

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

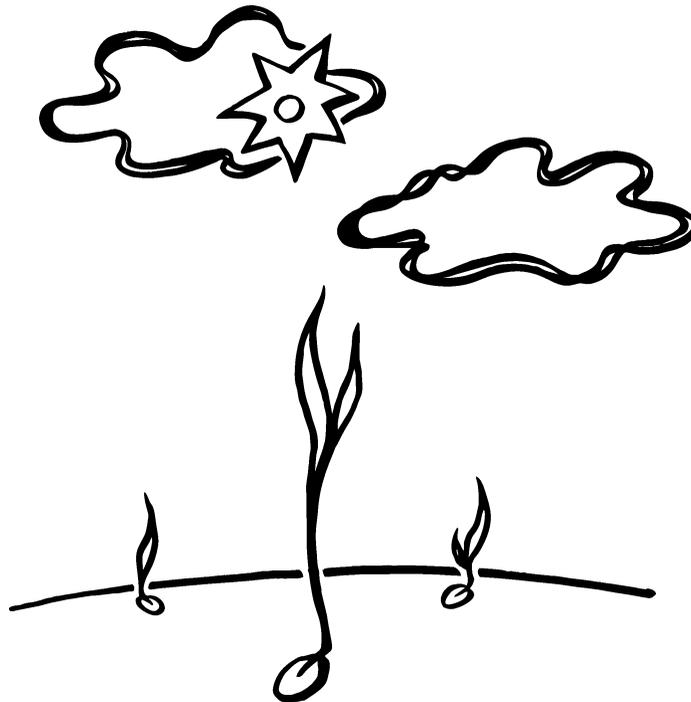
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor  
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor  
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor  
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68131-3616  
402-341-7761  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

March 21, 2021

9:00 AM

FIFTH SUNDAY in LENT



*God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.*

# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

☞ Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

☞ **Amen.**

☞ God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

☞ Fountain of living water,

☞ **pour out your mercy over us.**

**Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**

**Rebuild what we have ruined**

**and mend what we have torn.**

**Wash us in your cleansing flood.**

**Make us alive in the Spirit**

**to follow in the way of Jesus,**

**as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

☞ Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ✝ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

☞ **Amen.**

- 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days  
you prayed and kept the fast;  
inspire repentance for our sin,  
and free us from our past.
- 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;  
your faithfulness endured;  
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust  
in God's eternal word.
- 3 Though parched and hungry, yet you prayed  
and fixed your mind above;  
so teach us to deny ourselves  
that we may know God's love.
- 4 Be with us through this season, Lord,  
and all our earthly days,  
that when the final Easter dawns,  
we join in heaven's praise.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838-1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930

### 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.

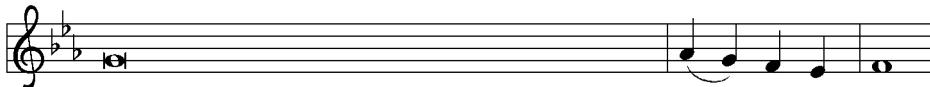
### KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



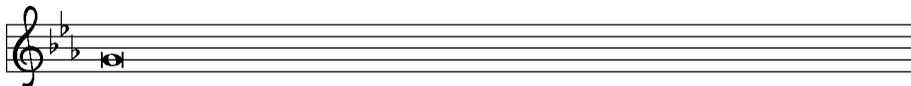
Lord, have mer - cy.



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 de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men, a - men.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

- ☐** Almighty God,
- ☑** with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, That through life and death we may life in 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

Jeremiah 31:31-34

*The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.*

**T**he days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It 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. <sup>33</sup>But 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. <sup>34</sup>No 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 51:1-12 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses,  
and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my mother’s womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

## THE SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:5-10

Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; <sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**G** 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.

