

# 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

[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

December 24, 2023

7:00 & 11:00 PM

The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Eve



## PRELUDE

7:00 pm

**Kountze Brass**

Scott Quackenbush, Dan Nesbitt, *trumpet*  
Jason Stromquist, Jay Wise, *trombone*

7:00 pm, 11:00 pm

**Cellist**

Greg Clinton

## GATHERING

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

**C** Amen.

**P** Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**P** God of life,

**C** you promise good news of great joy for all people,  
and call us to be messengers of your peace.

We confess that too often we hoard our joy,  
our resources, and our security.

We nurture conflict and build barriers.

We neglect the needs of our neighbors  
and ignore the groaning of creation.

Have mercy on us.

Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.

Where we are reluctant, give us courage.

Where we are cynical, restore our trust.

Renew us with your grace

and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.

Amen.

**P** Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ✠ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

**C** Amen.

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*Oh Come, All Ye Faithful*

ELW 283 vs. 1-3

**1 O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the king of angels:**

*Refrain*

**O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!**

**2 The highest, most holy,  
light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain***

**3 Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain***

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786;  
tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

## 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.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

ELW 270

**1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise;  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

**2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain***

*Refrain*

**Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** Almighty God,

**G** you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

## WORD

(sit)

### FIRST READING

**Isaiah 9:2-7**

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!*

**T**he people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

### PSALM: Psalm 96 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup>**Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

<sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory among the nations  
and God's wonders among all peoples.

<sup>4</sup>**For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**

<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.

**<sup>6</sup>Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

**<sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the Lord honor and power.**

**<sup>8</sup>Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**

**<sup>9</sup>Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
tremble before the Lord, all the earth.**

**<sup>10</sup>Tell it out among the nations: “The Lord is king!**

**The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity.”**

**<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**

**<sup>12</sup>Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord,  
for you come to judge the earth.**

**<sup>13</sup>You will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with your truth.**

## **SECOND READING**

**Titus 2:11-14**

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

**T**he grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

**℟** The word of the Lord.

**☩ Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

**ELW 257 vs. 7**

**O come, O King of nations, come,  
O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
refresh the hearts that long for you;  
restore the broken, make us new**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**℟** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

**☩ Glory to you, O Lord!**

## THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL

**Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]**

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

**I**n those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

[<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

**📖** The Gospel of the Lord.

**👏** Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

**SERMON**

*Pastor Wynard*



1 A sta - ble lamp is light - ed whose glow shall wake the  
 2 This child through Da - vid's cit - y shall ride in tri - umph  
 3 Yet he shall be for - sak - en, and yield - ed up to  
 4 But now, as at the end - ing, the low is lift - ed



sky; the stars shall bend their voic - es, and ev - 'ry stone shall  
 by; the palm shall strew its branch-es, and ev - 'ry stone shall  
 die; the sky shall groan and dark - en, and ev - 'ry stone shall  
 high; the stars shall bend their voic - es, and ev - 'ry stone shall



cry. And ev - 'ry stone shall cry, and  
 cry. And ev - 'ry stone shall cry, though  
 cry. And ev - 'ry stone shall cry, for  
 cry. And ev - 'ry stone shall cry, in



straw like gold shall shine; a barn shall har - bor  
 heav - y, dull, and dumb, and lie with - in the  
 hearts made hard by sin: God's blood up - on the  
 prais - es of the child by whose de - scent a -



heav - en, a stall be - come a shrine.  
 road - way to pave his king - dom come.  
 spear - head, God's love re - fused a - gain.  
 mong us the worlds are rec - on - ciled.

Text: "A Christmas Hymn," Richard Wilbur, 1921-2017

Music: David Hurd, b. 1950

Text © 1961, ren. 1989 Richard Wilbur, admin. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Music © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc.

