

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

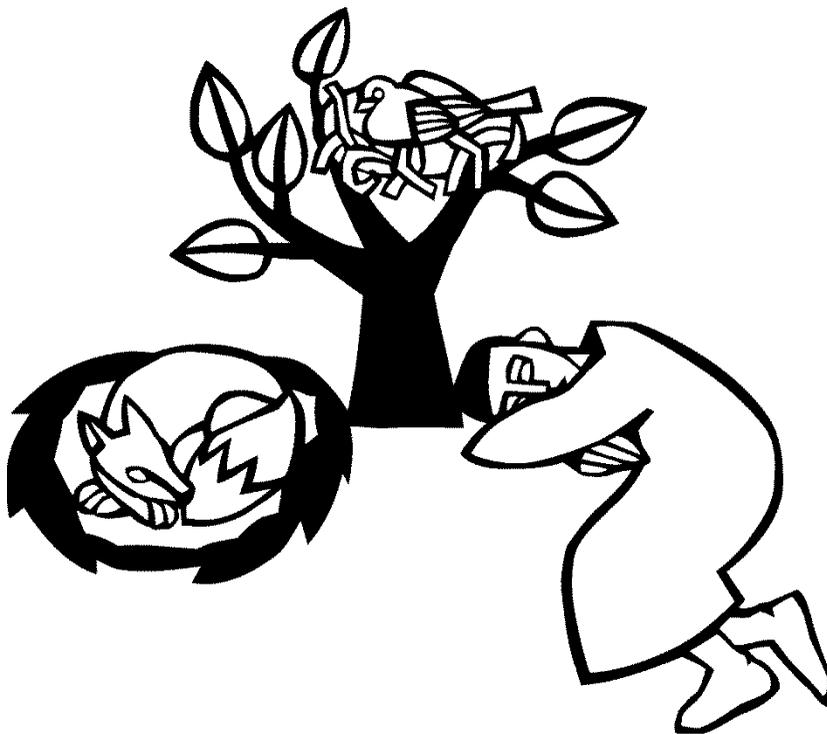
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68131-3616
402-341-7761
www.kmlchurch.org

June 30, 2019

9:00 & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY after PENTECOST



*We have no good apart from God. That makes our Lord's call to follow him an invitation to freedom.
This is freedom to revel in the Spirit's fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, and the like.
This is the path of life.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C Amen.

P Seeking reconciliation with God and neighbor, let us remember the gift of baptism and confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P God of mercy,

C we confess that we have sinned against you,
against one another,
and against the earth entrusted to our care.

We are worried and distracted by many things,
and we fail to love you above all else.

We store up treasures for ourselves
and turn away from our neighbors in need.

Forgive us, that we may live in the freedom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P When we were laid low by sin and guilt, God made us alive together with Christ, forgiving us † all our trespasses by taking our sins to the cross. For freedom Christ has set us free: Rejoice in this good news!

C Amen.

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.
- G** And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Almighty God, ruler of all hearts,
- G** you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 49:13-18

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones. ¹⁴But Zion said, "*The LORD has forsaken me, my LORD has forgotten me.*" ¹⁵Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. ¹⁷Your builders outdo your destroyers, and those who laid you waste go away from you. ¹⁸Lift up your eyes all around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, says the LORD, you shall put all of them on like an ornament, and like a bride you shall bind them on.

L The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

PSALM 16 (*read responsively*)

¹Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;

I have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.”

²**All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

³But those who run after other gods
shall have their troubles multiplied.

⁴**I will not pour out drink offerings | to such gods,
never take their names upon my lips.**

⁵O LORD, you are my portion and my cup;
it is you who uphold my lot.

⁶**My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**

⁷I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night after night.

⁸**I have set the LORD always before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰**For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**

¹¹You will show me the path of life;

**in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

SECOND READING

Galatians 5:1,13-25

For Paul, the freedom Christ gives is not permission to do whatever we want. It is the invitation to be what we could not be otherwise. The power and guidance of Christ's Holy Spirit produce a different kind of life, one marked by the fruit of this Holy Spirit.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ...

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

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. Luke.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord!

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 9:51-62

Jesus is unwavering in his commitment to his mission in Jerusalem and will not be swayed by pettiness. In a series of striking cases in point, he calls his disciples to a similar single-mindedness.

When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “*Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*” ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “*I will follow you wherever you go.*” ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, “*Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.*” ⁵⁹To another he said, “*Follow me.*” But he said, “*Lord, first let me go and bury my father.*” ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, “*Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.*” ⁶¹Another said, “*I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.*” ⁶²Jesus said to him, “*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.*”

☞ The Gospel of the Lord.

