

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

July 8, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the between: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love.

C Amen.

P Trusting God’s promise of forgiveness, let us confess our sin against God and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Eternal God our creator,

C **in you we live and move and have our being.**

Look upon us, your children, the work of your hands.

Forgive us all our offenses,

and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires.

**By your grace draw us near to you, our refuge and our strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

P Since we are justified by faith alone,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit given to us.

In the mercy of almighty God,

Christ died for us while we still were sinners;

and for his sake, God † forgives you all your sins.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”

ELW 311

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** God of the covenant,
- C** **in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 2:1-5

In 597 BCE, the Priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.

A voice said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.² And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me.³ He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day.⁴ The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord God."⁵ Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 123 *(read responsively)*

¹To you I lift up my eyes,

to you enthroned in the heavens.

²**As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,
and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,**

so our eyes look to you, O Lord our God, until you show us your mercy.

³Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy,

for we have had more than enough of contempt,

⁴**too much of the scorn of the indolent rich,
and of the derision of the proud.**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows.³ And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat.⁵ On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.⁶ But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me,⁷ even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me,⁹ but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 6:1-13

At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim god's word and relieve affliction.

Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.²On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C 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

Rev. Robert G. Moore, Ph.D.

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

"If You But Trust in God to Guide You"

ELW 769

THE APOSTLES' CREED

P With the whole church, let us confess our faith:

C 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.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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)

Sympathy to: Steve Olson, and the family and friends of Steve's brother, Robert Olson, Gloria Erickson, and the family and friends of Gloria's mother, Florence Erickson

Illness: Emalee Gardels, Jr Green, Eunice Grunberg, Janice Nelson, Gary Rodene, Grant Searcey, cousin of Diane Nickeson-Ray, Charlie Wachholtz

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, 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; Meghan Brown Saavedra, Mexico; Our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin

WE SHARE GOD'S PEACE

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.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“I Can Only Imagine”

Arr. Bart Millard
Lynn Schneiderman, soloist

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

THE OFFERTORY HYMN

“Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring”

ELW 691

C Accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place upon your table.
We do not worship as we ought but only as we're able.

The vines were planted, seeds were sown. They grew in your good pleasure.
What once was common, daily food becomes a holy treasure.

Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer before you.
Lord, by your grace now come to us, as humbly we adore you.

Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, b. 1957

Text © 1990 Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERING PRAYER

P Merciful God,

C you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

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

THE PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

SANCTUS

- C** **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!**
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

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

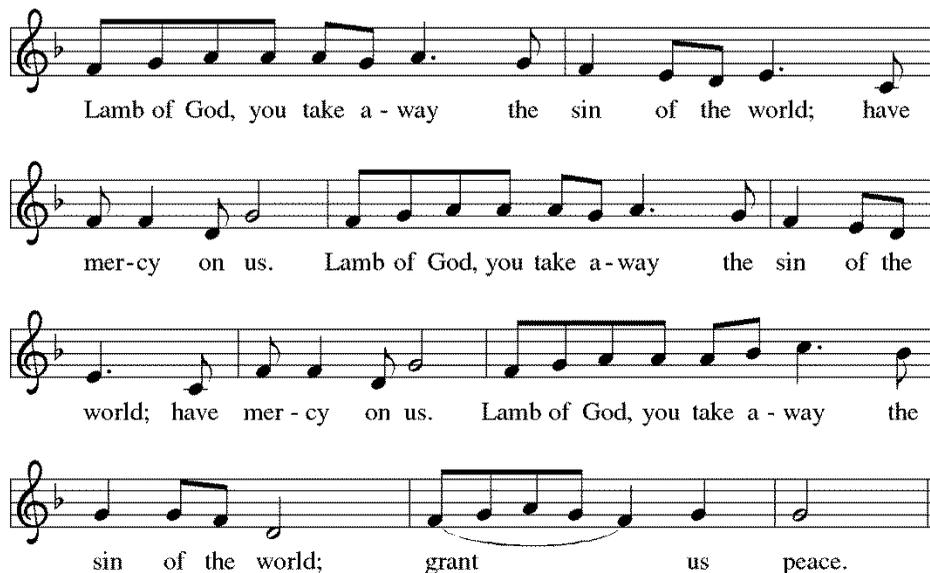
- P** The gifts of God for the people of God.
- C** **Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

THE DISTRIBUTION

All baptized Christians who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and his Real Presence in, with and under the bread and wine, are welcome to the Lord's Supper. We believe that this is the Lord's table and is he who invites you. So you who are strong in faith, come with gratitude. You who feel weak in faith, come to be strengthened. And you who feel you have no faith, come so that the God of steadfast love will touch your heart with hope and joy. The form of distribution is *intinction*, you will receive the consecrated bread and you may then dip it in the wine. Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.

