

# 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  
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[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

August 2, 2020

9:00 AM

NINTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



*In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.*

# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

*Mark Jones, Organist*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

**C** Amen.

**P** Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

**P** Reconciling God,

**C** we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.

We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;

through your love, renew us;

and in your Spirit, lead us;

so that we will live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

**P** Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through ✠ Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

- 1 Give to our God immortal praise!  
Mercy and truth are all his ways.  
Wonders of grace to God belong;  
repeat his mercies in your song.**
- 2 God sent his Son with pow'r to save  
from guilt and darkness and the grave.  
Wonders of grace to God belong;  
repeat his mercies in your song.**
- 3 Give to the Lord of lords renown;  
the King of kings with glory crown.  
His mercies ever shall endure  
when lords and kings are known no  
more!**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

## 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.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

*Refrain*

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,**

- 1 Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. R**
- 2 Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are his. R**
- 3 Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:  
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. R**
- 4 For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia. R**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Glorious God,
- C** your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-5

*God invites Israel to a great feast at which both food and drink are free. God also promises to make an everlasting covenant with all peoples, with promises that previously had been limited to Israel. As David was a witness to the nations, these nations shall now acknowledge the ways in which God has glorified Israel.*

**H**o, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup>Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. <sup>3</sup>Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. <sup>4</sup>See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. <sup>5</sup>See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

℣ The word of the Lord.

☩ Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 145:8-9, 14-21 (*read responsively*)

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup>**LORD, you are good to all,  
and your compassion is over all your works.**

<sup>14</sup>The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

<sup>15</sup>**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,  
and you give them their food in due season.**

<sup>16</sup>You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

<sup>17</sup>**You are righteous in all your ways  
and loving in all your works.**

<sup>18</sup>You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

<sup>19</sup>**You fulfill the desire of those who fear you;  
you hear their cry and save them.**

<sup>20</sup>You watch over all those who love you, but all the wicked you shall destroy.

<sup>21</sup>**My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD;  
let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

## SECOND READING

Romans 9:1-5

*This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.*

**I** am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

(stand)

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord!

## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 14:13-21

*After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.*

**N**ow when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup>When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “*This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.*” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to them, “*They need not go away; you give them something to eat.*” <sup>17</sup>They replied, “*We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.*” <sup>18</sup>And he said, “*Bring them here to me.*” <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

## CHILDREN'S BLESSING

### SERMON

Pastor Hall

(stand)

### HYMN OF THE DAY

*"In Christ Called to Baptize"*

**ELW 575**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1 In Christ called to baptize,<br/>we witness to grace<br/>and gather a people<br/>from each land and race.<br/>In deep, flowing waters,<br/>we share in Christ's death,<br/>then, rising to new life,<br/>give thanks with each breath.</b></p> <p><b>2 In Christ called to banquet,<br/>one table we share,<br/>a haven of welcome,<br/>a circle of care.<br/>Although we are many,<br/>we share in one bread.<br/>One cup of thanksgiving<br/>proclaims Christ, our head.</b></p> | <p><b>3 In Christ called to witness,<br/>by grace we will preach<br/>the life-giving gospel;<br/>God's love we will teach.<br/>By grace may our living<br/>give proof to our praise<br/>in costly compassion<br/>reflecting Christ's ways.</b></p> <p><b>4 Unite us, anoint us,<br/>O Spirit of love,<br/>for you are within us,<br/>around us, above.<br/>Equip us for service<br/>with gifts you bestow.<br/>In Christ is our calling.<br/>In Christ may we grow.</b></p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

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### THE APOSTLES' CREED

- ☐** With the whole church, let us confess our faith.
- ☑** **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**Response:**    **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 Dee Hiatt

**Illness:** Christine Bachman, sister of John Natvig, Richard Bock, Karen Bucholz, Don Burton, Lois Carlsen, Carol Coffey, Joe Doremus, Rodney Edwards, Samuel Garrett, Sherry Henneman, mother of Scott Henneman, Dolores Hiatt, Richard Holzer, father of James Holzer, Renee Johnson, daughter-in-law of Ken & Linda Johnson, Marcie Lafleur, Donna Moessner, Gary Rodene, Vinn Stephens, Sheri Tipton, Dorothy Vancaster, Ed & Darlene White, Kimberly Wilson, Joanne Worm

