

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

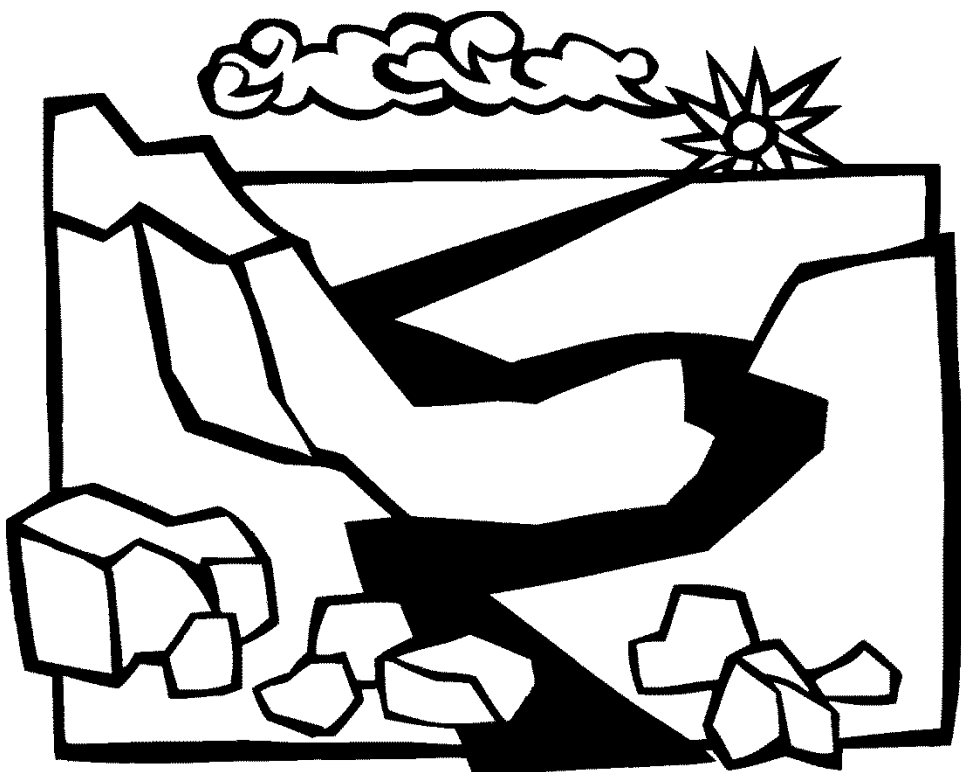
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

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

December 9, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT



Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Lord Jesus as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of the Lord and assist all flesh in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity one God, Father, ☩ Son and Holy Spirit, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

C Amen.

P Let us come before God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P To you, O God, we lift up our souls.

C You know us through and through;
we confess our sins to you.

Remember not our sins;

remember us instead with your steadfast love.

Show us your ways; teach us your paths;

and lead us in justice and truth,

for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

P Children of God, come with joy and draw water from the well of salvation. Remember the gift of baptism: your sin is washed away in the name of ☩ Jesus; you belong to Christ; you are anointed to serve. Stand up and raise your heads! The Kingdom of God is near.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW 246

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

P Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

C You call all nations to walk in your light
and to seek your ways of justice and peace,
for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near.

P Bless us as we light the second candle of this wreath.

C Rouse us from sleep, that we will be ready to greet our Lord when he comes
and welcome him into our hearts and homes,
for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

We light the second candle.



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

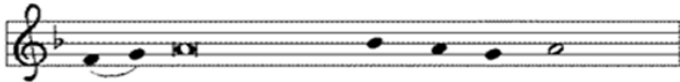


He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

APOSTOLIC GREETING

- ☐ The grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- ☐ And also with you.

