

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

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

January 21, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY after EPIPHANY



*Stories of the call to discipleship continue as the Time after Epiphany plays out the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of fisherman brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.*

## PRELUDE

## GATHERING

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who stretches out the heavens,  
who sends light to the nations, who gives breath to us all.

**C Amen.**

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

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

**P** Loving God,

**C** we confess that we have turned from your way  
to follow our own ways.

**Forgive us for the times**

**we have spoken or acted too quickly;**

**we have not spoken or acted at all;**

**we have hurt those closest to us;**

**we have hurt those we have yet to know;**

**we have thought more about ourselves than others;**

**we have thought less of ourselves than we ought.**

**Turn us around, and give us a fresh start,**

**so that we can live again as your children. Amen.**

**P** Even when we have done wrong, God makes us right. Even when we have messed up, God puts us together. God's love never runs out. God never tires of calling us beloved children. Hear God say to you now: Your sins are forgiven, for the sake of † Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C Amen.**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**     *"You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore"*

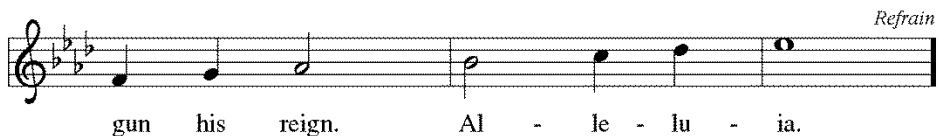
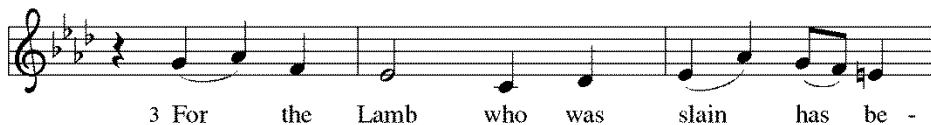
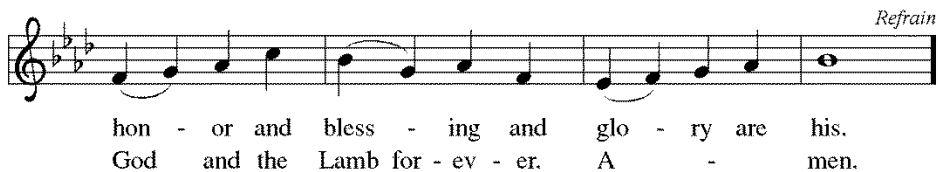
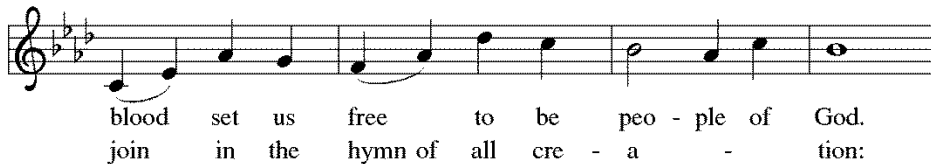
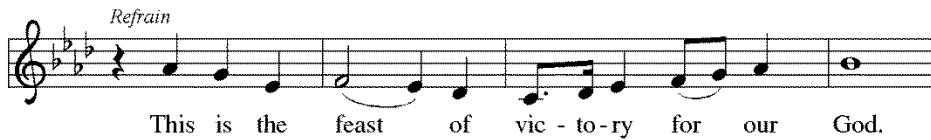
**ELW 817**

### 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.

**C And also with you.**

# HYMN OF PRAISE



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Almighty God,  
**C** by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## WORD

(sit)

### FIRST READING

**Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

*The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"*

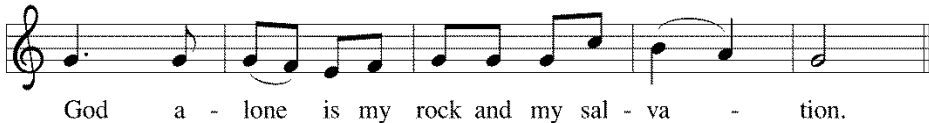
**T**he word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup>So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "*Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!*" <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

**A** The word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

### PSALM 62:5–12



Psalm 62:6

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.