**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.

*As we share the peace today – and you do so in your home – You are invited to contact a fellow member by phone, email or letter. You can do that today or any time during the week. Pick someone from the church directory. We could email each other or call each other during this time when we cannot meet. Then each week select another person to contact. Try to make it someone you don’t really know and get acquainted with them. Always be sure to leave your address, email, and phone number on your message in case they do not have a directory. Talk to people you know and get the names and addresses of those who might not have directories and try to contact them. By the time we meet again we will have made many new friends.*

# MEAL

(sit)

## THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

Please Support the overall ministry of Kountze Memorial during these difficult times. If you are able, please mail in your offering or donate on-line. Thank you!



## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Sarabande”

Handel

Janet Campbell & Barb Carlsen, *recorders*

## THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

## OFFERTORY HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

ELW 184

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

## OFFERING PRAYER

- P** God of goodness and growth,
- C** all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we will proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.



## HOLY COMMUNION

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** We lift them to the Lord.

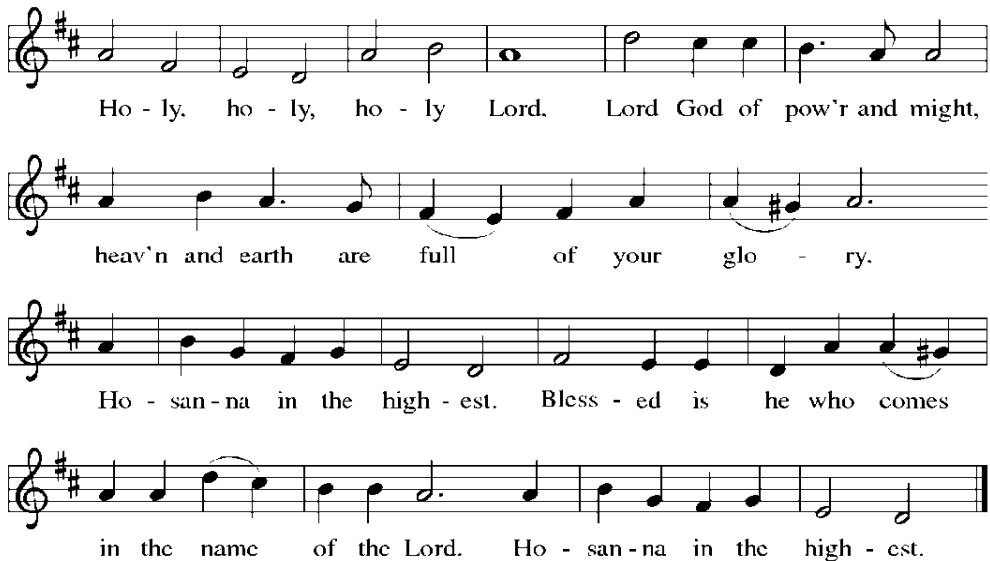
**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## PREFACE FOR TIME AFTER PENTECOST

**P** It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,  
almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## SANCTUS



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

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

**C** **Our Father, who art in heaven,**  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**P** Friends of Jesus, come to his table.

**C** **We receive nourishment for our journey.**

*(sit)*

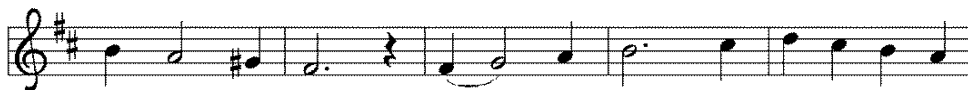
## AGNUS DEI



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, grant us peace.

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*Refrain*

You satisfy the hungry heart  
with gift of finest wheat.  
Come give to us, O saving Lord,  
the bread of life to eat.