*(stand)*

## **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** Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

## THE CHRISTMAS 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

**7:00 pm Kountze Choir**

*Sing Gloria*

by Katherine K. Davis

**11:00 pm**

Greg Clinton, *cello*

*(stand)*

### OFFERTORY HYMN

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**ELW 279 vs 1 & 4**

**1 O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.**

**4 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
oh, come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel!**

## OFFERING PRAYER

- P** God of abundance,  
**C** receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen

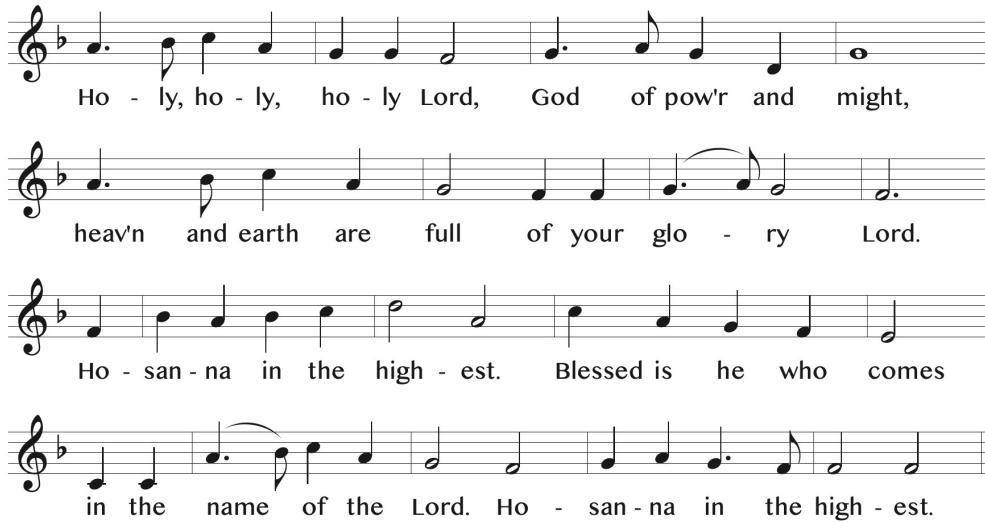
## HOLY COMMUNION

- 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.

## PREFACE FOR THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD

- 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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, 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.

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

*sung to the tune of Away in a Manger ELW 277*

**Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your Name!  
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same  
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone:  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;  
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom; o'er all things You reign.  
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.  
To you be the glory, resounding again  
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

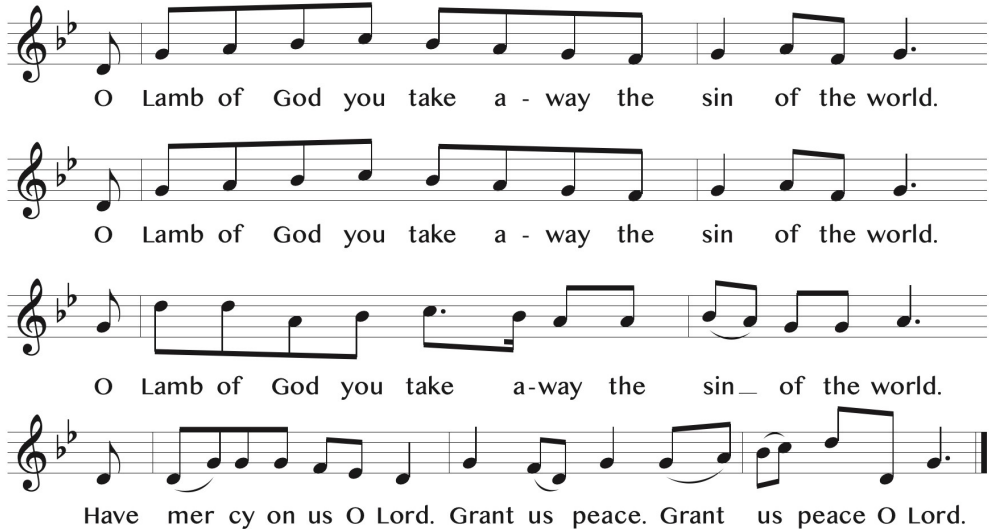
- [P]** Glory to God in the highest!
- [C]** Come to the table of peace.

## 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.*

*(sit)*

## AGNUS DEI



O Lamb of God you take a - way the sin of the world.

O Lamb of God you take a - way the sin of the world.

