

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Stephen Griffith, Transition Senior Pastor
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor

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

July 30, 2023

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

NINTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



Julia Noyes, 2015
Lincoln, NE

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel, Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.
Merciful God,

C we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community.
We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty.
In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Righteous God,

C we confess that we have sinned. We have failed to be honest. We have lacked the
courage to speak. We have spoken falsely. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant
us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail. Claim
the gift of God's mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

- 1 Here in this place the new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.
- 2 We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry,
we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.
- 3 Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.
- 4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away—
here in this place the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever,
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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APOSTOLIC GREETING

- ☐ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- ☑ **And also with you.**

KYRIE

- ☐ In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- ☑ **Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.**
- ☐ For the reign of God, for peace throughout the world,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
- ☑ **Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.**
- ☐ For your people here, who have come to give you praise,
and for the strength to live in your Word, let us pray to the Lord.
- ☑ **Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.**



Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion



sings for joy to the God of life and love and free-dom;



praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!



1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has



freed and u - nit-ed us to be one great peo-ple of God.



2 Pow - er and rich-es, wis-dom and might, all hon - or and



glo - ry to Christ for - ev - er.



3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo-ple of



God; to make all things new.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Beloved and sovereign God,
C through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” ⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.”

L Word of God, Word of Life.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 119:129-136 (*read responsively*)

¹²⁹Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰**When your word is opened it gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant
because I long for your commandments.

¹³²**Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as you always do to those who love your name.**

¹³³Order my footsteps in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴**Rescue me from those who oppress me,
and I will keep your commandments.**

¹³⁵Let your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶**My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your teaching.**

SECOND READING

Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

In the same way, the spirit also helps us with our weakness, because we do not know what we should pray for, but the spirit itself intercedes for us with groaning that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷And God who searches our hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because it makes intercession for the holy ones according to the will of God.

²⁸Now we know that in all things God works for good together with those who love God—for those who are the called ones in accordance with his purpose— ²⁹because those whom he foreknew, he also decided in advance would be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters, ³⁰and those whom he decided in advance would be conformed to the image of his Son, he also called, and those whom he called, he also declared righteous, and those whom he declared righteous, he also glorified.

³¹What, then, are we to say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also freely give us everything else along with giving us him? ³³Who can bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God is the one who declares us righteous. ³⁴Who is the one who condemns us? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but more than that, who was raised from among the dead, who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us. ³⁵What can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being put to death all day long,
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

L Word of God, Word of Life.

C Thanks be to God.

(stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Congregation:

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

go? You have the words of e - ter - nal

life. Al - le - lu - ia! *Repeat optional*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore

every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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 return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the regular sermon.

SERMON

Pastor Griffith

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Be Thou My Vision”

ELW 793

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**
- 3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
- 4 Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931

THE APOSTLES' CREED

P God has made us God's 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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response: **P** God, 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)

Prayers of the Week: Linda Filbrant, Jim Hopkins,

On-going Care: Gordon Bergjord, Cheri Biggs, John & Jane Bodnar, Don Burton, Shirley Dietrich, Steve Dragon, Mike Edris, Jessica Hannon, Richard & Betty Holzer, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Jason Klonglan, Rosanne Klug, Orville & Julie Knapp, Ruth & Charles Martis, Lara McCormick, Linda Peltz, Kathy Preninger, Darlene White, Deb Woosley

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Wyatt Johnson, Tyler Johnston, 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; Katie Larson, Colombia; Rev. Robert and Kathy Moore, Wittenburg Center, Germany; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators; our sister congregation, the American Church in Berlin, as they assist refugees from the war in Ukraine

Other Prayers: *Seminarians*— Katie Larson, Giselle Loucks

THE PEACE IS SHARED

P The peace of Christ be with you always.
C And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

We glorify God in our giving. Our offering is an act of worship that makes the ministries of this church possible. We encourage everyone to give. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to participate in this portion of worship. If you would like, use the QR code scanner on your smart phone to give online or place your offering in the plates that are located at the entrances to the Sanctuary. For those of you watching through our media outlets, if you are able, please mail in your offering or donate online. Thank you!



THE TABLE IS PREPARED

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“This Is My Father’s World”

Franklin Sheppard
arr. Phillip Keveren
Kai Johnson, violin


(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“As the Grains of Wheat”

ELW 465

Refrain



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

Refrain

may we share the pres-ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

- P** God of field and forest, sea and sky,
C you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.


