

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

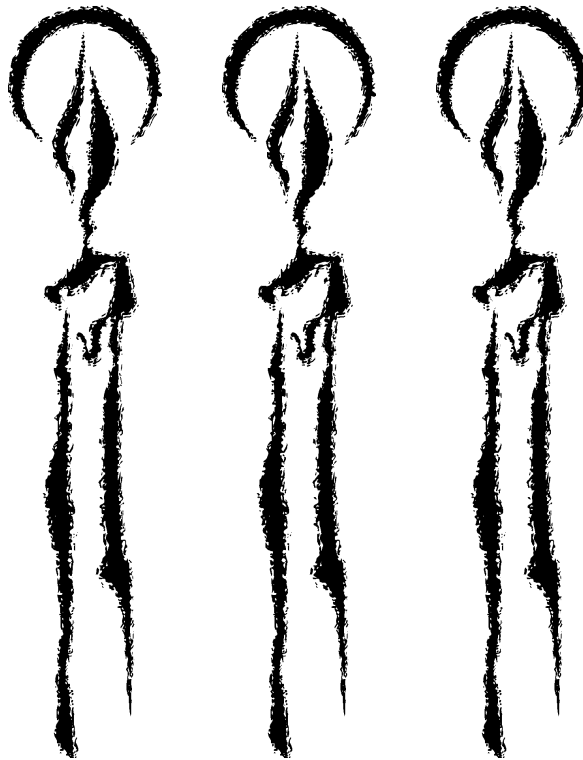
Stephen Griffith, Transition Senior Pastor
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Gretchen Olson Kopp, Vicar

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

December 11, 2022

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT



A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S BLESSING 9:00 AM

Children (aged 3 years through 5th grade) are invited to come forward for a blessing. Then, they may either return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the service, or follow Ms. Boe upstairs for an activity in the Sunday School room, and Ms. Carlsen for Children's Choir.

(stand)

ADVENT WREATH HYMN

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

ELW 257 vs. 5

**5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.**

Refrain
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

*Text: Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.*

ADVENT WREATH PRAYER

- ☐** We praise you, O God,
☑ for this wreath of joy that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.

(light three candles)

- 1** Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.
- 3** In darkest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.
- 4** Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.


Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Text © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.
www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- G** And also with you.

KYRIE


Refrain




Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.




Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.



1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
2 That we may live out your im - passioned re - sponse to the
3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . . for
4 For your Spir - it to guide; that you cen - ter our lives in the



u - ni - ty of all; for
hun - gry and the poor; that
friends and fam - i - ly; for
wa - ter and the word; that you



this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
we may live out truth and jus - tice and grace,
life and for love, for our work and our play,
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,

Refrain



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

(congregation sings Refrain; Choir will sing verses)



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and



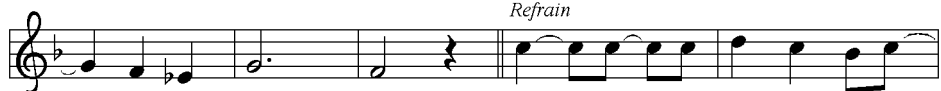
peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you



for your glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high-



est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the



right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and
 peace to God's peo - ple on earth. 3 For you a -
 lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,
 you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the
 Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.
 A - men. A - men. A - men.

Final refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and peace to God's
 peo - ple on earth. Glo - ry to God in the high -
 est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God,
- ☑ and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through 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

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

☒ Word of God, Word of Life.

☑ Thanks be to God.

PSALM LUKE 1:46B-55 *(read responsively)*

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on those who fear you,
from generation to generation.**

⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²**casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.**

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears,

to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Ⓐ Word of God, Word of Life.

Ⓒ Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Ⓐ The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Ⓒ Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

SERMON

Vicar Olson Kopp

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“*Light Dawns on a Weary World*”

ELW 726

low voices sing vs. 1; high voices sing vs. 2; all sing refrain & vs. 3

**1 Light dawns on a weary world
when eyes begin to see
all people's dignity.
Light dawns on a weary world:
the promised day of justice comes.**

**2 Love grows in a weary world
when hungry hearts find bread
and children's dreams are fed.
Love grows in a weary world:
the promised feast of plenty comes. *Refrain***

Refrain

**The trees shall clap their hands;
the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth
with singing!
We shall go out in joy,
and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.**

**3 Hope blooms in a weary world
when creatures, once forlorn,
find wilderness reborn.
Hope blooms in a weary world:
the promised green of Eden comes. *Refrain***

