

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

July 21, 2019

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SIXTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



Perhaps the church, at its best, is “all ears.” Almighty God urges the faithful, again and again, to “listen up!”—to heed the word from above. So it was with Abraham and Sarah, with Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the words 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** Eternal God,
- G** you draw near to us in Christ, and you make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we will always treasure your word above all else, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Genesis 18:1-10a

The Lord visits with Abraham and Sarah to tell them that the long—awaited promise of the birth of a child will be fulfilled for them in their old age.

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³He said, “*My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.*” ⁴*Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.* ⁵*Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.*” So they said, “*Do as you have said.*” ⁶And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “*Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.*” ⁷Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, “*Where is your wife Sarah?*” And he said, “*There, in the tent.*” ^{10a}Then one said, “*I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.*”

L The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

PSALM 15 (*read responsively*)

¹LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit up on a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected,
but they honor those who fear the LORD.**

They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain,
nor do they take bribes against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING

Colossians 1:15-28

Sometimes Paul preaches with great attention to theological concepts. Here, however, Paul offers a mystical teaching, that the great mystery of God is "Christ in you." Because Christ is present in the church, Christians share in his life, suffering, and glory.

Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

²¹And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—²³provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

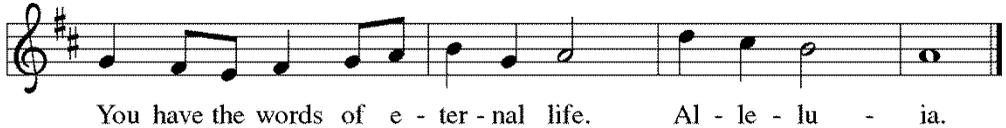
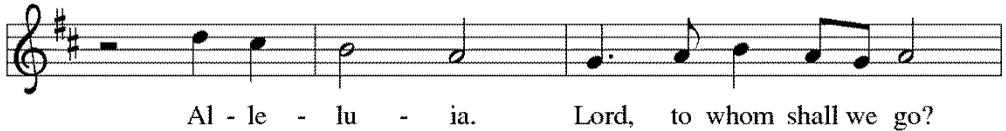
²⁴I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. ²⁵I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸It is he whom we

proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

L The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

G Glory to you, O Lord!

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus uses his visit to two sisters as an occasion to remind disciples that an important aspect of obedience is singleminded devotion to Jesus and his word.

Now as [Jesus and his disciples] went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

P The Gospel of the 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 Hall

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

"You Servants of God"

ELW 825

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.**

(stand)

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 Ralph Diggins

Thanksgiving: for the birth of Andrew Theodore Dyer, son of Amy Dyer

Illness: the Barber family, Richard Bock, Don Burton, Joe Doremus, Rev. Harry Fink, Junior & Marvel Green, Eunice Grunberg, Dolores Hiatt, Mae Johnston, Marcie Lafleur, Joan Nelson, Jean Nippert, Gary Rodene, Ed & Darlene White, Pr. David Zellmer

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Wyatt Johnson, 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

Mark Jones

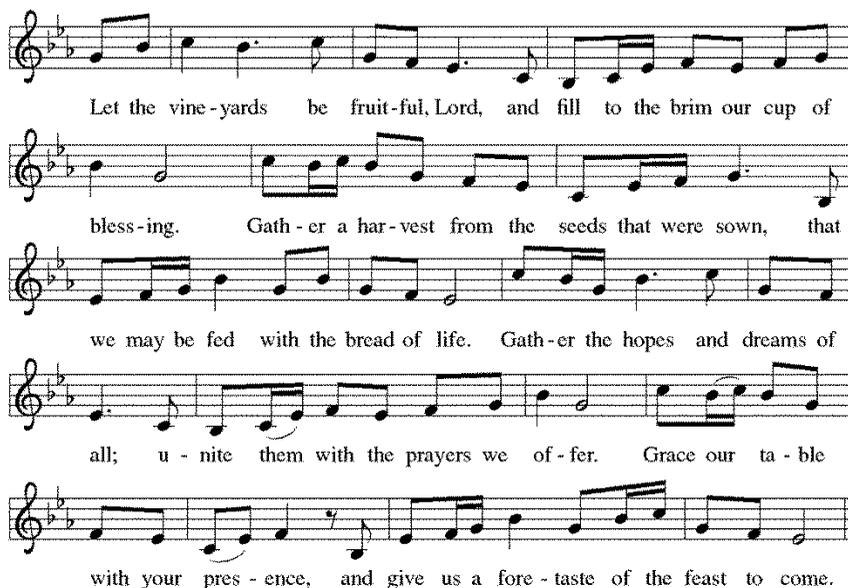
THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