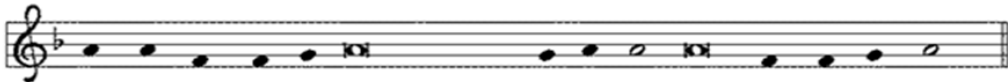
THE KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

(continued on next page)

For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up our hearts, Lord God,
- ☑ to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING

Malachi 3:1-4

The Lord announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) shall prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

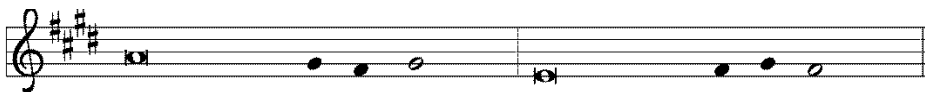
See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

L The word of the Lord.

© Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1:68-79

(Choir sings lines in regular print, All may sing lines in **bold** print)



⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.

**⁶⁹You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David.**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,

⁷¹from the hands of | all who hate us,

⁷²**to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.**

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our enemies.

free to worship you | without fear,

⁷⁵holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life.

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,

⁷⁷to give God's people knowledge | of salvation

by the forgiveness | of their sins.

⁷⁸In the tender compassion | of our God

the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,

⁷⁹to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,

and to guide our feet into the | way of peace.

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God’s grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

C Glory to you, O Lord

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of the saving Lord, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet

Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

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 Hall

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

ELW 249

THE NICENE CREED

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

C 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.

(continued on next page)

**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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response: **P** Lord, in your mercy,
 G 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 Ellen Pesavento; to the family and friends of Doris Kusch

Thanksgiving: for the baptism of Blake Allan Shively, son of Drew & Michelle Shively, December 8, 2018

Illness: Don Burton, Emalee Gardels, Jr. Green, Peggy Johnson, Tom Nippert, Mary Olson, Ellen Pesavento, Susan Ray, Gary Rodene, Steve Sheftz, father of Stephen Sheftz, Vinn Stephens, Marlys Thomas, Marilyn Van Bibber, Del Weber

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.
G And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

Today is the first Sunday of Advent – a time of preparation for Christmas. The world around us prepares for Christ’s birth by saying, “Buy! Buy! Buy!” In Advent we are reminded that showing love is more important than buying what is not really needed. Your offering gifts each week show your appreciation for God’s love.



MUSICAL OFFERING

“Every Valley”

John Ness Beck

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“All Earth is Hopeful”

1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.

Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our

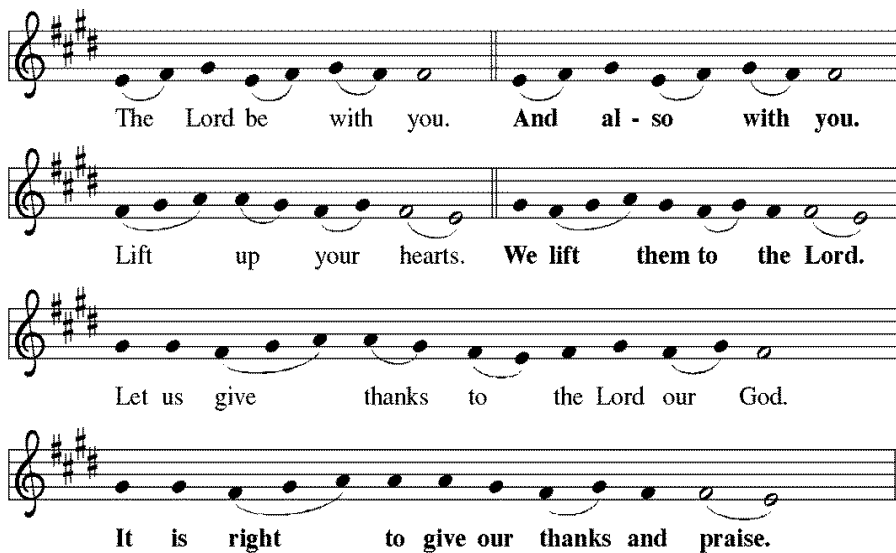
la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our

God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** God of abundance,
- C** we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

