

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

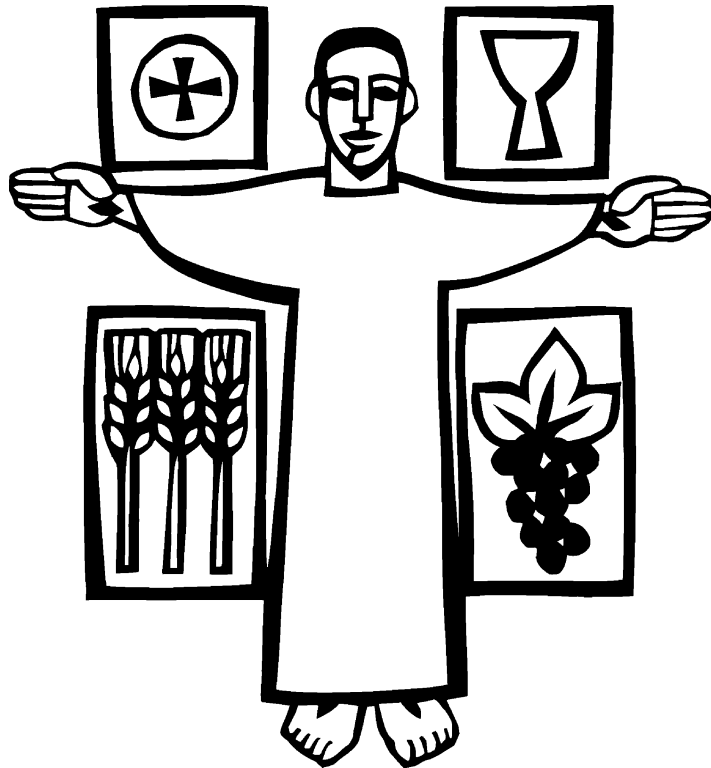
Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor  
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor  
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor  
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68131-3616  
402-341-7761  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

August 8, 2021

9:00 & 11:00 AM

ELEVENTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



*Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is his flesh, and whoever eats this bread has eternal life now and will be raised on the last day. In Ephesians Paul tells us what this life Jesus gives us looks like, this life we live as those marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit in baptism. We live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The whole purpose of life is giving yourself for the other.*



# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**P** Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

**P** God our provider,

**C** help us we pray.

**It is hard to believe there is enough to share.**

**We question your ways when they differ from our ways.**

**We turn to our own understanding  
rather than trusting in you.**

**We take offense at your teachings and your ways.**

**Turn us again to you.**

**Where else can we turn?**

**Share with us the words of eternal life**

**and feed us for life in the world. Amen.**

**P** Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, † the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

**C** Amen.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b> Awake, O sleeper, rise from death,<br/>and Christ shall give you light;<br/>so learn his love, its length and breadth,<br/>its fullness, depth, and height.</p> <p><b>2</b> To us on earth he came to bring<br/>from sin and fear release,<br/>to give the Spirit's unity,<br/>the very bond of peace.</p> | <p><b>3</b> There is one body and one hope,<br/>one Spirit and one call,<br/>one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,<br/>one God who made us all.</p> <p><b>4</b> Then walk in love as Christ has loved,<br/>who died that he might save;<br/>with kind and gentle hearts forgive<br/>as God in Christ forgave.</p> |
|--|---|
- 5** For us Christ lived, for us he died,  
and conquered in the strife.  
Awake, arise, go forth in faith,  
and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895-1984

Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

### 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** Gracious God,
- C** your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he will live in us and we in him, and that, strengthened by this food, we will live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

# WORD

(sit)

## FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:4-8

*First Kings chapter 18 describes the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The contest proves that the Lord is God, and afterward Elijah orders the killing of the Baal prophets. Angered by the deaths of her prophets, Queen Jezebel threatens to kill Elijah. This reading finds Elijah fleeing, fatigued, and in utter despair.*

**E**lijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "*It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.*"<sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "*Get up and eat.*"<sup>6</sup> He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again.<sup>7</sup> The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "*Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.*"<sup>8</sup> He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 78:23-29 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>I will bless the LORD at all times;  
the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.

