

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

July 1, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



A woman finds healing by touching Jesus' cloak, and a girl is restored to life when he takes her by the hand. In both cases a boundary is crossed: in Jesus' time the hemorrhaging woman was considered ritually unclean, polluting others by her touch, and anyone who touched a corpse also became unclean. In Mark's Gospel Jesus breaks down barriers, from his first meal at a tax collector's house to his last breath on the cross as the temple curtain is torn in two. We dare touch Jesus in our "uncleanness" and to live as a community that defines no one as an outsider.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

- P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love
- C** 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,
- C** 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 ☩ forgives you all your sins.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"I Know that My Redeemer Lives!"

ELW 619
vs. 1-4

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 and merciful God,
- C** we implore you to hear the prayers of your people. Be our strong defense against all harm and danger, that we will live and grow in faith and hope, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Lamentations 3:22-33

The book of Lamentations is one of our most important sources of information about the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587 BCE. Though the people admit that God's judgment was just, today's reading declares a fervent trust that God will not leave them forever.

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." ²⁵The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. ²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. ²⁷It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth, ²⁸to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it, ²⁹to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope), ³⁰to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. ³¹For the Lord will not reject forever. ³²Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; ³³for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 30 (read responsively)

¹I will exalt you, O LORD, because you have lifted me up
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

**²O LORD my God, I cried out to you,
and you restored me to health.**

³You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead;
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

**⁴Sing praise to the LORD, all you faithful;
give thanks in holy remembrance.**

⁵God's wrath is short; God's favor lasts a lifetime.
Weeping spends the night, but joy comes in the morning.

**⁶While I felt secure, I said,
"I shall never be disturbed.**

⁷You, LORD, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains."
Then you hid your face, and I was filled with fear.

**⁸I cried to you, O LORD;
I pleaded with my Lord, saying,**

⁹"What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

**¹⁰Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me;
O LORD, be my helper."**

¹¹You have turned my wailing into dancing;
you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

**¹²Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing;
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Paul encourages the Corinthians to honor their commitment to participate in the collection his churches are organizing for the Christians in Jerusalem. He presents Jesus as an example of selfless stewardship and reminds them that Christians have received abundantly so that they can share abundantly.

Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. ⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something—¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance

between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written, “*The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.*”

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 5:21-43

Jarius, a respected leader, begs Jesus to heal his daughter. A woman with hemorrhage is ritually unclean, treated as an outcast in Jewish society. Both Jarius and the unnamed woman come to Jesus in faith, believing in his power to heal and bring life out of death.

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, “*My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.*” ²⁴So Jesus went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, “*If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.*” ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “*Who touched my clothes?*” ³¹And his disciples said to him, “*You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’*” ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.*” ³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “*Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?*” ³⁶But

overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “*Do not fear, only believe.*”³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, “*Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.*”⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha cum,*” which means, “*Little girl, get up!*”⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.⁴³ Jesus strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

G Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)
MUSICAL OFFERING

“Not Too Far From Here”

Ty Lacy and Steve Siler
Dayle Johnson, soloist
Jean Johnson, accompanist

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

“Come, Ye Disconsolate”

ELW 607

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

P With the whole church, let us confess our faith:

G 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: Emalee Gardels, Jr Green, Eunice Grunberg, Janice Nelson, Gary Rodene, Grant Searcy, cousin of Diane Nickeson-Ray, Charlie Wachholtz

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 “When in our Music God Is Glorified”

Arr. Jason Krug
Jean Johnson, pianist

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

THE OFFERTORY HYMN

“Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring”

ELW 691

- ☐ 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

- ☐ Merciful God,
☐ 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 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.

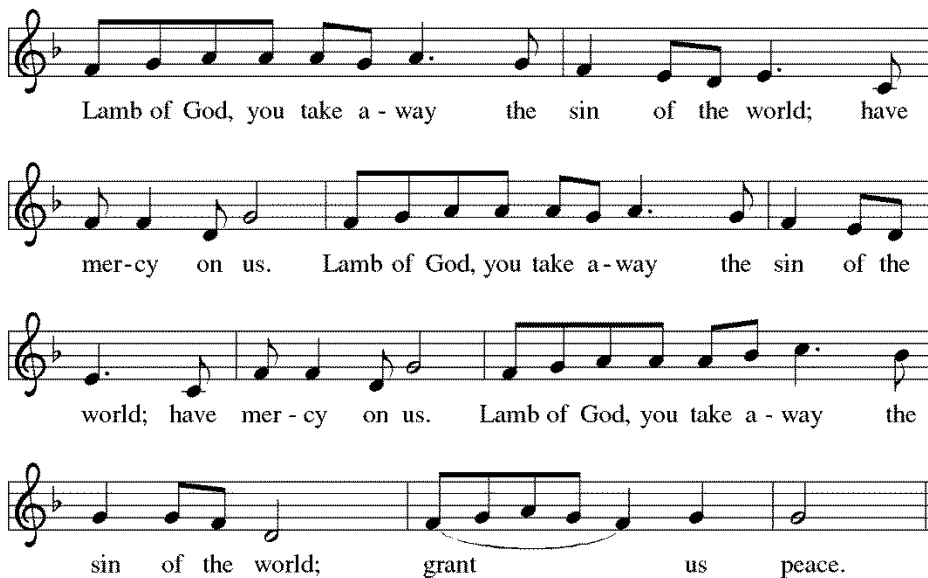
☩ Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”
“If You But Trust in God to Guide You”

ELW 733

ELW 769

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** Jesus Christ, host of this meal,
G you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore Amen.

SENDING

DISMISSAL OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

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

"I Know that My Redeemer Lives!"

