we have for the blessings of "heavenly joy."

Stanzas 3 and 4 continue in this confident hope and faith by pointing to the means of grace—"Your Word and Spirit, flesh and blood"—and returning to our ultimate hope in God's "great salvation."

Stanzas 5 and 6 must be counted among the greatest in Lutheran hymn writing, as they express the joyful expectation of an eternity in the very presence of Jesus, the One who "ransomed us in love." Stanza 6 is particularly rich with references to Revelation: "first and last, the end and the beginning" (see Rev. 1:8, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13, and finally 22:20, with its "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!").

No, the Morning Star is not the star in the sky that guided the Wise Men to the infant Jesus—it is far better. Our Morning Star is Jesus Christ Himself. And yet how fitting this is for Epiphany: as the Gentile Magi greeted the long-awaited Savior, so too shall we greet our long-awaited bridegroom at the Last Day. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Adapted from *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns, vol. 1* (CPH, 2019), pp. 178-179.