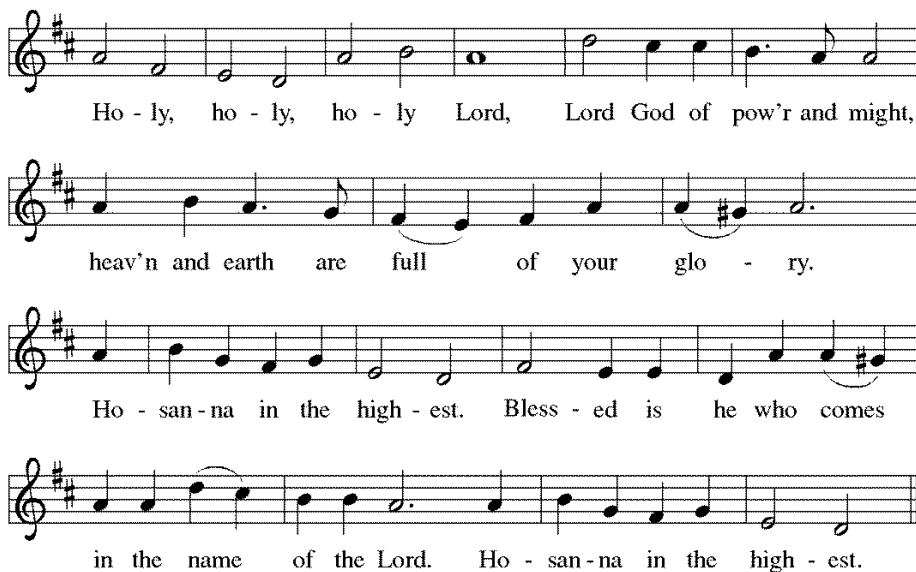
HOLY COMMUNION



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.

PREFACE FOR ADVENT

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

☞ Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us all to pray:

☞ **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

☞ God fills the hungry with good things.

☞ **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

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 you may then dip it in the wine. Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.*

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*"Blessed Be the God of Israel"
"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"*

ELW 250

ELW 256

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

ELW 244

**Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.**

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Holy One,

C we give thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we will be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

P May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Fling Wide the Door”

ELW 259

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Jesus Christ is with you.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

✠ ✠ ✠

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Olaf Roynesdal	Senior Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Pr. Inba Inbarasu	Visitation Pastor
Kristin Boe	Christian Ed Coordinator
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Steve Jacobson	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	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	Duane Hovendick
	Penny Hovendick

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Mike Jensen
	Liz Pemberton
	Jill Gittler
Lector	Don Darst
Ushers	Bob Woodworth
	Glenn Anderson
	Dan Collett
	Marcy Madison
	Mark Mahaffey
	Gary Westerman
	Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Sharon Anderson
	Karen Wolf
Crucifer	Britten Johnson
Acolytes	Rahn Johnson
	Kaitlyn Munguia

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ann Miller
	June Anderson
Lector	Judith Poffenbarger
Ushers	Linda Johnson
	Ken Johnson
	Lee Johnson
	Norm Sack
	Monica Albers
Greeters	Rosemary Tessin
	Julie King
Crucifer	Torin Edwards
Acolytes	Abby Rigas
	Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 8 & 9, 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 Then join us each Sunday morning for a hot breakfast buffet served from 8:00—11:00 AM prepared by our 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:** Staffing changes **NEXT WEEK:** Getting to Know Your Council Members

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God in honor of Eunice Grunberg's 100th birthday given by a thankful relative; in thankful celebration of my sons, Alan, Nick, and Jackson, given by Marie Barrett

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES TODAY

JOYFUL SOUNDS CHILDREN'S CHOIR Join us each Sunday from 9-9:30 AM. All children (K—5th grade) who want to praise our Lord by singing, meet in the Joyful Sounds Studio on the 2nd floor.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ALL Sunday School children and the Joyful Sounds choir will rehearse for the Christmas program during the Sunday School time on December 9, 10:00 - 10:55 AM. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9:00—10:00 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery).