HOLY COMMUNION

- P** The Lord be with you. **C** And also with you.
P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C It is right to give our thanks and praise.
P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Fulfilling the promise of the resurrection, you pour out the fire of your Spirit, uniting in one body people of every nation and tongue. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

ACS 1089



San - to, san - to, san - to, oh Dios del u - ni - ver - so:
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of might and mer - cy,

. . . lle-nos es-tán el cie - lo y la tie - rra de tu glo - ria.
your glo - ry fills all heav-en and earth. . . You are ho - ly, God.

Ben - di - to el que vie-ne en nom - bre del Se - ñor. . .
. . . Bless - ed be the Sav-ior, the one who comes in your name.

Ho - san - na en el cie - lo. San - to e-res, oh Dios.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. You are ho - ly, God.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- P** Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
- C** **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.

AGNUS DEI

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

* you pour your Holy Spirit on

Congregation:

world:
us: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*

mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

Congregation:

take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,

grant us peace, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come, eat what is good.

G All people are called to Christ's table.

(sit)

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 then you may dip the bread into the wine. Gluten free bread is available upon request.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

"All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly"

ELW 461

**1 All who hunger gather gladly;
holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wand'ring.
Here in truth we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

**2 All who hunger, never strangers;
seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here in joy we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

**3 All who hunger, sing together,
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here in peace we have been fed.
Blest are those who from this table
live their days in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993
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www.giamusic.com, 800.442.3358.
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**1 Here is bread, here is wine,
Christ is with us, he is with us.
Break the bread, taste the wine,
Christ is with us here.**

**2 Here is grace, here is peace,
Christ is with us, he is with us.
Know his grace, find his peace,
feast on Jesus here. *Refrain***

Refrain

**In this bread there is healing,
in this cup is life forever.
In this moment, by the Spirit
Christ is with us here.**

**3 Here we are, joined in one,
Christ is with us, he is with us.
We’ll proclaim till he comes
Jesus crucified. *Refrain***

Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950

(stand)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☞** We thank you, generous God,
☞ for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☞ The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed, Father, Son ✙, and Holy Spirit bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

ELW 705

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.</p> <p>2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days,</p> | <p>3 Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.</p> <p>4 Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878-1969

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Share the harvest.
☞ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*



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KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Stephen Griffith	Transition Senior Pastor
Pr. Shari Duminy	Associate Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Kristin Boe	Director of Faith Formation
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Sarah Jewell	Administrative Assistant
Noni Cambridge	Staff Treasurer
Judi Boe	Financial Secretary
Jim Smejkal	Bldg. Super./Dir. of Cong. Activities
Louis Flake	Night Manager
Kayla Slaight	Janitorial Staff
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Shannon Picha	Nursery Director
Susann Henry	Food Pantry Director



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

July 29 & 30, 2023

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 over 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.

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. It is the understanding of the universal Church that those who wish to commune with bread only (especially for health reasons) have communed fully. Our form of distribution is Intinction. You will receive the wafer in your hand and then dip into the wine.

Children in Worship

We believe that all are welcome in worship and encourage families to worship together. Activity bags, children's bibles, and bulletins are available, as well as a 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.

Nursery

Our nursery is available from 8:45 AM—noon for children 0—2 years. Please ask an usher if you are unsure as to where our nursery is and would like to use it.

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 attendance card in your bulletin.

Thank you for supporting the ministries of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church.



Today at Kountze Memorial

Kountze Café

9:30—11:00 AM

Join us each Sunday for breakfast. The suggested donation is \$5 adults, \$2.50 children 12 and younger for the hot breakfast and a free-will donation for the continental breakfast.