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

**G** Glory to you, O Lord!

## HOLY GOSPEL

**John 12:20-33**

*Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.*

**N**ow among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*" <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, "*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.*

<sup>27</sup>"*Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.*" Then a voice came from heaven, "*I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.*" <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "*An angel has spoken to him.*" <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "*This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*" <sup>33</sup>Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

*(sit)*

## CHILDREN'S BLESSING

## SERMON

*Pastor Roynesdal*

*(stand)*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"*

**ELW 324**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1</b> In the cross of Christ I glory,<br/>tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.<br/>All the light of sacred story<br/>gathers round its head sublime.</p> <p><b>2</b> When the woes of life o'ertake me,<br/>hopes deceive, and fears annoy,<br/>never shall the cross forsake me;<br/>lo, it glows with peace and joy.</p> | <p><b>3</b> When the sun of bliss is beaming<br/>light and love upon my way,<br/>from the cross the radiance streaming<br/>adds more luster to the day.</p> <p><b>4</b> Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,<br/>by the cross are sanctified;<br/>peace is there that knows no measure,<br/>joys that through all time abide.</p> |
|---|--|

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872

## 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,  
                  **G** 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 Wayne Houston

**Thanksgiving:** for the baptism of Jameson Bruechert, son of Cody & Rachael (Coufal) Bruechert; for the baptism of Jack Jenson, son of Mark & Alex (Clatterbuck) Jenson; for the baptism of Oliver Mirch, son of Christian & Emma Mirch

**Illness:** Lois Andresen, Richard Bock, Kristin Boe, Don Burton, Myrna Carter, Carol Duncan, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Richard Holzer, Renee Johnson, Jason Klonglan, Marcie Lafleur, Ron Muchmore, Mary Olson, David Penning, Toby Rees, Gary Rodene, Al Schewe, Helen Taylor, Sheri Tipton, Dorothy Vancaster, John Waterman, Darlene White

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Wyatt Johnson, Josh Kropenske, 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

**P** The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**G** 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 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. If you are able, please mail in your offering or donate on-line. Thank you!*



## OFFERTORY MUSIC

*“No, Not Despairingly”*

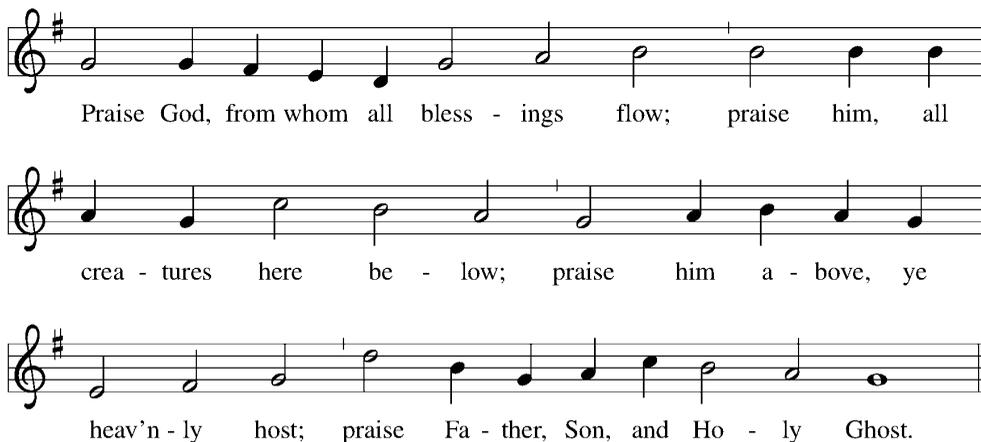
Spratt/Page  
Jean Johnson, *piano*

*No, not despairingly come I to Thee; No, not distrustingly bend I the knee.  
Purge Thou my sin away, wash Thou my soul this day; Lord, make me clean.*

## THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

## OFFERTORY HYMN

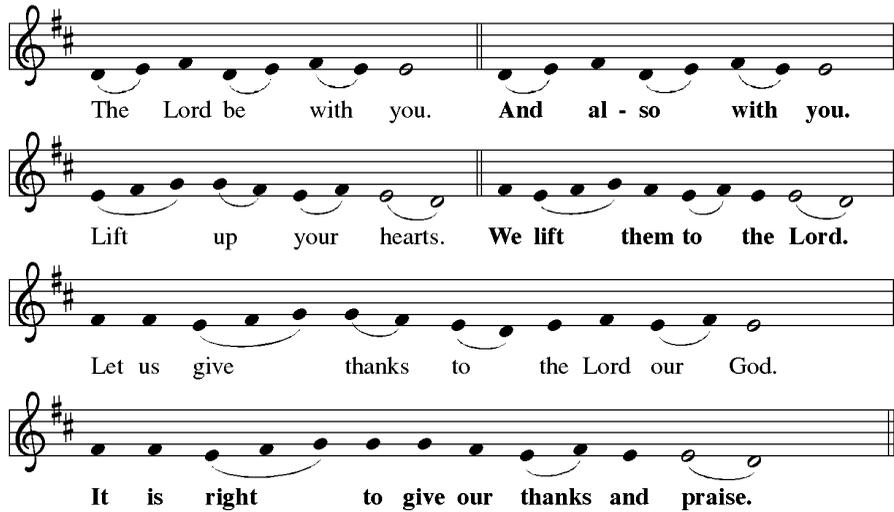


Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

## OFFERING PRAYER

- P** Faithful God,
- C** you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we will pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## HOLY COMMUNION

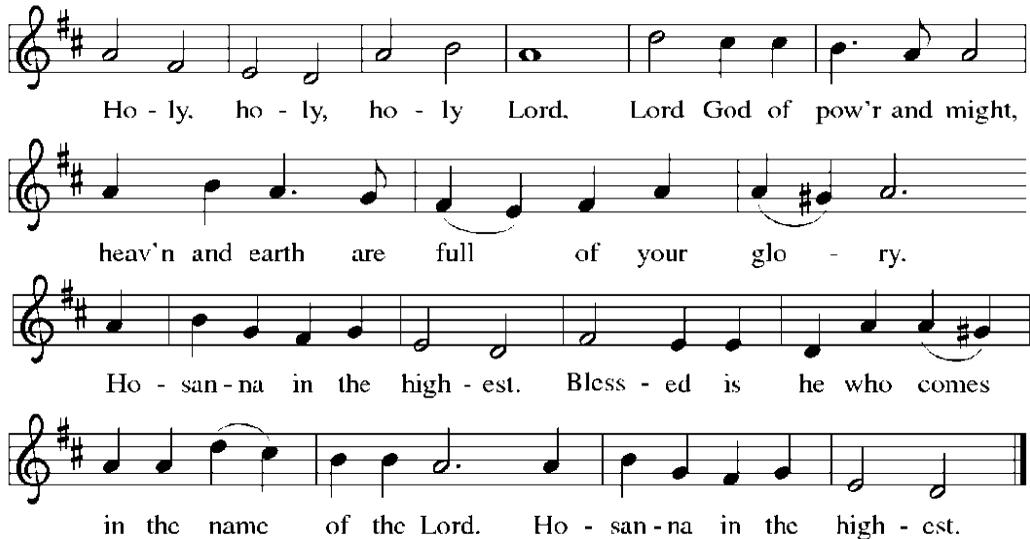


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## PREFACE FOR LENT

- ☐ 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. You call us, your people, to cleanse our hearts and prepare with joy for the Easter celebration, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we will come to the fullness of your grace. 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** Jesus draws the whole world to himself.

**C** **Come to this meal and be fed.**

### 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 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.*

(sit)

## AGNUS DEI



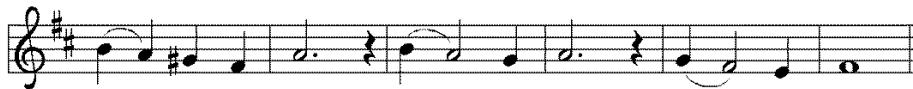
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



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.

## HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”*

ELW 803

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss  
and pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ, my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.
- 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

**1 As we gather at your table,  
as we listen to your word,  
help us know, O God, your presence;  
let our hearts and minds be stirred.  
Nourish us with sacred story  
till we claim it as our own;  
teach us through this holy banquet  
how to make Love's vict'ry known.**

**2 Turn our worship into witness  
in the sacrament of life;  
send us forth to love and serve you,  
bringing peace where there is strife.  
Give us, Christ, your great compassion  
to forgive as you forgave;  
may we still behold your image  
in the world you died to save.**

**3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon  
other guests to share that feast  
where triumphant Love will welcome  
those who had been last and least.  
There no more will envy blind us  
nor will pride our peace destroy,  
as we join with saints and angels  
to repeat the sounding joy.**

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

*(stand)*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**☞** God of steadfast love,

**☞ at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives will bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☐ You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God the Father, † Son and Holy Spirit bless you that you may be a blessing.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## HYMN

*“Lift High the Cross”*

**ELW 660**

### *Refrain*

**Lift high the cross,  
the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.**

**3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee.**

### *Refrain*

**1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain  
trod,  
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.**

**4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
praise to the Crucified for victory!**

### *Refrain*

### *Refrain*

**2 All newborn servants of the Crucified  
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.**

### *Refrain*

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827-1912;  
rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874-1956

## DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. Share the good news.  
☑ **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

**Spending Time (again!) with an Old Friend**  
**Wednesdays, 7:00 PM**  
**In-Person (please register by noon on Tuesday)**  
**Live-Stream**



Last year our midweek Lenten Worship was to give us an opportunity to visit an old friend: The Lord's Prayer. That was cut short by the pandemic. So again each week we will reflect on various petitions(s) of this great prayer gaining insights from Martin Luther's Small Catechism. The Pastors are looking forward to this special time and encourage you to come (or live-stream) and hopefully gain a new perspective and a new appreciation for the prayer we say most often.

Our Schedule will be as follows:

**Wednesday, March 24**  
The Seventh Petition and the Conclusion  
"But deliver us from evil. Amen."



### **Maundy Thursday, April 1**

7 PM      Worship Online & In person (***with reservation only***)

### **Good Friday, April 2**

12-3 PM   Ecumenical Good Friday Service: Seven Words from the Cross with Guest Speakers and String Quartet  
(***no reservation required***)

7 PM      Online & In person (***with reservation only***)  
Tenebrae (Veneration of the Cross and Service of Shadows)

10 PM     Worship Online & In person (***with reservation only***)  
Easter Vigil (Fire, Word, Water, Eucharist)  
(There will be no 5 PM Saturday service)

### **Easter Sunday, April 4**

9 AM      Worship Online & In person (***with reservation only***)  
Kountze Brass

10:15 AM   Easter Egg Hunt in the Green Space  
All children, **registered** for the Easter Sunday services, are welcome to join in an Easter Egg Hunt. Bring a basket and join us in the Green Space following worship.

11:00 AM   Worship Online & In person (***with reservation only***)  
Kountze Brass

The fine staff at our church join me in wishing you a Blessed Easter!  
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

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

March 20 & 21, 2021

## Kountze Food Pantry Volunteers and Clothing Needed

**Mondays, 7:30 - 9:00 AM**

**9:00 - 11:00 AM**

**11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Fridays, 4:00 - 7:00 PM**

Have you ever bought what you needed at Kohl's or JC Penney, received either Kohl's Cash or a Penney's Reward, and then wondered "What should I use this for?" Use it to buy underwear, socks, hats and gloves! If you wait until the end of a season and buy on clearance, you can get a lot for your money. There is a need for everything in our community! Please put your donations in the Food Pantry Box in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you very much! If you are able to volunteer, please sign up by using the link below:  
<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

## Youth Summer Trip

### We're headed to Tulsa, Oklahoma!

Summer Trip for 8<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup> graders will be July 31—August 7, 2021. Let us know of your interest by March 22. An email to Pastor Shari ([shari@kmlchurch.org](mailto:shari@kmlchurch.org)) will greatly help in the planning. Registration forms will be sent out soon.

## Easter Sunday Attendance—9:00 & 11:00 AM

If you are interested in attending Easter worship please register as soon as possible. Please note that we

### Attendance and Giving

**Saturday Attendance:** 21

**Sunday Attendance: 9:00:** 73

**Wednesday Attendance:** 23

**Total:** 117

**Streaming Attendance:** 146

**Cox Cable Attendance:** 255

**Pantry Guests Served:** 883

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 20

### Offering:

\$10,538.00 (Regular)      \$2,971.18 (Specials)

\$737.00 (Debt Reduction)

are having two services. Also, we are hoping to hold the Easter Vigil on April 3 at 10:00 PM if there is interest. If you are interested, please register as soon as possible. You may also make reservations for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at any time.