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

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THE NICENE CREED 9:00 AM

**☐ God has made us God's people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.**

**☑ 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.**

HOLY BAPTISM 11:00 AM

see ELW pg 227

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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

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

Sympathy: to the family and friends of Jerry Weible

Thanksgiving: for the birth of Brooke Everly and Piper Layne, daughters of Layne and Alex (Clatterbuck) Jenson, born on December 5, 2022; for the baptism of Hollis Opal, daughter of Chris and Sheena Fischer

Prayers This Week: Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Robin Perkins

On-going Care: Don Burton, Shirley Dietrich, Carol Duncan, Mike Edris, Marge Grabow, Susie Henry, Richard & Betty Holzer, Pr. Bob Johnson, Jason Klonglan, Rosanne Klug, Orville & Julie Knapp, Chris Meyer, Lara McCormick, Debra Woosley

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Brenden Frerck, Wyatt Johnson, Tyler Johnston, 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; Katie Larson, Columbia; Rev. Robert and Kathy Moore, Wittenburg Center, Germany; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators; our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin, as they assist refugees from the war in Ukraine

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

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 church 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 or place your offering in the plates that are located at the entrances to the Sanctuary. For those of you watching through our media outlets, if you are able, please mail in your offering or donate online. Thank you!



THE TABLE IS PREPARED

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“O Come, Emmanuel”

by John Purifoy

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am”

ELW 814

sing three times



Take, oh, take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall be;



set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Eternal God,
- ☑ you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

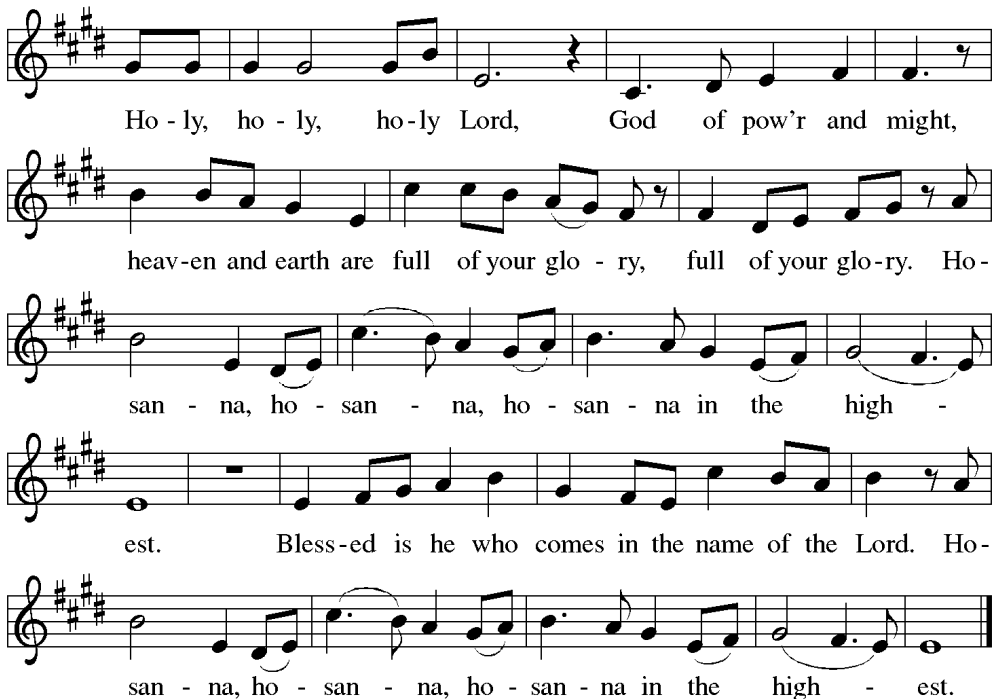
C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. 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, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: ...
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P With this bread and cup ... We look with hope for his coming.

C Come, Lord Jesus.

- Ⓟ Holy God, we long for your Spirit ...
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
- Ⓞ **Come, Holy Spirit.**
- Ⓟ All praise and glory are yours, ...
one God, now and forever.
- Ⓞ **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- Ⓟ Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
- Ⓞ **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.**

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, Lamb of God.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come, do not fear!

G Here is your God, who has come to save you.

(sit)

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 who 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. The form of distribution is intinction: you will receive the consecrated bread and then you may dip the bread into the wine. Gluten free bread is available upon request.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

"God Extends an Invitation"
sing twice

ELW 486

**God extends an invitation to the table of creation,
where there's wine and light and bread.
Here we gather in thanksgiving and we offer all our living.
Here the feast of life is spread; here the feast of life is spread.**

Text: Miria T. Kolling; Spanish and English tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923
Spanish and English text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress.

