

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Paul H. Moessner, Associate Pastor
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68131-3616
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December 10, 2017

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT



Making _____ great again! So much in our world seems just not right. That is part of what our Lutheran approach to life calls Law! But what does greatness look like? And how do we get there? That is part of God's continuing gracious action for the world.

Advent challenges us to open the eyes of our hearts and minds to see God's picture of greatness. Getting there may require changing our attitudes and priorities. That may be difficult, may feel impossible. In today's readings, what words of challenge, what words of comfort lead us into God's preferred and promised future?

PRELUDE

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who comes to wake us from sleep,
who leads us into the light of grace.

G Amen.

P Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P God of all time,

G we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us.

**We ignore our neighbors in need
and fail in the labor of justice and peace.**

In your mercy forgive us.

**Grant us wisdom to welcome your light
and to seek the things that will endure
until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

P Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

In † Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new.

Rejoice in this good news!

G Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW 264

Verse 1: All

Verse 2: Men

Verse 3: **Women**

Verse 4: All

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

- P** Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
- C** **John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way for the kingdom of heaven is near.**
- P** Bless us as we light the second candle of this wreath.
- C** **Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit, that we will be a light shining in the darkness welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.**

We light the second candle.

HYMN

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

ELW 240

Verse 2



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C** **And also with you.**

THE KYRIE



1, 3 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.
2 Chris - te e - lei - son. Chris - te e - lei - son.
1, 3 Lord, . . . have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.
2 Christ, . . . have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
Chris - te e - le - i - son.
Lord, . . . have mer - cy.
Christ, . . . have mer - cy.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son.
- ☑ **By his coming give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1–11

I don't belong here and I want to go home! *The Old Testament story tells us that God's creation is good, but we humans mess it up through our self-centered ways (sin). One result of this rebellion is this sense that I am in the wrong place, just do not fit in. In the Biblical story we read how the once great nation of Israel was defeated by the cruel Babylonian empire (597 B.C.) To exert control, the Babylonians forced the peoples they conquered into exile. In our day, we witness many stories of refugees, people forced away from their home. The Bible also tells us that, in spite of our sin, God's grace continues. In this passage, the prophet proclaims (that is what cries out really means) that the way will be built so we can return home. Perhaps we think of Jesus' statement, that he is the way (John 14:6). How does this image touch me personally? What, according to this image, might God's priorities be for our turmoil-filled world?*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the

flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 85:1–2, 8–13 (*read responsively*)

This Psalm (and much of the Old Testament) assumes religion and politics must work together for the wellbeing of people and nation, the common good. Too often in our world, peace is maintained only through the exertion of unjust and oppressive power. With the poet, we pray for a time when peace and righteousness (justice) prevail together.

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

**²You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins. ...**

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to you.

**⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

**¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

**¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

MUSICAL OFFERING

“Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning”

arr. J. Helgen

African American Spiritual

Kountze Youth Choir

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, for this work is almost done.
Children, don't get weary, for this work is almost done.
Darker midnight lies before us, for this work is almost done.
Lo, the morning soon is breaking, for this work is almost done.
Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, for this work is almost done.

SECOND READING

2 Peter 3:8–15a

When Jesus ascended to heaven, his followers were told he would return (Acts 1:6-11). But then many years passed. Was Jesus' promise empty? This short letter speaks to those who hope that Jesus will get back here and make things right again, and do it right now. With the international conflicts and weaponry available today, we may wonder about the image in verse 12. This passage, and the whole season of Advent, is about what we are doing while we are waiting.

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

A The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (sung three times)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.
www.giamusic.com, 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

G **Glory to you, O Lord.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 1:1–8

Reading the book of Mark, we may have a hurried feel, a sense of urgency. The term “good news” (verse 1) could mean the specific message Jesus proclaimed. Or, it could mean that the whole ministry of Jesus, including his life, his death, and his resurrection, is the good news the world needs to hear. Compare verse 2 here, to verse 3 in our Old Testament reading. The difference in the phrasing suggests the living nature of our Scripture – that the word of our God will stand forever!

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, " *See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'*" ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "*The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*"

P The Gospel of our Lord

G **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(sit)

CHILDREN'S BLESSING (9:00 AM)

Children (aged 3 years through 5th grade) are invited to come forward for a blessing. Then, they may either follow the teacher upstairs for an extended children's sermon (joining us again later in time for Communion) or they may return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the regular sermon.