O Lamb of God you take a-way the sin\_ of the world.

Have mer cy on us O Lord. Grant us peace. Grant us peace O Lord.

## HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**ELW 289**

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain*

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
gloria in excelsis Deo.**

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heav'nly song?  
*Refrain*

- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn king.  
*Refrain*

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,  
the cross be borne for me, for you;  
hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
the virgin sings her lullaby;  
joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear***ELW 282**

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heav'n's all-gracious king."  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heav'nly music floats  
o'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hov'ring wing,  
and ever o'er its babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.
- 3 And you, beneath life's crushing load,  
whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way  
with painful steps and slow:  
look now, for glad and golden hours  
come swiftly on the wing;  
oh, rest beside the weary road  
and hear the angels sing!
- 4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendors fling,  
and all the world give back the song  
which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

(stand)

**BLESSING**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- [P]** God our redeemer,  
**[C]** you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

**CANDLE LIGHT HYMN**                      *Silent Night, Holy Night*                      **ELW 281**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1   Silent night, holy night!</b><br/><b>All is calm, all is bright</b><br/><b>round yon virgin mother and child.</b><br/><b>Holy Infant, so tender and mild,</b><br/><b>sleep in heavenly peace,</b><br/><b>sleep in heavenly peace.</b></p>           | <p><b>2   Silent night, holy night!</b><br/><b>Shepherds quake at the sight;</b><br/><b>glories stream from heaven afar,</b><br/><b>heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!</b><br/><b>Christ, the Savior, is born!</b><br/><b>Christ, the Savior, is born!</b></p> |
| <p><b>3   Silent night, holy night!</b><br/><b>Son of God, love's pure light</b><br/><b>radiant beams from your holy face,</b><br/><b>with the dawn of redeeming grace,</b><br/><b>Jesus, Lord, at your birth,</b><br/><b>Jesus, Lord, at your birth.</b></p> |  |

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849;  
John F. Young, 1820-1885

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

- P** Alleluia! I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Alleluia!
- C** Alleluia! To us is born a Savior, Jesus Christ! Alleluia!

*The Gospel is read.*

## THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION

**John 1:1-5, 9-14**

*The congregation will stand and face the reader as the Gospel is read  
from the center of the nave. Listen in wonder and awe.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

- P** Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we will walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

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# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☞ God bless you and keep you, ✝ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## HYMN

*Joy to the World*

**ELW 267 vs. 1, 2, 4**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!</b><br/>Let earth receive her king;<br/>let ev'ry heart<br/>prepare him room<br/>and heav'n and nature sing,<br/>and heav'n and nature sing,<br/>and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.</p>                        | <p><b>2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!</b><br/>Let all their songs employ,<br/>while fields and floods,<br/>rocks, hills, and plains<br/>repeat the sounding joy,<br/>repeat the sounding joy,<br/>repeat, repeat the sounding joy.</p> |
| <p><b>4 He rules the world with truth and grace</b><br/><b>and makes the nations prove</b><br/><b>the glories of his righteousness</b><br/><b>and wonders of his love,</b><br/><b>and wonders of his love,</b><br/><b>and wonders, wonders of his love.</b></p> |   |

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

## DISMISSAL

- ☞ Christ the Savior is born!  
Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.
- ☞ Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

**7:00 pm**

**Kountze Brass**

Scott Quackenbush, Dan Nesbitt, *trumpet*  
Jason Stromquist, Jay Wise, *trombone*

**7:00 pm, 11:00 pm**

**Cellist**

Greg Clinton





### 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 24 & 25, 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**



**The Christmas Eve Television Broadcast** is sponsored to the glory of God in appreciation of the pastors, staff, and media crew of Kountze Memorial given by Karen & Shirley Bonneau

### **Faith Formation**

#### **Sunday School and Children's Choir**

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

Sunday School will not be held December 24, 31, or January 7. Join us again on January 14 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Sunday School Rooms. We will continue with the rotation model. Children's Choir students will join Barb Carlsen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the Sunday School Music Room again on January 14.

