

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

January 26, 2020

9:00 & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY after EPIPHANY



Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit, the eternal voice from heaven, the anointed and beloved one, the Spirit moving over the waters.

G Amen.

P As we approach the mystery of God, let us come in confession, trusting the love of Christ crucified and risen.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P God who searches us and knows us,

G **you have shown us what is good,
but we have looked to other lights to find our way.**

We have not been just in our dealings with others.

We have chosen revenge over mercy.

We have promoted ourselves instead of walking humbly with you.

With what shall we come before you?

**Forgive us our sin, and show us your salvation
in the face of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

P Beloved of God, you have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, poured out for you in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Receive the promise of baptism: You are God's child; † your sins are forgiven. Rejoice and be glad, for yours is the reign of heaven:

G Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

ELW 836

In honor of Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th Birthday, on December 16th

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

☞ Lord God,

☞ **your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:1-4

The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

☞ The word of the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”

ELW 517 vs 1

**Lord, keep us steadfast in your word;
curb those who by deceit or sword
would wrest the kingdom from your Son
and bring to naught all he has done.**

☞ The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

☞ **Glory to you, O Lord!**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God’s reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵“*Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,*

on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶*the people who sat in darkness*

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.*”

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “*Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.*” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

☞ 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.

(sit)

- P** God who searches us and knows us,
C you have shown us what is good,
but we have looked to other lights to find our way.

SERMON

Pastor Roynesdal

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Thy Strong Word”

ELW 511

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.

(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)

Sympathy: to the family and friends of Ann McKenna

Thanksgiving: for the baptism of Max Joseph Garday, son of Benjamin & Megan Garday

Illness: Richard Bock, Ron Brown, Debbi Buike, office volunteer, Don Burton, Joe Doremus, Rodney Edwards, Rev. Harry Fink, Samuel Garrett, Eunice Grunberg, Dolores Hiatt, Karrol Kamarath, Roseann Klug, mother of David Klug, Marcie Lafleur, Jean Laughlin, Mary Olson, Gary Rodene, Bess Swanson, Sheri Tipton, Jerry Warner, Ed & Darlene White

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military*—Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Wyatt Johnson, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, 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

Other Prayers: *Seminarians*—Adam Klinker, Katie Larson, Justin Perkins

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

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise”

ELW 310 vs 1&4

- 1** Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise;
manifested by the star to the sages from afar,
branch of royal David's stem in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

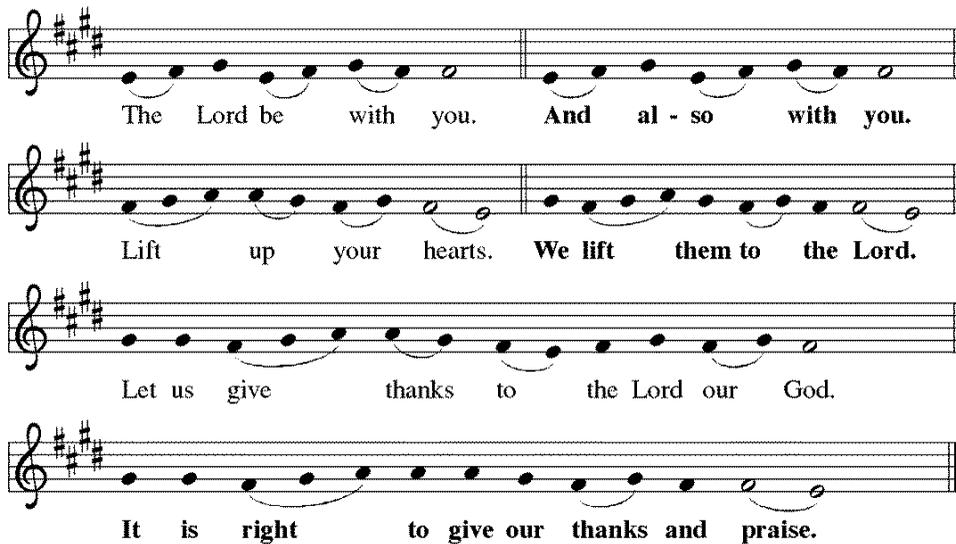
- 4** Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, present in thy holy word;
grace to imitate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we might become like thee at thy great epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest, God in flesh made manifest.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-1885, alt.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** God of wonder,
- G** you formed us in our mother's womb, and from mother earth you bring forth this bread and wine. We place them on your table, together with our lives and all that you have made. Open the heavens to us and pour out your Spirit. We wait for your mercy; we long for your peace; we hunger and thirst for Jesus Christ, our banquet of life. Amen.