SERMON

Pastor Moessner

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

ELW 257

Verses 1, 4-6

THE NICENE CREED

G **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,**

true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response: **P** Lord, in your mercy,
 C hear our prayer.

(In our prayers today, during a time of silence, pray for those listed below and for others according to their needs)

Illness: Lesley Akers, Evelyn Christensen, Donna Crouse, Jr Green (husband of Marvel), Eunice Grunberg, Virginia Jensen

Sympathy: To the family and friends of Leo Berk (cousin of Donald & Søren Johnson), to the family and friends of Harold Polan (cousin of Shirley Dietrich)

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, and Joel Woosley

Other Prayers: *Those serving in mission* – Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India; Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson, Tanzania; Krystle Moraska & Ignacio Madrussan, Argentina; Lindsay Mack, Mexico; Our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin

THE PEACE IS SHARED

- ☐ The peace of Christ be with you always.
- ☑ And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

Advent is an annual reminder that God is patient with us – patiently forgiving us again and again; while giving us – again and again – all we need to live as his disciples. In response, Sunday after Sunday – again and again – we give our offerings in thankfulness to God. Thank you for your faithful giving!



THE TABLE IS PREPARED

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“I Hear the Prophet Callin’”

Pepper Choplin
Dayle Johnson, Percussion

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“All Earth is Hopeful”

ELW 266



1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our

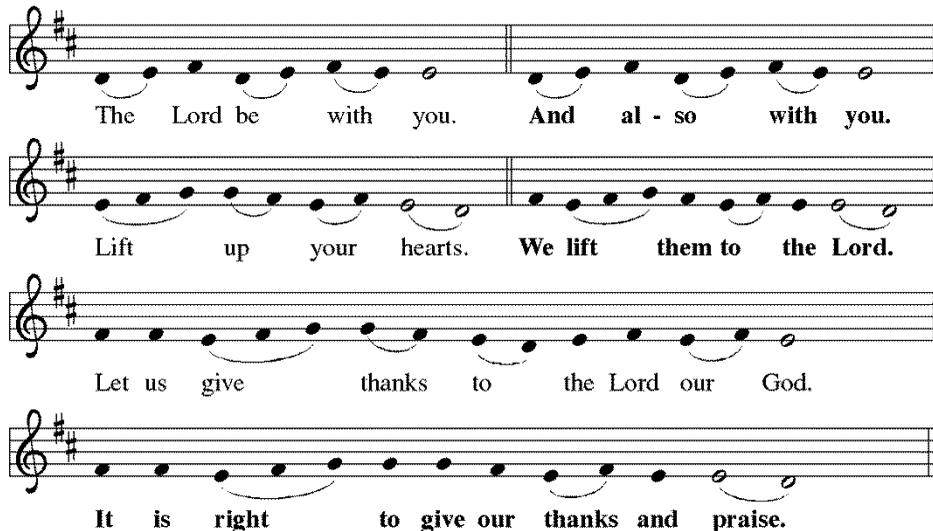


God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Savior of the nations, come,
- ☑ **Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen.**

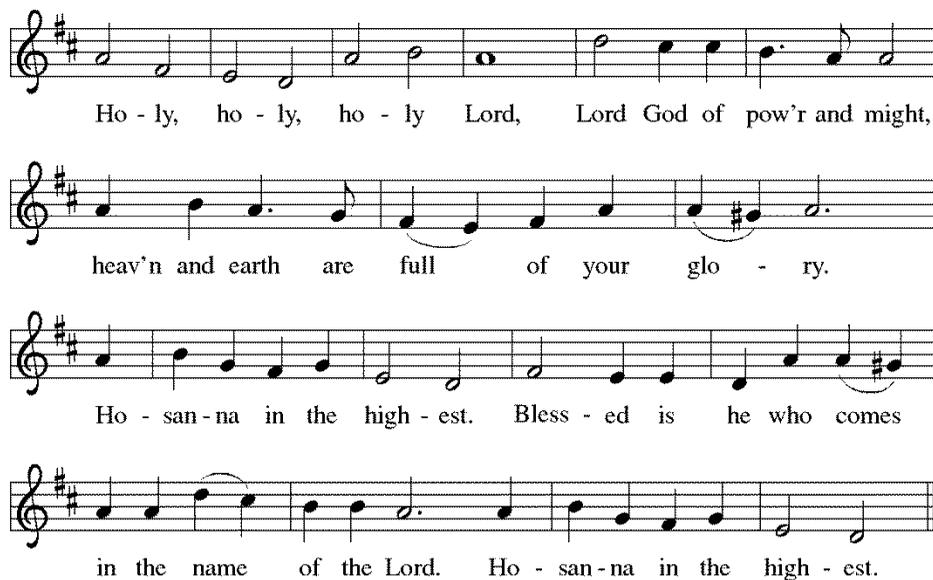
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE FOR ADVENT

