

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Lucy Wynard, Senior Pastor  
Shari Duminy, Transitional Associate Pastor  
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor

2650 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68131-3616  
402-341-7761

December 10, 2023

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

**SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT**



*John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.*

# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

**P** Mothering God, enfold us in your loving arms as we prepare to confess our sin and receive your forgiveness. We know that we need your comfort now,

**C Amen.**

**P** Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**P** Loving God,

**C we confess that we have turned away from your comfort time and time again. We thought that we could go our own way and that we did not need you. We have made a mess of our lives and of our world. Have mercy upon us, we pray, Amen.**

**P** Here this good news! God, ✠ forgives you all of your sin. Feel the loving arms of God wrapping around you now. Find comfort against God's bosom. Dry your eyes and be set free. Let us stand together, my siblings, as we cry, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" In Jesus' Name,

**C Amen.**

*(sit)*

## CHILDREN'S BLESSING 9:00 AM

*Children (aged 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) are invited to come forward for a blessing. Then, they may either return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the regular sermon, or follow Ms. Boe upstairs for an activity in the Sunday School room, and Ms. Carlsen for Children's Choir.*

- 2 Light two candles to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
gently lead them homeward.**

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954  
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND PRAYER

- P** By the light of this second candle we receive your *comfort* now. By your Spirit, may all of the pain and sorrow that we carry be shouldered by this beloved community. We are not alone, for you are with us and we are with one another. Through the power of mutual aid, we have everything that we need. Our *peace* comes through our willingness to share the abundance that you have given to us. In Chris Jesus, we pray.

**C Amen.**

*(light two candles)*

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*Prepare the Royal Highway*

ELW 264 vs. 1, 3, 4

- 1 Prepare the royal highway;  
the King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley  
a level road appear!  
Then greet the King of glory,  
foretold in sacred story:**

- 3 Then fling the gates wide open  
to greet your promised king!  
Your king, yet ev'ry nation  
its tribute too may bring.  
All lands will bow before him;  
their voices join your singing: *Refrain***

*Refrain*

**Hosanna to the Lord,  
for he fulfills God's word!**

- 4 His is no earthly kingdom;  
it comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom  
and justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding  
for kindness so abounding: *Refrain***


Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship  
Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, 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.**


## KYRIE

**Leader**




Lord have mer - cy on — us, Lord have mer - cy on — us


**All**



Lord have mer - cy on — us, Lord have mer - cy on — us



Christ have mer - cy on — us, Christ have mer - cy on — us



Lord have mer - cy on — us, Lord have mer - cy on — us.

## GLORIA



Sing glo - ry to God, and peace on earth.



We sing glo - ry to God in the high - est.



We — wor - ship you, we — give — you thanks.



We — praise you for — your glo - ry Lord.



Sing glo - ry to God, and peace on earth.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

☞ Messiah God,

☞ **we acknowledge that we are unworthy even to untie your sandals. Yet, here we are, comforted by your love and ready to share the good news that the kingdom of God is *now* at hand. Like John that baptizer, make us bearers of your good news message, now and forevermore. Amen.**

## WORD

(sit)

### FIRST READING

**Isaiah 40:1-11**

*In grand, flowing poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

**C**omfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." <sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" <sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

☞ The word of the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13** (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;  
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people  
and blotted out all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

- <sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,  
and our land will yield its increase.  
<sup>13</sup>**Righteousness shall go before the LORD  
and shall prepare for<sup>1</sup> God a pathway.**

## SECOND READING

**2 Peter 3:8-9**

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

**D**o not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*(stand)*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Pre - pare our hearts, our minds, our souls

To hear your word, to know your truth, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

**C** Glory to you, O Lord.

## HOLY GOSPEL

**Mark 1:1-8**

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

**T**he beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’ ”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed,

“The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

*Pastor Duminy*

*(stand)*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*Lost in the Night*

**ELW 243 vs. 1 - 3**

- 1   Lost in the night do the people yet languish,  
longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,  
plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish.  
Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?**
- 2   Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?  
Shall those who have light no light let us borrow,  
giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?  
Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?**
- 3   Sorrowing wand'rers, in darkness yet dwelling,  
dawned has the day of a radiance excelling,  
death's deepest shadows forever dispelling.  
Christ is coming soon! Christ is coming soon!**

Text: Nordic hymn; tr. Olav Lee, 1859-1943, alt.  
Text © 1932 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## HOLY BAPTISM (11:00 AM)

**see ELW pg 227**

## THE NICENE 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** 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.



## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response:    **P**   Merciful God,  
                  **G**   receive 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 Cal Joseph Hardy, son of Alex & Karen Hardy

**Sympathy:** to the family and friends of Rosemary Tessin

**Prayers This Week:** Paul Carlson, Martha Eckmann, Marilyn Hofeldt, Kym Johnson

**On-going Care:** Cheri Biggs, John & Jane Bodnar, Don Burton, Ellie Carlson, Shirley Dietrich, Mike Edris, Jessica Hannon, Richard & Betty Holzer, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Jason Klonglan, Orville & Julie Knapp, Ruth & Charles Martis, Lara McCormick, Idonna Meyer, Linda Peltz, Kathy Preininger, Jim West, Gary Westerman, 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. Bridget Gautieri, 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*— James Holzer, Katie Larson, Giselle Loucks

## THE PEACE IS SHARED

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

## MEAL

*(sit)*

## THE OFFERING IS RECIEVED

*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

*I Hear the Prophet Callin’*

by Pepper Choplin

(stand)

## OFFERTORY HYMN

*Blessed Be the God of Israel*

ELW 250 vs. 1 & 2



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.  
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;



So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm  
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.

## OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ God our provider,
- ☒ by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

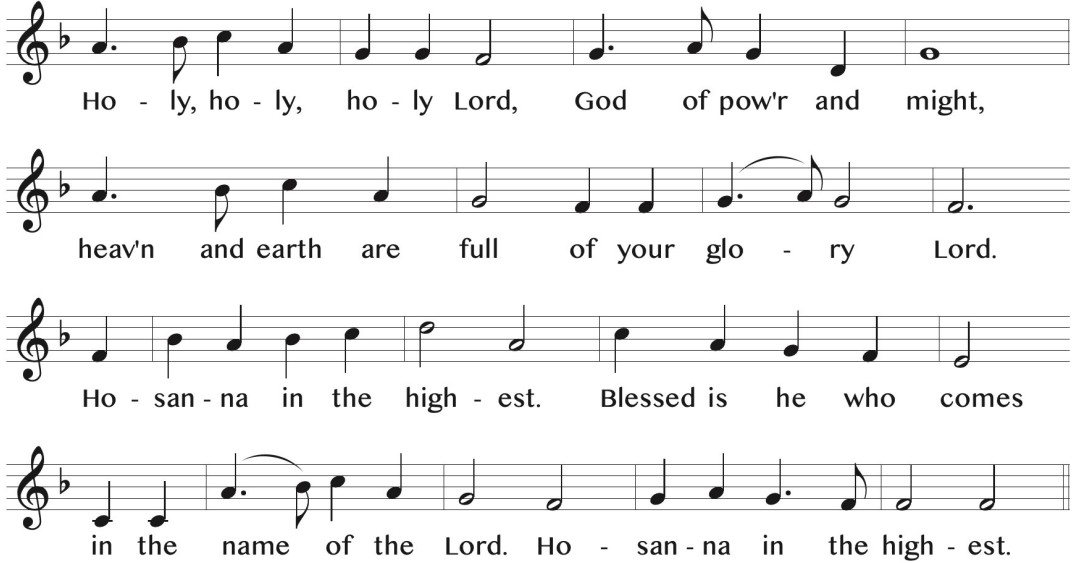
## HOLY COMMUNION

- ☐ The Lord be with you. ☒ And also with you.
- ☐ Lift up your hearts. ☒ We lift them to the Lord.
- ☐ Let us give thanks to the Lord,
- ☒ It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

- ☐ It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## SANCTUS



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

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- P** Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: ...  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

- C** Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

- P** With this bread and cup ...  
We look with hope for his coming.

- C** Come, Lord Jesus.

- P** Holy God, we long for your Spirit ...  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

- C** Come, Holy Spirit.

- P** All praise and glory are yours, ...  
one God, now and forever.

- C** Amen.

## 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



## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**P** Come, take your place at the table.