1 As when the shepherd calls his sheep,  
they know and heed his voice;  
so when you call your fam'ly, Lord,  
we follow and rejoice. *Refrain*

2 With joyful lips we sing to you  
our praise and gratitude  
that you should count us worthy, Lord,  
to share this heav'nly food. *Refrain*

3 Is not the cup we bless and share  
the blood of Christ outpoured?  
Do not one cup, one loaf, declare  
our oneness in the Lord? *Refrain*

4 The myst'ry of your presence, Lord,  
no mortal tongue can tell:  
whom all the world cannot contain  
comes in our hearts to dwell. *Refrain*

5 You give yourself to us, O Lord;  
then selfless let us be,  
to serve each other in your name  
in truth and charity. *Refrain*

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916-1997  
Text © 1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia

(stand)

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**P** God of the welcome table,

**C** in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. Amen.

**SENDING****FAREWELL AND GODSPEED**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Vickie Wichert, as you leave our community of faith we wish to bid you farewell.

**P** A reading from Isaiah: Thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. (Isaiah 43:1-3).

**P** In holy baptism our Lord Jesus Christ received you and made you a member of his church. When you came to this community we rejoiced to welcome you into the mission we share as the people of

God. In this community you have come to know and to share in God's loving purpose for you and for all creation. God has blessed you in this community, and God has blessed us through you.

☞ Let us pray. Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servant Vickie, who has enriched this community and shared her gifts with us. Now bless and preserve her at this time of transition. Day by day, continue to guide her and give her what is needed, friends to cheer her, and a clear vision of that to which you are now calling her. By your Holy Spirit be present in her pilgrimage, that she will continue to travel with the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

☞ Amen.

☞ Almighty God bless us, and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

☞ Amen.

## HYMN

*“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”*

ELW 674

**1 Let us talents and tongues employ,  
reaching out with a shout of joy:  
bread is broken, the wine is poured,  
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.**

**2 Christ is able to make us one,  
at the table he sets the tone,  
teaching people to live to bless,  
love in word and in deed express. *Refrain***

### *Refrain*

**Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!  
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**3 Jesus calls us in, sends us out  
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share:  
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere! *Refrain***

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929  
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## DISMISSAL

☞ Go in peace. Jesus Christ is with you always.

☞ Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

*Mark Jones, Organist*

✠   ✠   ✠

## Special Notice

If you plan to attend Worship in person, please call/e-mail the church office no later than noon on the Thursday before the Sunday you want to attend. Please note that the plans set forth are subject to immediate change. You may still join us for Worship on Cox channel 13 or live streamed at <https://www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/>



# KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street  
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

August 2, 2020

## Kountze Food Pantry Volunteers

**Mondays, 7:30 - 9:00 AM; 9:00 - 11:00 AM;  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Fridays, 5:00 - 7:00 PM**

Thanks to DiAnn Kolkman, the Kountze Food Pantry received two CARES grants totaling \$62,000. About \$26,000 will be used for disinfecting the pantry to keep the volunteers safe. The rest is for food and must be used by the last day of the year. We are blessed to have such a gifted grant writer! Thanks also to The Barklage Foundation and Richard Sieling, and St. Michael Lutheran Church for their generous support. We will be short of volunteers on Friday, August 7. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at the following link. . Please sign up at the link below. Thank-you!

<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

## KETV Board Update

Paul Sum's KETV Board term expired in August. On behalf of everyone at KMLC, the Endowment Fund Board would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for Paul's dedication and hard work over the last several years. He was indispensable to the successful construction and start-up of Kountze Commons and has been instrumental in bringing KETV, LLC to its new stage to support the missions of Kountze Commons. DiAnn Kolkman will join the KETV Board effective September 1, 2020. Thank you Paul and welcome DiAnn.

