

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

March 8, 2020

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SECOND SUNDAY of LENT



During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist.

C Amen.

P If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand? Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Gracious God,

C have mercy on us.

**We confess that we have turned away from you,
knowingly and unknowingly.**

We have wandered from your resurrection life.

We have strayed from your love for all people.

Turn us back to you, O God.

**Give us new hearts and right spirits,
that we will find what is pleasing to you
and dwell in your house forever. Amen.**

P Receive good news: God turns to you in love. “*I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live,*” says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God’s grace for you.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Lift High the Cross”

ELW 660

APOSTOLIC GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, 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 holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☞ Almighty God, our leader and guide,
☞ **in the waters of Baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we will lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Genesis 12:1-4a

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

The Lord said to Abram, “*Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*”

^{4a}So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

☞ The word of the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 121 (read responsively)

¹I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

²**My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

³The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

⁴**Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

⁵the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

⁶**the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

⁷The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.

⁸**The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*” ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, “*I have made you the father of many nations*”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

☑ **Glory to you, O Lord!**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 3:1-17

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.*” ³Jesus answered him, “*Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.*” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “*How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?*” ⁵Jesus answered, “*Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.*” ⁶*What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.* ⁷*Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’* ⁸*The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “*How can these things be?*” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “*Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?*

¹¹*‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.*” ¹²*If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?*” ¹³*No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.* ¹⁴*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* ¹⁵*that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*

¹⁶*‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

¹⁷*‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.’*”

☐ 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)

SERMON

Pastor Roynesdal

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*”

ELW 759

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)

Illness: Richard Bock, Debbi Buike, office volunteer, Don Burton, Joe Doremus, Rodney Edwards, Samuel Garrett, Dolores Hiatt, Roseann Klug, mother of David Klug, Marcie Lafleur, Gary Rodene, Rosemarie Schmidt, Sheri Tipton, 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: *Seminarrians*—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

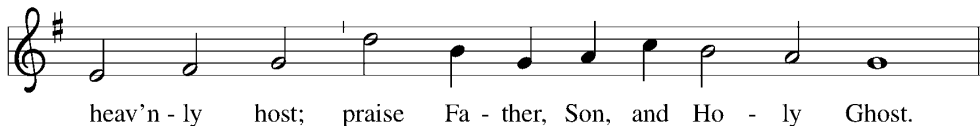
“God So Loved the World”

John Stainer

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

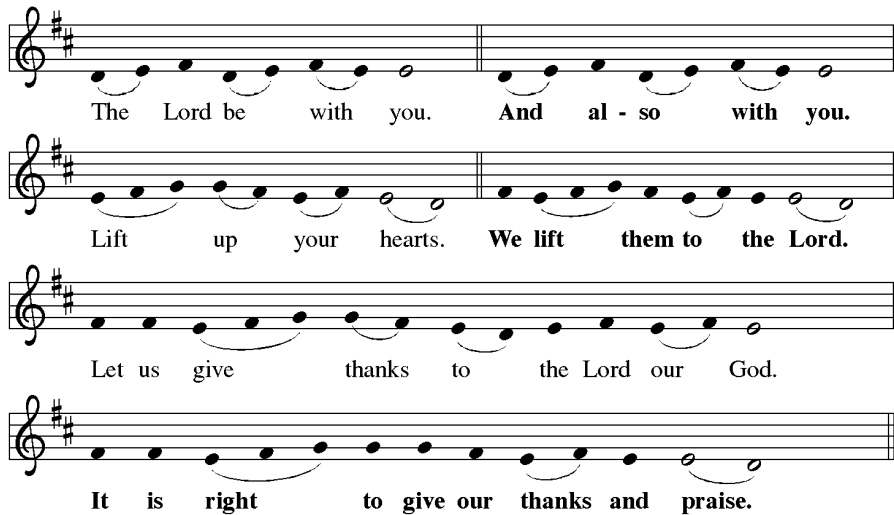


OFFERING PRAYER

P Holy and generous host,

C you set a table where we feast as friends. Prepare us to witness to your goodness with every gift you have given us to share, that all people will know your peace through Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