ELW 619
vs. 5-8

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

✠ ✠ ✠

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
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Lauri Askew	Staff Treasurer
Judi Boe	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	Kathy Englert
Ushers	Jim Smejkal Jason Klonglan

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Steve Jacobson Lowell Harms
Lector	Karen Fannin
Ushers	Jeff Perkins Jim Comfort Joe Councill Dave Forrest Fred Wachal Chad Wachholtz Jan Falk
Greeters	Vickie Wichert Darlene Anderson Jinette Cswercko
Crucifer	Carly Cameron
Acolytes	Clara Kidder Anna Kidder

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Norm Sack Kevin Larkowski
Lector	Donna Moessner
Ushers	Julie O'Doherty Linida Hoagland Adam Klinker
Greeters	Peggy Johnson Myrna Carter
Crucifer	
Acolytes	



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

June 30 & July 1, 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.

ADULT FORUM Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **THIS WEEK:** "Mingle Sunday" **NEXT WEEK:** The Rev. Robert G. Moore, Ph.D., ELCA Representative in Wittenberg and Leipzig

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL 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".

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

The ELCA Youth Gathering was held from June 26-July 2 in Houston Texas. Thirteen Youth and two adults from Kountze attended the Gathering. Check out our Facebook page for photos and a link to view videos of different events held at the Gathering.

An appreciation dinner for those of you who helped to sponsor the Gathering will be held on Sunday July 15 at 5:30 PM.

July 1 Sunday

Homebound Communion

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast

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 Summer Sunday School (2yr-8th)

July 2 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

July 3 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

12:00 PM Yesterday's Youth

July 4 Wednesday

Independence Day

OFFICE CLOSED

July 5 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

July 7 Saturday

4:30 PM Blood Pressure Checks

5:00 PM Worship

July 8 Sunday

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast

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 Summer Sunday School (2yr-8th)

12:00 PM Baptism Seminar

12:00 PM Book Group

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.

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. More details on the insert in your bulletin. Please 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!

CARD SHOWER In celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary on July 26, the children of Reverend Lavern and Marilyn Larkowski would like to honor them with a card shower. Cards of congratulations may be sent to 1705 North 107th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68114. Their children – Kevin Larkowski (Omaha, Nebraska), Cara Skrypchuk (Crofton, Maryland), Lisa Hahle (Boise, Idaho), and Craig Larkowski (Phoenix, Arizona) along with spouses, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren will celebrate in Omaha in July.



ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 62
Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 217 11:00: 108
Midweek - Noon: 9
Total: 396
Pantry Guests Served: 364
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 20
Offering:
\$14,633.50 (Regular) \$2,125.00 (Specials)
\$1,891.00 (In the City for Good)

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY Spring and Summer 2018

Summer Sunday School
June 17 – July 15

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

God leads us out of sad times to joy.

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

Sunday	Mark 5:21-43	Jesus heals and raises to life
Monday	Lamentations 3:22-33	There is still hope
Tuesday	2 Corinthians 8:7-15	Generous giving
Wednesday	Galatians 5:1-15	Christ gives freedom
Thursday	John 16:16-24	Sorrow will turn to joy
Friday	Jeremiah 31:10-14	The Lord offers hope
Saturday	Psalms 30	God turns mourning into dancing
Sunday	Mark 6:1-13	Jesus sends the twelve



© 2017 Vibrant Faith Ministries. All rights reserved.
Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
Go to www.vibrantfaithathome.org for more faith-forming activities.

For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. **Psalm 30:5 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Healing God, you who know our every need, bring us from hurt and sadness to joy and gladness. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

With this food you make us strong. To you our life and love belong. Thanks be to you, O God! Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord Jesus give you faith when you are afraid and peace when you are suffering. (Mark 5:34, 36)

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a sad or difficult time you have experienced.
- How is God with you—or feel absent from you—in the sad and difficult times?
- A life of faith does not always experience happy, joyous times. How does your faith keep you going as you wait for the sense of joy in God's presence?

Read: Psalm 30.

This psalm expresses thanksgiving after a time of distress. It acknowledges that we experience difficult times in life, but those difficult times do not get the last word. Identify some of the challenges you have experienced in life. How has God's presence been felt or experienced through God's word or through other people? What kept you going? How have you changed or grown through the experience? How did it impact your life of faith in God? Sometimes when we live through dark times we can forget to give thanks to God. In Psalm 30 the psalmist feels compelled to express words of thanksgiving. Think of a difficult time in your life that you have endured and moved beyond. Offer words of thanksgiving to God as a way to praise God as the one who turns weeping into joy, the one who takes our mourning and turns it into dancing (vv. 5 and 11).

Pray: Healing God, you who know our every need, bring us from hurt and sadness to joy and gladness. Amen.

In Psalm 30, it has been observed that verse 5 is a good summary of the entire book of Psalms. Caring for others while they go through a difficult time is an important part of the Christian life. It is tempting to either deny the pain of others or to move too quickly beyond the pain to a premature sense of closure or happiness. Be aware of others around you who are experiencing difficult times. Be willing to be with them and hear their pain. Do so with the confidence that God promises healing and joy without forcing that feeling as a present experience. Give the other person courage and hope to endure a present crisis with faith in God's future.

Lamentations is filled with the sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem and the people of God. Lamentations 3:22-33 offers the words of hope in God in the midst of crisis. Lamentations 3:26 states, "It is good that one should sit quietly for the salvation of the LORD." Centering prayer is a way for one to sit in silence and let God's love embrace the one waiting quietly. Take time to sit prayerfully without offering petitions or prayers of thanksgiving. Simply sit with a word to focus one's attention on God's loving presence. Use a word like "mercy," "love," or "Jesus" and sit quietly to be reminded of God's love for you.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123
2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13