<sup>5</sup>For God alone I wait in silence;  
truly, my hope is in God.

<sup>6</sup>God alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.

<sup>7</sup>In God is my deliverance and my honor;  
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

<sup>8</sup>Put your trust in God always, O people,  
pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge. **R**

<sup>9</sup>Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath; those of low estate cannot be trusted.  
Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.

<sup>10</sup>Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;  
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.

<sup>11</sup>God has spoken once, twice have I heard it,  
that power belongs to God.

<sup>12</sup>Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,  
for you repay all according to their deeds. 

## SECOND READING

## 1 Corinthians 7:29–31

*Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

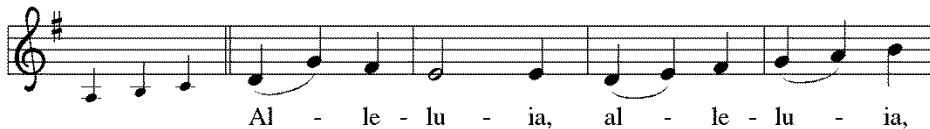
**B**rothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, <sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, <sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

 The word of the Lord.

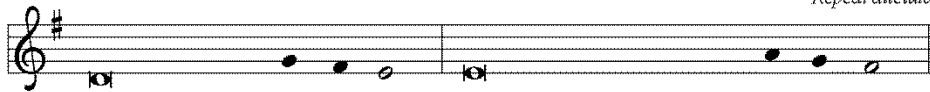
 Thanks be to God.

(stand)

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*Repeat alleluia*



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

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

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

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

**Mark 1:14-20**

*Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as “the gospel” or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.*

**N**ow after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news.”*

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, *“Follow me and I will make you fish for people.”* <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

**P** The Gospel of our Lord

**G** Praise to you, O Christ.

*(sit)*

## CHILDREN’S BLESSING

*Children (aged 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) are invited to come forward for a blessing. Then, they may either follow the teacher upstairs for an extended children’s sermon (joining us again later in time for Communion) or they may return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the regular sermon.*

## SERMON

Pastor Roynesdal

*(stand)*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*“O Jesus, I Have Promised”*

**ELW 810**

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

☛ 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.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response: ☐ Lord, in your mercy,  
☛ hear our prayer.

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

**Illness:** Marvin Andersen, Lois Carlsen, Emalee Gardels, Jr Green (husband of Marvel),  
Eunice Grunberg, Teri Heil, Susan Muchmore, Gary Rodene, Sheri Tipton, Ed White

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Michael McNeill,  
Daniel Milstead, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, and Joel Woosley

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in mission* – Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India; Dr. Stephen &  
Jodi Swanson, Tanzania; Krystle Moraska & Ignacio Madrussan, Argentina; Lindsay Mack,  
Mexico; Our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin

## THE PEACE IS SHARED

☐ The peace of Christ be with you always.  
☛ 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 use the giving kiosk in the Fellowship Hall.*



## THE TABLE IS PREPARED

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*“Deep Waters”*


by Pepper Choplin

(stand)

### OFFERTORY HYMN

*“Create in Me a Clean Heart”*

ELW 186



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take  
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of  
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923  
Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Merciful God,
- ☑ receive the gifts we bring, our selves, our time, and our possessions. Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 Thanksgiving continues)*

- It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...  
...and join their unending hymn:

## SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Blessed 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

- ☞** 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** We who are many are one body,  
**☞** for we all partake of the one bread. We come to be filled with light and life.

*(sit)*

### HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*“Around You, O Lord Jesus”*  
*“We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus”*

**ELW 468**  
**ELW 451**

*(stand)*

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** O Morning Star, fair and bright,  
**☞** you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our dearest treasure. Go with us now—today, tomorrow, every day—that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your praise both now and forever. Amen.