**<sup>2</sup>I will glory in the LORD;  
let the lowly hear and rejoice.**

<sup>3</sup>Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD;  
let us exalt God's name together.

**<sup>4</sup>I sought the LORD, who answered me  
and delivered me from all my terrors.**

<sup>5</sup>Look upon the LORD and be radiant,  
and let not your faces be ashamed.

**<sup>6</sup>I called in my affliction, and the LORD heard me  
and saved me from all my troubles.**

<sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear the LORD  
and delivers them.

**<sup>8</sup>Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
happy are they who take refuge in God!**

## SECOND READING

Ephesians 4:25—5:2

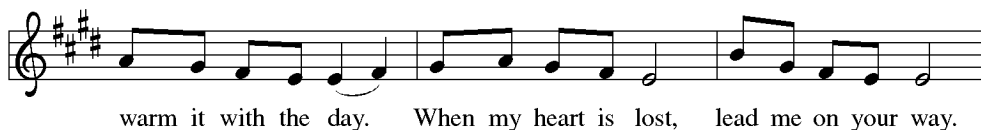
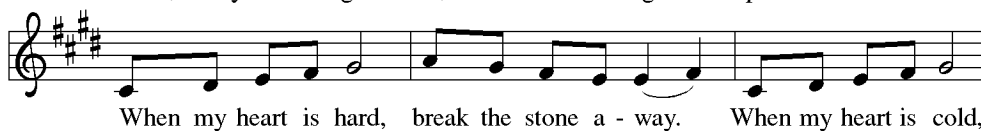
*Christians are called to be imitators of God. This does not mean Christians are perfect. Rather, the Spirit is at work in our lives so that our actions and attitudes genuinely reflect the love and forgiveness we have received through Christ and his death.*

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not make room for the devil. <sup>28</sup>Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. <sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. <sup>5:1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup>and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



☞ The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

☞ **Glory to you, O Lord!**

## HOLY GOSPEL

**John 6:35, 41-51**

*After feeding more than five thousand people in the wilderness, Jesus teaches them regarding the true significance of this remarkable sign.*

Jesus said to the crowd, *“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”* <sup>41</sup>Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, *“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”* <sup>42</sup>They were saying, *“Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”* <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered them, *“Do not complain among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. <sup>46</sup>Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”*

☞ The Gospel of the Lord.

☞ **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(sit)*

## CHILDREN’S BLESSING (9:00 AM)

## SERMON

*Pastor Roynesdal*

*(stand)*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*“For the Bread Which You Have Broken”*

**ELW 494**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 For the bread which you have broken,<br/>for the wine which you have poured,<br/>for the words which you have spoken,<br/>now we give you thanks, O Lord.</b></p> <p><b>2 By this promise that you love us,<br/>by your gift of peace restored,<br/>by your call to heav'n above us,<br/>hallow all our lives, O Lord.</b></p> | <p><b>3 With the saints who now adore you,<br/>seated at the heav'nly board,<br/>may the church still waiting for you<br/>keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.</b></p> <p><b>4 In your service, Lord, defend us;<br/>in our hearts keep watch and ward;<br/>in the world to which you send us<br/>let your kingdom come, O Lord.</b></p> |
|--|---|

Text: Louis F. Benson, 1855-1930, alt.  
Text © Robert F. Jefferys Jr.

