

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

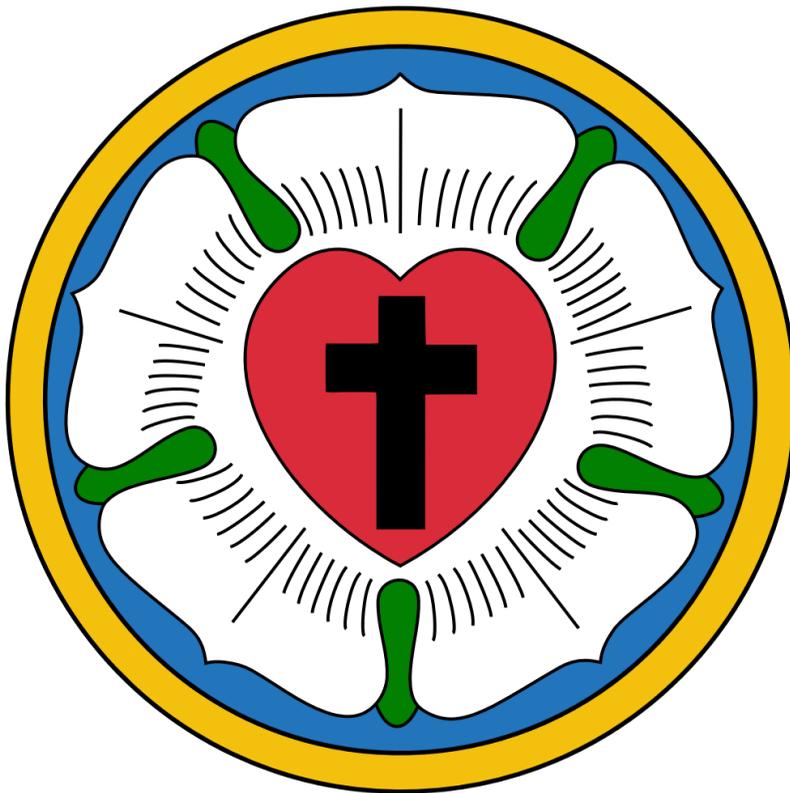
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68131-3616
402-341-7761
www.kmlchurch.org

October 25, 2020

9:00 AM

REFORMATION SUNDAY



Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Kountze Brass
Scott Quackenbush, *trumpet*
Jay Wise, *trombone*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove”

ELW 578
vs. 1, 2, 5, 6

- 1 Creator Spirit, heav'nly dove,
descend upon us from above;
with graces manifold restore
your creatures as they were before.
- 2 To you, the Comforter, we cry;
to you, the gift of God most high,
true fount of life, the fire of love,
the soul's anointing from above.
- 5 Keep far from us our cruel foe,
and peace from your own hand bestow;
upheld by you, our strength and guide,
no evil can our steps betide.
- 6 Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and you, of both, to be but one;
that through the ages all along
your praise may be our endless song.

Text: Rhabanus Maurus, 776-856; tr. composite

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE

“All Glory Be to God on High”

pg. 159 ELW

One of the earliest Lutheran hymns; written by Nikolaus Decius in 1523, used in Luther's German Mass

- 1 All glory be to God on high,
and peace to earth be given!
Let angels sing, let all reply;
goodwill breaks forth from heaven!
Lord God Almighty, heaven's king,
we worship you, our thanks we sing,
we praise you for your glory.
- 2 Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son
of God, creation's author,
O Lamb of God, your death alone
takes sin away forever.
Stretch your arms to ev'ry land,
and as your reign at God's right hand,
receive our prayer; have mercy.
- 3 To you alone, O God, we cry,
the Holy One we name you;
for you alone are God most high,
one living God we claim you:
we worship you, Lord Jesus Christ,
with God the Spirit ever blest,
in God the Father's glory.
Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Almighty God, gracious Lord,
- ☑ we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

📖 The word of the Lord!

🙏 Thanks be to God!

