

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

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

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

December 26 & 27, 2020

5:00pm & 9:00am

LESSONS and CAROLS SUNDAY



PRELUDE

David Gerard, *piano 5:00pm*
Mark Jones, *organ 9:00am*

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

GATHERING CAROL

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

ELW 289

**1 Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.**

**2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song?**

Refrain

Refrain

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king.**

Refrain

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy,
The Crown of Jesus Music, 1864

OUR NEED for a SAVIOR

LESSON

Genesis 3:1-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, *"Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?"* ²The woman said to the serpent, *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"* ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, *"You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸They heard the sound of the Lord GOD walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord GOD among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord GOD called to the man, and said to him, *"Where are you?"* ¹⁰He said, *"I heard the*

sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the Lord GOD said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The Lord GOD said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

☒ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

☐ Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, the Father, Son ✝ and Holy Spirit, who was in the beginning, who makes a dwelling among us, who covers us with justice and mercy.

☑ Amen.

☐ Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

☐ God of goodness and loving kindness,

☑ we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors.

We have turned away from your invitation to new life.

We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.

In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,

those we know and those only known to you.

for the sake of the one who came to live among us,

Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

☐ Hear the good news of peace and salvation! God forgives us all our sins, not through our own work, but through ✝ Jesus Christ, made known to all people. With all who come to the manger, rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.

☑ Amen.

- 1** Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!
- 2** Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!
- 3** Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol;
tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Almighty God,
- ☑ **you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

THE PROMISES of a SAVIOR

(sit)

LESSON

A Just Lawmaker

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "*If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.*" ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "*They are right in what they have said.* ¹⁸*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command.* ¹⁹*Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable.*"

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

CAROL

"Joy to the World"

ELW 267 vs 1&4

**1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

**4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

LESSON

A Righteous King

Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

**1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

**4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

LESSON

The Lord's Servant

Isaiah 42:1-10a

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. ⁵Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, ⁷to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. ⁸I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. ⁹See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. ¹⁰Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

CAROL

"Let All Together Praise Our God"

ELW 287 vs. 1-3, 5

**1 Let all together praise our God
before the highest throne;
today God opens heav'n again
and sends the only Son,
and sends the only Son.**

**2 From God's right hand the Son descends,
is born an infant small,
and lies in poverty, his bed
a manger in a stall,
a manger in a stall.**

**3 O tender Child, you veil in flesh
the splendor of your might;
a servant's garb now wraps the one
who clothed the sky with light,
who clothed the sky with light.**

**5 A wonderful exchange you make:
you take our flesh and blood,
and in return give us to share
the shining realm of God,
the shining realm of God.**

Text: Nikolaus Herman, 1480-1561;
tr. hymnal version
Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

THE GIFT of a SAVIOR

LESSON

God with us...

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*" ²¹*She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*" ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"*Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,*" which means, "*God is with us.*" ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

CAROL

"Away in a Manger"

ELW 277

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.</p> | <p>2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus;
look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.</p> |
| <p>3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.</p> | |

Text: North American, 19th cent.

LESSON

... in humility ...

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn..

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
 how still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 the silent stars go by;
 yet in thy dark streets shineth
 the everlasting light.
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 are met in thee tonight.

3 How silently, how silently
 the wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 the blessings of his heav'n.
 No ear may hear his coming;
 but, in this world of sin,
 where meek souls will receive him, still
 the dear Christ enters in.

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

LESSON

... making us children ...

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

☞ The word of the Lord.

☞ Thanks be to God.

CAROL

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

ELW 294

1 In the bleak midwinter,
 frosty wind made moan,
 earth stood hard as iron,
 water like a stone;
 snow had fallen, snow on snow,
 snow on snow,
 in the bleak midwinter,
 long ago.

2 Heaven cannot hold him,
 nor earth sustain;
 heav'n and earth shall flee away
 when he comes to reign;
 in the bleak midwinter
 a stable place sufficed
 the Lord God almighty,
 Jesus Christ.

3 What can I give him,
 poor as I am?
 If I were a shepherd
 I would bring a lamb;
 if I were a wise man
 I would do my part;
 yet what I can I give him—
 give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894

LESSON**... of God.****John 3:16-17**

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.

