

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 23, 2018

9:00 & 11:00 AM

FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT



Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and the blessed virgin Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in the holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

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

“Come, Though Long-Expected Jesus”

ELW 254

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 fourth 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 fourth 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.

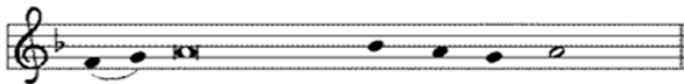


He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

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.

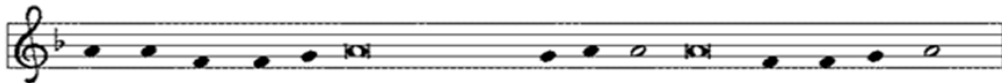
THE KYRIE



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 your power, Lord Christ, and come.
- ☑ **With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we will receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ^{5a}and he shall be the one of peace.

 The word of the Lord.

 Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1:46b-55

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



^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will | call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me
and holy | is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,
from generation to | generation.**

⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,

⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones
and lifting | up the lowly.**

⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**
⁵⁵the promise made | to our forbears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “*Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; ⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me). ⁸When he said above, ‘You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings’ (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, ‘See, I have come to do your will.’ He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

℣ The word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

℟ The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke

✠ Glory to you, O Lord

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-55

We are presented with Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, “*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.*”

⁴⁶And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

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 Roynesdal

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

ELW 263

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.

(continued on next page)

**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: **L** 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 Steve Sheftz, father of Stephen Sheftz; to the family and friends of Cecilia Moller, mother of Linda Johnson; to the family and friends of Susan Ray, daughter-in-law of Betty Callies

Illness: Don Burton, Ralph Diggins, Barbara Dilly, Emalee Gardels, Jr. Green, Peggy Johnson, Tom Nippert, Mary Olson, David Penning, Gary Rodene, 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 fourth 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

"Carol of the Advent"

arr. Phillip Dietterich

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

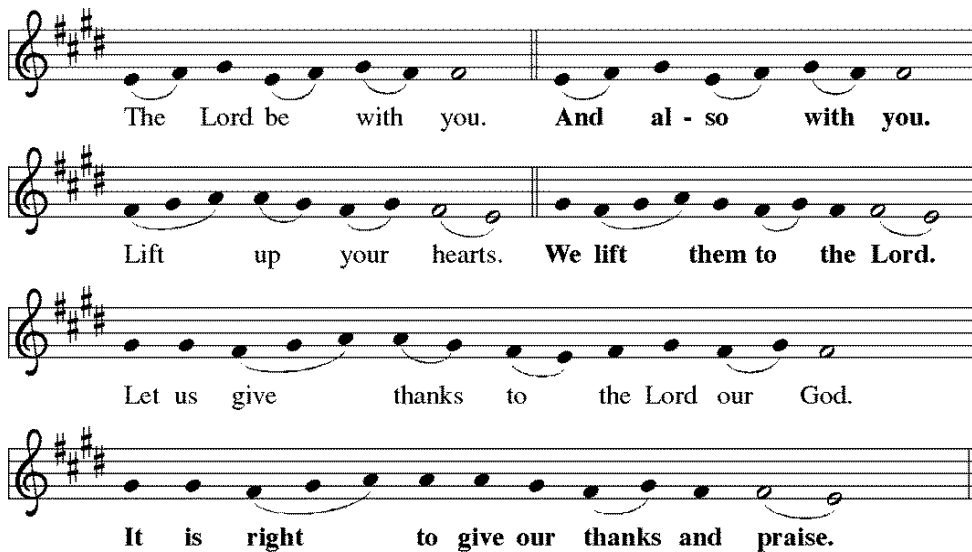
ev-er sets us free.

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.

