

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

December 15, 2019

9:00 & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT



A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free.

C Amen.

P Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,

C we open our hearts to you, Lord God.

Search us and know us.

Reveal all that we keep inside.

To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us in your ways of justice and peace.

Make us reflections of the radiant love

of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

P Beloved children of the God, you are gathered before the righteous judge who has mercy on us. Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism, where sin is washed away in the river of life. Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation. Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, † Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!”

ELW 246

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

P Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free. As we light these candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus. O ransomed people of the Lord, come,

C let us travel on God’s holy way and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.

We light the third candle.



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



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

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal-va-tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God,
- ☑ and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed through grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(sit)

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 9:00 AM

“Sing a Song of Christmas”
see insert

SECOND READING (11:00 AM)**James 5:7-10***In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.*

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

☒ The word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

*(stand)***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (11:00 AM)**

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

☒ The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

☑ **Glory to you, O Lord!**

HOLY GOSPEL (11:00 AM)**Matthew 11:2-11**

John the Baptist expects the messiah to bring God's judgement upon the earth. (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through jealing and restoration.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in

soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

☐ 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 (11:00 AM)

Pastor Hall

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Blessed Be the God of Israel”

ELW 250

THE NICENE CREED

☐ With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

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

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

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

(stand)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

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

Illness: Richard Bock, Joe Bonfante, Don Burton, Joe Doremus, Rodney Edwards, Rev. Harry Fink, Samuel Garrett, Susie Henry, Dolores Hiatt, Rosann Klug, mother of David Klug, Marcie Lafleur, Chris Meyer, son of Lynn & Nancy Meyer, Jean Nippert, Mary Olson, Nick Robinson, son of Debbie Robinson, Gary Rodene, Sheri Tipton, Jerry Warner, Ed & Darlene White, Don Zinnecker

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; Rev. Rachel Ringlaben, 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 (11:00 AM) “Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

arr. Mark Hayes
Jean Johnson, piano

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN



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



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



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

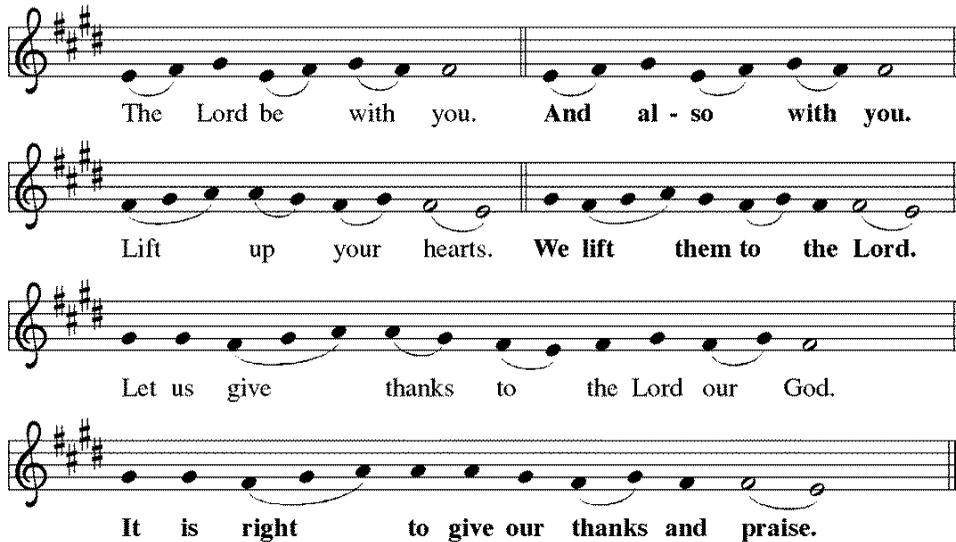


God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bod-y free.
Je-sus is with us, and ev-er sets us free.

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Giver of every good thing,
- ☑ we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. Amen.

