

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
402-341-7761
www.kmlchurch.org

January 28, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

FOURTH SUNDAY after EPIPHANY



In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that trumps any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

PRELUDE

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who stretches out the heavens,
who sends light to the nations, who gives breath to us all.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Loving God,

C we confess that we have turned from your way
to follow our own ways.

Forgive us for the times

we have spoken or acted too quickly;

we have not spoken or acted at all;

we have hurt those closest to us;

we have hurt those we have yet to know;

we have thought more about ourselves than others;

we have thought less of ourselves than we ought.

Turn us around, and give us a fresh start,

so that we can live again as your children. Amen.

P Even when we have done wrong, God makes us right. Even when we have messed up, God puts us together. God's love never runs out. God never tires of calling us beloved children. Hear God say to you now: Your sins are forgiven, for the sake of † Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“God, Whose Almighty Word”

ELW 673

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



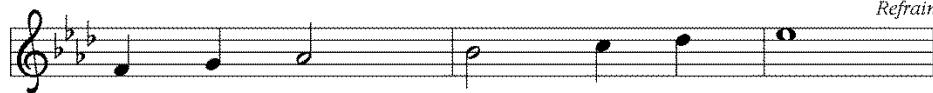
Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Compassionate God,

C you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

(sit)

WORD

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the Lord replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 111



The fear of the LORD is the be - gin - ning of wis - dom.

Psalm 111:10

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²Great are your works, O Lord,
pondered by all who delight in them.

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,
and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴You cause your wonders to be remembered;
you are gracious and full of compassion. 

⁵You give food to those who fear you,
remembering forever your covenant.

⁶You have shown your people the power of your works
in giving them the lands of the nations.

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;
all of your precepts are sure.

⁸They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity. 

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever. 

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Paul is concerned about how some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable, believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause a sister or brother to sin.

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

 The word of the Lord.

 Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Repeat alleluia
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 1:21-28

The story has barely begun, and already the battle is joined. Jesus sides with humanity against every force that would bring death and disease. These forces recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. This, however, is only the first fight. The war will go on much longer.

[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

P The Gospel of our Lord

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

CHILDREN’S BLESSING

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.

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“He Comes to Us as One Unknown”

ELW 737

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS *(9:00 AM)*

We Welcome: Cindy Featherly, Samuel & Sherry Garrett, Norman & Carol Herzog, Rick & DiAnn Kolkman, Marlys Thomas, Stephen & Jennifer Urlaub, Corey Wagg

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**☩ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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

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

Thanksgiving: For the baptism of Corey Wagg

Illness: Marvin Andersen, Lois Carlsen, Emalee Gardels, Jr Green (husband of Marvel), Eunice Grunberg, Teri Heil, Lavern Larkowski, Susan Muchmore, Gary Rodene, Ed White

Sympathy: To the family and friends of Vernon Ward

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

- P** The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C** And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

We glorify God in our giving. Our offering is an act of worship that makes the ministries of this church possible. We encourage everyone to give. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to participate in this portion of worship. If you would like, use the QR code scanner on your smart phone to give online or use the giving kiosk in the Fellowship Hall.