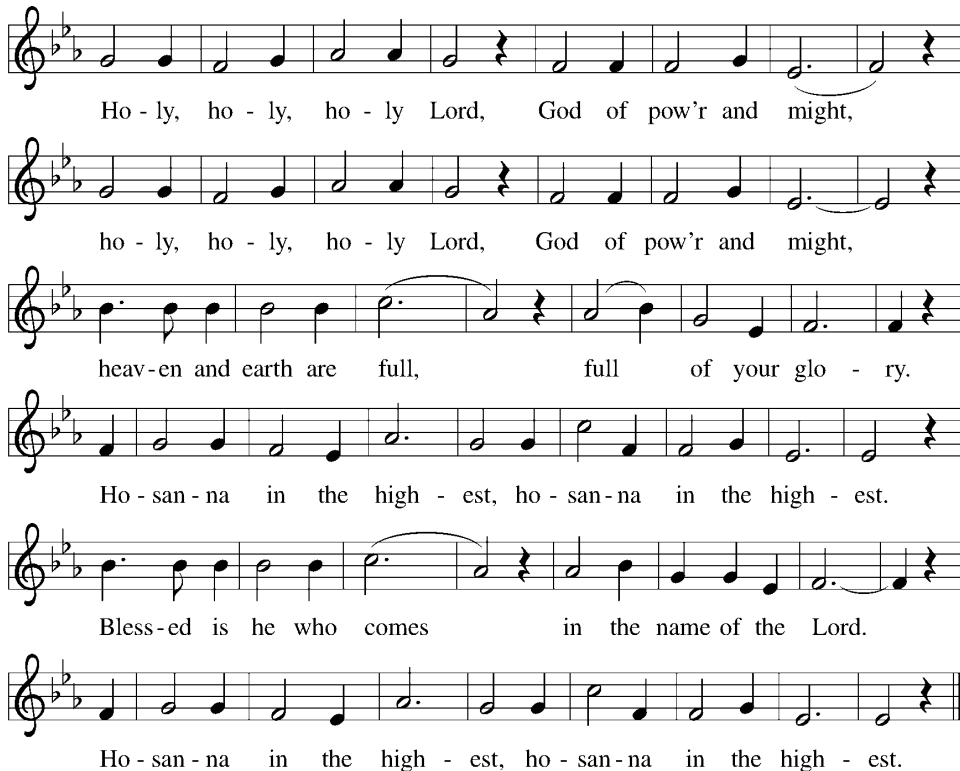
HOLY COMMUNION



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 LENT

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est, 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, 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

☐ God's love is poured out in Christ for you.

☑ **We open ourselves to receive it.**

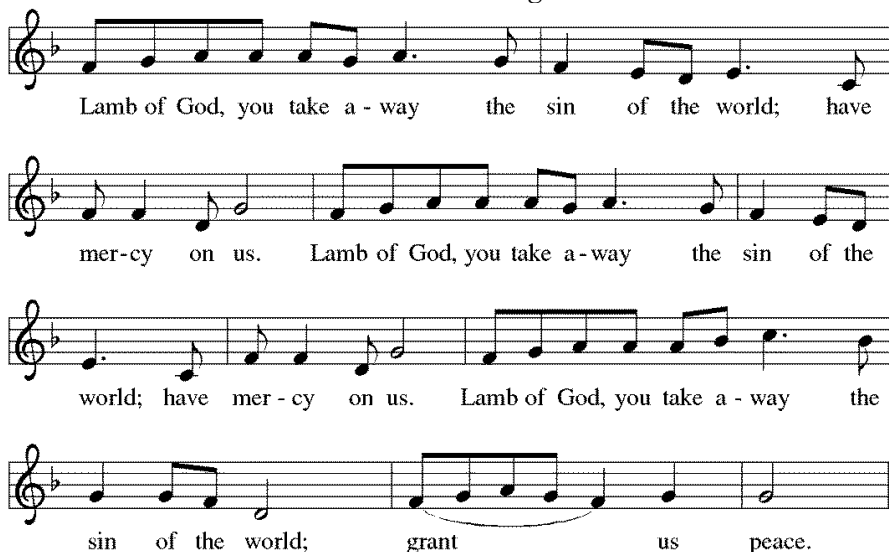
THE DISTRIBUTION

*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.