**P** Let us welcome the newly baptized:

**C** **We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

**THE APOSTLES' CREED (11:00 AM)**

**P** God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.  
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C** **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**



## PRAYERS OF 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)*

**Thanksgiving:** for the baptism of Cameron Mitchell Adams, son of Austin & Allyson Adams

**Illness:** Richard Bock, Don Burton, Gail Durban, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Richard Holzer, Renee Johnson, Mark Kidder, Jason Klonglan, Marcie Lafleur, Chris Meyer, Keith Nickeson, father of Diane Nickeson-Ray, Mary Olson, David Penning, Toby Rees, Gary Rodene, Sheri Tipton, John Waterman, Darlene White

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Wyatt Johnson, Josh Kropenske, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, Joel Woosley

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in mission* – Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India; Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson, Tanzania; Rev. Rachel Ringlaben, Argentina; Meghan Brown Saavedra, Mexico; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators

**Other Prayers:** *Seminarians*—Adam Klinker, Katie Larson, Giselle Loucks, Justin Perkins

## 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

Please Support the overall ministry of Kountze Memorial during these difficult times. 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. If you are able, please mail in your offering or donate on-line. Thank you!



## MUSICAL OFFERING

“How Great Thou Art”

Traditional  
Janet Diggins, *vocalist*

## THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

## OFFERTORY HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

ELW 184

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

## OFFERING PRAYER

**P** Jesus, Bread of life,

**C** you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world. Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

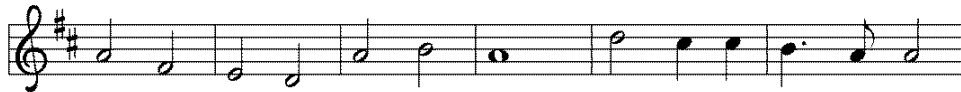
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

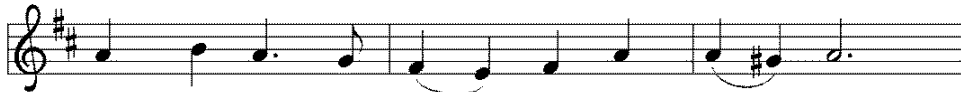
The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.', 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.', 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

## PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS IN PENTECOST

## 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

**P** Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.

**C** Come!

## 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.*

*Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.*

## 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, grant us peace.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Children of the heav'nly Father<br/>safely in his bosom gather;<br/>nestling bird nor star in heaven<br/>such a refuge e'er was given.</b></p> <p><b>2 God his own doth tend and nourish,<br/>in his holy courts they flourish.<br/>From all evil things he spares them,<br/>in his mighty arms he bears them.</b></p> | <p><b>3 Neither life nor death shall ever<br/>from the Lord his children sever;<br/>unto them his grace he showeth,<br/>and their sorrows all he knoweth.</b></p> <p><b>4 Though he giveth or he taketh,<br/>God his children ne'er forsaketh;<br/>his the loving purpose solely<br/>to preserve them pure and holy.</b></p> |
|--|--|

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832-1903;  
tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870-1958

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Lutheran Church in America, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

*“Day by Day”*

ELW 790

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Day by day,<br/>your mercies, Lord, attend me,<br/>bringing comfort to my anxious soul.<br/>Day by day,<br/>the blessings, Lord, you send me<br/>draw me nearer to my heav'nly goal.<br/>Love divine, beyond all mortal measure,<br/>brings to naught the burdens of my quest;<br/>Savior, lead me to the home I treasure,<br/>where at last I'll find eternal rest.</b></p> | <p><b>2 Day by day, I know you will provide me<br/>strength to serve and wisdom to obey;<br/>I will seek your loving will to guide me<br/>o'er the paths I struggle day by day.<br/>I will fear no evil of the morrow,<br/>I will trust in your enduring grace.<br/>Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow<br/>till in glory I behold your face.</b></p> |
|--|---|
- 3 Oh, what joy to know that you are near me  
when my burdens grow too great to bear;  
oh, what joy to know that you will hear me  
when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.  
Day by day, no matter what betide me,  
you will hold me ever in your hand.  
Savior, with your presence here to guide me,  
I will reach at last the promised land.**

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832-1903;  
tr. Robert Leaf, 1936-2005

Text © 1992 Augsburg Fortress.