THE TABLE IS PREPARED

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

arr. Mark Hayes

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

ELW 186

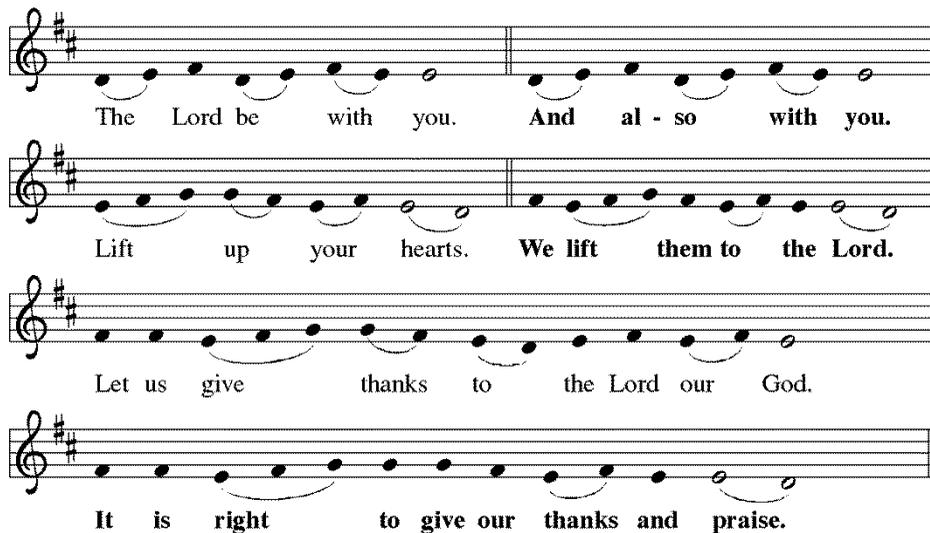


Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** Merciful God,
C receive the gifts we bring, our selves, our time, and our possessions. Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

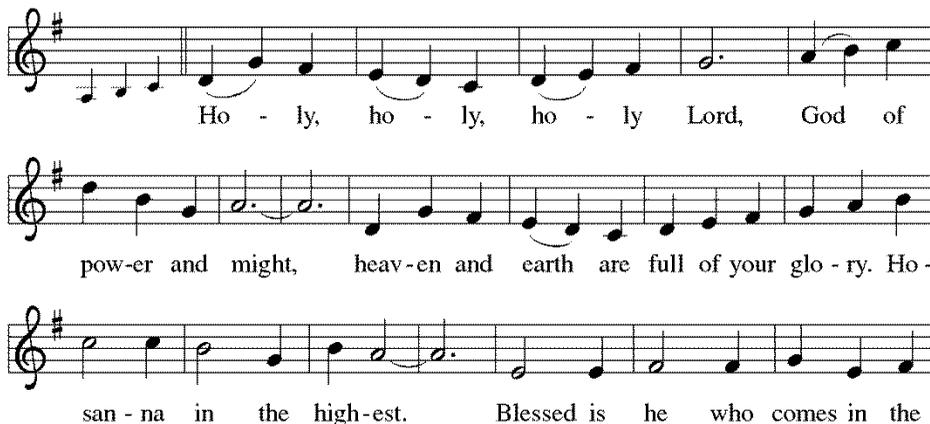


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(The Thanksgiving continues)

- P** It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...
...and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed 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

- C** 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

- P** We who are many are one body,
C for we all partake of the one bread. We come to be filled with light and life.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

"Let Streams of Living Justice"

ELW 710

"Now We Join in Celebration"

ELW 462

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** O Morning Star, fair and bright,
C you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our dearest treasure. Go with us now—today, tomorrow, every day—that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your praise both now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

☐ The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved, and shine brightly on your path; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

☑ Amen.

HYMN

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

ELW 543

DISMISSAL

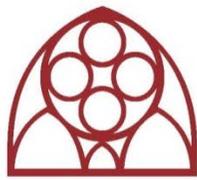
☐ Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

☑ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

✠ ✠ ✠

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KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

January 27 & 28, 2018

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.

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 Ed Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Amanda Zasada	Administrative Assistant
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Sheri Rose	Financial Secretary
Søren Johnson	Custodian
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Donna Moessner	Director of Children's Music
Danny Bos	Handbell Director/Custodian
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 Lorie Groenjes Susie Henry
Lector	Colleen Lenners
Ushers	Joe Councill Jim Comfort Jan Falk John Georgeson Jeff Perkins Fred Wachal Dave Forrest
Greeters	Darlene Anderson Lennea Davis Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Carter Wachholtz
Acolytes	Carly Cameron Cameron Miller

SUNDAY, 11:00 PM

Comm. Asst.	Deb Hinrichs Norm Sack
Lector	Steve Hinrichs
Ushers	Dudley Syre Adam Klinker Linda Hoagland Julie O'Doherty Byron Line
Greeters	Peggy Johnson Myrna Carter
Crucifer	Nicole Campbell
Acolytes	Hadley Rief Charlie Campbell

TODAY AT KOUNTZE

KOUNTZE CAFÉ Join us on Sundays for a hot breakfast buffet served from 8-11 AM prepared by Jim West and the kitchen crew. The suggested donation for the hot 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, or let the church office know. We would appreciate your help! Thanks.