## SENDING

### BLESSING

☐ The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved, and shine brightly on your path; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

☑ Amen.

### HYMN

*“I Love to Tell the Story”*

**ELW 661**

### DISMISSAL

☐ Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

☑ Thanks be to God.

### POSTLUDE



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## KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Olaf Roynesdal	Senior Pastor
Pr. Paul Moessner	Associate Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Pr. Inba Inbarasu	Visitation Pastor
Kristin Boe	Christian Ed Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Amanda Zasada	Administrative Assistant
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Sheri Rose	Financial Secretary
Søren Johnson	Custodian
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Donna Moessner	Director of Children's Music
Danny Bos	Handbell Director/Custodian
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Sheri Lynn Tipton	Night Security Manager
Norma Pafford	Nursery Superintendent
Joyce Palmer	Urban Ministries Coordinator

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

### SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Scott Henneman
	Kevin Larkowski
	Dan Collett
Lector	Kevin Larkowski
Ushers	Joe Councill
	Jim Comfort
	Jan Falk
	John Georgeson
	Jeff Perkins
	Fred Wachal
	Dave Forrest
Greeters	Darlene Anderson
	Lennea Davis
	Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Britten Johnson
Acolytes	Madelyn Hinrichs
	Rahn Johnson

### SUNDAY, 11:00 PM

Comm. Asst.	Norm Sack
	Lowell Harms
Lector	Bruce Nissen
Ushers	Dudley Syre
	Adam Klinker
	Linda Hoagland
	Julie O'Doherty
Greeters	Peggy Johnson
	Myrna Carter
Crucifer	Torin Edwards
Acolytes	Grace Penrod
	Lily O'Kane



# KOUNTZE

## Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street  
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

**January 20 & 21, 2018**

*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 worshiping, growing, and serving in downtown Omaha for nearly 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

**KOUNTZE CAFÉ** Join us on Sundays for a hot breakfast buffet served from 8-11 AM prepared by Jim West and the kitchen crew. The suggested donation for the hot breakfast is \$5 adults, \$2.50 children 12 and younger. If you're able to help set up, prep/cook, and/or clean up after breakfast on Sunday mornings, please talk to Jim, or let the church office know. We would appreciate your help! Thanks.

**ADULT FORUM** Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** *Preview of 2018 Budget* **NEXT WEEK:** *Congregational Meeting*

**NEW MEMBER CLASS** continues this Sunday January 21, from 12—2 PM. Please plan to attend both sessions. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are given to the glory of God by Barb & Bruce Nissen in memory of Lyle Nissen's birthday; by Betty Callies in memory of her husband, Gordon Callies, on their wedding anniversary.

**ETERNAL CANDLE** is given to the glory of God in honor of Pauline Brager on her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday by her sisters and family.

### CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** Join us each Sunday on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for children 2 years—8<sup>th</sup> grade. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9—10 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). Sunday School (2 yrs—8<sup>th</sup> grade) is held from 10:10—10:50 AM.

**HIGH SCHOOL FORUM** Join us each Sunday in the Youth Center at 10:10 AM.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CHOIR** rehearsal in the Adult Choir room each Sunday from 11—11:40 AM. Come and sing!

**January 21 Sunday**

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir  
 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast  
 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship  
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)  
 10:00 AM Blood Pressure Checks  
 10:10 AM Adult Forum  
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)  
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)  
 11:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal  
 12:00 PM New Member Class  
 8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU

**January 22 Monday**

10:00 AM Pantry  
 12:00 PM Endowment Board  
 5:30 PM KETV Board  
 7:00 PM Taize Service @ St. John's

**January 23 Tuesday**

9:00 AM Staff Meeting  
 7:00 PM Circle 3

**January 24 Wednesday**

10:30 AM Augsburg Confession Class  
 12:15 PM Worship

6:00 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal  
 6:00 PM Confirmation Dinner  
 6:30 PM Confirmation  
 6:30 AM Augsburg Confession Class  
 7:45 PM Closing Worship