- 1 **When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss  
and pour contempt on all my pride.**
- 2 **Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ, my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.**
- 3 **See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?**
- 4 **Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

*(stand)*

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- ☞** Jesus, Bread of life,
- ☞** we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray. Amen.

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# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☐ The blessing of the Almighty God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit be upon you now and forever.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## HYMN

*“O Living Bread from Heaven”*

ELW 542

- 1 **O living Bread from heaven,  
how well you feed your guest!  
The gifts that you have given  
have filled my heart with rest.  
O wondrous food of blessing!  
O cup that heals our woes!  
My heart, this gift possessing,  
in thankful song o'er flows.**
- 2 **My Savior, you have led me  
within your holiest place,  
and here yourself have fed me  
with treasures of your grace;  
for you have freely given  
what earth could never buy,  
the bread of life from heaven,  
that now I shall not die.**
- 3 **You gave me all I wanted;  
this food can death destroy.  
And you have freely granted  
the cup of endless joy.  
My Lord, I do not merit  
the favor you have shown;  
and all my soul and spirit  
bow down before your throne.**
- 4 **Oh, grant me then, well-strengthened  
with heav'nly food, while here  
my course on earth is lengthened,  
to serve you, free from fear;  
and bring me home to praise you  
where none can peace destroy,  
where I will ever raise you  
glad songs in endless joy.**

Text: Johann Rist, 1607-1667;  
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

## DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.  
☑ Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

† † †



## Special Notice

Reservations not required  
Vaccinated—Masks optional  
Not vaccinated—Masks required  
Please maintain a minimum of 3 feet  
between non-family members

You may still join us for Worship on Cox  
channel 13 or live streamed at [https://  
www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/](https://www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/)



# KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street  
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

August 7 & 8, 2021

### Kountze Food Pantry Volunteers Needed:

**Mondays, 7:30 - 9 AM, 9 - 11 AM, 11 AM - 1 PM**

**Fridays, 4 - 7 PM**

If you are able to volunteer, please sign up by using the link  
below:

<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

The Kountze Food Pantry is collecting school supplies to  
assist our guests. We have begun keeping statistics on the  
number of children we are serving, and found it is about one  
third of total individuals. Please leave your school supplies  
donations in the box in Fellowship Hall. Any contributions  
will be greatly appreciated!

### Blessing of the Backpacks

**Saturday, August 14 & Sunday, August 15**

We are sending our teachers and students back to school  
with prayers and blessings. We welcome students and  
teachers of all ages to bring their backpacks, book bags, or  
briefcases to church on Saturday, August 14 or Sunday,  
August 15. Let's begin the new school year in prayer to  
celebrate God's gift of learning and bless those in their  
academic endeavors.

### Senior High Mini Golf Outing

Wednesday, August 11, 6:00 PM

Talk to Pr. Shari if you have questions.

### '22 Youth Gathering Info Meeting

**August 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:15 PM in the Youth Center**

**Noon meal will be provided**

**For all youth (8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade this fall)**

You and your parents are invited to attend and informational  
meeting on the Youth Gathering that will be taking place in  
Minneapolis from July 24 - 28, 2022.

### Attendance and Giving

**Saturday Attendance:** 31

**Sunday Attendance:** 9:00: 121 11:00: 39

**Wednesday Attendance:** 9

**Total:** 200

**Streaming Attendance:** 87

**Cox Cable Attendance:** 213

**Pantry Guests Served:** 775 (includes 278 children)

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 23

**Offering:**

\$10,843.00 (Regular)      \$11,208.00 (Specials)

\$ 1,147.00 (Debt Reduction)

### Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, August 22, 10:10 AM in the Fellowship Hall**

The Committee is nominating the following:

**Congregation Council:** Dr. Steve Hinrichs, Michael Jensen,  
Ann Miller and Bruce Nissen.

**Endowment Board:** Sarah Penn

**deFreese Manor Board:** With the possibility of impending  
sale of deFreese Manor, all Board members will remain.

### Today at Kountze

**Eternal Candle** is given to the glory of God in memory of  
Randall Fike given by Mary Jo Fike

**Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God in honor of Jean  
Holcombe's committal service in Minneapolis, given by Tom  
Holcombe

### Coffee Hour

Please feel free to stop for coffee in the Fellowship Hall  
following service today. We need volunteers to help serve  
coffee and cookies. If you can help, please see Jim Smejkal  
(402-341-7761 or jim@kmlchurch.org).