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

☩ Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

☩ Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.
☩ Share in the feast of salvation.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

ELW 256

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

ELW 241

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE *“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”*
Verses 1 & 4

ELW 244

**Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.**

**Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!**

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☞ God for whom we wait:
- ☞ **You come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share.
Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts,
and send us forth to be your people in the world,
announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☞ May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Hark, the Glad Sound!”

ELW 239

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
- ☞ **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

† † †

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Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church is a vibrant, historic faith community that welcomes all and provides ministries for all ages and walks of life. We are a "City-wide Church with a World-wide Ministry" and have been worshiping, growing, and serving in downtown Omaha for nearly 160 years. If you are new to Kountze Memorial, we invite you to visit the Welcome Desk in Fellowship Hall for more information about who we are and what we do.



WORSHIP + GROW + SERVE

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Olaf Roynesdal	Senior Pastor
Pr. Paul Moessner	Associate Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Pr. Inba Inbarasu	Visitation Pastor
Kristin Boe	Christian Education Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Amanda Zasada	Administrative Assistant
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Sheri Rose	Financial Secretary
Søren Johnson	Assist. Bldg. Superintendent
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Donna Moessner	Director of Children's Music
Danny Bos	Handbell Director/Assist. to the Bldg. Superintendent
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Sheri Lynn Tipton	Night Security Manager
Norma Pafford	Nursery Superintendent
Joyce Palmer	Urban Ministries Coordinator

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Scott Henneman Jeff Perkins Kevin Larkowski
Lector	Jan Falk
Ushers	Bob Woodworth Glenn Anderson Daniel Collett Marcy Madison Mark Mahaffey Gary Westerman Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Shirleen Collett Jinette Cswercko Karen Wolf Sharon Anderson
Crucifer	Britten Johnson
Acolytes	Angie Arispe Rahn Johnson

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ashley Sum Lowell Harms
Lector	Deb Hinrichs
Ushers	Linda Johnson Ken Johnson Lee Johnson Julie O'Doherty Norm Sack
Greeters	Rosemary Tessin Julie King
Crucifer	Lily O'Kane
Acolytes	Rachel Stouffer Torin Edwards

HOLY COMMUNION All who

are baptized and trust in Christ's presence in Holy Communion are invited to commune at the Lord's Table. Children not yet communing will receive a blessing. Instructions will be provided during worship. It is the understanding of the universal Church that those who wish to commune with bread only (especially for health reasons) have communed fully.

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP We believe that all are welcome in worship and encourage families to worship together. Quiet activity bags, children's bibles, and bulletins are available, as well as a Quiet Room, just off the west side of the main sanctuary, that includes a TV and a variety of toys, games, and books for young children.

NURSERY is available from 9 AM—noon for children 0—2 years. Please ask an usher if you are unsure as to where our nursery is and would like to use it.

ATTENDANCE CARDS All those attending worship are encouraged to fill out the card included in your bulletin and place in the offering plate.

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS AND LISTENING DEVICES Please speak to an usher if you would like a large print bulletin or an assisted listening device.

NEW MEMBER CLASS If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be held January 14 & 21 from 12—2 PM. Please plan to attend both sessions. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided. Please indicate your attendance plans on your attendance card or call the church office and let us know if you will need childcare.

E-NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA If you would like to receive our weekly e-news and monthly e-newsletter, add your e-mail address to the card in your bulletin or text your e-mail address to 22828.

TODAY AT KOUNTZE

KOUNTZE CAFÉ Join us on Sundays for a hot breakfast buffet served from 8-11 AM prepared by Chef Tim and his volunteers. The suggested donation for breakfast is, \$5 adults, \$2.50 children 12 and younger. If you're able to help set up, prep/cook, and/or clean up after breakfast on Sunday mornings, please talk to Jim West, or let the church office know. We would appreciate your help! Thanks.

ADULT FORUM Join us Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM.