ELW 184

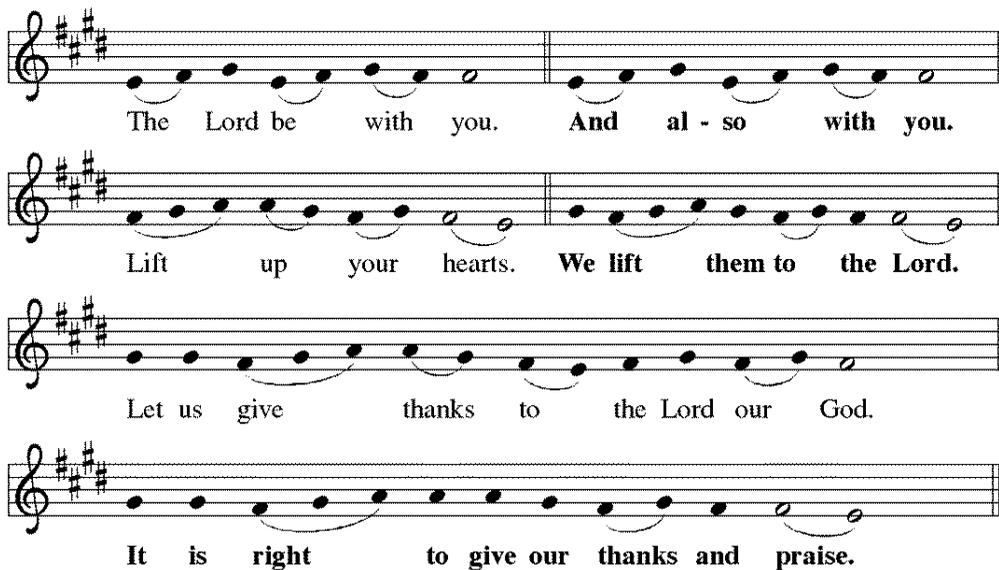


Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us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

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Blessed are you, Lord God,
- ☑ 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.

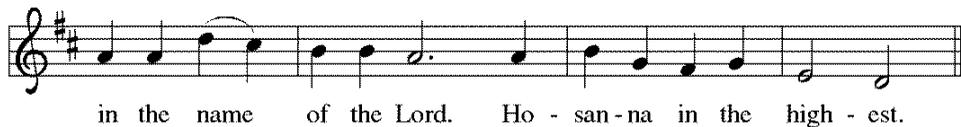
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: '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.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with various phrasing slurs.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

SANCTUS



THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

☑ **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

"Come with Us, O Blessed Jesus"

ELW 501

"Day by Day"

ELW 790

"You Are the Way"

ELW 758

(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

- ☐ Live your lives in Christ, rooted and built up in him, and abound in thanksgiving; and the blessing of the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, be upon you and remain with you forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing”

ELW 545

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. Christ is sending you.
☑ **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE



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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	Debra Kelly
Ushers	Duane Hovendick Penny Hovendick
Comm. Set-up	Penny Hovendick

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Marylin Oldaker Mark Oldaker Lorie Groenjes
Lector	Susie Henry
Ushers	Jeff Perkins Jim Comfort Joe Council Dave Forrest John Georgeson Fred Wachal Janice Falk
Greeters	Vickie Wichert Darlene Anderson Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Britten Johnson
Acolytes	Rahn Johnson John Groenjes

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Deb Hinrichs Lowell Harms
Lector	Steve Hinrichs
Ushers	Julie O'Doherty Linda Hoagland Adam Klinker
Greeters	Myrna Carter
Crucifer	Charlie Campbell
Acolytes	Anna Kotula Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

July 20 & 21, 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

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:** Together, Inc. with Mike Hornacek **NEXT WEEK:** Pr. Hall presents on his sabbatical in Germany

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in honor of Dayle Johnson's birthday; in honor of in honor of Bill & Madaline Christensen's 69th wedding anniversary

ETERNAL CANDLE is given to the glory of God in thanksgiving of the birth of a new grandson, Andrew Theodore Dyer, by Gary & Judy Westerman



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.