ADULT FORUM Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** Congregational Meeting **NEXT WEEK:** Omaha Lutheran Campus Ministry with Pr. Jim Holtus

Congregational Meeting this Sunday, January 28 10:10 AM

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS This Sunday we welcome new members to Kountze. Please be sure to introduce yourselves to them if you haven't already.

TELEVISION BROADCAST on January 21 was sponsored by John & Lennea Davis in memory of their parents.

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 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!

January 28 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 Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 9:00 AM Receive New Members
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
 10:10 AM Annual Meeting
 11:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
 12:00 PM Stephen Ministry
 8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU

January 29 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

January 30 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

January 31 Wednesday

10:30 AM Augsburg Confession Class
 12:15 PM Worship
 6:00 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal

6:00 PM Confirmation Dinner
 6:30 PM Confirmation
 6:30 PM Augsburg Confession Class
 7:45 PM Closing Worship

February 1 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

February 3 Saturday

Homebound Communion
 4:30 PM Blood Pressure Checks
 5:00 PM Worship

February 4 Sunday

Homebound Communion
 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 Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
 11:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal
 8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU

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.

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.

ALTAR FLOWERS AND ETERNAL CANDLE The 2018 sign-up sheets are available. Altar Flowers are provided by Janousek Florist and cost \$20 a bouquet. The Eternal Candle is \$7.50.

NEW MEMBER CLASS If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be held April 15 & 22 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 when you register.



PASTOR'S CLASS Pastor Olaf Roynesdal is teaching a class on the Augsburg Confession (the Confessio Augustana) which is the foundational doctrinal document of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The six-week class continues to meet on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM thorough February 7.

CAROL JOY HOLLING CAMP Register your child/children for summer camp by January 31 and get \$50 off! First-time campers get 50% off if you register for week 1, 2 or 6 (go to <http://caroljoyholling.org/registration> to register and first-timers use coupon code half off). Sending more than one child to camp? Receive an additional \$25 discount for each child of the same family attending a full-week or mini session.

WORSHIP LEADER TRAINING Saturday, February 10, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Join us for training of Communion Assistants, Lectors, Greeters and Ushers. With a little bit of training and conversation, anyone can fill these vital positions. Without such volunteers, many of the aspects of our liturgy—which so many of you and so many of our guests report to be vital and enriching—are impeded. Please consider volunteering in any one of the many available positions. All current servers, those who wish to serve in the future, or those who are interested in learning about serving, are encouraged to attend. Please call the church office to register. We will equip with everything you need and encourage you to let your service be an expression of worship.

KMLC COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS Scholarship are funds available to any eligible college-bound student member. Active members of Kountze Memorial planning or continuing to attend ANY college, university or seminary may submit an application. Additional eligibility requirements are noted on the application. Applications can be picked up after the first of the year in the Church Office, or downloaded at www.kmlchurch.org. Applications are due March 1. Applications received after this date will not be accepted. Please note: Scholarships are not automatically renewable, and recipients must re-apply each year.

BAPTISM SEMINAR Noon, Sunday, March 11. Meet with Pr. Hall in the Nave immediately after the liturgy, and then he will walk through the baptismal liturgy. To register, call the church office at 402-341-7761.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS Sunday, March 18, 12:00 PM. Communion is open to all baptized Christians. Those children who are already communing or those children interested in receiving Holy Communion are invited to a First Communion class. We will begin with lunch in the conference room followed by instruction in the Nave with Pastor Hall. Participants will receive their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, March 29 at 7:00 PM. A good guide for determining when your children are ready to receive Communion is when they begin to ask about receiving it during the liturgy. Please register with the church office at 402-341-7761 or info@kmlchurch.org.