THIS WEEK: "Family Ministry and the Whole Household of Faith" **NEXT WEEK:** Dealing with Holiday Stress, with guest speaker from Lutheran Family Services

ALTERNATIVE GIFTS What's underneath your Christmas tree? Share the true meaning of Christmas by giving an Alternative Gift this year. On December 3, 10, 17 & 24, you will be able to purchase alternative gifts of hope for families in Omaha and abroad. Some of the items on the list are "a week of food for an orphaned child," \$6, "ten chicks," \$10, "medicine for the Healing Gift Free Clinic," \$25 or, "a bag of food for a family in Omaha," \$10. A sign-up sheet is in your bulletin.

BREAKFAST VOLUNTEER/INFO MEETING If you, your family/friends, or your small group would be interested in helping with Sunday breakfast on a rotating basis, please join our kitchen crew in the Fellowship Lounge this Sunday, 12/10, in the Fellowship Lounge at 10:30 AM to hear more about volunteering. If you are already volunteering, thank you! We'd be glad to have you meet with us as well. See you at breakfast! 10:30 AM (Fellowship Lounge)

POINSETTIAS We are taking orders for poinsettias to beautify the church. Christmas poinsettias are a special way to honor or remember loved ones. The cost of the poinsettias is \$7.00 each. If you would like to order a poinsettia, please fill out a bulletin insert and either mail it to the church office with your payment (cash or check made out to Kountze Memorial) or drop it in the offering plate during Worship.

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God in memory of my parents, Russ and Sue VanHorn from Kimberly Grassmeyer

ETERNAL CANDLE is given to the Glory of God in honor of Donna Moessner's birthday by husband, Pr. Paul

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

SUNDAY SCHOOL Join us each Sunday on the 2nd floor for children 2 years—8th grade. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9—10 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). Sunday School (2 yrs—8th grade) is held from 10:10—10:50 AM.

HIGH SCHOOL FORUM Join us each Sunday in the Youth Center for Forum at 10:10 AM.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CHOIR rehearsal in the Adult Choir room each Sunday from 11—11:40 AM. Come and sing!

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY Wednesdays, 10:30 AM, *Christmas: The Prequel*, led by Pastor Moessner. Each of the 4 Gospels begins differently. Only two tell of Jesus' birth. Yet each helps us know why the story we celebrate at Christmas has such importance for us, indeed for all creation. Please join us.

TV BROADCAST SPONSORSHIPS Beginning this month, we will be welcoming sponsorships for the weekly televised broadcast of our worship service. You can sponsor a broadcast in memory of loved ones, in honor of someone's birthday or anniversary, etc. The cost for sponsoring one broadcast is currently \$175 (it may increase in the new year). Six services are available for sponsorship in December (5 Sundays + Christmas Eve). Sponsorship forms are available at the Welcome Desk and in the church office. You can go to our website and donate there as well.

ADVENT MEALS/WORSHIP In this season of preparation for Christ's coming, a place has been prepared for you, to hear the promise, see the

Now is the time to prepare the way of the Lord.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Table with 3 columns: Day, Bible Reference, and Description. Rows include Sunday (Mark 1:1-8), Monday (Isaiah 40:1-11), Tuesday (2 Peter 3:8-15a), Wednesday (1 John 4:16-21), Thursday (1 Timothy 1:12-17), Friday (Malachi 3:1-4), Saturday (Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13), and Sunday (John 1:6-8, 19-28).

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about how you have been comforted during a time of need.
• Tell about a time you have felt God's comfort in your life.
• Mark 1:1 speaks of the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. Reflect on how this good news is filled with the comfort of God's love and forgiveness.

DEVOTIONS

December 10 is the second Sunday in Advent. Continue to use an Advent wreath with four blue or purple candles and a white center candle. Light the first and second candles, and use the following words:

Say: The second candle on our Advent wreath is the love candle because God's love comes to all through the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who comforts, feeds, leads, and loves the sheep. [Light the first and second candles.]

Read: Mark 1:1-3 and Isaiah 40:1-3, 11. The gospel of Mark starts with the theme for the whole book: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Isaiah 40 begins a new section in the larger book of Isaiah. Both emphasize a new era of God's love that has overcome judgment with forgiveness.

