

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 16, 2018

9:00 am

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT “A VERY SPECIAL NIGHT”



The presence of the Lord “in your midst” in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the Lord in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one “more powerful” than John, even with his winnowing fork in his hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

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.

G 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.

G 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.

G Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Lost in the Night”

ELW 243

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 third 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 third candle.

HYMN

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

ELW 240
vs 1, 2, 3



- 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

- P** The grace of your 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** Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God,
- C** **and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.**

(sit)

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

“A Very Special Night: A Christmas Story for Children”

Music by Gregg Sewell Drama by Trenelia Sewell

Hymn for Children’s Processional

“The First Noel” ELW 300 vs 1, 2 & 3

Scene I – “A Very Special Night”

Scene 2 – “Questions”

Scene 3 – “Away in the Manger” – Preschool

Congregational Hymn: “What Child is This” ELW 296 vs 1

Scene 4 – “King of my Heart”

Scene 5 – “Alleluia! He is Born”

Hymn for Children’s Recessional

“Angels We Have Heard on High” ELW 289

CAST:

Rachel – Lillian Willson

Esther – Alise Willson

Anna – Lilly Kassal

Meriam – Sheyenne Glasgow

Angel – Zoe Fischer

Jacob – Pastor Olaf Roynesdal

Mary – Ann Hadfield

Joseph – Brian Hadfield

Baby Jesus – Winston Hadfield

JOYFUL SOUNDS CHOIR and SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR: Kristin Boe

ACCOMPANIST and ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Judy Boelts

PRESCHOOL MUSIC: Anita Morse and Becky Brusky

SET CONSTRUCTION: Jim Smejkal

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S MUSIC: Donna Moessner

THE NICENE CREED

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

**Ⓒ We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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)

Sympathy: to the family and friends of Joyce Aschenbrenner; to the family of Pastor Larry Arganbright

Illness: Don Burton, Barbara Dilly, Emalee Gardels, Jr. Green, Peggy Johnson, Tom Nippert, Mary Olson, 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.
C And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

Today is the third 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

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



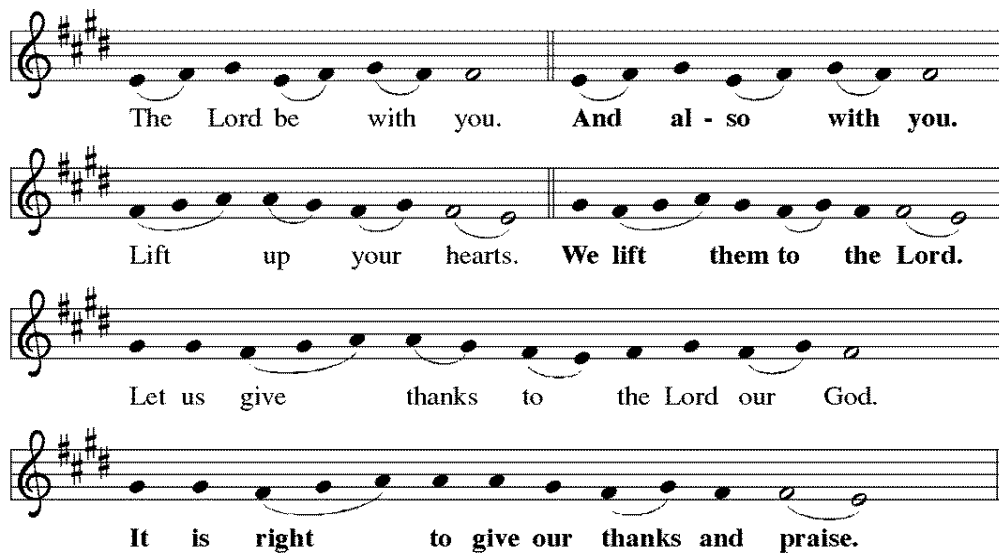
God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bod-y free.
Je-sus is with us, and ev-er sets us free.

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.