☞ 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 Roynesdal

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“When Memory Fades”

ELW 792

THE APOSTLES' CREED

- ☐ God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
- ☑ **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 INTERCESSION

- 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)

Sympathy to: the family and friends of Marvin Alff, friends of Steve & Karen Jacobson and the Kountze Food Pantry

Illness: Richard Bock, Don Burton, Ralph Diggins, Rev. Harry Fink, Jr. & Marvel Green, Eunice Grunberg, Dolores Hiatt, Mae Johnston, Marcie Lafleur, Joan Nelson, Jean Nippert, Mark Oldaker, Bob Ringo, Gary Rodene, Merlyn Ulrich, Ed & Darlene White

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; the Wittenberg Center and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators

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 congregation 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.



MUSICAL OFFERING

“How Great Thou Art”

*soloist: Dayle Johnson
arr. Dave Forrest*

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

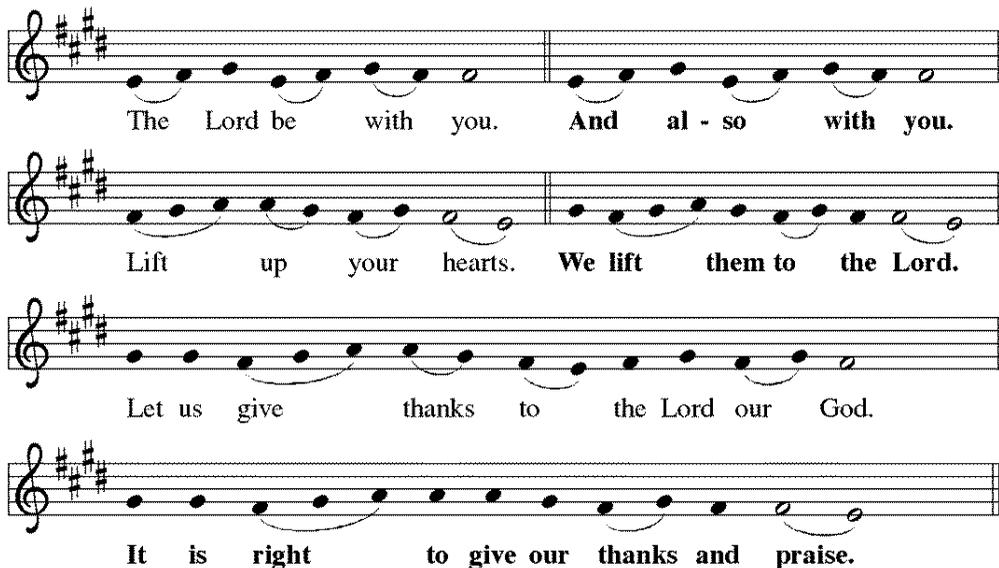
ELW 184

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** Blessed are you, Lord God,
C for the greening earth given for all, for the talents we are given to share, and for this bread and wine. Transform us to be the body of Jesus Christ, that, feasting on this food and drink, our lives will reflect your generosity; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION



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 SUNDAYS

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

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us all to pray:

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 God invites you to this table of bounty.

C **Come, the banquet is ready.**

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.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

“Day by Day”
“Abide with Me”

ELW 790
ELW 629

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** Gracious God,
- C** **in this holy communion you have welcomed us into your presence, nourished us with words of mercy, and fed us at your table. Amid the cares of this life, strengthen us to love you with all our heart, serve our neighbors with a willing spirit, and honor the earth you have made; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the Name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“On Our Way Rejoicing”

ELW 537

DISMISSAL

- P** Go in peace. Christ is sending you.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

✠ ✠ ✠

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Olaf Roynesdal	Senior Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Pr. Inba Inbarasu	Visitation Pastor
Kristin Boe	Christian Ed Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Noni Cambridge	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
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Sheri Lynn Tipton	Night Security Manager
Norma Pafford	Nursery Superintendent
Joyce Palmer	Director of the Weber Clinic
Susann Henry	Food Pantry Director

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

SATURDAY, 5:00 PM

Lector	Charlie Bressman
Ushers	James Smejkal Jason Klonglan
Comm. Set-up	Jim Smejkal

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Lowell Harms Scott Henneman Adam Klinker Liz Pemberton
Lector	Jan Falk
Ushers	Bob Woodworth Glenn Anderson Dan Collett Marcy Madison Mark Mahaffey Gary Westerman Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Karen Wolf Sharon Anderson
Crucifer	Carter Waccholtz
Acolytes	John Groenjes Communion Assistant

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ann Miller Jennifer Bunge
Lector	Jennifer Bunge
Ushers	Lee Johnson Ken Johnson Linda Johnson Norm Sack
Greeters	Julie King
Crucifer	Charlie Campbell
Acolytes	Rachel Stouffer Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

June 29 & 30, 2019

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 worshipping, growing, and serving in downtown Omaha for over 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

THANK YOU to Jean Johnson for playing organ this weekend while Mark Jones is away.