Pray: Lord God, like a shepherd caring for the sheep, you come to us full of love and comfort with the good news of your Son. Fill us with the love you have for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SERVICE

1 John 4:20 states, "We love because [God] first loved us." God's passion and love for us leads to acts of comfort, love, and forgiveness of others. Talk about or make a list of acts of kindness offered by you and others during the week. Give thanks to God for the good news of Jesus Christ that leads you to love the world that God so loves.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Setting up a Christmas tree in our home is a tradition and a Christian symbol reminding us of God's love. The evergreen tree reminds us of the ever-present love of God. The lights symbolize the light of Christ. The shape of an evergreen tree serves as an arrow that points to heaven. As you reflect on the symbolism of the Christmas tree, offer the following prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this tree as a reminder of your loving and saving presence in our lives and world. May the good news of Jesus Christ light up our hearts with your love, joy, and peace, and may the gifts placed under it remind us of the great gift of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
Go to www.vibrantfaithathome.org for more faith-forming activities.

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signs of the times in Christ's light, and share your hopes and dreams one with another. We are invited to make the Wednesdays in Advent a place apart for our minds and souls. Join us on Wednesdays, 12/13, & 20 at 12:15 PM or for a light meal from 6-6:45 PM and Holden Evening Prayer at 7 PM.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM The Christmas Program Rehearsal will be held on Saturday, 12/16 from 9-11 AM. The Christmas Program will be on Sunday, 12/17, at the 9 AM service. Please note-The program will not take place at 11 AM.

CANDLELIGHT CAROL SING Be sure to attend our annual Candlelight Carol Sing on Saturday, 12/16 at 5 PM (prelude begins at 4:40 PM). Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus with singing and worshipful reflection. A reception will follow. Nursery care will be provided.

HATS & GLOVES FOR PANTRY GUESTS If you would like to help keep our pantry guests warm this winter, you can donate hats and/or gloves for our pantry guests. We will be collecting them in the box behind the Welcome Center through Sunday, 12/17 and they will be distributed during pantry on Monday, 12/18. Thanks!

USHERS & GREETERS NEEDED! We need ushers for the large special services we have in December! Saturday, 12/16, 5 PM. Candlelight Carol Sing. Sunday, 12/24 (Christmas Eve): 4, 7, and 11 PM. Duties will be explained! If you can help, please speak with Pastor Olaf.

CAMPUS MINISTRY All high school graduates from the last few years (not just those currently in college) who are going to be in the Omaha area are invited to share some FREE PIZZA and visit with other young adults from your church and other Lutheran churches in Omaha at Godfather's Pizza on 67th in Aksarben Village on Thursday evening, 12/28 from 7 - 9 PM. Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry from the Omaha Metro is sponsoring this event and buying the pizza. This is a chance to meet some other students and make some connections with young adults from other campuses and campus ministries.

THIS WEEK AT KOUNTZE

December 10 Sunday

- 7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
8:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
10:10 AM Adult Forum
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
10:30 AM Breakfast Volunteer/Info Meeting (Fellowship Lounge)
11:20 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU (Halley Chapel)

December 11 Monday

- 10:00 AM Pantry

December 12 Tuesday

- 9:00 AM Staff Meeting

December 13 Wednesday

- 9:00 AM Sewing Group
10:30 AM Advent Bible Study
12:15 PM Worship
5:00 PM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM Advent Dinner
7:00 PM Holden Evening Prayer

December 14 Thursday

- Council Reports Due
11:30 AM Property Committee
12:00 PM Circle 4 (offsite)
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic
7:00 PM Circle 5

December 15 Friday

- Good News Deadline

December 16 Saturday

- 9:00 AM Christmas Program Rehearsal
9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group
5:00 PM Candlelight Carol Sing (Prelude @ 4:40 PM)
5:00 PM Worship

December 17 Sunday

- 7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Children's Christmas Program
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
10:00 AM Blood Pressure Checks
10:10 AM Adult Forum
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
10:30 AM Executive Committee
11:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU (Halley Chapel)

Table with 2 columns: Next Weekend's Lessons and Bible References. Includes Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

Saturday Attendance: 53
Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 246 11:00: 113
Midweek - Noon: 10 Evening: 73
Total: 495
Pantry Guests Served: 313
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 38
Offering: Not available at time of printing

WORSHIP With US
Sunday, December 24
4th Sunday of Advent
9 AM Worship only
Christmas Eve
4, 7, & 11 PM Worship
Monday, December 25
Christmas Day
10 AM Worship