

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor  
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor  
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2650 Farnam Street  
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402-341-7761  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

July 18, 2021

9:00 AM

EIGHTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



*Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.*



# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**P** Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

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

**P** God our provider,

**C** help us we pray.

**It is hard to believe there is enough to share.**

**We question your ways when they differ from our ways.**

**We turn to our own understanding**

**rather than trusting in you.**

**We take offense at your teachings and your ways.**

**Turn us again to you.**

**Where else can we turn?**

**Share with us the words of eternal life**

**and feed us for life in the world. Amen.**

**P** Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, † the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

**C** Amen.

- 1 All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
bring forth the royal diadem  
and crown him Lord of all.  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
and crown him Lord of all.
- 2 O seed of Israel's chosen race  
now ransomed from the fall,  
hail him who saves you by his grace  
and crown him Lord of all.  
Hail him who saves you by his grace  
and crown him Lord of all.
- 3 Hail him, you heirs of David's line,  
whom David Lord did call  
the God incarnate, man divine  
and crown him Lord of all.  
The God Incarnate, man divine  
and crown him Lord of all.
- 4 Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget  
the wormwood and the gall,  
go spread your trophies at his feet  
and crown him Lord of all.  
Go spread your trophies at his feet  
and crown him Lord of all.
- 5 Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe  
on this terrestrial ball  
to him all majesty ascribe  
and crown him Lord of all.
- 6 Oh, that with yonder sacred throng  
we at his feet may fall!  
We'll join the everlasting song  
and crown him Lord of all.

Text: Edward Perronet, 1726-1792, sts. 1-4;  
J. Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, sts. 5-6

## 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 shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we will embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

# WORD

(sit)

## FIRST READING

**Jeremiah 23:1-6**

*Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the “flock” of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David’s line to save Israel and Judah.*

**W**oe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! Says the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup>I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup>In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “*The LORD is our righteousness.*”

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 23 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

**<sup>2</sup>The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD,

and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.

**<sup>4</sup>Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

**<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

## SECOND READING

## Ephesians 2:11-22

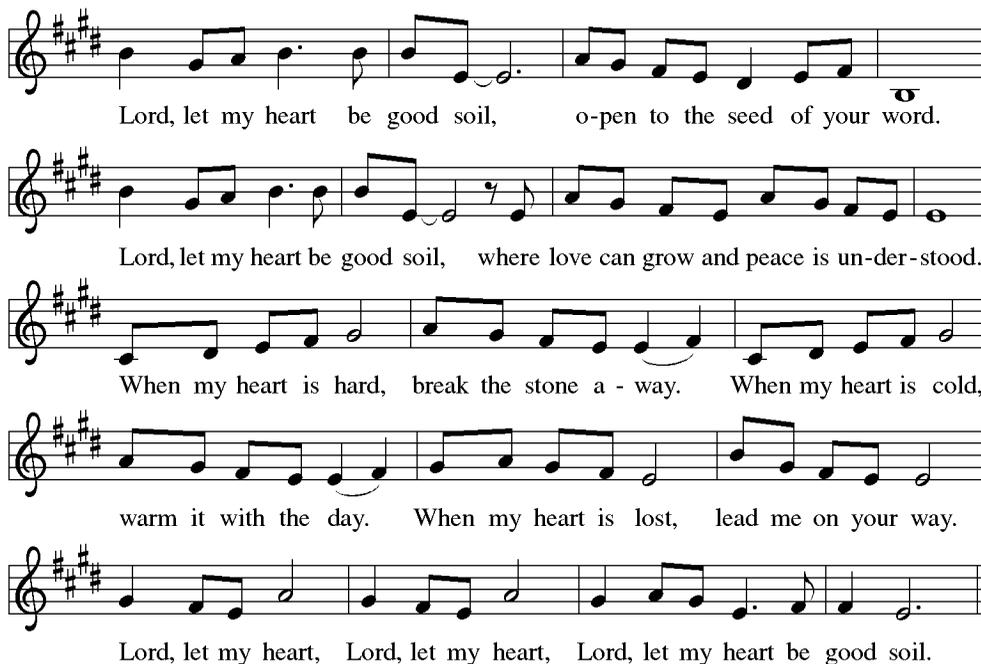
*The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.*

**R**emember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “*the uncircumcision*” by those who are called “*the circumcision*”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. <sup>15</sup>He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. <sup>17</sup>So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; <sup>18</sup>for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. <sup>21</sup>In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord!

## HOLY GOSPEL

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

*When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.*

**T**he apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, “*Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.*” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. ...

<sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. <sup>54</sup>When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, <sup>55</sup>and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

*(sit)*

## CHILDREN'S BLESSING

### SERMON

*Pastor Roynesdal*

*(stand)*

### HYMN OF THE DAY

*"O Holy Spirit, Enter In"*

**ELW 786**

- 1 O Holy Spirit, enter in,  
and in our hearts your work begin,  
and make our hearts your dwelling.  
Sun of the soul, O Light divine,  
around and in us brightly shine,  
your strength in us upwelling.  
In your radiance  
life from heaven  
now is given  
overflowing,  
gift of gifts beyond all knowing.
- 2 Left to ourselves, we surely stray;  
oh, lead us on the narrow way,  
with wisest counsel guide us;  
and give us steadfastness, that we  
may follow you forever free,  
no matter who derides us.  
Gently heal those  
hearts now broken;  
give some token  
you are near us,  
whom we trust to light and cheer us.
- 3 O mighty Rock, O Source of life,  
let your good Word in doubt and strife  
be strongly in us burning,  
that we be faithful unto death  
and live in love and holy faith,  
from you true wisdom learning.  
Lord, your mercy  
on us shower;  
by your power  
Christ confessing,  
we will cherish all your blessing.

Text: Michael Schirmer, 1606-1673;  
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, adapt.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

- P** God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.  
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
- C** **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

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

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

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

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

**Illness:** Richard Bock, Don Burton, Sydney Dietrich, Carol Duncan, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Richard Holzer, Rik Hooper, Renee Johnson, Mark Kidder, Jason Klonglan, Marcie Lafleur, Chris Meyer, Mary Olson, David Penning, Toby Rees, Gary Rodene, Sheri Tipton, John Waterman, Darlene White

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, 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.

**C** **And also with you.**

## **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!*



### **MUSICAL OFFERING**

*“Empty Hands, Open Arms”*

Lloyd Larson  
Sue Mollner, *soloist*

### **THE TABLE IS PREPARED**

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(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** Jesus, Bread of life,
- C** you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world. Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a single melodic line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures, the second and third have two measures each, and the fourth has one long measure. The lyrics are: '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.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

## PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS IN PENTECOST

### 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 image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a single melodic line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: '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', and '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** Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.

**C** Come!

## THE DISTRIBUTION

*All baptized Christians who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and his Real Presence in, with and under the bread and wine, are welcome to the Lord's Supper. We believe that this is the Lord's table and is he who invites you. So you who are strong in faith, come with gratitude. You 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.*

*Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.*

## 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

*"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"*

ELW 502

- 1 The King of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
and he is mine forever.
- 2 Where streams of living water flow,  
my ransomed soul he leadeth  
and, where the verdant pastures grow,  
with food celestial feedeth.
- 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
but yet in love he sought me,  
and on his shoulder gently laid,  
and home, rejoicing, brought me.
- 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill,  
with thee, dear Lord, beside me,  
thy rod and staff my comfort still;  
thy cross before to guide me.
- 5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
thine unction grace bestoweth;  
and, oh, what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!
- 6 And so, through all the length of days,  
thy goodness faileth never.  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house forever.

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Just as I am, without one plea,<br/>but that thy blood was shed for me,<br/>and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,<br/>O Lamb of God, I come, I come.</p> <p>2 Just as I am, though tossed about<br/>with many a conflict, many a doubt,<br/>fightings and fears within, without,<br/>O Lamb of God, I come, I come.</p> | <p>3 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,<br/>wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;<br/>because thy promise I believe,<br/>O Lamb of God, I come, I come,</p> <p>4 Just as I am; thy love unknown<br/>has broken ev'ry barrier down;<br/>now to be thine, yea, thine alone,<br/>O Lamb of God, I come, I come.</p> |
|---|--|

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871

“Blessed Assurance”

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!<br/>Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!<br/>Heir of salvation, purchase of God,<br/>born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.</p> | <p>2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,<br/>visions of rapture now burst on my sight;<br/>angels descending bring from above<br/>echoes of mercy, whispers of love.</p> |
|---|---|

*Refrain*

*Refrain*

This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior, all the day long:  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.

- 3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

*Refrain*

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915

*(stand)*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**P** Jesus, Bread of life,

**C** we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray. Amen.

# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☐ The blessing of the Almighty God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit be upon you now and forever.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## HYMN

*“Savior, Again to Your Dear Name”*

ELW 534

- 1 **Savior, again to your dear name we raise  
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;  
once more we bless you ere our worship cease,  
then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.**
- 2 **Grant us your peace upon our homeward way;  
with you began, with you shall end the day;  
guard all the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,  
that in this house have called upon your name.**
- 3 **Grant us your peace, Lord, through the coming night;  
for us transform its darkness into light.  
Keep us from harm and danger till the dawn;  
your evening presence promise to your own.**
- 4 **Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,  
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;  
then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,  
call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.**

Text: John Ellerton, 1826-1893, alt.

## DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.  
☑ Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

† † †

## Special Notice

Reservations not required  
Vaccinated—Masks optional  
Not vaccinated—Masks required  
Please maintain a minimum of 3 feet  
between non-family members

You may still join us for Worship on Cox  
channel 13 or live streamed at [https://  
www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/](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)

**July 17 & 18, 2021**

## Kountze Food Pantry

### Volunteers Needed:

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

**Fridays, 4 - 7 PM**

If you are able to volunteer, please sign up by using  
the link below:

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

We are in great need of toilet paper! We also need  
new or like new reusable tote bags (we cannot reuse  
plastic grocery sacks), cereal, and full-sized hygiene  
products. Please place your donated items in the  
shopping cart as you enter for church, in the donation  
box in the Fellowship Hall, or in the church office.  
Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

## CJH Quilt Auction

**Saturday, July 31**

**9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

The day promises good food, great fun, and lots of  
beautiful quilts donated by friends of camp. The  
auction and lunch will be held rain or shine. Bring  
your friends and families! If you have questions,  
contact Heather at [HAbbott@NLOM.org](mailto:HAbbott@NLOM.org) or 402-944-  
2544. Check out [CJHCenter.org/quilt-auction](http://CJHCenter.org/quilt-auction) to see  
the quilts, including the quilts our Kountze sewing  
group has donated.

### Attendance and Giving

**Saturday Attendance:** 18

**Sunday Attendance: 9:00:** 113

**Wednesday Attendance:** 12

**Total:** 143

**Streaming Attendance:** 57

**Cox Cable Attendance:** 213

**Pantry Guests Served:** 677

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 19

**Offering:**

Not available at time of printing

## The 11:00 AM service will return in August!

We will still be broadcasting our 9:00 AM Worship  
Service on Cox Cable Channel 13 and live  
streaming on our website.

## Volunteer at the ELCA Youth Gathering

**July 24-28, 2022**

**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Volunteer opportunities for the ELCA Youth  
Gathering are available for individuals age 19 and  
older at the time of the Gathering. For more  
information, go to [elca.org/gathering/volunteer](http://elca.org/gathering/volunteer)

## Today at Kountze

**Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God by Bruce  
& Barb Nissen in honor of their wedding anniversary

## Coffee Hour

Please feel free to stop for coffee in the Fellowship  
Hall following service today. We need volunteers to  
help serve coffee and cookies. If you can help, please  
see Jim Smejkal (402-341-7761 or  
[jim@kmlchurch.org](mailto:jim@kmlchurch.org)).

## Holy Play

**Ages 3 yrs - 6<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Sundays through August 29**

**10:15 - 11:00 AM**

Children from 3 years to 6<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join  
Pastor Shari and the Middle and High School Youth in  
the Kountze Green Space each Sunday (June 20 –  
August 29). We will be playing games, singing songs,  
sharing a snack, and getting to know each other  
better. Parents are encouraged to share coffee time  
with others or join in the fun!

*In deepest darkness, God provides safety and comfort.*

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

Sunday	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	Jesus teaches and heals
Monday	Jeremiah 23:1-6	God promises a righteous king
Tuesday	Ephesians 2:11-22	United by Christ
Wednesday	Psalms 139:7-18	The Lord knows us well
Thursday	Romans 13:11-14	The day when Christ returns
Friday	Colossians 1:9-14	The work of Christ
Saturday	Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Sunday	John 6:1-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand



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

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 (NRSV)*

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

God of compassion and protection, give us peace and faith in knowing you are our shepherd who pursues us with your goodness through Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Shepherding God, we thank you that you have provided this meal for us and promised us green pastures and still waters through Christ. Amen.

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

May God bless you with peace and comfort all the days of your life.

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

- When have you felt the need for protection or safety?
- When you feel you are in danger, who do you turn to?
- How do you experience God's care during difficult times?

*Read:* Psalm 23.

It is good to read this beloved psalm, one that many people have known by heart. This intricately woven poem and prayer has only 58 words in the Hebrew language and very few words are repeated. At the very center are the words "for you are with me" (v. 4b). In the beginning, middle, and end of this psalm, the Lord's presence and care is beautifully announced as part of our journey through life. This is true even—and especially—in our deepest darkness that can sometimes feel like being at the bottom of a valley. God is our shepherd who provides safety and comfort. In an ancient world that accentuated social honor and shame—experiences still very much with us today—our divine shepherd even leads us to a place of honor at a banquet before those who would shame us. Nothing but safety, comfort, and honor pursue God's people. God is our shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We, as ambassadors of Jesus, shepherd one another each and every day to offer safety, comfort, and honor all the days of our lives. When have you felt the presence of the Lord as your shepherd?

*Pray:* **Shepherding God, give us peace, safety, and good courage to go out with compassion to shepherd others through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Many people looked to Jesus for teaching, healing and guidance. His ministry was very busy and demanding. Those in helping professions (teachers, doctors, counselors, social workers, pastors, nurses, firefighters, police officers, and others) have many demands placed on them. Their work can be very tiring and sometimes stressful. How can you show your appreciation and support to someone in such a profession?

Jesus took his disciples to a quiet place to rest (Mark 6:31-32). Spend some time in a quiet place for your devotional time this week. Light a candle to represent the presence of Jesus with you. Focus on the candle in your silence. Finish your quiet time by saying the Lord's Prayer.

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 145:10-18  
Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21**