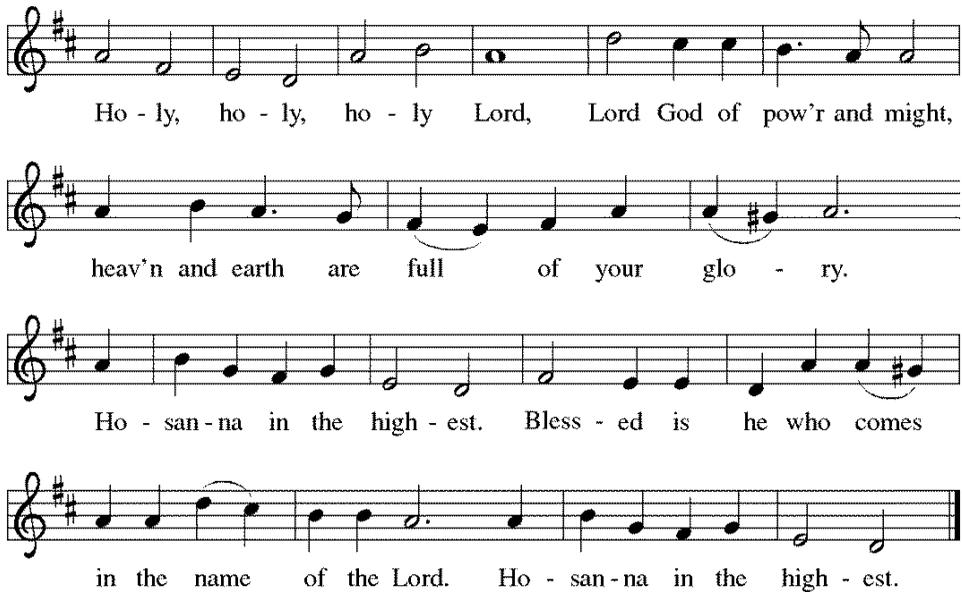
HOLY COMMUNION



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 ADVENT

SANCTUS



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

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- ☞ 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

- ☞ Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table.
- ☞ **Feast at the banquet of hope and love.**

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)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*"Jesus Shall Reign"
"Eat This Bread"*

**ELW 434
ELW 472
(sing 3 times)**

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☞ God of abundance,
- ☞ **we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

SENDING

(sit)

BLESSING

- ☞ May God, who gathers us in love, lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice. May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves, lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom. May God, who fills us with good things, lead you in pathways of equity and abundance. The blessing of the holy Trinity, one God, the Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“People, Look East”

ELW 248

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Christ is with 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
Kayla Slaughter	Housekeeper
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

Ushers	Paul Revord
	Mary Jo Fike
	Deb Hinrichs
	Dan Collett

Comm. Set-up Mary Jo Fike

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Jill Gittler
	Lorie Groenjes
	Lowell Harms
	Pam Johnson
Ushers	Bob Woodworth
	Glenn Anderson
	Dan Collett
	Marcy Madison
	Mark Mahaffey
	Gary Westerman
	Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Sharon Anderson
	Karen Wolf
Crucifer	Anna Kidder
Acolytes	Kaitlyn Munguia
	Charlie Wachholtz

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ashley Sum
Lector	Ashley Sum
Ushers	Linda Hoagland
	Ken Johnson
	Lee Johnson
	Norm Sack
Greeters	Julie King
Crucifer	Charlie Campbell
Acolytes	Hadley Rief
	Henry Rief



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam St
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 14 & 15, 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 worshiping, 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 for a hot breakfast buffet served from 8:00-11:00 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.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM at 9:00 AM. The Joyful Sounds Choir and all Sunday School children have been working very hard and are excited to "Sing a Song of Christmas" this morning.

ADULT FORUM Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** No Forum (Fellowship time) **NEXT WEEK:** Christmas Worship Preview

ALTERNATE GIFTS Check out the Alternate Gift insert that is in your bulletin this weekend. Find a cause or organization that would be the best gift for your friends and family.

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in honor of Dorothy Cross' 90th birthday by her daughter, Nancy Tunzer; in honor of the 91st birthday of Bill Christensen given by his wife, Madaline.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

JOYFUL SOUNDS CHILDREN'S CHOIR & SUNDAY SCHOOL
There isn't Children's Choir, Sunday School, or High School Forum this morning, but there will be a cast party for the children in the Joyful Sounds Studio at 10:10 AM.

December 15 Sunday

Good News Deadline
 No Sunday School
 7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
 8:15 AM Christmas Program Rehearsal
 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 9:00 AM Christmas Program
 10:00 AM Blood Pressure Checks
 10:10 AM Cast Party in Joyful Sounds Studio
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
 10:10 AM Adult Forum - Fellowship
 10:30 AM Executive Committee

December 16 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

December 17 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group
 6:00 PM Congregation Council
 6:00 PM Circle 3

December 18 Wednesday

11:00 AM Advent Lunch
 12:15 PM Worship
 5:00 PM Advent Dinner
 6:30 PM Worship

December 19 Thursday

11:30 AM Men's Luncheon
 12:00 PM Circle 4
 4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic
 7:00 PM Circle 5

December 21 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

December 22 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)
 10:10 AM Adult Forum
 10:10 AM Sunday School Christmas Celebration
 (2yr-8th gr)
 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.

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.

NEW MEMBER CLASS If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be Sundays, January 19 & 26, 2020, from 12:15—2:00 PM. Please plan to attend both sessions. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided. New members will be received on February 2. Please indicate your attendance plans on your attendance card or call the church office by January 12 and let us know if you will need childcare when you

ADVENT MEALS AND WORSHIP Wednesday, December 18. Lunch served from 11:00 AM—noon. Worship is at 12:15 PM. Dinner will be served from 5:00—6:15 PM. Worship is at 6:30 PM.