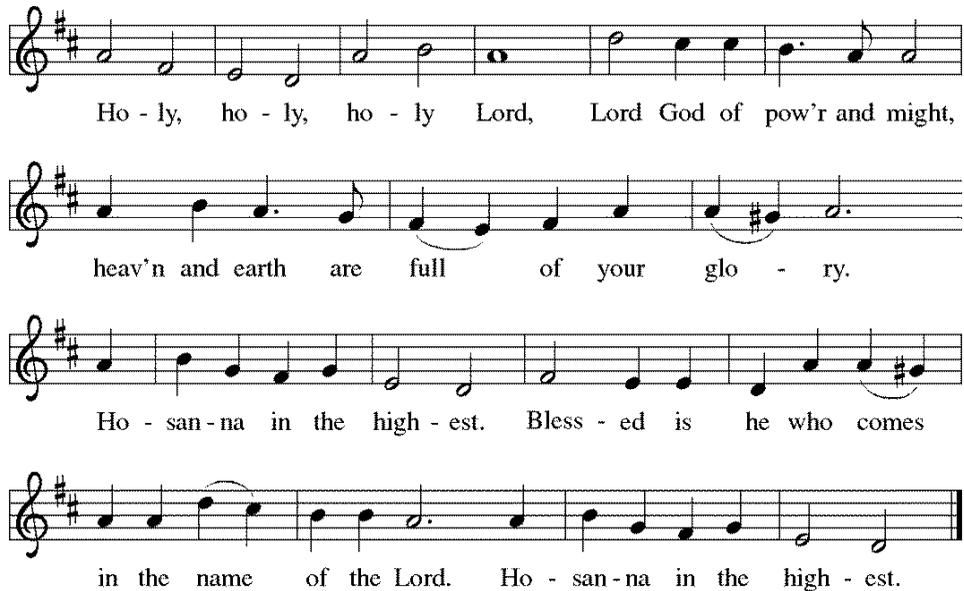
HOLY COMMUNION



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 EPIPHANY

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

☐ Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

☑ **Come to the table of mercy and joy.**

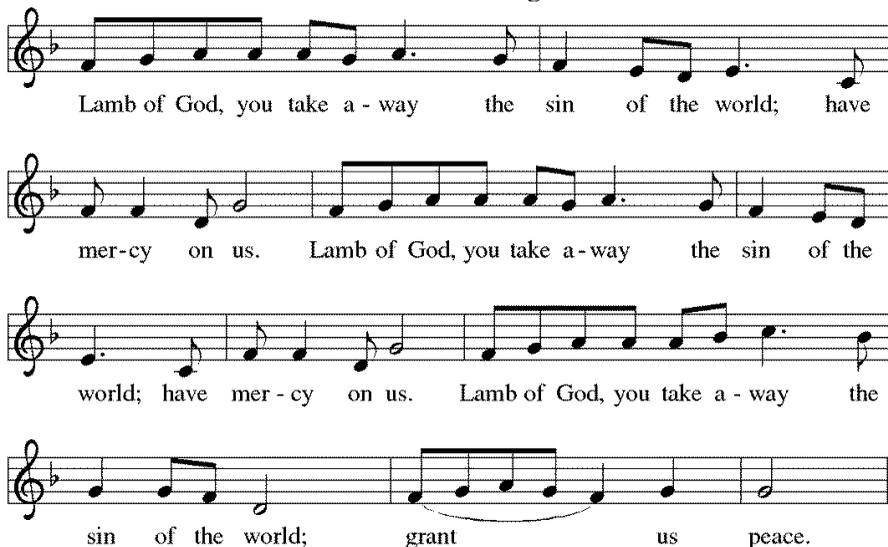
THE DISTRIBUTION

*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

"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.

