

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

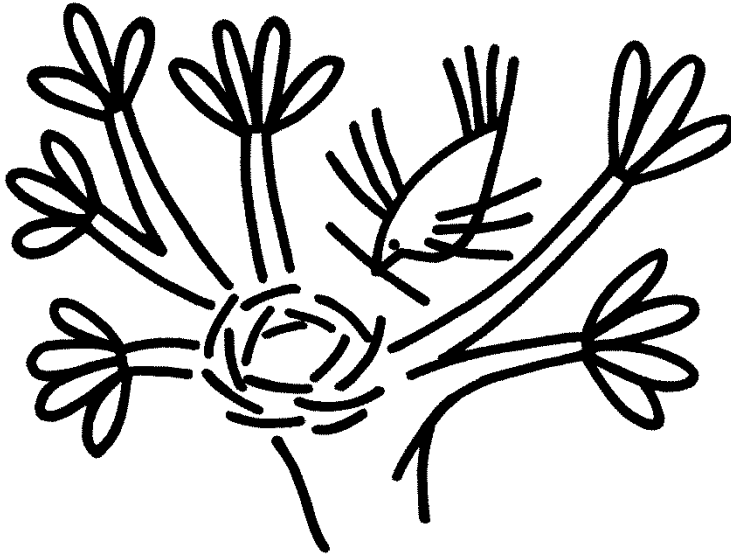
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Paul H. Moessner, Associate Pastor
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

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

June 17, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



The mustard seed becomes a great shrub that shelters the birds, recalling ancient images of the tree of life. We'd expect a cedar or a sequoia, but Jesus finds the power of God better imaged in a tiny, no-account seed. It's not the way we expect divine activity to look. Yet the tree of life is here, in the cross around which we gather, the tree into which we are grafted through baptism, the true vine that nourishes us with its fruit in the cup we share. It may not appear all that impressive, but while nobody's looking it grows with a power beyond our understanding.

GATHERING

PRELUDE (CROWNED)

*“A Believer’s Prayer”
“Make Them Hear You”*

*Sally DeFord
Stephen Flaherty*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, Son \mp , and Holy Spirit, full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love.

G Amen.

P Trusting God’s promise of forgiveness, let us confess our sin against God and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P Eternal God our creator,

G in you we live and move and have our being.

Look upon us, your children, the work of your hands.

Forgive us all our offenses,

and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires.

**By your grace draw us near to you, our refuge and our strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

P Since we are justified by faith alone,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
God’s love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit given to us.
In the mercy of almighty God,
Christ died for us while we still were sinners;
and for his sake, God \mp forgives you all your sins.

G Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“The Church’s One Foundation”

ELW 654

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Almighty God,
C you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we will indeed bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the Lord will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ²³On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. ²⁴All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 92:1-4, 12-15 (*read responsively*)

¹It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praise to your name, O Most High;

²**to herald your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night;**

³on the psaltery, and on the lyre,
and to the melody of the harp.

⁴**For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD;
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.**

¹²The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

¹³**Those who are planted in the house of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts of our God;**

¹⁴they shall still bear fruit in old age;
they shall be green and succulent;

¹⁵**that they may show how upright the LORD is,
my rock, in whom there is no injustice.**

THE SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—⁷for we walk by the faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one had died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

L The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil”

ELW 512

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.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

G Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.”²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”³⁰ Jesus also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?”³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”³³ With many such parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

G Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

MUSICAL OFFERING

“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”

Jason McCoy

Crowned

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 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 Olaf Roynesdal

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service”

ELW 712

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

P With the whole church, let us 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 GOD’S PEOPLE

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: Vicki Freeman, Emalee Gardels, Jr Green, Eunice Grunberg, Gary Rodene, Charlie Wachholtz, Evelyn Winther

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Brennan Hron, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, 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; Meghan Brown Saavedra, Mexico; Our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin

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

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.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“I Love You Lord Jesus”

Glenn Christianson
Crowned

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

THE OFFERTORY HYMN

“Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring”

ELW 691

C Accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place upon your table.
We do not worship as we ought but only as we're able.

The vines were planted, seeds were sown. They grew in your good pleasure.
What once was common, daily food becomes a holy treasure.

**Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer before you.
Lord, by your grace now come to us, as humbly we adore you.**

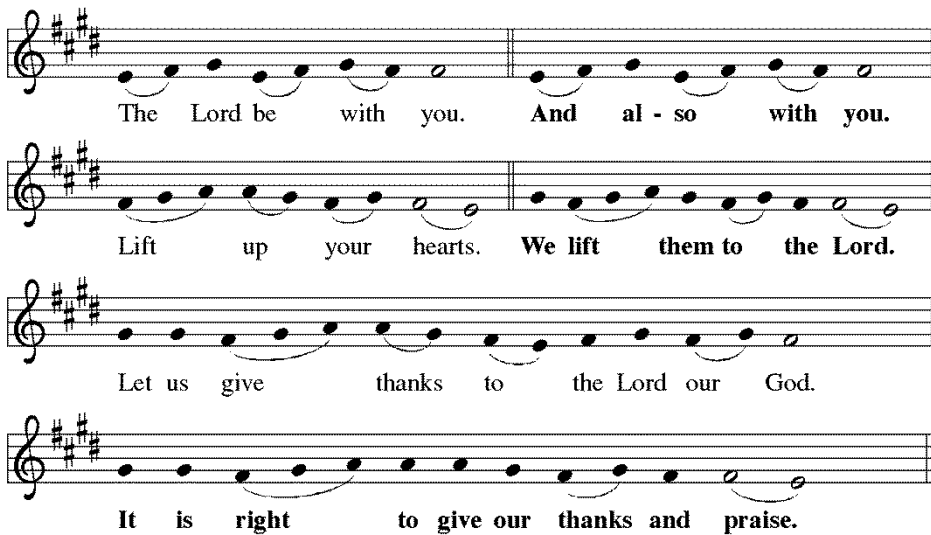
Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, b. 1957

Text © 1990 Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** Merciful God,
C you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our 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.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures, the second and third have two measures each, and the fourth has one 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.'

THE PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

SANCTUS

☩ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

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

☐ The gifts of God for the people of God.

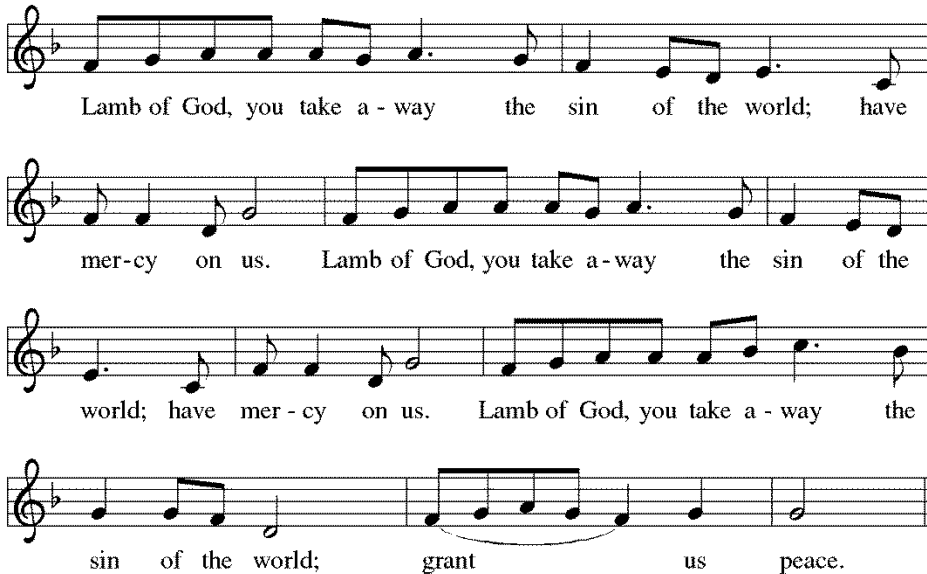
☩ Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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. The form of distribution is **intinction**, you will receive the consecrated bread and you may then dip it in the wine. Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.*

(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.

(sit)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

“Oh, Strengthen Me”

Sally DeFord

Crowned

“This Is My Father’s World”

ELW 824

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

ELW 631

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Lord God,

G you have called us, your servants, to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☞ The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father and of the Son ✝ and of the Holy Spirit.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

"On What Has Now Been Sown"

ELW 550

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve. Let us go remembering our mission:
☞ **We are disciples of Jesus, worshiping our God, growing in faith and serving our community. Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

"It's About the Cross"

Jamison J. Statema
Crowned

✝ ✝ ✝

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
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Sheri Rose	Financial Secretary
Jim Smejkal	Bldg. Super./Dir. of Cong. Activities
Søren Johnson	Custodian
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Donna Moessner	Dir. 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

SATURDAY, 5:00 PM

Lector	Ellen Pesavento
Ushers	Duane Hovendick
	Penny Hovendick

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Darlene Anderson
	Pam Johnson
	Jeff Perkins
Lector	Don Darst
Ushers	Bob Woodworth
	Glenn Anderson
	Dan Collett
	Marcy Madison
	Mark Mahaffey
	Gary Westerman
	Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Karen Wolf
	Sharon Anderson
	Bev Troxel
Crucifer	Carly Cameron
Acolytes	Clara Kidder
	Anna Kidder