KMLC MEN'S LUNCHEON Thursday, December 19, 11:30 AM. Suggested donation: "Project Santa" gift - see following: We will have a special Holiday meal. There will not be a cost of the meal this month but please consider bringing a new and unwrapped toy for the Open Door Mission's "Project Santa." Project Santa provides toys to needy boys and girls so that everyone will have gifts on Christmas morning. Candace Gregory, President/CEO of the Open Door Mission will be our speaker. Please RSVP to the Church office by Monday,

December 16 or to jim@kmlchurch.org. Project Santa Toy Needs: Toddler Toys, Art Sets for All Ages, Small and Med. Lego Sets, ALL Sports Balls, Board Games and Puzzles (Especially for Children 8+ and Family Time), Dolls (single and sets), \$10.00 Gift Cards for Walmart and Target, Play-Doh Sets, Cars (All sizes, especially Matchbox and Hot Wheel sets), Makeup and Shaving Kits for Teenagers, Alarm Clocks and Ear Buds for Teens

KOUNTZE FOOD PANTRY Thank you so very much to all who contributed to the holiday bag giveaway for the Kountze food pantry! It was a very successful event thanks to your generosity! Looking forward, the food pantry is in need of canned fruit. This is a major expense every week, and it is also the favorite category of our guests. We do like to spread a little joy where we can!

SIMPLY GIVING Just a reminder - if you give your offering automatically through Simply Giving, please remember if there are any changes to be made, whether increasing, decreasing, or stopping the automatic giving, you need to indicate this change to the office or the withdrawals will continue as they are currently set up. Please send an email to noni@kmlchurch.org or complete a new Simply Giving form and turn it into the office so we can make those changes. **If you would like more info. on Simply Giving**, you can pick up a form at the Welcome Desk or call the office.

CJH CAMP EARLY BIRD SAVINGS! Register for CJH Camp before January 31, 2019 and get \$50 off a full-week session and a drawstring bag! You can register online at <https://www.caroljoyholling.org/register>.



ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 50
Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 219 11:00: 110
Midweek - Noon: 43 Evening: 62
Total: 484
Pantry Guests Served: 285
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 36
Offering:
\$18,891.54 (Regular) \$5,917.93 (Specials)
\$7,655.00 (Phase 2)

Dorothy Cross will have her 90th birthday on Tuesday, December 17.

If you would like to send Dorothy a birthday card, please send it to:

Mrs. Dorothy Cross
6809 N 68th Plz Apt 206 -A
Omaha NE 68152



Advent is the season of joy.

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

Sunday	Matthew 11:2-11	Jesus and John the Baptist
Monday	Isaiah 35:1-10	The return to Zion
Tuesday	James 5:7-10	Patience in suffering
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 5:12-22	A final greeting
Thursday	Nehemiah 8:9-12	Ezra reads God's Law
Friday	Philippians 4:4-9	Paul encourages the people
Saturday	Psalms 146:5-10	Praise for God's help
Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us



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Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. **Isaiah 35:5-6 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, you who bring healing, hope, and joy to the world, give us the faith to trust your never-ending care through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you who made heaven and earth, we thank you for this food, a sign of your never-failing love. Amen. (Psalm 146:6)

A Blessing to Give:

May God strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is near. (James 5:8)

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

- How would life be different for you if you were blind or deaf?
- God's promise that the blind will see and the deaf will hear seems too good to be true. In what ways does this promise bring joy instead of disbelief?
- John the Baptist wondered if Jesus was the awaited messiah. What would you tell John?

Read: Isaiah 35:1-10.

The people of Israel were exiled far from home, imprisoned in Babylon, a foreign land. The people were wondering if there was a future for them. Did the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob abandon them? We can ask similar questions. Will our children have faith? Has our Lord abandoned us? To all such concerns and questions Isaiah responds with unbelievable images of God doing amazing things: the blind will see; the deaf will hear; the lame will walk; and those who can't talk will sing for joy. God makes the impossible possible. Advent reminds us of God's power and promise that is like no other. Advent is a time for joy and patient waiting (James 5:7-10) for God to do what only God can do, that is, save God's people. How does God's promise of care and salvation bring you joy?

Pray: **Come, Lord Jesus, help us to trust your amazing healing power for our lives and our world. Amen.**

Psalm 146 is a song praising God's help. Happy are those who "give food to the hungry" (v. 7). Make cupcakes or cookies and write the words hope, peace, and joy on them. Put them in a bag or box and include a card that reads "Praise the Lord" (v. 1). Deliver them to an organization that feeds the hungry or to those who are homebound or living alone during this Advent season.

This week we light three candles on the Advent wreath. They are the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. Today's candle reflects the joyful return of God's people to Zion.

Say: This is the third week of Advent. Advent means "coming." We are waiting for the coming of Christ. Let us light the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. [Light three candles]

Read: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert (Isaiah 35:5-6).

Respond: Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives joy.

Pray: **Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope, peace, and joy. May we see with the eyes of faith the work of your kingdom in our lives and world. Amen**

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25