"Taste and See"

ELW 493

congregation sings refrain; leader sings verses 1-3

Refrain

**Taste and see, taste and see
the goodness of the Lord.
Oh, taste and see, taste and see
the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.**

**2 Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us all praise God's name.
I called the Lord, who answered me;
from all my troubles I was set free. *Refrain***

**1 I will bless the Lord at all times.
Praise shall always be on my lips;
my soul shall glory in the Lord;
for God has been so good to me. *Refrain***

**3 Worship the Lord, all you people.
You'll want for nothing if you ask.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;
in God we need put all our trust. *Refrain***

Text: James E. Moore Jr., b. 1951, based on Ps. 34
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(stand)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

☞ Faithful God,

☞ **in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

☞ God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✝ bless you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW 264 vs 1, 3 & 4

**1 Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:**

**3 Then fling the gates wide open
to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
their voices join your singing: *Refrain***

Refrain

**Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!**

**4 His is no earthly kingdom;
it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
for kindness so abounding: *Refrain***

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

☞ Go in peace. Christ is near.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

✝ ✝ ✝

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Stephen Griffith	Transition Senior Pastor
Pr. Shari Duminy	Associate Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Gretchen Olson Kopp	Vicar
Kristin Boe	Christian Ed Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Noni Cambridge	Staff Treasurer
Judi Boe	Financial Secretary
Jim Smejkal	Bldg. Super./Dir. of Cong. Activities
Louis Flake	Night Manager
Kayla Slaight	Janitorial Staff
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Shannon Picha	Nursery Director
Susann Henry	Food Pantry Director



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 10 & 11, 2022

Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church is a vibrant, historic faith community that welcomes all and provides ministries for all ages and walks of life. We are a "City-wide Church with a World-wide Ministry" and have been worshipping, growing, and serving in downtown Omaha for over 160 years. If you are new to Kountze Memorial, we invite you to visit the Welcome Desk in Fellowship Hall for more information about who we are and what we do.

Today at Kountze

We Have Gone High Def! Our television broadcast on Cox channel 13 will be shown in high definition beginning today. Thanks to our Endowment Fund, they granted us the money to change how we broadcast.

Welcome Shannon Picha! Shannon will begin this Sunday as our new Nursery Director. Besides having three children of her own, Shannon operated her own in-home daycare and has been a substitute Special Ed Para at Papillion Public Schools.

Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God by Ralph & Jane Ross in honor of granddaughter, Hollis Fischer's baptism

Eternal Candle is given to the glory of God by Ralph & Jane Ross in honor of granddaughter, Hollis Fischer's baptism

Television Broadcast is sponsored to the glory of God by Ralph & Jane Ross in honor of granddaughter, Hollis Fischer's baptism

Kountze Café

Sundays from 9:30—11:00 AM

Join us each Sunday for breakfast. The suggested donation is \$5 adults, \$2.50 children 12 and younger for the hot breakfast (this Sunday) and a free-will donation for the continental breakfast.

Children's Choir

Second Floor Music Room

9:15 AM (after the 9 AM Children's Blessing)

Grades K-5 - Choir

Grades 6-8 - Director's Assistants

The choir will rehearse immediately after the children's blessing at the 9:00 AM service (9:15 AM). If you have any questions, please contact Barb at 402-341-7761.

Sunday School

Sundays, 10:10 - 10:50 AM

Join us on Sundays on the 2nd floor for Sunday School. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs.) meets from 9:00—10:00 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). **This week:** Christmas Program Rehearsal

Holy Communion

All who are baptized and trust in Christ's presence in Holy Communion are invited to commune at the Lord's Table. Children not yet communing will receive a blessing. Instructions will be provided during worship. It is the understanding of the universal Church that those who wish to commune with bread only (especially for health reasons) have communed fully. Our form of distribution is Intinction.

Children in Worship

We believe that all are welcome in worship and encourage families to worship together. Activity bags, children's bibles, and bulletins are available, as well as a room just off the west side of the main sanctuary, that includes a TV and a variety of toys, games, and books for young children.

Nursery

Our nursery is available from 9 AM—noon for children 0—2 years. Please ask an usher if you are unsure as to where our nursery is and would like to use it

Attendance Cards

All those attending worship are encouraged to fill out the card included in your bulletin and place in the offering plate.

Large Print Bulletins and Listening Devices

Please speak to an usher if you would like a large print bulletin or an assisted listening device.