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”
“All Who Believe and Are Baptized”

ELW 335
ELW 442

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** We thank you, living God,
C for the body and blood of your Son, which sustains us in the wilderness and the garden alike.
As Christ has loved us in this feast, so send us to love Christ in our neighbors. In Jesus' name
we pray. Amen.

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SENDING

(sit)

BLESSING

- ☐ Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. The Holy God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Salvation unto Us Has Come”

ELW 590

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. Share the good news.
☑ **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
Kayla Slight	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
Taylor Brown	Exec. Dir. Kountze Commons

SATURDAY, 5:00 PM

Lector	Kathy Englert
Ushers	Kathy Englert Theresa Gruber
Comm. Set-up	Donna Reinig

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Jane Ross Scott Henneman Jerry Clanton Rick Kolkman Lowell Harms
Lector	Rick Kolkman
Ushers	Glenn Anderson Dan Collett Gary Westerman Bob Woodworth Ted Kaasch Marcy Madison
Greeters	Sharon Anderson Carole Woodworth Karen Wolf
Crucifer	John Groenjes
Acolytes	Kaitlyn Munguia Charlie Wachholtz

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	June Anderson Ann Miller Lowell Harms
Lector	Judith Poffenbarger
Ushers	James Holzer Linda Hoagland Julie O'Doherty
Greeters	Julie King Rosemary Tessin
Crucifer	Torin Edwards
Acolytes	Neely Edwards Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

March 7 & 8, 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 (Fellowship) **NEXT WEEK:** How Are We 'Saved'?

ETERNAL CANDLE is given to the glory of God in honor of Richard Ray's parent's 67th wedding anniversary.

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.

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.

Lent



March 8 Sunday

Daylight Savings—spring ahead 1 hour
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
12:00 PM Book Group

March 9 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

March 11 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group
9:00 AM Staff Meeting
11:00 AM Devotions @ deFreese Manor
11:00 AM Lenten Lunch
12:15 PM Worship
5:30 PM Lenten Dinner
7:00 PM Worship
7:30 PM Call Committee

March 12 Thursday

Council Reports Due
9:30 AM WELCA Board
11:30 AM Property Committee
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

March 14 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

March 15 Sunday

Good News Deadline
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)
10:00 AM Blood Pressure Checks
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)
10:10 AM Adult Forum
10:30 AM Executive Committee

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, April 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 May 3. Please indicate your attendance plans on your attendance card or call the church office by April 12 and let us know if you will need childcare when you register. We are also planning a Saturday New Member Class for those not able to attend on Sundays. Please mark April 18 & 25 from 3:00—4:15 PM on your calendars and mark your attendance card if you plan to attend. New members will be received on Saturday, May 2.

KOUNTZE FOOD PANTRY The Kountze Food Pantry is in immediate need of personal care items, in particular: soap, liquid or bar, and preferably anti-bacterial. We also need shampoo and conditioner, hand sanitizer, antiperspirant, lotion, razors and shave cream. In many cases, Kountze is the only provider of soap for our

guests. Any contributions you can make are greatly appreciated. We are continually amazed at the generosity of the Kountze family! Please consider volunteering for one of the regular shifts from 9:00—11:00 AM or 11:00AM—1:00 PM. The green sign-up book is in Fellowship Hall, meeting room A, by the kitchen.

SEWING GROUP Our sewing group meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 9:00 AM until 2:00 PMish 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! Join the ladies for fun, fellowship, and service and then stay for our Lenten meal at 11 AM and worship at 12:15 PM.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES March 22 & 29, 12:15 PM. Communion is open to all baptized Christians. Those children who are already communing or those children interested in receiving Holy Communion are invited to a First Communion class. We will begin with lunch in the conference room followed by instruction in the Nave with Pastor Hall. Participants will receive their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 9 at 7:00 PM. A good guide for determining when your children are ready to receive Communion is when they begin to ask about receiving it during the liturgy. Please register with the church office at 402-341-7761 or info@kmlchurch.org.

MEN'S LUNCHEON The program is still TBD but it's sure to be a good one! Mark your calendars for 11:30 AM on Thursday, March 19. Suggested donation for lunch is \$10. Please RSVP to the church office or jim@kmlchurch.org by Tuesday, March 17.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY LUNCHEON Sunday, March 29, 12:00 PM. The Social Ministry Committee is hosting a luncheon followed by holy Communion for all homebound members and friends of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church. We also invite our Eucharistic Ministers to participate. To let us know you plan to come, and if you need a ride, please contact the church office at 402-341-7761 or info@kmlchurch.org.