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



WE'RE INVITED! Eunice Grunberg will be 100 years old on December 11 and has invited us to celebrate with her at an open house this Sunday, December 9 from 2—4 PM at Brookestone Village (4330 S 144th St, Omaha, NE 68137). No gifts please.

December 9 Sunday

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir Rehearsal
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:00 AM Joyful Sounds Children's Choir (gr K-5)
10:10 AM Adult Forum
10:10 AM Sunday School (2yr-8th gr)
10:10 AM Youth Forum (gr 9-12)

December 10 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

December 11 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

December 12 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group
11:00 AM Advent Lunch—Chicken Noodle Soup
12:15 PM Worship
6:00 PM Advent Dinner—Chicken Noodle Soup
7:00 PM Holden Evening Prayer

December 13 Thursday

9:30 AM WELCA Board Meeting

11:30 AM Property Committee

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

December 15 Saturday

9:00 AM Christmas Program Rehearsal
9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group
5:00 PM Candlelight Carol Sing
Prelude begins 4:40 PM
5:00 PM Worship

December 16 Sunday

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir Rehearsal
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Christmas Program
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)
10:30 AM Executive Committee
7:00 PM LCM Worship @ CU (Halley Chapel)

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 January 13 & 20 from 12:15—2:00 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 and if you have food restrictions when you register.

ESTIMATE OF GIVING If you haven't turned your Estimate of Giving and Opportunities to Serve cards to the office yet, it's not too late. Just a reminder that if you are giving your offering through Simply Giving and have changed your giving amount for 2019, we need you to email Steve Jacobson (steve@kmlchurch.org) or complete a new Simply Giving form (a new voided check isn't necessary) and put it in the offering plate or return to Steve in the church offering plate. We are unable to change your giving amount without having something in writing. If you're not currently using electronic giving but would like more information about this safe and reliable method to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account through Simply Giving, you can download a form from our website or pick one up at the Welcome Desk. You can always call the church office for more information as well.

ADVENT MEALS AND WORSHIP Wednesdays, December 12, & 19. Lunch from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Dinner

from 5:00—6:15 PM. Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30 PM. In this season of preparation for Christ's coming, a place has been prepared for you, to hear the promise, see the signs of the times in Christ's light, and share your hopes and dreams one with another. We are invited to make Wednesday evenings in Advent a place apart for our minds and souls. Join us.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REHEARSALS There will be a Saturday morning rehearsal with all of the children on Saturday, December 15 from 9:00 to 10:30 AM. It's vital for your child/children to attend. Thank you to the children's parents and grandparents for encouraging and getting their kids to Sunday School and choir rehearsals. All the children from Joyful Sounds Choir and Sunday School will sing one song from the program for the 4:00 PM Christmas Eve service.

KMLC YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GATHERING Post College to the Young at Heart! Saturday, December 15 (Note date change) For the December YP Gathering, we are going to attend the Candlelight Carol Service at Kountze Memorial. Please note that we will be meeting on a different day than the 3rd Friday this month. After the Carol Service we will go to Proof in Midtown Crossing. For questions, contact Ashley Sum (AshleySumRealtor@gmail.com 402-880-7629) or Melissa Musick (Musick.melissa@gmail.com, 913-209-4485).

CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE (note new name) Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church, Saturday, December 15 at 5:00 PM (prelude begins at 4:40 PM). Reception following. Nursery care will be provided. Be sure to invite your family and friends to join us for this special service.

KMLC MEN'S LUNCHEON "Come, All Ye Faithful" to celebrate Christmas at the Kountze Memorial's Men's Luncheon. We will have a special Holiday meal and time for sharing your favorite Christmas stories of days gone by. There will not be a cost for the meal this month but please consider bringing a new and unwrapped toy for Toy's for Tot's. Join us at Kountze Memorial on Thursday, December 20, 11:30 AM (Please RSVP to the church office or to jim@kmlchurch.org by Monday, December 17).

