

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 97th 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 2nd floor in the Sunday School Music Room.

Sunday School

10:10 AM

Ages 2 years-6th Grade

Join us again next week in the 2nd 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:** 165th 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.

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

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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Written by Pr. Greg Priebbenow and edited by Vibrant Faith Ministries.
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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