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Deb Hinrichs
Lector	Deb Hinrichs
Ushers	Ken Johnson
	Ken Johnson
	Lee Johnson
	Norm Sack
Greeters	Rosemary Tessin
	Julie King
Crucifer	Keelan Edwards
Acolytes	Rachel Stouffer
	Charlie Campbell



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

June 16 & 17, 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 each Sunday 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. **Next Sunday**, June 24, is our Neighborhood Gathering, so we won't be serving breakfast. If you would like to bring some cookies to share, please feel free to do so.

ADULT FORUM Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** Celebrating Our Choirs: Adult, Youth, Children, and Bells (*Barb Carlsen, Janet Carlsen, Donna Moessner, and Danny Bos*) **NEXT WEEK:** No Forum (Neighborhood Gathering)

CROWNED The Men's singing group known as Crowned is joining Kountze Memorial for worship this Sunday, June 17, at both services. Crowned would very much like to thank Carolyn Sieling for accompanying them on the piano and to Pastor Olaf for allowing them to use Kountze as practice space. If you would like to give an offering to their ministry, there will be offering baskets placed around the Sanctuary. To follow Crowned on their journey, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/CrownedQuartet/>

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in celebration of Mark and Tarna Kidder's 22nd wedding anniversary

ETERNAL CANDLE is given to the glory of God in memory of Bill Epperson by Karen and Shirley Bonneau.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL Begins this Sunday, June 17, and will continue through Sunday, July 15. Join us each Sunday on the 2nd floor for Summer Sunday School. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9—10 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). Sunday School (2 yrs—8th grade) is held from 10:10—10:50 AM. Our program will focus on Holy Communion and use the curriculum "Fed and Forgiven".

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

June 17 Sunday

Father's Day

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 Summer Sunday School (2yr-8th)

10:30 AM Executive Committee

June 18 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

June 19 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

1:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group

6:00 PM Congregational Council

June 20 Wednesday

6:30 PM MS/HS Hangout in Youth Center

12:15 PM Worship

June 21 Thursday

11:30 AM Men's Luncheon

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

7:00 PM Circle 5

7:00 PM Longest Day - Alzheimer's Awareness Service

June 22 Friday

6:00 PM Movie Night

June 23 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

June 24 Sunday

Neighborhood Gathering – No breakfast but bring cookies to share

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

10:10 AM Adult Forum

10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)

10:10 AM Sunday School Summer (2yr-8th)

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Neighborhood Gathering

12:00 PM Stephen Ministry

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.

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

NEW MEMBER CLASS If you are interested in joining our congregation, the next class will be held September 16 & 23 from 12—2 PM. 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 when you register.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH we'll meet each week on Wednesday evenings from 6:30—9:00 PM and just hang out in the Youth Room. We hope to see you there!

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO INVEST IN KOUNTZE MEMORIAL YOUTH Twelve high school members and accompanying Adults from Kountze, plus about 30,000 others from ELCA congregations from around the nation, will get together for acts of service and spiritual development, for encouraging conversations and uplifting worship. If you'd like to help, please write "Youth Trip" in the memo area of your check. Thanks.

SPECIAL VESPERS FOR ALZHEIMER AWARENESS AND ALL CARETAKERS Wednesday, June 21, 7:00 PM, This year the Sanctuary will be open for individual meditation and prayer at 6:30 PM with Vespers beginning at 7:00 PM. Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. There are 16.1 million caregivers supporting those living with the disease. In Nebraska alone, there are 34,000 individuals living with dementia and nearly 37,000 individuals living with brain injuries. In 2 Timothy 4:17 we read, "But the Lord stood with

me and gave me strength". Coming together in prayer is our opportunity to show our love and concern for those living with Alzheimer's and their Caregivers.

MEN'S LUNCHEON The Men's Luncheon meets the 3rd Thursday of each month, at 11:30 AM. The cost is \$10. We enjoy conversation and a meal and hear presentations on a variety of topics. Presenters may be from the community or within the congregation. Topics may be directly theological, always inviting us to consider how faith connects with the wider community and all of creation. Join us on Thursday, June 21, and hear from Katie Larson, about the community work she has been doing.

PICNIC POTLUCK & MOVIE NIGHT On Friday, June 22, at 6:00 PM, all members of Kountze are invited to a picnic potluck and movie. The main dish and beverages will be provided. Please bring a side to share and a blanket to sit upon while we eat on the Kountze Commons green space. After eating, we will go inside to watch a family centered movie in the Fellowship Hall. Please RSVP to the church office by Wednesday, June 20.