### Holy Play

**Ages 3 yrs - 6<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Sundays through August 29**

**10:15 - 11:00 AM**

Children from 3 years to 6<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join Pastor  
Shari and the Middle and High School Youth in the Kountze  
Green Space each Sunday (June 20 - August 29). We will be  
playing games, singing songs, sharing a snack, and getting to  
know each other better. Parents are encouraged to share  
coffee time with others or join in the fun!

### Volunteers Needed

As Pr. Olaf said in the August Good News, "we are, in a sense,  
back to normal..." That means we're in need of you as a  
volunteer. There are several volunteer opportunities here at  
Kountze from Sunday breakfast help to Worship Assistants,  
Choir members, Sunday School teachers, or many others. If  
you would like to serve in this way, please call the church  
office and we'll get you to the right people to answer any  
questions you might have.

*Eternal life begins now through faith in Jesus.*

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

Sunday	John 6:35, 41-51	Bread from heaven
Monday	1 Kings 19:4-8	Elijah flees from Jezebel
Tuesday	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	Rules for the new life
Wednesday	Colossians 1:9-14	Paul thanks God
Thursday	Proverbs 8:32-36	Listen to what you are taught
Friday	1 Timothy 6:11-16	The good fight of faith
Saturday	Psalms 34:1-8	Taste and see
Sunday	John 6:51-58	Christ, the true food and drink



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*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." **John 6:35 (NRSV)***

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Dear God, give us faith to see in Jesus the bread of life that feeds us and cares for us now and always. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear Bread of Life, we thank you that with this gift of food, we taste and see that you are good. Amen. (Psalm 34:8 and John 6:35)

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May God come to you and bless you with faith and hope through Christ our Lord.

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

- What is something that you look forward to?
- How do your hopes for the future affect your life today?
- How does faith in Jesus impact your life today and in the future?

*Read:* John 6:35, 41-51.

Twice in this text Jesus says *"I am the bread of life"* (vv. 35 and 48). He also says *"I am the living bread"* (v. 51). These words create tension with those who object to Jesus making such claims about himself. This text acknowledges that the uniqueness of Jesus causes a divide between those who accept Jesus' identity and those who do not. This passage does not try to explain why some believe while others do not, except to note that those who believe in Jesus do so by God's power. Jesus also states that believing in him as the one who is the bread of life gives not just life but eternal life. The eternal life that Jesus gives begins now, not just at some future time. It is not for us to understand how one comes to believe in Jesus as the bread of life, except to know that it is a gift from God. Jesus is the source of life that begins now and knows no end. It is a life entered through faith in Jesus, the one whose life feeds the world in hope. How is it helpful for you to know that eternal life with God has already begun?

*Pray:* **Living God, give us Jesus, the bread of life, that we may live each day in faith, hope, and love. Amen.**

Ephesians 4:26 says: *"do not let the sun go down on your anger."* Anger that festers against others destroys relationships and entire communities. Take time this week to reflect on those with whom you may have experienced conflict. Pray for a clean heart that forgives this person and that you can receive forgiveness from this person.

Sometimes we are focused on the future or on disappointments in life and miss God's care for us now. Write a list of ways God's eternal care blesses your life today. After composing the list pray: **Gracious God, thank you for caring for [name what is on your list]. Thank you for the gift of life that blesses me now and in the future. Amen.**

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Proverbs 9:1-6; Psalm 34:9-14  
Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58**