#### **Youth Forum**

##### **Lower Level Youth Room**

**10:10 AM**

**12/31: Games**

#### **Adult Forum**

Join us at 10:10 AM on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall. **12/31: Fellowship**

## This Week at Kountze Memorial

### December 24 Sunday

Christmas Eve  
4:00 PM Family Service  
6:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 PM Candlelight Service  
11:00 PM Candlelight Service

### December 25 Monday

Christmas Day  
OFFICE CLOSED  
10:00 AM Worship

### December 25 Tuesday

OFFICE CLOSED

### December 27 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship

### December 28 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

### December 29 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

### December 30 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

### 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

## 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>

### 2024 Summer Youth & Young Adult Trip Sponsorships

During the season of Advent, we asked 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. It's not too late! Please take an envelope with the amount that you are able to give, print your name on it, and place in the envelope. You can leave the envelope in the offering plate, bring it to the office, or use the QR Code here or on the trunk of the tree to give online.



### 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 gave 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>

### Birthday Card Shower

Dr. Gary Westerman will turn 80 years old on December 26. His wife, Judy, asked that we share his address in case you would like to send Gary belated birthday wishes. Birthday wishes can be sent to Gary at Astoria Senior Living - Villa, Room 131, 9220 Western Ave, Omaha, NE 68114

### 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

Confirmation resumes again at Saint Timothy's Church.

### 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

12:15 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. Lunch will be served. 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 so we can prepare for lunch.

## 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 (Save \$50)

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. Send a copy of your registration to KMLC. Register at <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 <https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

## Attendance & Giving

**Saturday:** 201

**Sunday: 9:00:** 150 **11:00:** 47

**Wednesday: 12:15:** 27 **6:30:** 53

**Total:** 505

**Streaming:** (Sunday & Wednesday) 120

**Pantry Guests Served:** 901 (inc. 287 children)

**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 21

**Offering:**

\$28,194.78 (Regular)                      \$9,480.3 (Specials)

\$1,738.33 (Debt Reduction)

*Mary finds favor through God's love.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold
Monday	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	The Lord's message to David
Tuesday	Romans 16:25-27	Paul's closing prayer
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	The gift of love
Thursday	Psalms 36	Wickedness and God's goodness
Friday	1 John 4:16-21	God is love
Saturday	Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26	God's promise to David
Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple



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### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus." Luke 1:30-31 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Everlasting God, your ways are unsearchable and your love never ending; give us the faith to trust in your Son, child of Mary, and Savior of the World. Amen.

#### Mealttime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this gift of food; give us faith and courage to speak of your steadfast love to all generations. In Jesus' name, amen. (Psalm 89:1)

#### A Blessing to Give:

May God's grace bless you with faith and love.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- If an angel appeared and told you something, would you believe it? Why or why not?
- How does God's love influence your life?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Luke 1:26-38.

When God's love showers down upon us, it can really turn our lives upside down. That's certainly what happened to Mary. The angel Gabriel announced that she was favored by God and would bear a son who would inherit the throne of King David. Mary was given promises that would seem hard to believe, let alone understand. She was perplexed, to say the least. She had no husband. In her community bearing a child without a husband was nothing less than shameful. Bearing a child in those days was one of the most dangerous events that could happen to a woman. Being ostracized by her neighbors, looking at the prospect of pain, and the possibility of death does not seem like divine favor. This is a story filled with risk, danger, confusion, extreme drama, and surprise. Amid it all, Mary responds with her own act of trust and love and says, "[L]et it be with me according to your word" (v. 38). Mary is the embodiment of a faithful disciple, one who trusts the amazing love of God for her and for all.

*Discuss:* Do you think Mary's response to Gabriel is surprising?

*Pray:* **All knowing God, help us to receive your undeserved kindness with courage and love through Jesus Christ, child of Mary, your Son and our Savior. 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 share the good news of Jesus' birth with someone?