**C** In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.

(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

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

**ELW 631**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Love divine, all loves excelling,<br/>Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!<br/>Fix in us thy humble dwelling,<br/>all thy faithful mercies crown.<br/>Jesus, thou art all compassion,<br/>pure, unbounded love thou art;<br/>visit us with thy salvation,<br/>enter ev'ry trembling heart.</b></p> <p><b>2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit<br/>into ev'ry troubled breast;<br/>let us all in thee inherit;<br/>let us find thy promised rest.<br/>Take away the love of sinning;<br/>Alpha and Omega be;<br/>end of faith, as its beginning,<br/>set our hearts at liberty.</b></p> | <p><b>3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;<br/>let us all thy life receive;<br/>suddenly return, and never,<br/>nevermore thy temples leave.<br/>Thee we would be always blessing,<br/>serve thee as thy hosts above,<br/>pray, and praise thee without ceasing,<br/>glory in thy perfect love.</b></p> <p><b>4 Finish then thy new creation,<br/>pure and spotless let us be;<br/>let us see thy great salvation<br/>perfectly restored in thee!<br/>Changed from glory into glory,<br/>till in heav'n we take our place,<br/>till we cast our crowns before thee,<br/>lost in wonder, love, and praise!</b></p> |
|--|--|

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

**1 O Lord, how shall I meet you,  
how welcome you aright?  
Your people long to greet you,  
my hope, my heart's delight!  
Oh, kindle, Lord most holy,  
your lamp within my breast  
to do in spirit lowly  
all that may please you best.**

**2 I lay in fetters, groaning;  
you came to set me free.  
I stood, my shame bemoaning;  
you came to honor me.  
A glorious crown you give me,  
a treasure safe on high  
that will not fail or leave me  
as earthly riches fly.**

**3 Love caused your incarnation;  
love brought you down to me.  
Your thirst for my salvation  
procured my liberty.  
Oh, love beyond all telling,  
that led you to embrace  
in love, all love excelling,  
our lost and fallen race.**

**4 Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,  
who sit in deepest gloom,  
who mourn your joys departed  
and tremble at your doom.  
All hail the Lord's appearing!  
O glorious Sun, now come,  
send forth your beams so cheering  
and guide us safely home.**

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676; tr. composite

*(stand)*

## **POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- ☐** Generous God,  
**☑** in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☞ The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit  
✝ remain upon you now and forever.
- ☞ Amen.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## RECESSIONAL HYMN

*Hark, the Glad Sound!*

ELW 239 vs. 1, 3, 4

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,<br/>the Savior promised long;<br/>let ev'ry heart prepare a throne<br/>and ev'ry voice a song.</b></p> | <p><b>3 He comes the broken heart to bind,<br/>the bleeding soul to cure,<br/>and with the treasures of his grace<br/>to enrich the humble poor.</b></p> |
| <p><b>4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,<br/>your welcome shall proclaim,<br/>and heav'n's eternal arches ring<br/>with your beloved name.</b></p>  |  |

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751

## DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Keep awake.
- ☞ Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

✝      ✝      ✝

Liturgy arranged by ©2022 Cynthia I. Gonzales, Ph.D., Music Director at FLC-San Marcos, TX.  
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# Worship With Us During Advent!



## **Weekend Worship Times**

**Saturdays: 5:00 PM**

**Sundays: 9:00 & 11:00 AM**

**Please Note: Sunday, December 24, no 11:00 AM worship service**

## **Musical Offerings**

**Tuba Christmas Concert**

**Sunday, December 10, 3:00 PM**

## **Candlelight Carol Service**

**Saturday, December 16, 5:00 PM**

## **Children's Christmas Program**

**Sunday, December 17, 9:00 AM**



**December 24**

**Advent 4: 9:00 (no 11:00 AM)**

**Christmas Eve: 4:00, 7:00, 11:00 PM**

**December 25**

**Christmas Day: 10:00 AM**



### KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Lucy Wynard	Senior Pastor
Pr. Shari Duminy	Transitional Associate Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Kristin Boe	Director of Faith Formation
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Danielle Barrett	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
Jill Conway	Director of Kountze Commons



# KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

**2650 Farnam Street  
402-341-7761**

**Omaha, NE 68131  
www.kmlchurch.org**

**December 9 & 10, 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 the 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. Offering plates are located by the doors in the Nave.

### **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**

**Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God in celebration of Bruce Nissen's mom, Eline Brosh, on her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday given by Bruce & Barb Nissen

### **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.

### **Faith Formation**

#### **Children's Choir**

**9:15 AM (following 9:00 AM Children's Blessing)  
Grades K-6**

Join Barb Carlsen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the Sunday School Music Room.

#### **Sunday School**

**10:10 AM**

**Ages 2 years-6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Join us again next week in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Sunday School Rooms.