PSALM 46 (read responsively)

¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

²**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶**The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸**Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰**“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

SECOND READING

Romans 3:19-28

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

☒ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

ELW 509

God's word is our great her - i - tage and shall be ours for - ev - er;
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief en - deav - or.
Through life it guides our way; in death it is our stay. Lord, grant while
time shall last your church may hold it fast through-out all gen - er - a - tions.

☒ The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord!

HOLY GOSPEL

John 8:31-36

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “*If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*” ³³They answered him, “*We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’*”

³⁴Jesus answered them, “*Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*”

☒ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)
CHILDREN’S BLESSING *A special word about Bible Sunday*

SERMON

Pastor Hall

(stand)
HYMN OF THE DAY “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” **ELW 504**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a sword and shield victorious;
he breaks the cruel oppressor's rod
and wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe
has sworn to work us woe!
With craft and dreadful might
he arms himself to fight.
On earth he has no equal.</p> <p>2 No strength of ours can match his might!
We would be lost, rejected.
But now a champion comes to fight,
whom God himself elected.
You ask who this may be?
The Lord of hosts is he!
Christ Jesus, mighty Lord,
God's only Son, adored.
He holds the field victorious.</p> | <p>3 Though hordes of devils fill the land
all threat'ning to devour us,
we tremble not, unmoved we stand;
they cannot overpower us.
Let this world's tyrant rage;
in battle we'll engage!
His might is doomed to fail;
God's judgment must prevail!
One little word subdues him.</p> <p>4 God's Word forever shall abide,
no thanks to foes, who fear it;
for God himself fights by our side
with weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house,
goods, honor, child, or spouse,
though life be wrenched away,
they cannot win the day.
The kingdom's ours forever!</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

☞ God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

☞ **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

(stand)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

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

Illness: Richard Bock, Don Burton, Carol Coffey, Carol Duncan, sister of Debbie Robinson, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Samuel Garrett, Richard Holzer, father of James Holzer, Renee Johnson, daughter-in-law of Ken & Linda Johnson, Harlan Kirkvold, father of Steve Kirkvold, Marcie Lafleur, Rick Lienemann, Mary Olson, Patricia Ranney, Gary Rodene, Evelyn Sueper, grandmother of Melissa Osentowski, Sheri Tipton, Dorothy Vancaster, Charlie Wachholtz, Ed & Darlene White, Kimberly Wilson, Joanne Worm, Mary Yocum

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; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators

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

WE SHARE GOD'S PEACE

☐ The peace of Christ be with you always.

☑ **And also with you.**

As we share the peace today – and you do so in your home – You are invited you 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

Kountze Brass

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** Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.
- C** You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

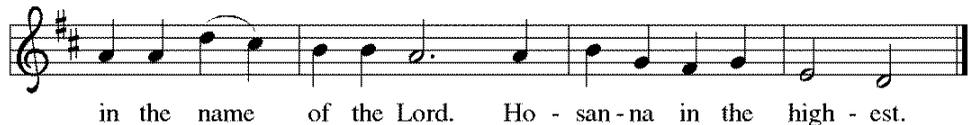
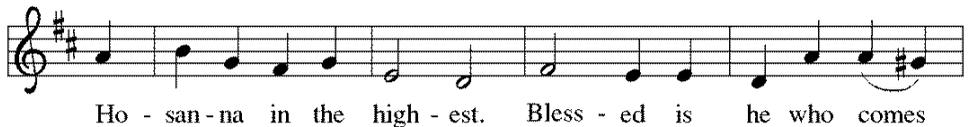
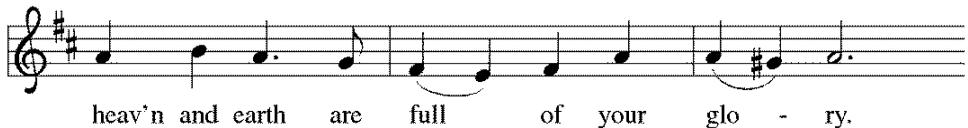
HOLY COMMUNION

- 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



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 to the banquet table

☑ where Jesus Christ gives himself as food and drink.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

"Agnus Dei"



- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Faith of our fathers, living still
in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
whene'er we hear that glorious word.
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
we will be true to you till death.</p> <p>2 Faith of our mothers, daring faith,
your work for Christ is love revealed,
spreading God's word from pole to pole,
making love known and freedom real.
Faith of our mothers, holy faith,
we will be true to you till death.</p> | <p>3 Faith of our sisters, brothers too,
who still must bear oppression's might,
raising on high, in prisons dark,
the cross of Christ still burning bright.
Faith for today, O living faith,
we will be true to you till death.</p> <p>4 Faith born of God, oh, call us yet,
bind us with all who follow you,
sharing the struggle of your cross
until the world is made anew.
Faith born of God, O living faith,
we will be true to you till death.</p> |
|--|---|

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863, st. 1, alt.; Joseph R. Alfred, b. 1947, sts. 2-4
Text sts. 2-4 © Joseph R. Alfred, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>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.</p> | <p>2 Lord Jesus Christ, your pow'r make known,
for you are Lord of lords alone;
defend your holy church, that we
may sing your praise eternally.</p> |
| <p>3 O Comforter of priceless worth,
send peace and unity on earth;
support us in our final strife
and lead us out of death to life.</p> | |

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546;
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *(written by Martin Luther)*

- ☞** We give you thanks, almighty God,
- ☞** that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☞ The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, Son ✠, and Holy Spirit.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation”

ELW 645

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ, our head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord and precious,
binding all the church in one;
holy Zion's help forever
and our confidence alone.</p> <p>2 To this temple, where we call you,
come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;
come, with all your lovingkindness,
hear your people as they pray;
and your fullest benediction
shed within these walls today.</p> | <p>3 Here bestow on all your servants
what they seek from you to gain;
what they gain from you, forever
with the blessed to retain;
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.</p> <p>4 Praise and honor to the Father,
praise and honor to the Son,
praise and honor to the Spirit,
ever three and ever one:
one in might and one in glory
while unending ages run!</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Latin hymn, c. 7th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

DISMISSAL

- ☞ The Living Christ has set you free!
☛ **Free indeed! Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*
K. Craig Bircher & Scott Quackenbush, *trumpet*
Jason Stromquist & Jay Wise, *trombone*

✠ ✠ ✠

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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 Saturday or 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

October 24 & 25, 2020

Q & A with Pastor Shari Duminy Thursday, October 29 from 7:00-8:30 PM (please note date change)

We will hold a Question and Answer session with Pastor Shari Duminy on Thursday, October 29 (please note date change) from 7:00-8:30 PM. It will take place in person in the sanctuary (and the Fellowship Hall if necessary) and will also be live-streamed. Tim Backora, Chair of the Call Committee, will lead the session. Those present will have the opportunity to ask Pastor Duminy questions.

- Those live-streaming can email their questions to the Chair of the Call Committee, Tim Backora (tbackora@cox.net) by Tuesday, October 27.
- Those planning to be in attendance must register by Noon on Tuesday, October 27.

As has been the custom, you will enter through the Kountze Commons Link (west side) and exit through the Farnam Street doors.

Special Congregation Meeting Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 10:30 AM

A special congregational meeting for the sole purpose of voting on calling The Reverend Shari Duminy as Associate Pastor will be held in the sanctuary. Attendance at the meeting will also be permitted through Zoom. Those physically present will cast a ballot on whether to call Pastor Duminy. Those who attend via Zoom will have until 12:30 PM to come to the west church parking lot, receive a ballot, and vote. Please note that those not physically present at the meeting must have first registered via Zoom in order to cast a ballot. This is in accordance with ELCA policy. Five percent (5%) of the voting members (those who are confirmed) shall constitute a quorum. That means that at least 75 confirmed members must attend the meeting either physically or via Zoom.