YESTERDAY'S YOUTH It's BINGO time! Please join us on Tuesday, July 3, for lunch and then stay for one of our most popular events—BINGO! There will be prizes galore! Lunch will be served at noon. The cost is \$4.00. Please RSVP to the church office. All ages are welcome! If you have any questions, please call Sheri Tipton at 402-415-6033. Hope to see you there!

BAPTISM SEMINAR Sunday, July 8, Noon (immediately following 11:00 AM service). Meet with Pr. Hall in the Nave immediately after the liturgy, and then he will walk through the baptism liturgy with you. To register, call the church office at 402-341-7761.

"SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THE BIBLE" Join us this summer on four Wednesdays at 6:00 PM beginning July 11 for a Bible Study presented by Dulcinea Boesenberg. You can call the church office to sign up so we know how many to plan for.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – Not Just for Children! or – for Children of All Ages! Reserve Friday evening, July 20 and Saturday Morning, July 21, for a different Bible School Experience. We begin with supper at 5:30 PM and conclude the evening by 7:45 PM. We resume Saturday with continental breakfast at 8:30 AM. We will focus on a Bible story that helps us know who we are as the people of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church! We will

create an art project together. We will have a chance to talk with people of different ages. And we intend to have fun!



ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 44

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 183 11:00: 101

Midweek - Noon: 11

Total: 339

Pantry Guests Served: 305

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 36

Offering:

\$13,297.9 (Regular) \$1,592.00 (Specials)

\$795.00 (In the City for Good)

We have gratefully received \$75,000.00 from the Hitchcock Foundation for debt reduction.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY Spring and Summer 2018

Summer Sunday School
June 17 – July 15

Picnic Potluck & Movie Night
Friday, June 22

Vacation Bible School "Camp"
Friday evening, July 21,
Saturday morning, July 22
For ALL AGES!

August 12 – Blessing of Backpacks
(as a new school year begins)
and our School Teachers/Workers

The kingdom of God is experienced more than explained.

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

Sunday	Mark 4:26-34	The use of parables
Monday	Ezekiel 17:22-24	Israel to return from ex
Tuesday	2 Corinthians 5:6-17	Living by faith
Wednesday	Proverbs 3:1-12	Trusting in God
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1-40	The meaning of faith
Friday	Revelation 21:22-22:5	The tree of life
Saturday	Psalms 92:1-4, 12-15	A song for the sabbath



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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
Go to www.vibrantfaithathome.org for more faith-forming activities.

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—we walk by faith, not by sight. **2 Corinthians 5:6-7 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, help us to see with eyes of faith that your kingdom is present in our lives and world bringing mercy and steadfast love through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God has planted, God has fed. Thanks be to God for daily bread. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of steadfast love give you a thankful heart morning and night and all the day long. (Psalm 92:1-2)

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about something you have learned this past year. How did you learn it?
- Having confidence is about support as well as having skills and information. Who or what gives you a sense of confidence?
- The Apostle Paul writes, "...we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:6). How does that give you confidence in your daily life of faith?

Read: Mark 4:26-34.

Jesus talks about the kingdom of God in parables. It is acknowledged that the ability to hear and understand these parables varied according to the listener. He explained them privately to his disciples. The key to understanding parables is doing the will of God. This means following Jesus and being part of his community, his family (Mark 3:34-35). The two parables in this text describe growth through the image of plant life. Growth happens without our full comprehension of how the plants develop. In the kingdom of God growth happens as God's will is done through Jesus. It may not be easily understood, but the fruit of the work of the kingdom does show forth in the world. Reflect on how you experience the kingdom of God as a follower of Jesus in a community of faith.

Pray: God of life and growth, we thank you that your kingdom has come to dwell among us and promises to continue with us and to bear fruit. Bless us with faith that trusts that your work is being done through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Father's Day is a time to honor the men in our lives who have cared for us and supported us over the years. Connect with a dad, grandfather, uncle, or other mentor and go outdoors to enjoy God's creation together. Enjoy the time together by walking side by side. Talk about some of your life experiences and how you have grown over the years.

Walking in creation has been shown to be a healthy experience, impacting our body chemistry and immune system. It also impacts our life of faith. Psalm 92 compares the life of faith with the growth of a palm and cedar tree. Make time to go for a walk in creation regularly. Before you walk each time, take time to pray this prayer:

Dear God, you who give us creation to see life and growth, guide our lives of faith to reflect your goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Amen.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32
2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41