## Attendance and Giving

**Online Attendance:** 175

**9:00 AM Attendance:** (Reservation Only) 48

**Pantry Guests Served:** 594

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 23

**Offering:**

\$10,446.00 (Regular)      \$36,598.66 (Specials)

\$612.00 (Phase 2)

## Rally Day & the First Day of Sunday School!

August 23<sup>rd</sup> is Rally Day and With new social distancing protocols in place, we will begin the 2020/2021 Sunday school year online. Lessons will be videotaped and posted on the KMLC Parents Facebook page as well as the Kountze Memorial Facebook Page. In addition, there will be pintables and activity suggestions that complement the lesson. If you would prefer to receive the lessons by email, please contact Kristin Boe at [kristin@kmlchurch.org](mailto:kristin@kmlchurch.org). Register by completing the online registration at:

<https://form.jotform.com/Kristinboe/Registration>

If you are interested in volunteering your time to present a lesson, please contact [kristin@kmlchurch.org](mailto:kristin@kmlchurch.org). All the lessons are scripted and materials are provided. Thank you!

## Project Hope Food Pantry

### Family Indoor Miniature Golf Event

### Includes Lunch

**Sunday, August 30, 12—3 PM**

Register at: [www.projecthopeomaha.org](http://www.projecthopeomaha.org)

## Today at Kountze

**Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God in honor of Lynn & Nancy Meyer's 51<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary; in honor of Diane Nickeson-Ray's birthday

## Sunday School

Each Sunday I will post a video of the Children's sermon on the KMLC Parent Group Facebook Page. In addition, I will be providing some printable activities that relate to the lesson. Take a picture of your child's work and post it in the comments. Let's stay as connected as possible while we can't gather together. Stay tuned for more fun activities!

In Peace, Kristin

*God's generosity is like no other.*

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

Sunday	Matthew 14:13-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand
Monday	Isaiah 55:1-5	An invitation to abundant life
Tuesday	Romans 9:1-5	God's choice of Israel
Wednesday	Genesis 32:22-31	Jacob wrestles at Peniel
Thursday	Psalms 17:1-7, 15	Prayer for deliverance
Friday	1 Timothy 6:11-19	The good fight of faith
Saturday	Psalms 145:8-9, 14-21	The Lord is kind and merciful
Sunday	Matthew 14:22-33	Jesus walks on water

taking  
faith  
home

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Go to [www.vibrantfaithathome.org](http://www.vibrantfaithathome.org) for more faith-forming activities.

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. **Isaiah 55:1 (NRSV)**

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Dear God, we thank you for inviting us to the banquet feast that has no end and is filled with joy and life in your presence through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, the eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. Amen. (Psalm 145:15-16)

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God of abundance fill you with joy and peace in believing.

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

- What is a dream you have for your future?
- Tell or think about a time you had a dream that came true.
- How do your dreams reflect your faith in Christ?

*Read:* Isaiah 55:1-5.

Feasting is a biblical image of God's providence and grace. In Matthew 14 we have Jesus feeding the masses, not just five thousand people, but five thousand men plus the women and children. It comes right after the beheading of John the Baptist at another feast, the banquet of King Herod. Just as Jesus' banquet is a far cry from other earthly feasts, so is God's invitation to eat and drink without payment unique to other economies we experience. Isaiah 55 includes a challenge to all who want glory and feasting: "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" (55:2). Isaiah gets to the heart of the problem of life: pursuing that which is not important, not essential. And now, ever since Jesus fed the masses, God has reached out to all people with the promise of true joy envisioned in a banquet feast that never ends. What is it that you want to pursue in life? Does your pursuit reflect the faith and joy of being invited to God's banquet? Why or why not?

*Pray:* **God of abundant joy, help us to remember and believe that your kingdom gives us a joy like no other through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The crowds followed Jesus. Jesus "had compassion for them and cured their sick" (Matthew 14:14b). There are many organizations that are treating and researching cures for diseases. Think or talk about ways to support or donate to an organization that is doing this work.

God's love and care for people is shown in the Bible with stories of meals and feasts. Invite friends or someone you may not know very well for a meal in your home. Begin the meal with a prayer and engage in caring conversations as you enjoy the meal together. After guests leave, take time to think about what you enjoyed the most as you prepared and hosted the meal.

End your day with this or a similar prayer: **Lord, help me to find joy in your abundant care for us. Amen.**

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** 1 Kings 19:9-18; Psalm 85:8-13  
Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33