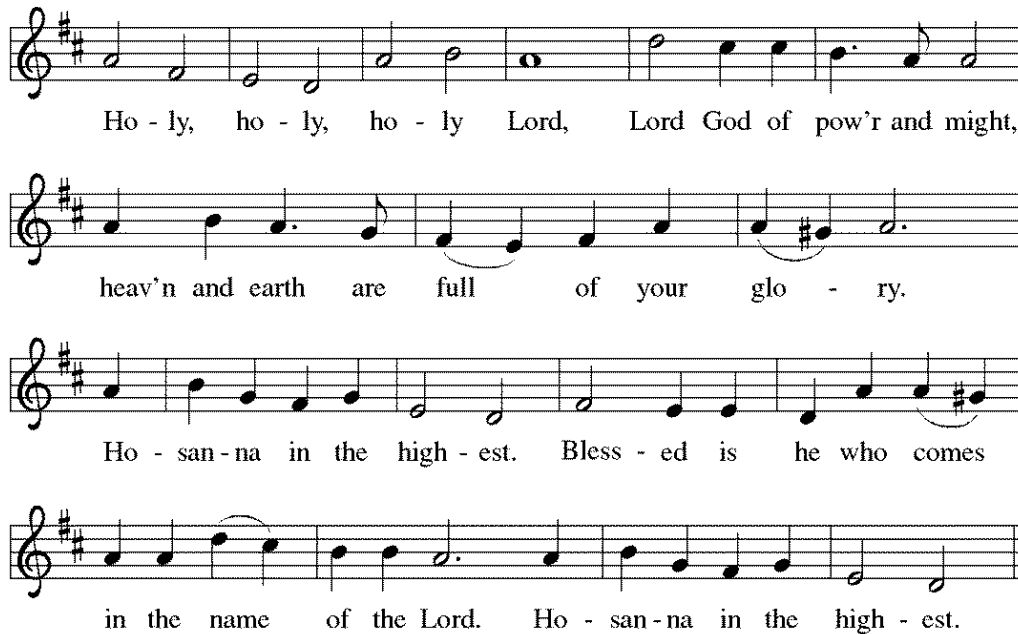
HOLY COMMUNION



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

*“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
“Prepare the Royal Highway”*

ELW 257
ELW 264

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

- ☞** Holy One,
- ☞** 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

- ☞ 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

“Joy to the World”

ELW 267

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Jesus Christ is with you.
☛ 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

Comm. Asst.	June Anderson
	Deb Hinrichs
Ushers	Jim Smejkal
	Joe Councill
	Jeff Perkins
	Debra Kelly
	Duane Hovendick
	Penny Hovendick

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Mike Jensen
	Lorie Groenjes
	Lee Johnson
Ushers	Bob Woodworth
	Glenn Anderson
	Dan Collett
	Marcy Madison
	Mark Mahaffey
	Gary Westerman
	Ted Kaasch
Greeters	Sharon Anderson
	Karen Wolf
Crucifer	Clara Kidder
Acolytes	Anna Kidder
	Cameron Miller

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Ashley Sum
	Lowell Harms
Lector	Ashley Sum
Ushers	Linda Johnson
	Ken Johnson
	Lee Johnson
	Norm Sack
Greeters	Rosemary Tessin
	Julie King
Crucifer	Charlie Campbell
Acolytes	Torin Edwards
	Communion Assistant



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 15 & 16, 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:** Update on Campus Ministry **NEXT WEEK:** No Forum

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God in honor of Madaline Christensen

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 Join us each Sunday on the 2nd floor for Sunday School. Preschool 1 (2-4 yrs) meets from 9:00—10:00 AM (child care for those too old for the nursery). Sunday School (2 yrs—8th grade) is held from 10:10—10:50 AM.

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



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

December 17 Monday

Good News Deadline
 10:00 AM Pantry

December 18 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
 6:00 PM Congregational Council

December 19 Wednesday

11:00 AM Advent Lunch – chicken noodle soup and chili & hot dogs
 12:15 PM Worship
 5:00 PM Advent Dinner – chicken noodle soup and chili & hot dogs
 6:30 PM Holden Evening Prayer

December 20 Thursday

11:30 AM Men's Luncheon
 4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

December 22 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

December 23 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)
 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 January 13 & 20, 2019 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 Wednesday, December 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.

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!