**January 25 Thursday**

1:30 PM Circle 4  
 4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

**January 27 Saturday**

5:00 PM Worship  
 5:30 PM Congregational Game Night

**January 28 Sunday**

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir  
 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast  
 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship  
 9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)  
 9:00 AM Receive New Members  
 10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)  
 10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)  
 10:10 AM Annual Meeting  
 11:00 AM MS/HS Choir Rehearsal  
 12:00 PM Stephen Ministry  
 8:30 PM LCM Worship @ CU

**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.

**CHILDREN IN WORSHIP** We believe that all are welcome in worship and encourage families to worship together. Quiet activity bags, children's bibles, and bulletins are available, as well as a Quiet 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** 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.

**NEW MEMBER CLASS** If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be held April 15 & 22 from 12—2 PM. Please plan to attend both sessions. Lunch will be served and childcare is provided. Please indicate your attendance plans on your attendance card or call the church office and let us know if you will need childcare.

**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 card in your bulletin or text your e-mail address to 22828.

**ALTAR FLOWERS AND ETERNAL CANDLE** The 2018 sign-up sheets are available. Altar Flowers are provided by Janousek Florist and cost \$20 a bouquet. The Eternal Candle is \$7.50.

**SIMPLY GIVING UPDATE FOR 2018 PLEDGE** If you have made a change to your pledge for 2018 and your offerings are made through Simply Giving, please be sure to contact the office to allow us to make that change. You may notify Lauri Askew (402-341-7761 or lauri@kmlchurch.org).



**CONGREGATION CONSTITUTION—CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION** We appreciate the care for our congregation's ministries expressed in the questions raised. To give more opportunity for discussion, your Council is offering additional times to meet. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall this Monday (1/22) and Thursday (1/25) at 6 PM and Wednesday (1/24) at 12:45 PM. Join us.

**PASTOR'S CLASS** Pastor Olaf Roynesdal is teaching a class on the Augsburg Confession (the Confessio Augustana) which is the foundational doctrinal document of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The six-week class continues to meet on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM thorough February 7.

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** Please join us at 7 PM, Monday, January 22 for a prayer service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St. John Parish (Creighton University). Parking is available at 24<sup>th</sup> and Cass. The liturgy for the service is created by the World Council of Churches to promote the Christian hope that we may find ways to overcome our differences and unite in common prayer and service. This year's theme is "Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power." The Rev. Portia Cavitt (Clair Memorial Methodist) is preaching; representatives from Bethel (AME), Trinity Cathedral (Episcopal), First United Methodist, First Central Congregational (UCC), Kountze Memorial (Lutheran), and St. John's (Roman Catholic) will participate. All are welcome! Please invite a friend! For any questions, please contact Pr. Hall.

**CONGREGATIONAL GAME NIGHT** Saturday, January 27, 5:30 PM, in the Fellowship Hall. Monopoly, Jenga, Scrabble, Catchphrase, Gin Rummy....what's your game? We will have them all! Join us for conversation, community, and a little competition at the Congregational Game Night. Pizza, salad, and beverages will be provided. Bring a dessert or snack to share. Have a fun game? Bring that as well! All ages welcome. RSVP to the church office by Friday, January 26.

**CAROL JOY HOLLING CAMP** Register your child/children for summer camp by January 31 and get \$50 off! First-time campers get 50% off if you register for week 1, 2 or 6 (go to <http://caroljoyholling.org/registration> to register and first-timers use coupon code half off). Sending more than one child to camp? Receive an additional \$25 discount for each child of the same family attending a full-week or mini session.

**WORSHIP LEADER TRAINING** Saturday, February 10, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Join us for training of Communion Assistants, Lectors, Greeters and Ushers. All current servers and those who wish to serve in the future are encouraged to attend. Please call the church office to register.