KOUNTZE CAFÉ We'll have a continental breakfast this morning. Join us again next 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:** Preview of Summer Children's Programs, with Kristin Boe **NEXT WEEK:** No Forum

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in honor of Bob & Etta McDonald's anniversary by Becky Brusky

FYI Steve Jacobson has resigned as Staff Treasurer; we thank him for his faithful service to us. We are pleased to welcome Noni Cambridge to this part-time position.

THANK YOU!!! On behalf of us all, I want to thank Jim Smejkal and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make last week's Neighborhood Gathering such a wonderful event! Pastor Olaf



UPDATE



If you did not order photos, your free 8 x 10 may have been delivered to the church. Check the Welcome Desk to see if yours has been delivered.

June 30 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Continental Breakfast

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

10:10 AM Adult Forum

July 1 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

July 2 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

12:00 PM Yesterday's Youth

July 3 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship

July 4 Thursday

Independence Day

OFFICE CLOSED

July 6 Saturday

Homebound Communion

4:30 PM Blood Pressure Checks

5:00 PM Worship

July 7 Sunday

Homebound Communion

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

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.

GREETERS NEEDED When arriving for Worship on Sunday mornings, it's great to be greeted by a friendly "good morning" and a smile! If you can smile and tell people "good morning" you already know how to be a Greeter and we'd like to be able to add you to our Greeter list. You can also greet as a family if you'd like to. Kids love taking part in this kind of Ministry! Contact the church office (402-341-7761) or Jim Smejkal (jim@kmlchurch.org) if you'd like to be a Sunday morning Greeter.

SOUND BOARD & TV MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Volunteers are needed to assist with sound at the 11:00 AM worship service as well as special services throughout the year. Training is provided and experience is not necessary. If you are interested, please contact Mike or Julie Bratcher in the TV studio (on the north side of the Youth Center) or call the church office at 402-341-7761.

KOUNTZE FOOD PANTRY With July upon us the time for vacations has arrived, at least for the Pantry volunteers. Unfortunately, most of our guests do not get a break. Having an adequate number of volunteers is essential to the Food Pantry operation, and allows us to serve over 400 guests per week. If you can sign-up for a shift, your service would be greatly appreciated. Pantry is open every Monday. You can choose between 9:00—11:00 AM, or 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, or both. You do not need to have prior experience, just a willingness to put faith into action! Sign-up book is located in Meeting room A of the Fellowship Hall.

YESTERDAY'S YOUTH B-I-N-G-O! Join us on Tuesday, July 2, for one of our most popular events of the year. There will be prizes galore! We will be eating a delicious summertime lunch at noon. Cost is \$4.00. Please RSVP to the church office by Friday, June 28, so that we can plan on food preparation. Any questions, please call Sheri at 402-415-6033. All ages are welcome and encouraged! Some of our Sunday School students will be joining in the fun! You won't want to miss out! See you there!

SEWING GROUP Our sewing group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (July 10) at 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM or however long you can stay. The group sews quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Even if you can't sew, you can still help. The quilts are not quilted but are tied, so if you can tie a knot, you can help! Bring a sack lunch and join the ladies for fun, fellowship, and service.

BOOK GROUP Sunday, July 14 12:00 PM. July's book is "Lilian Boxfish Takes a Walk" by Kathleen Rooney. Join us for a discussion of this book. The novel's present time is New Years Eve 1984. Lillian Boxfish reminisces about her past on a walk through New York. Throughout the novel the narrative shifts back and forth in time. She remembers her job at Macy's in the 1930s to the present about her family. She remembers these times on her walk through New York.

TIP TOP THRIFT SHOP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS The Tip Top Thrift Shop supports the Youth Emergency Services program and is their largest fundraiser. In order to continue this support, community volunteers are needed. The Thrift shop is located at 5910 Maple Street in Benson and needs volunteer workers on Tuesdays, thru Saturdays. There are three and six-hour shifts available. These shifts are 10 AM—1 PM, 1 PM—4 PM, or 10 AM—4 PM. If you are interested in helping at the Thrift Shop, stop in and fill out a volunteer application. If you have questions, call 402-680-2842.