ASH WEDNESDAY worship (Wednesday, February 14) will be a time to receive the ashes of repentance and the word of God's forgiveness. Worship with us at 12:15 & 7:00 PM. Dinner

from 6 – 7 PM. Cost of the dinner – Free-will offering.

Lent at Kountze

Theme: *Being Lutheran Together*

February 21 - Faith Alone

February 28 - Grace Alone

March 7 - Scripture Alone

March 14 - To the Glory of God Alone

March 21 - The Gospel-Evangelical Alone

Dinner - 6 -7 PM

Cost - Free-will Offering

Worship - 12:15 PM and 7 PM



WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION! We are delighted to see the children's choir (gr. 2-5) revived as an essential ministry of the congregation under the direction of new staff member Donna Moessner. She brings a rich experience of leading music education with young children. Soon, a new rehearsal program will begin. Watch the bulletin announcement page, the Good News, and Wednesday e-news for more information.

Saturday Attendance: 54

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 196 11:00: 122

Midweek - Noon: 4 **Evening:** 16

Total: 392

Pantry Guests Served: Snow Day

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 51

Offering:

\$12,702.85 (Regular) \$282.00 (Specials)

\$792.50 (In the City for Good)

Jesus teaches with power and authority.

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

Sunday	Mark 1:21-28	Jesus teaches in the synagogue
Monday	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Treat everyone with justice
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Love builds up others
Wednesday	Matthew 7:24-29	Jesus teaches with authority
Thursday	John 14:23-31	Obeying Jesus' teaching
Friday	Joshua 1:6-9	The Lord speaks to Joshua
Saturday	Psalms 111	Praise for God's wonderful works
Sunday	Mark 1:29-39	Jesus heals many people



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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.

They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. **Mark 1:22 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, you rule with steadfast love and faithfulness. Teach us to trust your ways and to extend your love to others. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

The Lord is kind and merciful. God provides food for one and all. Thanks be to God! Amen. (Psalm 111:4-5)

A Blessing to Give:

May God guide you in the way of Christ. May the grace and mercy of the Lord be your strength and comfort, now and always. (Psalm 111:4)

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a teacher you liked and respected. What did you learn from him or her?
- In Mark 1:21-28, Jesus' teaching was more than learning information. How is he different from other religious leaders of his day?
- The unclean spirit knew who Jesus was, the Holy one of God. Faith is about a relationship to God that is more than knowing about God. How do you have a relationship to Jesus that is more than information?

Read: Psalm 111.

It is a song of praise that gives examples of who God is in the community of the congregation (v. 1); God's righteousness lasts forever (v. 3); God is gracious and merciful (v. 4); and, God is faithful, just, and trustworthy (v. 7). It is a psalm of praise that describes who God is. God does not need our praise. Our neighbors need the message of praise to encourage them and us in our faith. Make your own list of how you see God at work in the world and in your life. Make that into a prayer that begins, "**God, you who (then use your list of descriptions), we praise you for your goodness. Holy and awesome is your name. In Christ we pray. Amen.**"

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Paul directs those who have the greater insight regarding the Christian faith not to use their insight to hurt those who don't have the same understanding. Knowledge by itself is not enough. As he wrote, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (v. 1b). The Christian life is not about knowing more than the next person, but caring for the other person. This next week, think about someone whose opinion you disagree with. Find some way of affirming that person as an act of love in a way that moves beyond who is right and who is wrong.

Meals are filled with rituals and traditions that can reflect one's faith. Research shows that there is great benefit to people when they eat meals together. Make a commitment to eat at least five meals a week with family or close friends. A simple mealtime practice is to pray before your meals and talk about your day and what you are most (and least) grateful for.

Mealtime Prayer:

The Lord is kind and merciful. God provides food for one and all. Thanks be to God! Amen.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 2:1-12