**KMLC COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS** Scholarship are funds available to any eligible college-bound student member. Active members of Kountze Memorial planning or continuing to attend ANY college, university or seminary may submit an application. Additional eligibility requirements are noted on the application. Applications can be picked up after the first of the year in the Church Office, or downloaded at [www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org). Applications are due March 1. Applications received after this date will not be accepted. Please note: Scholarships are not automatically renewable, and recipients must re-apply each year.

**BED & COUCH NEEDED** Sharon West has a gentleman who just recently moved into deFreese Manor that needs a bed and a couch. If you have either of those and would like to part with them, please call Sharon West (402-345-0622). Thanks.

## Annual Meeting

**Sunday January 28, 2018**

**10:10 AM**

**Fellowship Hall**

*Annual Report, Constitution,  
2018 Budget*

Saturday Attendance: 39

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 164 11:00: 134

Midweek - Noon: 6 Evening: 16

Total: 359

Pantry Guests Served: closed due to weather

Medical Clinic Guests Served: holiday

Offering:

\$23,357.50 (Regular) \$12,743.60 (Specials)

\$51,778.00 (In the City for Good)

*Jesus calls us to follow him.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 1:14-20	Jesus calls disciples
Monday	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Jonah goes to Nineveh
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Live without anxiety in daily life
Wednesday	Genesis 12:1-9	God calls Abram
Thursday	Mark 3:13-19	Jesus appoints the twelve
Friday	1 Corinthians 7:17-24	Live the life assigned to you
Saturday	Psalms 62:5-12	God is powerful and kind
Sunday	Mark 1:21-28	Jesus teaches in the synagogue



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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.  
Go to [www.vibrantfaithathome.org](http://www.vibrantfaithathome.org) for more faith-forming activities.

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." **Mark 1:17 (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, you who call us to follow you, we thank you for your steadfast love that gives us the courage and the faith to follow. Amen.

### Mealtime Prayer:

For food and drink, house and home, we thank you God, you give them all. May we hear your voice and follow your call. Amen.

### A Blessing to Give:

May the God who calls you to follow Jesus be your mighty rock, and your protection, now and always. (Mark 1:17 and Psalm 62:7)

## CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- What is the difference between being a leader and being a follower? In what ways are you a leader? In what ways are you a follower?
- In Mark 1:16-20, Simon, Andrew, James, and John respond immediately to Jesus' call to follow him. What does this story say about Jesus' power to call us?
- In the book of Jonah, Jonah did not want to preach repentance as God had directed him to do, so at first he ran away from God's call. What does Jonah's experience teach us about God's power, grace, and mercy?

## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Psalm 62:5-12 in the style of *lectio divina* (divine reading).

This is a psalm of trust in God's power and steadfast love. Read the verses slowly twice, then pause to reflect on a word or phrase that stands out for you. Focus on that word or phrase for an extended time. What might be the significance of that word or phrase for you today? Read it again and wonder how this text may guide your life in the days ahead. *Pray:* Read it a final time as a prayer, and conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

## SERVICE

Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their jobs as fishermen to follow Jesus. They were now to be "fishers of people." Following Jesus sometimes means sacrificing, giving up, or sharing earthly goods to share Jesus' love and good news with others. Decide on an act of giving or sharing you can do this week as a way to promote the message and work of Christ for the sake of the world.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The fish is an important Christian symbol. Each letter in the Greek spelling of the word "fish" (ΙΧΘΥΣ) begins a Greek word that stands for "Jesus Christ God Son Savior." During the early church, it was dangerous to be a Christian in some parts of the Roman Empire. Believers developed a code to reveal their faith to others who were Christian. One person would draw on the ground the upper half of a fish symbol. If the other person was a Christian, they would recognize this and add a second curve line to complete the drawing of a fish.

- Practice making the fish symbol with others by having two people make curved lines to create the fish symbol.
- Place the fish design in different parts of your home to symbolize and remind you of your faith in Jesus.
- Pray for those who live in places today where it is dangerous to be a Christian.

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111;  
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28