USHERS, GREETERS, AND COMMUNION ASSISTANTS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS Please check your calendars and consider signing up to help usher and greet at our upcoming Christmas services as we gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the Sanctuary for Ushers; we will need ushers for the Candlelight Carol Service on December 15 as well as ushers for Christmas Eve 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM Christmas Eve services and Christmas morning at 10:00 AM. You can also email jim@kmlchurch.org to have an electronic sign-up sheet emailed to you. Communion assistants can sign up on Signup Genius. Thanks for your help.

YEAR END FINANCIAL INFORMATION You may fulfill your 2018 General and In the City for Good pledges by making your contribution in the following ways:

- Bring to the office or place your offering in the offering plate by Monday, December 31, 2018 (just an FYI, we will close at noon on December 24 and will not be back in the office until December 27).
- By mail: Must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2018. Contributions received in the office or in the offering plates in January, 2019, will be posted in 2019.
- Pre-payments: If pre-paying your 2019 pledge, please clearly indicate on your offering envelope that it is a pre-payment for 2019.

Please contact Steve or Debbie in the church office with any questions you may have. Thank you!

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 38

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 102 11:00: 54

Midweek - Noon: 23 **Evening:** 61

Total: 278

Pantry Guests Served: 282

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 46

Offering: Not available at time of printing



Prepare the way of the Lord.

Sunday	Luke 3:1-6	Prepare the way of the Lord
Monday	Malachi 3:1-4	The promised messenger
Tuesday	Luke 1:68-79	Zechariah praises the Lord
Wednesday	Isaiah 35:3-7	God changes everything
Thursday	Philippians 1:3-11	Peace to God's people
Friday	Isaiah 40:1-11	A voice in the desert
Saturday	Psalms 126	Harvest of joy
Sunday	Luke 3:7-18	One more powerful is coming



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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
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[John the Baptist] went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' " **Luke 3:3-4 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, prepare your way in us. Set us straight where we are crooked and make us smooth where we are rough. Amen. (Luke 3:4-5)

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord, bless this meal and our home this Advent as we prepare for your coming. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord direct your ways so that the crooked path be made straight and the rough ways be made smooth. (Luke 3:5)

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

- To repent means "to turn around." Tell or think about a time you were going in the wrong direction.
- John the Baptist's call to repentance is a call to turn in a direction that relies not on our own human powers (including personal, political, or even religious powers) but to a direction that relies on God. How is this good news?
- God does not come to us and leave us unchanged. How does God's love shown in Jesus change you?

Read: Luke 1:68-79.

Usually we expect an Old Testament psalm as one of the readings. In the Second Sunday of Advent, we have a New Testament psalm, the psalm (or song) of Zechariah. He is prophesying, meaning he is giving us a Spirit-filled message (v. 67), revealing the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation that is now going to happen. The psalm is a beautiful testimony to "the tender mercy of our God" (v. 78) that will bring joy to the world. The promise of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord (Malachi 3:1-4) is being fulfilled with the birth of Zechariah's and Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist. Reread Luke 1:68-79 and pause to feel the joy and exultation of Zechariah's song that has lifted people's hearts ever since.

Pray: **Merciful God, you have prepared us for a joy we cannot fully imagine. Bless us now and always with the light of Christ to guide our feet into the way of peace. Amen.** (Luke 1:79)

Make Christmas cards or ornaments for a Christmas tree using various craft materials (cardboard, colored paper, glue, glitter, etc.). Give them to those who are receiving care or are home alone. Take time to visit with them, pray with them, and bless them.

The second candle on the Advent wreath is the candle of preparation and peace. Discuss or think about what it means to you to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus. Read Isaiah 40:3-5 and then after lighting the first candle of expectation and hope and the second candle of preparation and peace on your Advent wreath, say the following:

Leader: **John the Baptist fulfills the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' " (Luke 3:4)**

All: **Thank you Lord Jesus, for preparing us for your coming. Amen.**

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18