E-news & Social Media

If you would like to receive our weekly e-news and monthly e-newsletter, add your e-mail address to the attendance card in your bulletin.

Thank you for supporting the ministries of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church.



Today at Kountze, *continued*

Youth Forum Grades 7—12

In December, you are encouraged to help with the youth Christmas Program preparation from 10:10 to 10:50 AM in the Children's Choir Room. On Sunday, December 18 at deFreese Manor, we will host a Christmas Caroling Party for the Sunday School Youth and the residents.

Adult Forum Fellowship Hall, 10:10 AM

Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **This week:** End of Year Giving with Lutheran Planned Giving and Stewardship Update **Next week:** Fellowship

KMLC Young Adults All Adults ages 21 - 40 Sunday, December 11 10:20 AM

You are invited to meet in the Link. The gathering will include listening to ideas of creating space for you at Kountze Memorial and providing information about the Omaha Lutheran Young Adults Organization and the ELCA Upcoming Young Adults Gathering in New Orleans in 2024. Please consider how you might be a part of this ministry!

Merry Tuba Christmas Concert Sunday, December 11

3:30 PM

Kountze Memorial Free to the Public

Bring your friends, the concert is free and open to the Public. It should be a fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon. For those tuba/euphonium players who are interested in playing along, registration is 1:00 PM with rehearsal at 2:00 PM. Bring your own music stand. There is a \$10 participation fee for all players. For more information, contact Nate Griffith at 402-980-6121. We hope you are able to attend, but if not, it will be live-streamed and can be watched at your convenience.

Omaha Lutheran Young Adults—Table Theology Sunday, December 11

6:30 PM

Everett's on Maple

Rev. Dr. Ashley Hall will be leading this discussion

Alternative Gifts

Now through December 18

See next page for more information.

This Week at Kountze Memorial

December 11 Sunday

Advent 3
8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:15 AM Children's Choir (K-5)
9:30—11:00 AM Breakfast
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-6th gr)
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 7-12)
10:10 AM Adult Forum
10:20 AM Young Adult (21-40) Gathering
3:30 PM Tuba Christmas Concert

December 12 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry
6:00 PM Bible Study

December 13 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
3:00 PM KETV Board Meeting
6:00 PM Circle 3 (Link)

December 14 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group
11:00 AM Advent Lunch
11:00 AM Bible Study
12:15 PM Worship
1:00 PM Devotions @ deFreese Manor
5:00 PM Advent Dinner

6:00 PM Executive Committee

6:30 PM Worship

7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

December 15 Thursday

Council Reports Due
Good News Deadline
12:00 PM Circle 4 Potluck (note time change)
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic
6:00 PM Circle 5

December 16 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

December 17 Saturday

9:00 AM Children's Program Rehearsal
3:00 PM Candlelight Carol Sing Rehearsal
4:40 PM Prelude
5:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service

December 18 Sunday

Advent 4
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:00 AM Children's Christmas Program
9:30—11:00 AM Breakfast
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-6th gr)
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 7-12)
10:10 AM Adult Forum

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Alternative Gifts

December 11 & 18

When you give someone an Alternative Gift, you triple the blessings: The person who receives the gift not only feels your love and generosity, they will be honored that you gave them a gift that truly makes a difference in someone's life. You will also feel the blessing of giving a gift that represents God's love and compassion for all people and rejects the commercialization of Christmas. The third blessing is for the child or family who benefits from your gift of food, medicine, education, or a step toward self-sufficiency. An order sheet is in your bulletin.

Bible Study

Mondays, 6:00 PM or

Wednesdays, 11:00 AM

Enter through the Farman Office door to join with others and Pastor Shari for time of learning and sharing. The 11:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study will be 30 minutes so you will have time to have lunch before our 12:15 Advent worship. We will be exploring the Lutheran World Relief Study with the following Advent themes:

- Dec. 12 & 14 Preparing the Way for the Lord
- Dec. 19 & 21 Emmanuel, God With Us
- Dec. 26 & 28 No Study

In January we will explore Epiphany Themes as we unwrap the present of Christ in our lives.

Lutheran Women Omaha, LWO

Tuesday, December 13, 12:00 Noon

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

For reservation and more info., Call Faith, 402-734-4629

Wednesdays in Advent

December 14, & 21

Eucharist at 12:15 PM—Lunch at 11:00 AM

Vespers at 6:30 PM—Dinner at 5:00 PM

Featuring Marty Haugen's musical setting, *Holden Evening Prayer*. The pastors' reflections at these services will follow the theme "Holy Darkness."