#### **Youth Forum**

**Lower Level Youth Room**

**This week:** Bible Study – Created to Be (prep for ELCA Youth Gathering)

**Next Week:** ELCA Youth Leadership Summit Report

#### **Advent Focus**

In this second week of Advent has us focusing on the theme, “Comfort Now.” During Sunday worship we will use the Gospel text. On Wednesdays, we turn to the prophet Isaiah.

## Today at Kountze Memorial, *continued*

### Adult Forum

Join us at 10:10 AM on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall. **This week:** 165<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of KMLC **Next Week:** ELCA Youth Leadership Summit

### Collecting Children's Books New or Slightly Used

The WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Board is asking our women's circles, as well as the congregation, to bring new or slightly used children's books for our Pantry. We will be **collecting until December 18**. Please leave your children's books in the Pantry Box located in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you.

### Annual Merry Tuba Christmas Concert

**Sunday, December 10**

**3:30 PM**

**Held at Kountze Memorial**

Bring your friends, the concert is free and open to the Public. It will be a fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

### Progressive Dinner and White Elephant Christmas Gift Exchange Youth in Grades 7-12

**Sunday, December 10 at 5:30 PM**

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church. Bring a White Elephant Gift to exchange. We will be transported to 4 homes in the area for Appetizers, Salad, Main Dish with Side, and Dessert.

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## This Week at Kountze Memorial

### December 10 Sunday

Advent 2  
8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir  
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship  
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)  
9:15 AM Children's Choir (K-5)  
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast  
10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour  
3:00 PM Tuba Christmas Concert  
5:00 PM Progressive Dinner & White Elephant Exchange (gr 7-12)

### December 11 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

### December 12 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

### December 13 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group  
11:00 AM Advent Lunch  
12:15 PM Worship  
1:00 PM Devotions @ deFreese Manor  
5:00 PM Advent Dinner  
6:00 PM Executive Committee  
6:30 PM Worship

### December 14 Thursday

Council Reports Due  
9:30 AM WELCA Board  
11:30 AM Property Committee  
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

### December 15 Friday

Good News Deadline  
5:00 PM Pantry

### December 16 Saturday

9:00 AM Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal  
5:00 PM Worship  
5:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service  
Prelude begins 4:40 PM

### December 17 Sunday

Advent 3  
8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir Rehearsal  
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship  
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)  
9:00 AM Children's Christmas Program  
9:15 AM Children's Choir (K-5)  
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast  
10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour

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## For Your Calendar/News & Notes

### Pantry Service Project

**Friday, January 12**

**5:00 PM**

Mark your calendars for service, food, and fun! Students of all ages are invited to volunteer in the pantry, followed by a meal and movie in the Fellowship Hall.

### Advent Meals & Worship

**December 13 and 20**

**Lunch: 11:00 AM – Noon**

**Supper: 5:00 – 6:30 PM**

**Worship: 6:30**

- Mark your calendars and join us for Advent meals followed by Worship.
- We will have a vegetarian option at each of the meals.
- All meals are free will offering.

**Candlelight Carol Service**  
**Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church**  
**Saturday, December 16**  
**Prelude begins at 4:40 PM**  
**Service 5:00 PM**  
**Reception Following**  
**Nursery Care will be Provided**

The annual Candlelight Carol Service has become a beloved tradition at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church. We hope that you, your family, and friends can join us for this special service of sacred scripture and poetry, congregational carols, handbells, brass, organ, and piano. Please join us following the service for a lovely reception.

**Children's Christmas Program**  
**Sunday, December 17**  
**9:00 AM**

We are excited again, to hear our children sing and tell the story of Christ's birth. The children (grades prek-6) will present the Christmas story with music. The children should arrive by 8:25 that morning. The children in kindergarten through sixth grade will have a special practice on Saturday, December 16 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. If you have any questions, please contact Barb Carlsen at carlsen.barbara18@gmail.com. Following the Christmas program, there will be a "wrap party" for the children during Sunday School time as a fun reward for working so hard. We will have a small magic show, treats, and games.

**Christmas Ushers/Worship Assistants Sign-up**

If you will be here on Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day, we could use your ushering expertise. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the Nave for you to sign up if you're able to help. We also ask Lectors and Communion Assistants to call the church office or sign up on SignUp Genius for Lector and Communion Assistants. Thanks!