"Blessed Assurance"

ELW 638

"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"

ELW 658

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** Faithful God,
C you have kept your promise to us in this meal, nourishing us with the gift of salvation. Now send your servants forth in peace, that we may testify to your goodness and share the hope this is ours in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SENDING

(sit)

BLESSING

- ☞ May Christ, the wisdom and power of God, and the source of our life together, keep you united in mind and purpose. And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you always.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Shine, Jesus, Shine”

ELW 671

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Let your light shine.
☛ **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

SATURDAY, 5:00 PM

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

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Liz Pemberton Lowell Harms Kevin Larkowski
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Lector	Jan Falk
Ushers	Joe Council Jim Comfort Janice Falk Jeff Perkins Fred Wachal John Georgeson
Greeters	Darlene Anderson Joyce Wachal Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Britten Johnson
Acolytes	Rahn Johnson John Groenjes

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ann Miller Deb Hinrichs
Lector	Lisa Chinn
Ushers	Linda Hoagland Julie O'Doherty James Holzer
Greeters	Myrna Carter
Crucifer	Torin Edwards
Acolytes	Neely Edwards Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

January 25 & 26, 2020

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 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:** No Forum (Baptism Seminar) **NEXT WEEK:** Congregational Meeting

BAPTISM SEMINAR If you are interested in having your child baptized and have not been through a Baptism Seminar before, please join us on Sunday, January 26 at 10:10 AM. We will meet in the Nave. The purpose of the seminar is to introduce parents to the theology of baptism, walk through the baptismal liturgy, discuss scheduling for the baptism, and address any questions the parents might have. Please call the church office to register at 402-341-7761.

NEW MEMBER CLASS continues this Sunday, January 26, from 12:15—2:00 PM. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided. New members will be received on February 2.

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in honor of Mara Grassmeyer on her 2nd Birthday

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

JOYFUL SOUNDS CHILDREN'S CHOIR Join us each Sunday from 9-9:30 AM. All children (K-6th grade) who want to praise our Lord by singing, meet in the Joyful Sounds Studio on the 2nd floor.

(Continued on page 2)

January 26 Sunday

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 9:00 AM Joyful Sounds Children's Choir (gr K-6)
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
 10:10 AM Adult Forum
 10:10 AM Baptism Seminar
 12:00 PM Stephen Ministry
 12:15 PM New Member Class

January 27 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

January 28 Tuesday

7:00 PM Circle 3

January 29 Wednesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
 12:15 PM Worship
 6:00 PM Confirmation Supper
 6:30 PM Confirmation Class
 7:30 PM Confirmation Worship

January 30 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

February 1 Saturday

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

February 2 Sunday

Homebound Communion
 Receive New Members
 7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir Rehearsal
 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
 9:00 AM Joyful Sounds Children's Choir (gr K-6)
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
 10:10 AM Adult Forum—Congregational Meeting

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY *(Continued from page 1)*

SUNDAY SCHOOL Join us on Sundays on the 2nd floor for Sunday School. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9:00—10:00 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). Sunday School (2 yrs-8th grade) is held from 10:10—10:50 AM.

HIGH SCHOOL FORUM Join us each Sunday in the Youth Center at 10:10 AM.

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.

KOUNTZE FOOD PANTRY The Kountze Food Pantry volunteers do a great job of making your donation dollars go as far as possible, allowing Kountze to serve the most people with nutritious food. One item that takes a big chunk of the weekly budget is cereal, so we would like to make January Cereal Drive month! We like to include healthful choices such as oatmeal, Cheerios and other non-sugary, whole grain options. If you are able to

contribute to our cereal drive, you may leave your donation in the pantry container located in Fellowship Hall.

LINCOLN LUTHERAN CHOIR welcomes new and returning members to the Spring Concert Season! Rehearsals begin with a retreat on Sunday, January 26, 2:00—5:00 PM at Calvary Lutheran Church, 2788 Franklin St., Lincoln. Julia Marble continues as the choir's artistic director and conductor. Julia has prepared a program theme which will focus on the earth and rebirth. Concerts are April 19 and 26 at Grace Lutheran Church in Lincoln at 3:00 PM. Contact Betsy Obenland at 402-786-7277 or lincolnlutheranchoir@gmail.com. Come sing with us!

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>.

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY In our faith formation, what comes after high school youth group? Campus ministry! Join us at Evensong to celebrate our invitation to college students in Omaha! There will be a reception with a silent auction, raffle, and Holden Evening Prayer with special music by students, and a community choir. **What:** Evensong! Holden Evening Prayer, social and celebration! **Where:** Morning Star Lutheran, 331 S. 85th Ave, Omaha, NE 68114. **When:** Sunday, February 9, 3:00 – 5:00 PM (social at 3:00 PM, worship at 4:00 PM). For information or be a part of the choir, contact Pastor Jim Holthus at 218-760-2028 or at lootrnl@hotmail.com. Can't attend, but want to make a gift? Click the donate button at www.nelcm.com. This ministry would not be possible without YOU and our local congregations! Thank you for your support of our Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry!