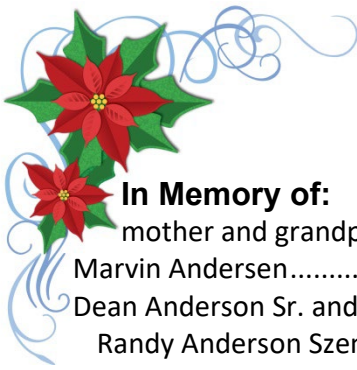
### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week we light all four candles on the Advent wreath. The fourth candle is the candle of love. Psalm 89 is a praise song to God for all creation: *"I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations."* Think or talk about the ways we respond to God's great love for us through Jesus.

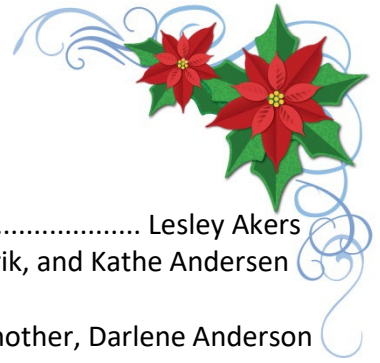
Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, the third candle of joy, and the fourth candle of love and say: ***"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."*** (John 1:5)

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Isaiah 61:10—62:3; Psalm 148  
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40





## Poinsettias are Given to the Glory of God...



### In Memory of:

mother and grandparents..... Lesley Akers  
Marvin Andersen..... Kay, Erik, and Kathe Andersen  
Dean Anderson Sr. and  
Randy Anderson Szemplenski .....wife and mother, Darlene Anderson  
Grandma Marge Sullivan .....Kathleen Bailey, Brett and Jack Bailey  
Grandma Jane Bailey ..... Kathleen Bailey, Brett and Jack Bailey  
Uncle Tom Sullivan ..... Kathleen Bailey, Brett and Jack Bailey  
baby Axl ..... Tonia Beck  
loved ones..... Karen and Shirley Bonneau  
loved ones..... Callies, Green, & Ray Families  
David & Lois Carlsen ..... the Carlsen and Campbell families  
Viggo & Viola Carlsen..... the Carlsen and Campbell families  
Floyd & Alice Chase ..... the Carlsen and Campbell families  
husband, Dwaine Carlson .....Ellie Carlson  
loved ones.....Ellie Carlson  
Laura Chrisman .....The Chrisman Family  
Bill & Dorothy ..... Barb Chrisman  
Bill Chrisman III ..... Barb and Kids  
Judy Ryan ..... Barb Chrisman  
our Parents ..... Gary & Debi Clatterbuck  
Lawrence & Marion Cooke ..... Warren Cooke  
Thelma & Joe Councill, Marie & Ed Debus, Jackie & Stephanie McCoy,  
Pat & Lou Granneman, Vern McAleer, and Kathy Stauffer ..... Joe Councill family  
Tim Daugherty ..... Rebecca, Ryan, and Linda  
John & Nancy Estabrook..... Jane Estabrook  
Kelcey Renae Fike ..... Mary Jo Fike and family  
Randall S Fike ..... Mary Jo Fike and family  
Dr. & Mrs. John Johnson and Linda J. Johnson..... Mary Jo Fike  
our father, Rocco Fili..... Caleb Fili & family and Sarah & Josh Kellams  
parents, Anne & Charles Forslund ..... daughter, Christine Forslund  
our granddaughter, Hannah Rief..... Leigh & Vicki Freeman  
our parents ..... Leigh & Vicki Freeman  
Wayne and Sonn Simmonds..... daughters Terri, Sherri, and Sandi  
Bud Gogetap ..... loving wife, Terri Gogetap  
Mary Rose Gruber..... Mom & Dad