## Easter Egg Hunt!

**10:15 AM (following the 9:00 AM service)**

All children, registered for the Easter Sunday services, are welcome to join in an Easter Egg Hunt at 10:15 AM. Bring a basket and join us in the Green Space following the 9:00 AM service.

## Today at Kountze

**Eternal Candle** is given to the glory of God in honor of Pr. Inbarasu's sincere & timely visitations given in gratitude by Pam & Bob Johnson

**Television Broadcast** is sponsored by Mary Olson in memory of Art Olson's birthday.

## Online Sunday School

Lessons are videotaped and posted on the KMLC Parents Facebook page as well as our Kountze Facebook Page.

## Youth Forum

**In-Person & Zoom on Sundays, 10:15 - 11:00 AM**

All 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Graders are invited to join us!

We will meet in person in the Youth Room and on Zoom each week

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Bible Ponderings

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: High School Hang Out

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Serving in the World

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Host Middle School Hangout

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Adventures (if on Zoom, we will carry you along with us.)

Contact Pastor Shari (402-341-7761 or

[shari@kmlchurch.org](mailto:shari@kmlchurch.org) if you need the Zoom Link info.

We will continue to be masked and physically distanced for all meetings in person at the church.

## *A time for new beginnings.*

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

Sunday	John 12:20-33	The hour has come
Monday	Jeremiah 31:31-34	A new covenant from God
Tuesday	Hebrews 5:5-10	Jesus as high priest
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 3:5-18	Ministers of the new covenant
Thursday	Nehemiah 1:5-11	Nehemiah prays for his people
Friday	Hebrews 8:6-13	A better covenant
Saturday	Psalms 51:1-12	A prayer for cleansing
Sunday	Mark 14:1-15:47	The passion of Jesus



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*But 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. Jeremiah 31:33 (NRSV)*

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

God of new beginnings, help us to face our shortcomings knowing that you promise to be our God and that we are your people through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, with this food restore our bodies as your promise of love and care for us restores our hearts. Amen.

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

May God create in you a clean heart through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

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

- Think or tell about a time you failed at something.
- Failure is a part of life, but when we learn from our mistakes, it is not a total failure, but a learning moment. When have you learned from your mistakes?
- The Bible is filled with mistakes by God's people, yet God refuses to give up on us. What does that say about the God who reaches out to us through Jesus?

*Read:* Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah is speaking to a people who are either in exile in Babylon or about to be conquered and sent to Babylon. The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians well over a hundred years before. Now the southern kingdom of Judah is doomed. The people have been unfaithful and God's promises to Abraham, Moses, and David seem to have come to naught. But Jeremiah prophesies, "Not so." God promises to find a new way, a new covenant. This passage is about God's people only because it is about the God who continues to claim them. God will not give up on the people God loves. It is the very nature and character of God not to give up on us. God finds a way by having a new covenant, a new start. What God ordains will happen: we shall be God's people and God will be our God. We are not there yet. We are people of the new covenant, but the prophesy has not happened completely. We still need to be taught, but the day is coming that God's promise will be fulfilled. How do you learn about faith in Christ?

*Pray:* **God of the new covenant, give us faith to trust in your promises and courage to walk in your ways through Jesus Christ, the one who came to set us free. Amen.**

Psalm 51 is a prayer for cleansing and pardon. Christian prison ministries reach out to inmates with the love and hope of Jesus Christ. There are many who care for the children and families of prisoners and lead Bible studies and prayer with the prisoners. Pray for those who work with inmates and their families this week.

This is our fifth week suggesting the discipline of using the *Daily Bible Readings*. At the core of new beginnings for Christians is the work of God revealed from the cross and in the Bible. Begin each day's reading by reciting Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." Say the *Prayer for the Week* after each reading, add your own prayers, and end by saying: **Remember that you are God's, and to God you shall return.**

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12  
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33