Zoom Codes: Meeting ID: 964 5627 3096
Passcode: 793541

Today at Kountze

Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God in honor of the wedding of Sydney Feller and Nicholas Seaman; in honor of Amanda Schneiderman's birthday given by John & Lynn Schneiderman

Television Broadcast is sponsored in honor of Pastor Bob Johnson's 80th birthday given by Mary Ann Johnson

Bible Sunday

Sunday, October 25 - Blessing of Bibles
For Ages 2, 4, and 1st, 3rd, and 5th grades

Even though there are physical distancing restrictions, we will still honor the importance of this day and have provided

children with the Holy Scriptures. Children ages 2 and 4 years of age, and those in 1st, 3rd, and 5th grades, receive Bibles. There will be a Blessing of the Bibles during the televised church service this Sunday, October 25.

Online Sunday School

Lessons are videotaped and posted on the KMLC Parents Facebook page as well as the Kountze Memorial Facebook Page. In addition, there are 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.

Youth Forum

Sundays at 10:10 AM

IN-PERSON: The youth group will meet in-person in the green space on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month. The 1st Sunday of the month will be current event Sunday.

Please bring an article or current event to share (must be non-COVID related).

ZOOM: The youth group will meet via Zoom on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month.

Adult Forum

Members and friends of the congregation will have the opportunity to study Martin Luther's "Freedom of a Christian" (1520). The ELCA is encouraging study of this monumental text on its 500th anniversary. Pr. Hall will post videos for this multi-week study on a Kountze Memorial designated channel on YouTube. The YouTube link to the videos is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChtalSdEjyMBKlZjbgGGIyFA/>. The text of "Freedom of a Christian" and the study guide are available for free on the ELCA's Reformation homepage: www.elca500.org.

Attendance and Giving

Saturday Attendance: 14

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 81

Total: 95

Pantry Guests Served: 865

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 27

Offering:

\$10,506.00 (Regular) \$2,490.63 (Specials)

\$962.00 (Debt Reduction)

Disciples have a trusted relationship with Jesus.

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

Sunday	John 8:31-36	The Son makes you free
Monday	Jeremiah 31:31-34	The new covenant
Tuesday	Romans 3:19-28	True righteousness
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 34:1-12	Moses is buried in Moab
Thursday	Psalms 90:1-17	God is eternal
Friday	Galatians 2:15-21	Justified through faith
Saturday	Psalms 46	God is our refuge
Sunday	Matthew 5:1-12	The beatitudes



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

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” **John 8:31-32 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, keep your faithful people steadfast in your word so that we may receive your freedom and truth through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God of glory and might, with this gift of food we remember the gift of faith that strengthens us and renews us daily through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord bless you with a relationship to God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

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

- Talk or think about what it takes to have a strong, ongoing relationship with a friend.
- What gets in the way of a friendship?
- Talk or think about what it takes to have a strong, ongoing relationship with Jesus.

Read: John 8:31-36.

It is the power of the word that Jesus brings that gives us freedom from sin. That word is first and foremost Jesus, the Word that became flesh (John 1:14). Christian disciples “continue” or remain in the freeing and saving word of God. The Gospel of John emphasizes that the follower of Jesus has an ongoing relationship to him by continuing “in my word” (8:31). To know the truth that sets one free is more than to know information; it is to live in a relationship to Jesus through faith. The challenge at the time of the Reformation—and today as well—is for the church to promote a living relationship with God, a relationship that depends on faith in Jesus, the Son of God. We experience this relationship through worship, prayer, reading the Bible, and serving and loving one’s neighbor for the sake of Christ. How do you continue to live each day as a disciple of Jesus?

Pray: **Almighty God, help me to trust in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and have life in his name. Amen.**

Martin Luther wrote, “God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does.” An important theme of the Reformation is that all Christians are called to serve others through their baptisms. Think about friends and neighbors in your community who may need help or support in some way. What good works can you do to serve them in Jesus’ name?

Martin Luther wrote the words for *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* and composed the melody. This well-known hymn is based on Psalm 46. After reading this psalm once, make a list of words from it that help you understand God as a mighty fortress. Read Psalm 46 again and pause for a moment when you read a word from your list. After finishing, say, “Amen.”

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS: Micah 3:5-12; Psalm 43
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12