ATTENTION 8TH GRADERS - For 77 years, young people have served as acolytes in worship through the Order of Saint John (OSJ) at Kountze Memorial, providing leadership for our worship experience. OSJ members carry the processional cross, torches, gospel book, and banner. In addition, OSJ members light candles, as well as assist the pastors at baptisms and Holy Communion. Since it is your Confirmation year, the Order of Saint John sponsors invite you to train to assist in the Sunday church services. Please contact an OSJ Sponsor to arrange a training time: Jeff or Robin Perkins at papioperkins@cox.net or 402-339-5384; Tom Steffen at 4freefalling@gmail.com or 402-321-3666; Jill Gittler at jill@centertrophy.com or 402-689-4521.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING 10:00 AM, Saturday, January 19 through 2:00 PM, Sunday, January 20. Middle school youth in grades 6-8 and their adult leaders from across the Nebraska Synod are invited to take part in the 2019 Nebraska Synod Middle School Gathering. It will take place at First Lutheran Church in Kearney, Nebraska, starting at 10:00 AM on Saturday, January 19 and concluding at 2:00 PM on Sunday, January 20. The theme this year is "Rooted," and participants will explore Colossians 2:6-7. Hip hop artist AGAPE* and spoken word poet Joe Davis will be guest artists for the weekend. Cost is \$65. For more information, please speak with Marcia Roynesdal.

BAPTISM SEMINAR Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 12:15 PM (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. The next session will be held on March 10.

CJH CAMP EARLY BIRD SAVINGS! Register for CJH Camp before January 31, 2019 and get \$50 off a full-week session and a drawstring bag! You can register online at <https://www.caroljoyholling.org/register>.

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 72

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 257 11:00: 104

Midweek - Noon: 35 **Evening:** 58

Total: 526

Pantry Guests Served: 410

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 23

Offering:

\$42,046.48 (Regular) \$5,809.97 (Specials)

\$10,717.00 (In the City for Good)

Rejoice in the Lord.

Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth
Monday	Matthew 1:18-25	Birth of Jesus
Tuesday	Luke 2:1-20	Jesus is born
Wednesday	John 1:1-14	The Word becomes flesh
Thursday	Micah 5:2-5a	A promised ruler
Friday	Hebrews 10:5-10	Christ's sacrifice once for all
Saturday	Psalm 80:1-7	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Sunday	Luke 2:41-52	The boy Jesus at the temple



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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.

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, fill us with the Holy Spirit as we embrace the good news. We rejoice in our Savior, Jesus Christ and the love you have shown us through this gift. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord Jesus, bless our lives with love. As we enjoy your gifts of food this day, help us to give thanks for the gift of your coming into our world as Savior. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you rejoice in God your Savior Jesus Christ; may your Savior bless you and look with favor on you. (Luke 1:47-48)

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

- How do you tell or show someone you love them?
- Mary and Elizabeth supported each other. How do you support others? How are you supported by others?
- Mary's song states, "my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior." How do you show or express your love for God?

Read: Luke 1:39-55.

Sometimes it takes a life that has experienced and knows hardships to truly know what it means to be delivered. Mary, a young peasant girl speaks on behalf of the lowly (vv. 48, 52), those who know hunger of many forms (v. 53), when she sings her song of praise to God. And, yes, as the mother of our Savior Jesus, all future generations will honor Mary and call her blessed by God (v. 48). She speaks for herself and for us and we give thanks for God's work in her that lifts up the lowly while the proud are sent away. In humility and in recognition of our need of the Savior, we, too, can join Mary's song, a love song filled with passion for life and for faith in God. What words in Mary's song, the Magnificat, speaks most powerfully to you?

Pray: Magnificent God, we praise you for lifting up Mary and for giving us a Savior through your lowly servant. Bless us with humble hearts that are filled with joy for your goodness. Amen.

Is there room for more at your meal table this Christmas? Be on the lookout for someone who may be alone at this festive time, and invite them to join you, either on Christmas Day or the days after. Students, single adults, recent immigrants, widows, widowers, and elderly persons can feel particularly lonely at Christmas time.

The fourth candle on the Advent wreath is the candle of revelation and love. Discuss or think about the love that Jesus brings to the world. Read Luke 2:10-14 and after lighting all four candles on your Advent wreath, say the following:

Leader: In Mary's song of praise, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 5:8^o - 47), she expresses her love and revelation that all generations will call her blessed.

All: Mary's song expresses love for God and rejoices in all that God does for those in need.

Leader: Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving us so much. Fill our lives with love this Christmas. Amen.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55
Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]