July 21 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 10:00 AM Blood Pressure Checks
 10:10 AM Adult Forum

July 22 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

July 23 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
 12:00 PM Endowment Board
 7:00 PM Circle 3

July 24 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship

July 25 Thursday

1:30 PM Circle 4
 4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

July 27 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

July 28 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 10:10 AM Adult Forum
 10:10 AM deFreese Manor Board
 12:00 PM Stephen Ministry

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 Sundays, September 29 & October 6 from 12:15—2:00 PM. Plan to attend both sessions. New members will be received on October 13. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided. Please indicate your attendance plans on your attendance card or call the church office by September 22 and let us know if you will need childcare when you register.

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.

QUARTERSFEST The Quarters is the name of the neighborhood from Dodge to Leavenworth Streets and 20th Street to 28th Street. Kountze sits in that area and we have been invited to take part in QuartersFest on Thursday, July 25 from 5—8 PM at 2609 St. Marys Avenue. There will be live music, local vendors, food trucks, kids activities, and a car show. Pets are welcome. Be sure to join in the fun! More info can be found at <https://www.quartersomaha.com/>

CAROL JOY HOLLING 31ST ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION Saturday, July 27, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Join in this exciting day at Carol Joy Holling Camp on July 27 for our 31st Annual Quilt Auction! The day promises good food, great fun and lots of beautiful quilts donated by friends of Carol Joy Holling Camp. The auction and barbecue lunch will be held rain or shine. (We will use the Town Hall in case of rain.) Bring your friends and families! Kountze has donated several quilts to the auction. Be sure to check them out online at <http://cjh2019.piecd.com/index.cfm>

YESTERDAY'S YOUTH Please join us for a delightful musical program on Tuesday, August 6, 12:00 PM with the very talented Kountze member, Nicole Campbell. A delicious lunch will be served. The cost for lunch is \$4. All ages welcome. This is certain to be a lovely afternoon! **Please RSVP to the church office no later than Friday, August 2.** If you have any questions, please call Sheri Tipton (402-415-6033). We're looking forward to seeing everyone there!

SAVE THE DATE—YESTERDAY'S YOUTH IN SEPTEMBER Tuesday, September 12*, 12:00 PM. All ages welcome. Please join us for a spectacular opportunity! We will be going to Camp Carol Joy Holling for fun and relaxation. We will travel by bus /(car if needed). Our day will include: •Bus tour of the beautiful campus, •Buffet lunch at the lovely Swanson Center (cost \$10.50), •A fun craft with the camp counselors, •Fishing and swimming, and •Fellowship, relaxing, and observing the beauty of the scenic lake and surrounding area. We will depart from camp at 4:00 PM. Your non-refundable payment for lunch is due at the time of sign-up. You won't want to miss out on this memorable experience. Please note: sign-up deadline is Friday, August 16 – no exceptions! *Please note date change for Yesterday's Youth.

SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! As the Director of Children's Ministries, I deeply appreciate all who have considered how to help the children of Kountze, whether through teaching, organizing events, or offering to volunteer with our Sunday school classes. The children of Kountze are a valuable part of our congregation; they are the future. The children of Kountze are in need of your leadership, enthusiasm, and time. We are looking for volunteers in the pre-school room on the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Sundays of the month, between 9:00 and 10:50. Sunday School leaders are also needed. We are looking for a commitment of one Sunday each month for the school year. The lessons are scripted and all the materials are provided ahead of time. Sunday School is from 10:10 to 10:50. Thank you for considering giving your time to the children of Kountze. No matter what your experience or expertise, we have a spot for you! To join our program, please contact Kristin Boe at kristin@kmlchurch.org.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS We are sending our teachers and students back to school with prayers and blessings. We welcome students and teachers of all ages to bring their backpacks, book bags, or briefcases to church on Sunday, August 11. Let's begin the new school year in prayer to celebrate God's gift of learning and bless those in their academic endeavors. In addition, we will have a **school supply drive for schools in the community**. Please bring notebooks, pens, pencils, rulers, glue, crayons, markers, colored pencils, and folders to church and place them in the bins provided. With a few supplies we can show the love of Jesus and help area youth begin the school year with confidence.