¹⁷Indeed, 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 word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

CAROL*"All My Heart Again Rejoices"***ELW 273 vs. 1&3**

**1 All my heart again rejoices
as I hear, far and near,
sweetest angel voices;
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing,
till the air ev'rywhere
now with joy is ringing.**

**3 Come, then, let us hasten yonder;
here let all, great and small,
kneel in awe and wonder;
love him who with love is yearning;
hail the star that from far
bright with hope is burning.**

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676;
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

OUR RESPONSE to the SAVIOR**LESSON****Colossians 3:12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

*(stand)***CAROL***"From Heaven Above"***ELW 268 vs. 1&3**

**1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"**

**3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high,
who hears your sad and bitter cry,
who will himself your Savior be
and from all sin will set you free."**

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

NICENE CREED

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

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

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

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

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

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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

THE PEACE IS SHARED

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.



OFFERING MUSIC 9:00 AM *“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”*

Michael Connolly
Barb Carlsen, *vocalist*
Amy & Nick Pignatore, *vocalists*

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“From Heaven Above”

ELW 268 vs. 10&12

10 Were earth a thousand times as fair
and set with gold and jewels rare,
still such a cradle would not do
to rock a prince so great as you.

12 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child,
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
a quiet chamber in my heart,
that you and I may never part.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** Gracious God,
- C** you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we will proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

- 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 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

SANCTUS

“From Heaven Above”

ELW 268 vs. 13&14

13 My heart for very joy now leaps;
my voice no longer silence keeps;
I too must sing with joyful tongue
the sweetest ancient cradle-song:

14 "Glory to God in highest heav'n,
who unto us the Son has giv'n."
With angels sing in pious mirth
a glad new year to all the earth!

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger")*

Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your Name!
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone:
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver Your children most dear.

For Yours is the kingdom; o'er all things You reign.
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.
To you be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

☩ Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world. Have mercy on us!
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world. Have mercy on us!
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world. Grant us peace!

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

☐ The word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine.
☩ Come meet Christ in this meal.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

ELW 295

- 1** Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.
- 2** Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.
- 3** This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.
- 4** Let the heights of heav'n adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.
- 5** Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high
thanksgiving
and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory
evermore and evermore! Amen.

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius,
348-413; tr. composite

**1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

Refrain

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"**

**2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain***

**3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of
peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth.**

Refrain

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☐** We give you thanks, gracious God,
☑ that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body, and blood of Christ.
Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need. Through
the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☐ Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ✠ through the Word made flesh.
- ☑ Amen.

SENDING CAROL

“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

God rest ye merry gentlemen Let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Savior Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r When we were gone astray
Oh tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy

In Bethlehem, in Israel This blessed Babe was born
And laid within a manger Upon this blessed morn
The which His Mother Mary Did nothing take in scorn
Oh tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy

Fear not then, said the Angel Let nothing you affright
This day is born a Savior Of a pure Virgin bright
To free all those who trust in Him From Satan's pow'r and might
Oh tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
- ☑ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

David Gerard, *piano 5:00pm*
Mark Jones, *organ 9:00am*

✠ ✠ ✠

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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

December 26 & 27, 2020

Kountze Food Pantry Thank You & Volunteers Needed

Mondays, 7:30 - 9:00 AM;

9:00 - 11:00 AM;

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Fridays, 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas hygiene bags for Pantry guests! Between products collected and monetary contributions, we will be able to hand out 250 gift bags which include: shampoo/conditioner, soap, razor, shaving cream, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, and floss. We will distribute the bags on December 21. On December 14, we distributed 250, 30 lbs. extra boxes, provided by the government and Food Bank, which contained canned goods and pantry items. It was a welcome surprise for our guests! More good news is Kountze received \$1,370.82 from Family Fare receipts! Please keep them coming! As winter approaches, the pantry will be in need of volunteers willing to take a turn facing the elements while helping guests to their cars. The more people we have, the shorter the shift. Right now, we have 2 or 3 people doing all the work for 4 hours. Please consider helping them out by volunteering at the link below:

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

Year End Giving

Just a reminder that all 2020 giving - what you want on your year-end statement - will need to be **in the church office or postmarked by December 31, 2020.**

Altar Flowers, Eternal Candle, Television Broadcast for 2021

You can help us beautify the altar at Kountze or sponsor a television broadcast if you wish. This is a simple and meaningful way to honor a loved one who has passed away, celebrate a special anniversary or milestone, or can be given in thanksgiving for friends or family. Their names will appear in the church

bulletin on the weekend you select. You can sign up for a date to provide flowers, eternal candle, and/or television broadcast by calling the church office and/or mail your check to the church and note what it is for, and who it is in honor of, in memory, or thanksgiving of.

Today at Kountze

Television Broadcast is sponsored by Chet & Sara Worm in celebration of their 52nd wedding anniversary - married on December 28, 1968 in Mamrelund Lutheran Church in Stanton Iowa

Online Sunday School

There will not be a Sunday School lesson on December 27. Lessons will resume in video format on January 3, 2021. Lessons are videotaped and posted on the KMLC Parents Facebook page as well as our Kountze Facebook Page.

Youth Forum

Sundays at 10:10 AM

IN-PERSON: The youth group will meet in-person 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.

Attendance and Giving

Saturday Attendance: 18

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 66

Total: 84

Online Attendance: 219

Pantry Guests Served: 1,034

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 37

Offering:

\$14,176.04 (Regular)

\$5,016.43 (Specials)

\$792.00 (Debt Reduction)

The sight of baby Jesus brings peace.

Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple
Monday	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Rejoice in the Lord
Tuesday	Galatians 4:4-7	Adoption as God's children
Wednesday	Jude 1-2	A prayer for blessing
Thursday	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	A time for everything
Friday	Psalms 8	Divine majesty and human dignity
Saturday	Psalms 148	All creation praises God
Sunday	John 1:1-18	The Word became flesh



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"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation." **Luke 2:29-30 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

God of peace, give us faith to walk in peace each day and to trust your eternal care for us and for all the world through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Praise the Lord, all you people; for our Savior Jesus and for this gift of food, praise the Lord. (Psalm 148:1)

A Blessing to Give:

May Jesus, the light of the world, give you peace.

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

- When something painful happens, where do you look for hope?
- What does it mean to you to be a person of peace?
- How does the message of the birth of Jesus bring you hope and peace?

Read: Luke 2:22-40.

Luke 2:29-32 is known as the *Nunc Dimittis* (Latin for, "Now release," the first words of Simeon's song of praise in the Latin Bible) used in worship and also tender words offered at the deathbed of a loved one. Simeon's song makes it clear that in Jesus, God has acted in a way that now gives peace for all people, including Gentiles, the non-Jews of the world. Luke makes it clear that the promise given to the Jewish people to be a blessing to the world has now come to pass through the birth of Jesus. Barriers are broken down. Jews and Gentiles together have hope. Mary and Joseph who can only offer two turtledoves (often a gift given by the poor) as a sacrifice for Jesus' birth, have actually given the world its real hope and peace. It brings the joy expressed in Psalm 148, but it also brings the pain that will pierce Mary's soul. Compassion is like that. It feels the pain of others and trusts that God's saving work is the light, hope, and peace of the world. How has love brought you pain and peace at the same time?

Pray: **Loving God, we thank you for Simeon, Anna, and all those throughout history who have lifted up Jesus as the hope and peace for all the world. Amen.**

In the temple in Jerusalem, Simeon and Anna encouraged and blessed two young, first-time parents, Mary and Joseph. Identify parents with young children in your congregation or community. Is there an act of service you can do on their behalf (e.g., help with cleaning, bringing a meal, or childcare) so they can enjoy some time out together?

Psalm 148 is a psalm that offers praise to God in all things. Praise means to give thanks. Write your own psalm. Make a list of things for which you wish to praise God. Using the list, say each praise aloud. For example:

I praise God for *earth and all stars*. Praise the Lord!

I praise God for *family and friends*. Praise the Lord!

And so forth until you finish the list.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:[1-9] 10-18