Adult Forum

Fellowship Hall

10:10 AM

Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall from 10:10-10:50 AM. **This week:** Fellowship **Next week:** Congregational Meeting

This Week at Kountze Memorial

July 30 Sunday

Pentecost 9

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast

10:10 AM Adult Forum

July 31 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

11:30 AM Endowment Board

August 1 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

August 2 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship

August 3 Thursday

2:00 PM Cards with Friends

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

August 4 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

August 5 Saturday

Homebound Communion

5:00 PM Worship

August 6 Sunday

Pentecost 10

Homebound Communion

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast

10:10 AM Adult Forum—Congregational Meeting & Election of Council Members



For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Kountze Food Pantry
The Pantry is always short of canned soup and peanut butter. If you want to donate these items, please leave them in the box in Fellowship Hall. We are also very short of volunteers on Friday evenings. The service is from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Volunteers should arrive by 4:30. If you, or someone you know would like to volunteer, please sign up at the link below:
<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

LFS HQ Ribbon-Cutting
Friday, August 4, 2023
3:00—5:00 PM
7929 West Center Road
We are invited by LFS to join LFS for a ribbon-cutting ceremony with remarks from Mayor Jean Stothert, Lutheran Family Services CEO and President Chris Tonniges, and other special guests. After the ceremony, stay for a tour of their new building and refreshments. RSVP to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/onelfs>

Welcome Back BBQ Party
The Lutheran Center
Saturday, August 19, 2023
5:30-7:30 PM
535 N 16th St Lincoln NE 68508
Celebrate the start of the school year with a FREE BBQ! There will be free food, free succulents, yard games, music, and time to just hang out with new and old friends. Stop on by anytime!

Confirmation Orientation and OSJ Training
Grades 7 & 8
Wednesday, August 30
6:00 PM
We will meet in the Fellowship Lounge for a meal and orientation for the Confirmation Learning year. Then we will go to the Nave for OSJ training with Robin and Jeff Perkins. Please let Pastor Shari know that you will be attending.

Solomon’s prayer for justice and understanding.

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

Sunday	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52	Parables of the kingdom
Monday	1 Kings 3:5-12	Solomon’s prayer for wisdom
Tuesday	Romans 8:26-39	God’s love in Christ Jesus
Wednesday	Isaiah 30:18-26	God’s promise to Zion
Thursday	Amos 5:10-15	Choose good instead of evil
Friday	Luke 6:37-42	Judging others
Saturday	Psalms 119:129-136	The glories of God’s law
Sunday	Matthew 14:13-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand



“Give your servant [Solomon] therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil.” **1 Kings 3:9a (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:
Come Holy Spirit, come Lord Jesus, give us your truth that we may judge with your steadfast love and mercy for all. Amen.
Mealtime Prayer:
Dear God, for this food we thank you, and for your wisdom, understanding, and mercy we pray to you. Amen.
A Blessing to Give:
May the Lord’s face shine on you and teach you God’s ways. (Psalm 119:135)

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

- When you have a conflict with someone, are you able to see the situation from the other person’s perspective? Explain.
- What makes it difficult to be a fair judge of other people’s thoughts and actions?

Read: 1 Kings 3:5-12.
Humans have proven throughout the ages that they can explain away any thoughts and actions. Our own sense of truth and justice can be hurtful and unfair. We know how we can try to fool ourselves and others. Solomon also knew this, so he prayed to God for “*understanding to discern what is right*” (1 Kings 3:11b). The Hebrew literally says, “to hear justice.” That is, to let Solomon’s mind perceive and hear real justice on behalf of others. This is a daring prayer that puts others before his—and our own—interests. Our imperfect sense of justice and truth needs the humility of Solomon to recognize that God’s truth stands out from our own. A good example is when the disciples heard the many parables of Jesus. Perhaps the greater wisdom would have been to acknowledge that they really did not understand them (Matthew 13:51).
Discuss: When have you prayed for wisdom and understanding?
Pray: **God of justice and truth, give us a humble heart that we may see and judge people with mercy and understanding that dares to love others through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others humbly and with understanding from their viewpoint?

Jesus told parables to teach people. A parable is a story to explain a moral or spiritual lesson. Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 includes five different parables that Jesus told to the disciples. Each time, he begins by saying, “*The kingdom of heaven is like ...*”. Choose to read one of the five parables and then think or talk about what Jesus is telling you about the kingdom of heaven.
Pray: **Dear God, thank you for Jesus who teaches us about the kingdom of heaven. Help us to take time to learn and to tell others about what Jesus has taught us. Amen.**

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:
Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21

Attendance & Giving
Saturday: 29
Sunday: 9:00: 125 11:00: 67
Wednesday: 12:15: 9
Total: 230
Streaming:
Pantry Guests Served: 1009 (inc. 287 children)
Medical Clinic Guests Served: 15
Offering:
\$18751.8 (Regular) \$3599.37 (Specials)
\$1002.5 (Debt Reduction)