RALLY SUNDAY August 18, 2019, 9:00 service. The 2019/2020 Sunday School year begins August 18th! Join us for prayers and a procession to the Upper Rooms for a blessing on our new year. In this Sunday School year, we will be focusing on the Sacred Stories of the Bible. A Sacred Story is one in which God has the primary role. Using the Godly Play curriculum, we will tell the stories of how people met God in Creation, with the patriarchs, in the Exodus, at Sinai, in the Temple, in the Prophets' visions, by encountering Jesus, and more. To register for the Sunday School year, please go online to <https://form.jotform.com/91873872615165> to get registered. In addition, please join our Facebook page, KMLC Parent Group, for the latest information on Sunday School events. You can also find a link to the registration there. Please contact Kristin Boe at kristin@kmlchurch.org with any questions.

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 59
Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 181 11:00: 90
Midweek - Noon: No service due to funeral
Total: 330
Pantry Guests Served: 434
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 37
Offering:
\$9,740.50 (Regular) \$1,438.00 (Specials)
\$1,925.00 (Phase 2)

Save the Date!

Join us
for your Annual Meeting.
Don't miss it!

Sunday, August 25 | 10:10 AM | Fellowship Hall

Listen to Jesus.

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

Sunday	Luke 10:38-42	Only one thing needed
Monday	Genesis 18:1-10a	A son is promised
Tuesday	Colossians 1:15-28	The supremacy of Christ
Wednesday	1 Samuel 3:1-21	The Lord speaks to Samuel
Thursday	Matthew 17:1-8	The Transfiguration
Friday	Proverbs 19:20-27	The wisdom of being taught
Saturday	Psalms 15	Worshiping the Lord
Sunday	Luke 11:1-13	Jesus teaches about prayer



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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.

She [Martha] had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he [Jesus] was saying. **Luke 10:39 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, give us the peace and joy in your presence that we hear your word and trust in you alone. Through Christ our Lord, amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Lord, just as Sarah and Abraham fed the three strangers, we thank you for providing us this food today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May Christ, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, bless you with faith, hope, and love. (Colossians 1:15)

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- Who do you trust and want to listen to? Why?
- What helps you to listen to Jesus as your Savior and Lord?
- What gets in the way of listening to the message of Jesus for your life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 10:38-42.

This short story challenges our ability to interpret Jesus' message. Martha is showing hospitality to her guest Jesus while her sister Mary simply sits at Jesus' feet to listen to him. Hospitality is too important in the Bible (Luke 7:38-50) to see this not as a problem. Somehow, in the midst of her service, Martha gets distracted, perhaps by seeing Mary who simply sits and listens. Jesus affirms Mary's action as choosing "the better part" (v. 42). Even our good intentions to serve can become a distraction when we lose sight (and sound) of Jesus. Listening to the word of God leads us to serve, and serving others leads us back to receiving God's message that turns the world on its head by declaring loyalty to God alone. Why? Because those who receive the message and presence of Christ receive "the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages," and this mystery "is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27-28). Imagine sitting in front of Jesus. What might he be saying to you? What would you like to ask him?

Pray: **Lord, the busyness of our daily lives can be distracting. Help us to take time to sit down and listen to you. In Jesus name, amen.**

SERVICE

Abraham saw three strangers near him. He and Sarah gave them water and fed them (Genesis 18:1-9). This was an act of kindness and service. There are many who are strangers to us in need of water and food both in our own communities and around the world. Look up those organizations in your area that provide water and food to those in need. In what ways can you donate or support them?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Sometimes our lives get so busy that we do not take time to stop and listen, especially in our homes. In Luke 10:41-42, Martha was busy and had lots to do for her guests. Mary sat and listened to Jesus. Gather three bean bags or balls. Begin by throwing one in the air and catch it. Then add another and another until you are juggling all three. Can you juggle all three easily and pay attention to others? Martha may have been able to juggle everything she was doing well, but she thought everyone else should be doing the same. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen the better thing to do by listening. Why is it important to stop being busy in our lives and listen?

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 138
Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]; Luke 11:1-13