(sit)

AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION “O Bread of Life from Heaven”
“Thy Holy Wings”

ELW 480
ELW 613

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☐ Jesus Christ, host of this meal,
- ☑ you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☐ May God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, grant you the gifts of faith and hope. Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Spread, Oh, Spread, Almighty Word”

ELW 663

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve
☑ **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

☩ ☩ ☩

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
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Judi Boe	Financial Secretary
Jim Smejkal	Bldg. Super./Dir. of Cong. Activities
Søren Johnson	Custodian
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Donna Moessner	Dir. 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

SATURDAY, 5:00 PM

Lector	Charlie Bressman
Ushers	Kathy Englert
	Theresa Gruber

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Lorie Groenjes
	Lowell Harms
	Pam Johnson
Lector	Bailey Gittler
Ushers	Jeff Perkins
	Jim Comfort
	Joe Council
	Dave Forrest
	John Gorgeson
	Fred Wachal
	Jan Falk
Greeters	Vickie Wichert
	Darlene Anderson
	Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Bailey Gittler
Acolytes	Cameron Miller
	Kaitlyn Munguia

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	
Lector	
Ushers	Julie O'Doherty
	Linida Hoagland
	Adam Klinker
	Kathy Preininger
Greeters	Peggy Johnson
	Myrna Carter
Crucifer	Torin Edwards
Acolytes	Tyler Johnston
	Rachel Stouffer



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

July 7 & 8, 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.

TODAY AT KOUNTZE

KOUNTZE CAFÉ Join us each Sunday 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.

ADULT FORUM Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** The Rev. Robert G. Moore, Ph.D., ELCA Representative in Wittenberg and Leipzig. See Rev. Moore's bio on inside page. **NEXT WEEK:** Pr. Hall Shares Information on Time at Cambridge

BAPTISM SEMINAR This Sunday, July 8, Noon (immediately following 11:00 AM service). Meet with Pr. Hall in the Nave immediately after the liturgy, and then he will walk through the baptism liturgy with you. To register, call the church office at 402-341-7761.

ALTAR FLOWERS AND ETERNAL CANDLE are given to the glory of God by Debbie Bogue and Family in memory of John Bogue.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL will continue through Sunday, July 15. Join us each Sunday on the 2nd floor for Summer Sunday School. 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. Our program will focus on Holy Communion and use the curriculum "Fed and Forgiven".

July 8 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
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 Summer Sunday School (2yr-8th)
12:00 PM Baptism Seminar
12:00 PM Book Group

July 9 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

July 10 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

July 11 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group
12:15 PM Worship
6:00 PM Bible Study - Sex & Violence in the Bible

6:30 PM MS/HS Hangout in Youth Center

July 12 Thursday

9:30 AM WELCA Board Meeting
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

July 14 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

July 15 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
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 Summer Sunday School (2yr-8th)
10:30 AM Executive Committee
5:30 PM Sponsor Appreciation Dinner

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.

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.

NEW MEMBER CLASS If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be held September 16 & 23 from 12—2 PM. 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.

"SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THE BIBLE" Join us this summer on four Wednesdays at 6:00 PM beginning July 11 for a Bible Study presented by Dulcinea Boesenberg. More details on the insert in your bulletin. Please call the church office to sign up so we know how many to plan for.

SPONSOR APPRECIATION DINNER Youth Gathering Sponsors — THANK YOU! Please come to our Thank-you Banquet on Sunday, July 15, 5:30 PM. We want to tell you more of our experience. Please sign up in the office or contact Pastor Paul to let us know you are coming.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – Not Just for Children! or – for Children of All Ages! Reserve Friday evening, July 20 and Saturday Morning, July 21, for a different Bible School Experience. We begin with supper at 5:30 PM and conclude the evening by 7:45 PM. We resume Saturday with continental breakfast at 8:30 AM. We will focus on a Bible story that helps us know who we are as the people of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church! We will create an art project together. We will have a chance to talk with people of different ages. And we intend to have fun! Contact Kristin Boe at Kristin@kmlchurch.org, or Pastor Paul at Paul@kmlchurch.org with any questions. RSVP to the church office at 402-341-7761.

CARD SHOWER In celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary on July 26, the children of Reverend Lavern and Marilyn Larkowski would like to honor them with a card shower. Cards of congratulations may be sent to 1705 North 107th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68114. Their children – Kevin Larkowski (Omaha, Nebraska), Cara Skrypchuk (Crofton, Maryland), Lisa Hahle (Boise, Idaho), and Craig Larkowski (Phoenix, Arizona) along

THE REV. DR. ROBERT MOORE is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Dr. Moore currently serves as Director of the ELCA Wittenberg Center and Reformation Ambassador for the City of Leipzig. Prior to his move to Germany he served twenty-three years as pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas. Robert served on the ELCA Churchwide Council (2011-2016) and the Board of Regents of Texas Lutheran University (2010-2016). He also served on the national board of Godly Play, Inc. and Bach Society Houston. Robert and his wife, Kathy, have worked passionately for the sister-city relationship between Houston and Leipzig. For his work Robert received the Golden Honor Pin of the City of Leipzig and the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Federal Cross of Merit) of the Federal Republic of Germany. Robert holds the degree of Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Rice University in Houston.