LYSO June 8-12, 2020, from 8:30-Noon. Grades K-12. Mark your Calendar for this exciting summer ministry opportunity at Kountze Memorial. JOIN US!! Invite your friends.

ALTAR FLOWERS, ETERNAL CANDLE, CHURCH BROADCASTS There are still quite a few available dates available for all of the above. You can sponsor them in memory of loved ones or in honor of someone's birthday, anniversary, etc. Altar Flowers are provided by Janousek Florist and cost \$20 a bouquet (no flowers during Lent) and the Eternal Candle is \$7.50. The cost of sponsoring one broadcast is \$200 for 2020. The sign-up sheets are located in the Narthex, just before you enter the Sanctuary.

SPENDING TIME WITH AN OLD FRIEND

Our midweek Lenten Worship will give us an opportunity to visit an old friend: The Lord's Prayer. Each week we will reflect on various petitions of this great prayer gaining insights from Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Pastor Roynesdal and Pastor Hall are looking forward to this special time and encourage you to come and hopefully gain a new perspective and a new appreciation for the prayer we say most often.

Wednesday, March 11

12:15 PM (with the Lord's Supper) and
7:00 PM

THE FOURTH PETITION

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Lunch, 11:00 - Noon
Supper, 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Baked potato bar
w/choice of toppings
(Ham, Bacon, Chili, Cheese, Broccoli, etc.)

Garden Salad
w/Cucumber & Tomato
Ranch or Italian Dressing

Come hungry and join us!

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 61

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 218 11:00: 108

Midweek - Noon: 75 **Evening:** 92

Total: 554

Pantry Guests Served: 383

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 32

Offering:

\$14,807.54 (Regular) \$3,563.40 (Specials)

\$784.00 (Phase 2)

We are blessed to bless others.

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

Sunday	John 3:1-17	For God so loved the world
Monday	Genesis 12:1-4a	The call of Abram
Tuesday	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	God keeps his promise
Wednesday	Jeremiah 17:7-8	Trust the Lord
Thursday	2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Generous giving
Friday	Numbers 6:22-27	Blessing for the people
Saturday	Psalms 121	Assurance of God's protection
Sunday	John 4:5-42	Jesus and the woman at the well



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“I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:3 (NRSV)

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, as you bless us each day in faith, help us to bless others through your never-failing love through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Loving God, you who watch over our going out and our coming in, we thank you for this food that nurtures us day by day, through Jesus Christ. Amen. (Psalm 121:8)

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord bless you with a living faith that you may be born anew each and every day. (John 3:3-8)

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

- What does it mean to you to be blessed?
- Who has blessed you? How might you have blessed someone else?
- Abram and Sarai were called by God to bless all the families of the earth. How do you think this affected their faith in God and the way they lived?

Read: Genesis 12:1-4a.

Abram and his wife Sarai (not mentioned in this text but part of the story) are sent on a faith quest. They look rather foolish to the world. They leave the security of a kinship community to go out and trust an unknown God while becoming foreigners in a strange land. The faith of Abram (and Sarai) in this passage is not defined by doctrines or clear convictions. Faith is a walk of life where people learn who their God is through a trusted relationship. This is true in the Gospel of John as well where faith is never a noun. It is always a verb, an action that trusts in a relationship that recognizes that one's entire existence is dependent upon God. This is what faith looks like. And it has consequences for others because faith is never a private affair: “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). How would you describe your faith as a journey?

Pray: Living God, you call us to ventures we cannot fully imagine. Help us to trust you and know you will lead us all the days of our lives, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalms 121 is an assurance of God's protection. “I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (vv. 1-2). The homeless, hungry, and sick need protection. There are organizations that help with housing, food, and finances. How can you help those in need to know and feel God's protection in their lives?

During the second week in Lent, light two of the six purple candles on your Lenten Candle Cross. The acronym ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) is being introduced as a way to pray. This week represents “C”, for Confession, meaning to confess one's sins and receive God's forgiveness.

Pray: Dear God, I confess that I do not fully place my trust in you. Forgive me for . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42