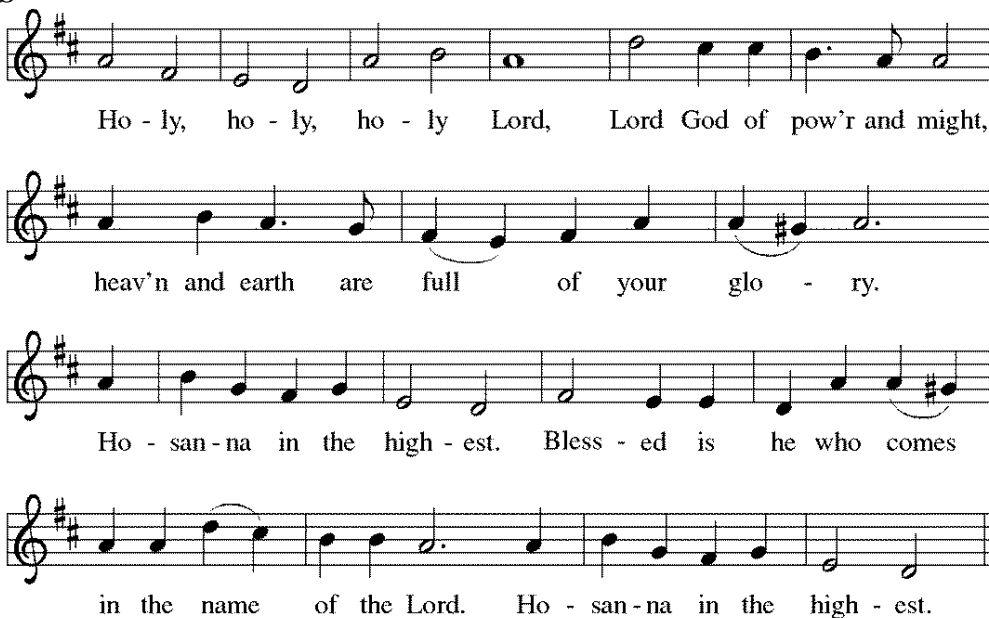
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff continues the melody and lyrics. The music is written in a simple, clear style suitable for a church service.

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 musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff continues the melody and lyrics. The music is written in a simple, clear style suitable for a church service.

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

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

ELW 490

“Creator of the stars of Night”

ELW 245

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

“Joy to the World”

ELW 267

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	Charlie Bressman
Ushers	Jim Smejkal
	Jason Klonglan

SUNDAY, 9:00 AM

Comm. Asst.	Steve Jacobson
	Adam Klinker
	Kevin Larkowski
Lector	Karen Fannin
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.	June Anderson
	Deb Hinrichs
Lector	Bruce Anderson
Ushers	Linda Johnson
	Ken Johnson
	Lee Johnson
	Norm Sack
Greeters	Rosemary Tessin
	Julie King
Crucifer	Charlie Campbell
Acolytes	Hadley Rief
	Henry Rief



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 22& 23, 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:** No Forum **NEXT WEEK:** No Forum

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God in honor of Lee and Jean Johnson's anniversary. Correction from December 16—altar flowers were given in honor Bill Christensen's 90th birthday on December 19 given by 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 No Sunday School this Sunday. Join us again each Sunday beginning January 13 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 No Forum this Sunday, but join us again each Sunday in the Youth Center at 10:10 AM beginning on January 13.

December 23 Sunday

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir Rehearsal
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Continental Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:00 AM Joyful Sounds Children's Choir
12:00 PM Stephen Ministry

December 24 Monday

Christmas Eve
OFFICE CLOSED @ NOON
4:00 PM Worship
7:00 PM Worship
11:00 PM Worship

December 25 Tuesday

Christmas Day
OFFICE CLOSED
10:00 AM Worship

December 26 Wednesday

OFFICE CLOSED

December 29 Saturday

9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group Breakfast (offsite)
5:00 PM Worship

December 30 Sunday

7:45 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

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.

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.

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. Sit with parents and come up front at appropriate time.

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.

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Saturday Attendance: 272

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 327 11:00: 62

Midweek - Noon: 24 **Evening:** 61

Total: 746

Pantry Guests Served: 461

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 35

Offering: Not available at time of printing

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	Psalms 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.

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." **Luke 1:46-47 (NRSV)**

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 1:46-47), 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: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52