HELP DELIVER ALTAR FLOWERS After the 11:00 AM service on Sundays, donated altar flower bouquets are taken to hospitalized members, nursing homes, or care centers. This is a great way to brighten someone's day and to grow friendships! Please contact the church office at 402- 341-7761 or via email at info@kmlchurch.org if you are interested in volunteering.

CAROL JOY HOLLING CAMP EVENTS

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION on Saturday, July 13. Enjoy old and new camp activities like archery, zip line, making friends, boating, and much more from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM. We will end the day with a community worship service at 4:00 PM. All those who register at CarolJoyHolling.org/anniversary before June 26 will receive an exclusive 40th Anniversary cuppie.

ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION will be held on Saturday, July 27. We want friends like you to come and support CJH Camp programs through this event. The 350+ quilts will be on display and the silent auction starts at 9:00 AM. The live auction starts at 9:30 AM.

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 59
Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 177 11:00: 110
Midweek - Noon: 5
Total: 351
Pantry Guests Served: 421
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 39

Offering:

\$13,868.54 (Regular) \$1,190.00 (Specials)
\$805.00 (Phase 2)

DIRECTORY PHOTOS

If you didn't have your photo taken for the church directory but would like to have your photo included, please submit a vertical photo no later than this Monday, July 1.

Vacation Bible School!

Who: All members of Kountze are welcome. There will be activities for everybody! (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

What: Worship, singing, crafts, service, fellowship, and more.

When: Friday, July 19, 6:00 to 8:00
Saturday, July 20, 9:00 to noon.

Where: Kountze Fellowship Hall

Dinner will be served Friday evening and a Continental breakfast served in the morning.

RSVP to the church office by calling 402-341-7761, or email Kristin Boe at Kristin@kmlchurch.org.



Christ has set us free.

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

Sunday	Luke 9:51-62	The cost of following Jesus
Monday	1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21	Elijah meets God at Horeb
Tuesday	Galatians 5:1, 13-25	Fruit of the Spirit
Wednesday	Leviticus 19:1-18	Living a holy life
Thursday	Matthew 5:43-48	Love for enemies
Friday	2 Timothy 1:3-7	Thanksgiving and encouragement
Saturday	Psalms 16	Suffering and praise
Sunday	Luke 10:1-11, 16-20	Jesus sends out the seventy



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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.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. **Galatians 5:1 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

God of love and freedom, set us free today to love others with the love that comes from you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the fruit from the earth that fills us with good things and for the fruit of the Spirit that we may love others. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who sets you free fill you with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:1, 22-23)

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you would like to be freed from doing?
- What is something you would like to be freed to do?
- How does freedom in Christ differ from simply being freed to do whatever you want?

Read: Galatians 9:5, 57-25.

The central point of Galatians is, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (v. 5:1a). It is complemented by the remainder of the verse, "Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (v. 5:1b). Christians are to live free, but it is not any kind of freedom; it is one that does not succumb to the imprisonment of sin, a life of self-centeredness. Paradoxically, Paul writes about Christian freedom, "through love become slaves to one another" (v. 13b). Luther famously wrote a similar statement about Christian freedom, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." Christians are totally free to submit to others for the sake of love, the love of all neighbors, including one's enemies. Paul wants us to focus on the life of the Spirit. Such a life snuffs out the "flesh," the life opposed to the Spirit. Verse 16 can be translated, "Live by the Spirit, I say, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." That is, be set free by the Spirit and you will not lead a life controlled by sin (vv. 19-21). How does the fruit of the Spirit free your life?

Pray: **Loving God, thank you for the fruit of the Spirit that frees us from self-centeredness and unites us to the love of others, for the sake of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

What makes someone an enemy? Who do you consider an enemy? Jesus commands us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44a). We are to love others as God loves us. Compassion and forgiveness toward our enemies is not easy but can be beneficial for them and ourselves. It is a Christian conviction to reach out and show God's love through prayer and good deeds to those who are not our friends. Pray this week for understanding and reconciliation with those who you consider to be your enemies.

As part of your home devotions this week, draw four or five different types of fruit on a piece of paper and cut them out. How is each fruit the same or different from the others? Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How is each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit the same or different from another? Choose four or five of these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit and write them down on your fruit cutouts. How will you use the fruit of the Spirit in your relationships this week?

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-9
Galatians 6:[1-6] 7-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20