

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 30 & 31, 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.*

Today at Kountze Memorial

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.



Poinsettias

Please feel free to take a poinsettia after any of the services this weekend. You can also stop by during regular office hours this week to pick one up.

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.

Altar Flowers, Eternal Candle, and TV Broadcast

You can help us beautify the altar at Kountze or sponsor a television broadcast if you wish. This is a simple and meaningful way to honor a loved one who has passed away, celebrate a special anniversary or milestone, or can be given in thanksgiving for friends or family. Their names will appear in the church bulletin on the weekend you select. Altar Flowers are provided by Janousek Florist and the cost is \$20 a bouquet. The Eternal Candle is \$7.50. The television broadcast is \$210 per week. You can sign up for a date to provide flowers, eternal candle, and/or our television broadcast by signing up in the Narthex, calling the church office, going online to our giving page, or placing a check in the mail or offering plate marked "flowers, candle, or TV ministry. Please let us know if it is in honor/memory/celebration of someone. Thanks.

Faith Formation

Sunday School and Children's Choir

Ages 2 years-6th Grade

Will not be held December 31, or January 7. Join us again on January 14. Sunday School will continue with the rotation model and Children's Choir students will join Barb Carlsen on the 2nd floor in the Sunday School Music Room again on January 14.

Today at Kountze Memorial, *continued*

Youth Forum

Lower Level Youth Room

10:10 AM

Join us in the Youth Room again beginning January 14 for time of community, learning, and serving.

Adult Forum

Join us at 10:10 AM on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall. **This Week:** Fellowship **Next Week:** Lutheranism in America: Muhlenberg and Schmucker

This Week at Kountze Memorial

December 31 Sunday

Christmas 1

New Year's Eve

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

10:10 AM Youth Forum/Adult Forum

January 1 Monday

New Year's Day

OFFICE CLOSED

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!



January 2 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

January 3 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship

6:00 PM Confirmation @ St. Timothy

7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

January 4 Thursday

2:00 PM Cards with Friends

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

January 5 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

January 6 Saturday

Epiphany of Our Lord

Homebound Communion

5:00 PM Worship

January 7 Sunday

Baptism of Our Lord

Homebound Communion

8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
Rehearsal

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

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

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>

Cards with Friends

Thursday, January 4

2:00 PM

Meet in the Fellowship Hall for a time together playing cards. All are welcome. Bring a snack to share.

Confirmation Resumes

January 10

6:00 PM

Confirmation resumes at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church.

Confirmation Photos

If you have any group photos from 2017 - 2021 and you would be willing to share with the church office, we would be most grateful. We want to make sure we have a photo of each of the Confirmation Classes of KMLC.

Kountze Family Service Project:

Friday, January 12

5:00 PM

Join us in the Pantry to volunteer and then following the service to our community, we will be serving pizza and watching a movie in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a friend, your favorite movie, and a snack to share.

Middle School Gathering

Grades 6-8

January 13-14, 2024

We will be gathering at Sheridan Lutheran Church in Lincoln. The cost will be covered by Kountze Memorial. Registration deadline is January 1, 2024.

New Member Class

January 14 & 21

10:15 PM

If you are interested in finding out more about Kountze Memorial or would like to join our congregation, we ask you to consider attending our next New Member Class. Childcare is available. Please plan on attending both classes. New members will be received on Sunday, January 28. Please call the church office if you have questions and let us know if you plan to attend.

High School Retreat for Grades 9-12

Carol Joy Holling Camp

January 19-21, 2024

Theme: (un)Equal

Come and join us as we dive into this past summer's theme, "UnEqual". Along with the lessons we will learn about God's love, we will also be experiencing some favorite camp activities, God's creation, and of course, fellowship! Cost \$100 per camper. This cost includes lodging, meals, and programming on Friday through Sunday. Register by January 17 at <https://www.cjhcenter.org/hs-retreat>

Annual Reports

Due January 28

If you are responsible for a report in our Annual Report, please have them turned in to Debbie Bogue no later than January 28. Reports are welcome—and preferred—anytime before that date. Thanks.

Dinners for 8

Consider signing up to join a dinners for 8 group in February, March, and April. It is a time when your group will have a meal together each month. This meal can take place in homes, in restaurants, or at the church. Or you may decide to attend a fish fry or another organization's fundraiser. It is up to your group. Please **sign up by January 21** at the Welcome Desk or by calling the church office. You will be informed about the groups, so you can begin to find times and places to meet.

Summer Bible Camp at Carol Joy Holling!