December 14 Menu:

- Peruvian Baked Chicken (Vegetarian Option Available)
- Cilantro Lime Rice (plain available)
- Vegetable
- Roll with Butter
- Desert T.B.A.

Middle School NE Synod Gathering

Grades 6-8 and Adult Leaders

Saturday, January 14, 10:00 AM to

Sunday, January 15, 1:00 PM

Held at First Lutheran Church in Kearney

This year's theme is "Lean on Me" with theme verses: Isaiah 41:13 & 1 Corinthians 12:12-20. Registration Rates: Regular registration by **December 15**: \$58 and Last Chance registration by **December 26**: \$68. Please return the registration form with payment to Pastor Shari to get registered.

Candlelight Carol Service

Saturday, December 17

5:00 PM; Prelude 4:40 PM

Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus with singing and worshipful reflection. Nursery is provided. Please join us for this special evening of hope, joy, and fellowship! A cheese and dessert reception following the service.

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 18

9:00 AM

New Member Class

January 15 & 22

10:15 AM

If you're interested in learning more about Kountze Memorial and the possibility of becoming a member of our congregation, please come to the New Member classes. Call the church office if you have questions and to let us know you plan to attend.

Worship with us this Christmas Season!

Christmas Eve

4:00 PM

Family Worship

7:00 PM

Candlelight Worship (in person, TV, and Livestream)

11:00 PM

Candlelight Worship

Christmas Day

10:00 AM

NOTE TIME CHANGE

Worship (in person, TV, and Livestream)

New Year's Eve

5:00 PM

Lessons and Carols

New Year's Day

9:00 AM

NOTE TIME CHANGE

(Pre-recorded for TV and Livestream only)

10:00 AM

Lessons and Carols (in person)

Attendance & Giving

Saturday: 35

Sunday: 9:00: 159 **11:00:** 83

Wednesday: 12:15: 20 **6:30:** 58

Total: 355

Streaming: 48

Cox Cable: Not available

Pantry Guests Served: 1048 (inc. 343 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 21

Offering:

\$21,885.5 (Regular)

\$53,218.63 (Specials)

\$1,577.75 (Debt Reduction)

God of judgement, mercy, and peace.

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

Sunday	Matthew 3:1-12	Prepare the way of the Lord
Monday	Isaiah 11:1-10	The peaceful kingdom
Tuesday	Romans 15:4-13	Good news for Jews and Gentiles
Wednesday	Psalm 96	Praise to God who comes in judgment
Thursday	Psalm 149	Praise for God's goodness to Israel
Friday	James 3:13-18	Two kinds of wisdom
Saturday	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	A prayer for guidance for the king
Sunday	Matthew 11:2-11	Jesus and John the Baptist



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For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4 (NRSV)

A Prayer for the Week: Dear God, help us to see in your judgment the cleansing power that frees us to bear the fruit of the new life in Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer: God of peace and love, we thank you for this food and ask that all people have food on their tables and a roof over their heads. Amen.

A Blessing to Give: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. (Romans 15:13)

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

- When you think of God as judge, what do you imagine?
- Have you ever felt judged because of your faith in God? Explain.

Read: Matthew 3:1-12.

In the Gospel of Matthew, no one gets a free pass. Pharisees and Sadducees are severely chastised. The masses are shown following almost anyone at any given moment. The disciples display their own shortcomings throughout the Gospel. John the Baptist questions if Jesus really is the anticipated Messiah (Matthew 11:2-3). Jesus' own righteousness gets betrayed, even by those closest to him. It is clear that God's rule needs divine judgment. It's not a judgment that desires punishment but one that brings truth to misunderstanding and cleansing and humility to offset self-righteousness. God's judgment is about correction and new beginnings, not threats. God's judgment finds all of us coming up short and in need of a Savior, in the need of Jesus. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus and baptized him. Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit cleanses to create a changed life. The result is a people set free to bear fruit in Jesus' name.

Discuss: In what ways have you been set free to bear fruit in Jesus' name?

Pray: **God of judgment and mercy, cleanse our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit that we may trust in you and bear the fruit of peace, joy, and love for all through Christ Jesus. Amen.**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve the poor and needy with fairness and compassion rather than judgement?

During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus Christ. For this second week of Advent, light the first candle of hope and a second candle of peace on the Advent wreath. This week, we focus on the peace that Jesus brings us to set aside our differences and trust in God's promise. Say: Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord, the light of Christ that gives us hope and peace.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11