**ELCA Young Adult Gathering**  
**Young Adults (19-25-year-olds)**  
**July 16-20, 2024, in New Orleans**

An ELCA Young Adult Gathering will take place at the same time as the ELCA National Youth Gathering. Each group will have separate daytime offerings followed by a joint Evening Program. As this is a new event, plans are still being made. We hope you will consider attending this event. Please contact Pr. Shari or the church office if you are interested in attending. For more info or to register, go to

<https://www.elca.church/gathering/attend/young-adult-gathering>

**Join Us in Spreading Joy: Offer a Ride to Church!**

Are you looking for a simple yet impactful way to make a difference in someone's day? Consider sharing the gift of

a ride to church! Your willingness to offer a ride even one or two weeks a month can brighten someone else's Sunday. Please call or email the church office to see if there's someone in your neighborhood or on your way to church that would like a ride. Open your heart and car doors to help others experience the joy of attending church.

**2024 Summer Youth & Young Adult Trip Sponsorships**  
**ELCA Youth Gathering/Young Adult Gathering**  
**December 1 – 24**

During the season of Advent, we ask that you check out the Advent Sponsor Tree in the Fellowship Hall to help youth attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering this summer. Please take an envelope with the amount that you are able to give and print your name on it. Place your donation in the envelope and then place it in the offering plate or bring it to the office. The trunk of the tree will have a QR code on it if that form of giving is preferred. If you give online, please take the envelope, write your name on it, and place in the offering plate, and note "online donation". Thanks!



**Kountze Food Pantry**

Our program with SpartanNash (Family Fare) raised \$875.00 for the Kountze Food Pantry in just 10 days! It was a bonus that we didn't have to collect and count receipts. Thank you to everyone who rounded up at the register. We are still requesting donations of toothbrushes and toothpaste for the Pantry. We try to have them for everyone who asks for one. They will be included in the Christmas gift bags for our guests, along with other hygiene items. St. Michael distributed 200 Christmas bags last week. Kountze will give ours starting December 11. There have also been gloves, socks, hats and scarves offered. The men's lunch group collects toys for the children which we wrapped and placed under the beautiful Christmas tree! There have been candy, cookies and books for all the kids as well. Please sign up with the link below if you would like to serve at the Kountze Food Pantry.

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

**Attendance & Giving**

**Saturday:** 33

**Sunday: 9:00:** 166 **11:00:** 67

**Wednesday: 12:15:** 31 **6:30:** 51

**Total:** 379

**Streaming:** 50

**Pantry Guests Served:** 973 (inc. 349 children)

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 24

**Offering:**

\$21,537.70 (Regular)      \$5,941.21 (Specials)

\$397.50 (Debt Reduction)

God brings peace and forgiveness.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news
Monday	Isaiah 40:1-11	Comfort my people
Tuesday	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Promise of the Lord's coming
Wednesday	Matthew 5:9	Blessed are the peacemakers
Thursday	Psalms 29	The voice of God in a storm
Friday	Isaiah 52:7-10	Let Zion rejoice
Saturday	Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13	A prayer for God's peace
Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light



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### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to*

*Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.* **Isaiah 40:1-2 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, help us to rely on you above all things that our lives may find rest and peace through Christ Jesus, the Son of God. Amen.

#### Mealttime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food; we pray for a fair distribution of the fruit of the earth that all may have enough to eat. In Jesus' name, amen.

#### A Blessing to Give:

May the steadfast love and faithfulness of God give you peace. (Psalm 85:10)

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- Think or talk about a time when you experienced peace.
- When have you felt God's peace in your life?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Mark 1:1-8.

The first line in Mark, "*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,*" serves as a title for the entire gospel writing. That title and that announcement of good news is the source of all the peace we can want. Mark's Gospel does not present a peace that is simply life without struggles. The peace of God that comes with the good news of Jesus involves struggle, cleansing, and letting go of one's own innocence or purity. The peace that Jesus brings, and John the Baptist introduces, involves a "*repentance for the forgiveness of sins*" (v. 4). The peace that Jesus brings—and continues to bring throughout our lives—is the freeing power to let go of an understanding of being able to make it on one's own or of being better than others. Worship services often begin with statements of confession and forgiveness. This offers a peace where we need not hide from the hurts and brokenness of our lives and world. It is the peace that rests on the goodness of God in Christ for us and for all.

*Discuss:* How does confession and forgiveness give you peace?

*Pray:* **God of steadfast love and faithfulness, we thank you for coming to us again and again that we may know your forgiving power and have peace through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you extend the peace of God to someone?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week we light two candles on the Advent wreath. The second candle is the candle of peace. Think or talk about how the words of Psalm 85, a prayer for restoration, bring us peace: "*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.*"

Light the first candle of hope and the second candle of peace and say: "***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.***" (John 1:5)

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28