Register by January 31 for Early Bird Pricing

Kountze Memorial will cover the cost if you register by January 31. If you register after this date, you will need to pay the additional cost. Kountze Camp Week is June 16-21, but you can attend camp whenever it is convenient for you. Check out the schedule for the different camp opportunities for grades K-12 as well as day camps and leadership training for high school-age youth and Special Needs camps at <https://www.caroljoyholling.org/register>

In order for the church to pay the fee, choose

- to mail your payment,
- select "Pay items in Full"
- then "Pay by Check/Money Order"
- Email a copy of the receipt to shari@kmlchurch.org

and we will submit payment on behalf of your youth. If you have any questions, please reach out to church staff. To register go to

<https://www.caroljoyholling.org/register>

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.

Altar Flowers, Eternal Candle, & TV Broadcast

The new sign up posters are now available. Be sure to sign up for your special date early so it's still available. Altar Flowers are provided by Janousek Florist and cost \$20 a bouquet. The Eternal Candle is \$7.50 and sponsoring a TV broadcast is \$210.

Just a Reminder

If you have changed your pledge for 2024, please remember that your automatic giving will only be altered if we receive written confirmation from you or if you've specifically indicated this change by checking the box on your 2024 pledge card. You can e-mail Debbie in the church office to make changes if you would like. Simply Giving info and registration forms can be found at the Welcome Desk.

2023 Contribution Note:

In order for your offerings to be counted toward your 2023 giving, it needs to be in the office or postmarked no later than December 31, 2023. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and support.

Kountze Food Pantry

Thank-you to everyone who donated to the Food Pantry and made this Christmas special for our guests! St. Michael Church contributed 200 goody bags with laundry soap and many items we don't usually have. Kountze provided 250 bags with a complete hygiene kit. Several groups collected toys and books for the children and the common room was beautifully decorated! In January the Pantry is collecting gloves and mittens for men, women and children. We get lots of hats donated but never seem to have enough gloves. If you would like to contribute you may leave the items in the donation box in Fellowship Hall. Another option is to order online and have them delivered to Kountze in care of the Pantry. As always, we are looking for volunteers. If you would like to donate your time, you may sign up at the following link:

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

Attendance & Giving

Saturday: 35

Sunday: 9:00: 84

Wednesday: 12:15: 5

Total: 129

Christmas Eve: 4:00: 245 **7:00:** 251 **11:00:** 80

Christmas Day: 25

Streaming: (Sunday & Wednesday) 107

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 22

Offering:

\$24,679.16 (Regular) \$15,782.34 (Specials)

\$10,168.21 (Debt Reduction)

Praise God for salvation and all of creation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.		
Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple
Monday	Isaiah 61:10-63:3	Rejoice in the Lord
Tuesday	Galatians 4:4-7	Adoption as God's children
Wednesday	Psalms 24	Entrance into the temple
Thursday	Romans 8:18-25	Future glory
Friday	Job 12:7-10	If you want to learn
Saturday	Psalms 148	All creation praises God
Sunday	Mark 1:4-11	The baptism of Jesus



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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
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SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Let them [all parts of creation] praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

Psalms 148:13 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Creator God, help us to see how deep and wide your saving work for all creation is, a love that is seen most clearly through Jesus, the one born in Bethlehem. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with sheep and cattle and all creation, we thank you for feeding us each day with food from the earth and with your saving grace through Jesus. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God give you and all creation peace through Jesus.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- What does creation care mean to you?
- How do you show praise to God for all that God has created?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalms 148.

Psalms 148 states that creation belongs to God, and God has promised creation a future forever (v.6). Jesus being born in Bethlehem places creation front and center as part of the saving work of God. From angels to sun and moon to shining stars, from earth to sea monsters, from fire and hail to stormy winds, the list goes on and on to include all of creation as the recipients of God's saving work. God's saving grace is not just for humans. The Apostle Paul names this when he writes in Romans 8:21, "*creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.*" What God has done in bringing us a Savior far exceeds all that we can imagine, even having all of creation join us in praise to God. When we look through the verses in many Christmas hymns, we are reminded that creation is often part of the Christmas message.

Discuss: How does Psalms 148 help you think anew about God's saving work in Christ?

Pray: **O God, our creator and redeemer, we thank you for your love that extends to all of creation through Jesus Christ, born to us in Bethlehem. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, in what way can you show care for God's creation?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, Simeon and Anna, prophets who had waited all their lives for Jesus, recognized him as the Promised One. Luke 2:29-32 is known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, Latin for "now let depart." This is Simeon's song of praise making it clear that God acted in a way that gives peace for all people. The words of Simeon's song are often used for evening worship. Write a list of words that give you peace. *Pray:* **Loving God, we thank you for Simeon, Anna, and all those throughout history who have lifted-up Jesus as the hope and peace for all the world. Amen.**

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalms 29
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11