Rev. Dr. Robert Moore and his wife, Kathy

What Kind of Dirt?



Friday, July 20th

*5:30 to 6:00, Spaghetti Dinner

*6:00 to 7:45, Activities

Saturday, July 21st

*8:30 to 9:00, Continental Breakfast

*9:00 to 12:00, Activities

ALL AGES ARE INVITED TO KMLC'S

WEEKEND VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.

EXPLORE THE PARABLE OF THE SOIL THROUGH
ART, SCIENCE, MUSIC, STORYTELLING,
AND DISCUSSION

CONTACT KRISTIN BOE AT KRISTIN@KMLCHURCH.ORG, OR
PASTOR PAUL AT PAUL@KMLCHURCH.ORG
WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

*RSVP TO THE CHURCH OFFICE AT 402-341-7761

with spouses, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren will celebrate in Omaha in July. **KMLC MEN'S LUNCHEON** Thursday, July 19, 11:30 AM at Kountze Memorial – Cost \$10. The Men's Luncheon meets the third Thursday of each month, at 11:30. We enjoy conversation and a meal. We hear presentations on a variety of topics. Presenters may be from the community and within the congregation. Topics may be directly theological, always inviting us to consider how faith connects with the wider community and all of creation. On July 19, we will learn of the work of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, featuring Kountze member David Klug, who has served as board chair.

CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS are needed for Monday mornings or Thursday mornings from 9 AM—12:30 PM. If you think you might like spending some time in the church office, please call Debbie for further info.

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Not available at time of printing.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY Spring and Summer 2018

Summer Sunday School
June 17 – July 15

Vacation Bible School "Camp"
Friday evening, July 21,
Saturday morning, July 22
For ALL AGES!

August 12 – Blessing of Backpacks
(as a new school year begins)
and our School Teachers/Workers

Jesus sends out his disciples.

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

Sunday	Mark 6:1-13	Jesus sends the twelve
Monday	Ezekiel 2:1-5	The Lord chooses Ezekiel
Tuesday	2 Corinthians 12:2-10	Paul's visions
Wednesday	Jeremiah 1:4-19	The Lord sends Jeremiah
Thursday	Philippians 4:2-14	Giving encouragement and thanks
Friday	Luke 10:1-20	Jesus sends the seventy
Saturday	Psalms 123	A prayer for mercy
Sunday	Mark 6:14-29	The death of John the Baptist



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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.

But [God] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NRSV)

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord, your grace is all we need. Help us to rely on you as we live as your followers each and every day. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord, all good things come from you. Give us hearts that are grateful and lips that are true. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord show you grace; may God fill your life with power perfected in weakness.

Discuss in your home or small group:

- When you pack your bags for a trip, what do you bring with you? Do you travel light or with lots of stuff?
- How do you rely on God's presence when you travel?
- Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to preach and help others (Mark 6:7-13). He told them to go without food, money, and bags. The disciples needed to rely on God. In what ways do you need to look to and rely on God more?

Read: 6 Corinthians 56:6-10.

Paul tells his faith story. It includes a rather ecstatic, heavenly experience, yet he tells it as a detached third person and with great humility. It would be very tempting for him to brag about his religious experience. Instead, he recounts his struggle, his "thorn" that keeps him "from being too elated" (v. 7). Paul's message is that the grace of God is enough to sustain us. Weakness is not the opposite of God's power; God uses weakness to show God's power. Paul concludes, "Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (v. 10). Reflect on your own faith story. Include experiences of joy as well as struggles and see how God is present in the midst of it all.

Pray: Lord, your grace is all we need. Help us to rely on you as we live as your followers each and every day. Amen.

When Jesus went back to his home town of Nazareth, he was not made to feel very welcome, even by his own family (Mark 6:1-6). We can easily take family, friends, and acquaintances for granted. Think of those around you and work on showing appreciation for their efforts and contributions to others. Name things they are good at or that make them a positive influence in the lives of others.

In 2 Corinthians 12:3-4 the Apostle Paul had a very significant experience of being in God's presence. Paul refuses to boast about that experience and instead speaks about his struggles and weaknesses. Without boasting about our lives in the presence of God, it is important to affirm that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, and to be comforted by that presence. This week designate a chair in your home and place a cross on it; call it the "Jesus chair" as a way to be reminded that in our joys and struggles, God in Christ is with us each day.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Amos 7:7-15; Psalm 85:8-13
Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29