Bob & Gayle Ringo .....	Tom & Theresa Gruber
Joyce E. Hahn .....	Wayne A. Hahn and family
Jeff Helgenberger .....	Cathy Helgenberger
Evan Hardy .....	Mimi & Papa Hardy
daughter, Stacie Heim Olson .....	Doug & Judy Heim
Lorri & Tommy Esnough .....	James Holzer & Tracey Saklar
our Parents .....	Duane & Penny Hovendick
loved ones.....	Duane & Penny Hovendick
Janet Woodhull Young and Byron Woodhull .....	Steve & Karen Jacobson
Evelyn, Norris, & Brian Jacobson .....	Steve & Karen Jacobson
Kenneth Trotter .....	wife, Joan Jacobson-Trotter
loved ones.....	The Jensen, Muchmore, and Luczynski families
Geri Laney and Carol Olson .....	Ken & Linda Johnson
Albin & Laura Johnson .....	Ken & Linda Johnson
Renee Johnson.....	Ken & Linda Johnson
Gerald Klonglan .....	Jason Klonglan and James Smejkal
Joe Kubat .....	Jack Kubat
daughter, Cathy Zinn .....	Marie Kubat
Marvin & Ann Lienemann.....	Rick Lienemann
beloved brother, Peter Andrew Miller .....	Ann Miller
grandparents, Moe, Dorothy, Andy & Helen.....	Ann Miller
Ruth Nielsen .....	Bruce & Barbara Nissen
grandparents .....	Bruce & Barbara Nissen
Ray & Mildren Hron .....	Julie & Pat O'Doherty
Frank & Jane O'Doherty.....	Julie & Pat O'Doherty
Russ & Donna Olson .....	Steve Olson
Joe Olson.....	Steve Olson
our parents .....	Marvin & Kris Olson
Rick Picha .....	family
Irwin & Margret Kahrs .....	Marce Picha
our parents .....	Robert & Pat Ranney
Pat's sister, Jean.....	Robert & Pat Ranney
Lola Reed .....	family
Hannah Rief .....	her parents and siblings
Marjean Sack .....	Norm Sack
Margaret Sack.....	Norm Sack
Barbara A Saklar .....	Tracey Saklar and Kris Placzek families
Charles & Augusta Laushman .....	Tracey Saklar and Kris Placzek families
Chris & Nadine Saklar .....	Tracey Saklar and Kris Placzek families
Joy Beavers .....	Tracey Saklar and Kris Placzek families
Lee Sealer.....	Judy Sealer

George Stephens and our grandparents ..... Michael & Lisa Stephens  
Dorothy Cross ..... daughter Nancy  
James Tunzer ..... Nancy Tunzer  
Donald Wichert..... his wife, Vickie Wichert  
our loved ones ..... Dan & Karen Wolf  
our parents ..... Chet & Sara Worm  
Bill and Joanne Worm..... Worm, Jones, Miranda Carreto, McLaren, and Walton families  
CPL Jeremy Jones ..... Worm, Jones, Miranda Carreto, McLaren, and Walton families  
Warren, Betty & Randy Miller ..... Al & Jenna Woster  
Lois & Joe Woster ..... Al & Jenna Woster

**In Honor of:**

All of the Kountze Pastors, Staff, and Volunteers .....Debbie Bogue  
our grandchildren, Joey, Jackson, and Lilly Council, Ty Council,  
and Samantha Gillespie ..... Patt & Joe Council  
our grandchildren ..... Bob & Sandy Fonda  
Erica Freeman and Dylan Freeman's graduations ..... Leigh & Vicki Freeman  
our family..... Doug & Judy Heim  
Nick & Betty Holzer..... James Holzer & Tracey Saklar  
Kyle, Kara, Krista & Kaun ..... Ken & Linda Johnson  
our 13 grandchildren ..... Ken & Linda Johnson  
our grandchildren, Hugo, Benjamin, Vera, and Jacob ..... Donna & Paul Moessner  
family & friends ..... Vinn Stephens  
God's goodness..... Vinn Stephens

**Love Gift by:**

Pastor Shari Duminy .....for Staff, Members, & Youth of Kountze Memorial  
grandma & grandpa ..... for Ethan, Markus, Sam, Henry, Ken, and Kai  
James Holzer .....for Tracey Saklar  
Bob & Jacque Johnson  
Ken & Linda Johnson .....for our Pastors and for all of the office workers  
Toby & Eric Rees.....for Dannika, Lawton, and Braxton Rees  
Jenni Toeppen



If you would like to take a poinsettia home, you may pick it up after the 10:00 AM Christmas Day service or during the week from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM until they are gone. The office will be closed on December 26. Please enter through the church office doors.