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY Join us for Evensong! Holden Evening Prayer, social and celebration at Morning Star Lutheran (331 S. 85th Ave, Omaha) on Sunday, February 9 from 3:00 – 5:00 PM (social at 3:00 PM, worship at 4:00 PM). For information or be a part of the choir, contact Pastor Jim Holthus at 218-760-2028 or at lootrnl@hotmail.com.

JOURNEY 2020 The Nebraska Synod Journey is typically a six or seven-day experience held during the summers when there isn't an ELCA Youth Gathering, and it's open to youth who have completed grades 8-12 along with their adult leaders. The next Journey will be held July 6-12, 2020 in Nashville, Tennessee. Early bird (submitted on or before February 15, 2020): \$495. \$100 per person deposit is due with online registrations and is paid by credit card online. Space is limited, so please register early. Registration forms are available online at: <https://nebraskasynod.org/ministries/faithformation/youth/trips/journey-registration.html>

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.

LYSO June 8– 12, 2020, from 8:30 – Noon. Grades K – 12. Mark your Church Calendar for this exciting summer ministry opportunity. Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church is hosting Lutheran Youth Serve Omaha (LYSO). JOIN US!!

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 43

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 145 11:00: 97

Midweek - Snow Day

Total: 285

Pantry Guests Served: Martin Luther King Day

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 31

Offering: Not Available at time of printing

**The Annual Meeting of Kountze Memorial Church
Sunday, February 2, 2020 10:10 AM
In the Fellowship Hall**

The Annual Report will be available on Sunday, January 26, 2020. You can pick it up that Sunday or during the week. It will also be available on our website, www.kmlchurch.org and click on "About Us".



Do justice and love kindness.

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

Sunday	Matthew 5:1-12	Sermon on the Mount
Monday	Micah 6:1-8	True obedience
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Message of the cross
Wednesday	Proverbs 21:12-16	When justice is done
Thursday	Romans 12:9-21	Marks of a Christian
Friday	Isaiah 1:11-17	Rescue the oppressed
Saturday	Psalms 15	Life of the blameless
Sunday	Matthew 5:13-20	Salt and light



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Go to www.vibrantfaithathome.org for more faith-forming activities.

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? **Micah 6:8 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Merciful God, bless us with contentment that seeks only you and a life lived pursuing justice, kindness, and humility. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

We thank you for the gift of each day and the food that sustains us. Help us to show our thanks with compassion for others. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you find peace and comfort in God, the source of true wisdom and strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25)

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

- ☐ How has someone shown you kindness recently?
- ☐ What gets in the way of appreciating what God has done for us?
- ☐ What more can you want in life than God's mercy and kindness? Explain.

Read: Micah 6:1-8.

God is pleading a court case against Israel. The people have turned from God, but God wonders how this could be. The guilt of the people is on themselves because God has done marvelous things for the people: brought them out of Egypt and slavery; given them leaders like Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; their enemies were conquered. With their guilt before them, the people wonder what is the appropriate penance: thousands of sacrifices? endless amounts of holy oils? sacrifice one's own child? Nothing will do but "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (v. 8). In the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) Jesus offers a similar path for faithful followers: poverty of spirit, humility, and mercy. The larger Gospel of Matthew cannot be understood without the content of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. This is the path for us to be satisfied and blessed. This is the way of purposeful, intentional living as a disciple. What helps you live as a disciple?

Pray: Dear God, give us the simple joy of trust in you by living a life of purpose that seeks justice, kindness, and humility with you and all people, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The word beatitude comes from a Latin word meaning blessed or happy. During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says that things will be different in God's kingdom. Even those who mourn, are meek, or are hungry will be blessed. Make a list of people and organizations you know that bless those who mourn, are meek or hungry. In what ways can you help others experience God's kingdom on earth?

In Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus tells his followers they are blessed. The words to a popular children's song are "If you are happy and you know it clap your hands." Use the tune to this song but change the words to "If you are blessed and you know it say a prayer." Take time each day to sing this song. Read the blessings from verses 3-10, and pray for those described in the verses.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12