

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

February 4, 2024

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

FIFTH SUNDAY after EPIPHANY



In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

C Amen.

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,

C **for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.**

P Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

C **We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.**

P To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C Amen.

- 1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the God of creation!
My heart is longing to offer up sweet adoration.
Melody make; dulcimer, harp, now awake.
Sound forth your praise, ev'ry nation.**
- 2 Praise the Almighty, o'er all life so wondrously reigning,
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen? All that is needful has been
sent by God's gracious ordaining.**
- 3 Praise the Almighty, who prospers your work and defends you;
see from the heavens the showers of mercy God sends you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do;
Infinite Love here befriends you.**
- 4 Praise the Almighty! In wonder my spirit is soaring!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises outpouring.
Let the amen sound from God's people again,
gladly forever adoring.**

Text: Joachim Neander, 1650-1680; tr. composite
Text © 2000 Augsburg Fortress.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

KYRIE

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

- ☞ Everlasting God,
☞ **you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:21-31

The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; ²³who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. ²⁵To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

☞ Word of God, Word of Life.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 147:1-11, 20c (read responsively)

¹Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!

How pleasant it is to honor God with praise!

²**The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem,
and gathers the exiles of Israel.**

³The LORD heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.

⁴**The LORD counts the number of the stars
and calls them all by their names.**

⁵Great is our LORD and mighty in power;
there is no limit to God’s wisdom.

⁶**The LORD lifts up the lowly,
but casts the wicked to the ground.**

⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
 make music upon the harp to our God,
⁸**who covers the heavens with clouds**
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the mountains.
⁹God provides food for the cattle
 and for the young ravens when they cry.
¹⁰**God is not impressed by the might of a horse,**
and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner,
¹¹but finds pleasure in those who fear the LORD,
 in those who await God's steadfast love. ^{20c} Hallelujah!

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul's ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.

If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

L Word of God, Word of Life.

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 1:29-39

Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.

As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. ³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

CHILDREN'S BLESSING 9:00 AM

Children (aged 3 years through 5th grade) are invited to come forward for a blessing. Then, they may 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.

SERMON

Pastor Wynard

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

ELW 610 vs. 1,2,4

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 O Christ, the healer, we have come
to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored
when reached by love that never ends?</p> | <p>2 From ev'ry ailment flesh endures
our bodies clamor to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess
that wholeness is our deepest need.</p> |
| <p>4 Grant that we all, made one in faith,
in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us,
shall reach the whole of humankind.</p> | |

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000
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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** God of grace,
 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 marriage of Nicole Campbell and Jacob Jones (2/3/2024)

Prayers This Week: Bruce Anderson

On-going Care: Cheri Biggs, John & Jane Bodnar, Don Burton, Ellie Carlson, Shirley Dietrich, Mike Edris, Martha Eckmann, Jessica Hannon, Richard & Betty Holzer, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Jason Klonglan, Orville & Julie Knapp, Ruth & Charles Martis, Lara McCormick, Nita Mueller, Linda Peltz, Marce Picha, Kathy Preininger, David Samaria, Evelyn Sueper, 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 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

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

by William Sterndale

(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

- ☐ Blessed are you, Holy One,
- ☑ **for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we receive what we seek and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

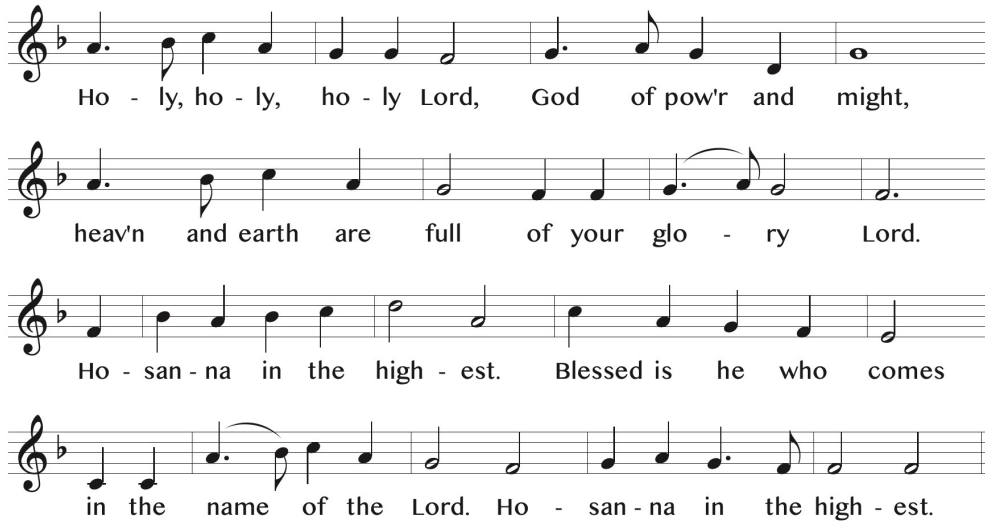
HOLY COMMUNION

- ☐ 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 our God.
- ☑ **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

- ☐ 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:
- ☑ **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**
- ☐ With this bread and cup ...
We look with hope for his coming.
- ☑ **Come, Lord Jesus.**
- ☐ Holy God, we long for your Spirit ...
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
- ☑ **Come, Holy Spirit.**
- ☐ All praise and glory are yours, ...
one God, now and forever.
- ☑ **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 and see at Jesus' table,

C **heaven and earth are joined as one.**

(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

As We Gather at Your Table

ELW 522

**1 As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's vict'ry known.**

**2 Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.**

**3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.**

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944
Text © 1989 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

1 Around you, O Lord Jesus,
your own you gather still
to share the feast you give us
with grace our lives to fill.
You say to us so lovingly,
“Take, eat! This is my body!
Take, drink! This is my blood!”

2 We hear your invitation,
and heed, O Lord, your call;
your word of consolation
is spoken here to all.
It draws us to your loving heart;
it brings to us your blessing,
which never will depart.

3 We are your own forever;
until our final breath
we will be true and never
in joy, in grief, in death
depart from you, for you are still
among your people dwelling,
as you have said you will.

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. composite
Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

(stand)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** Giver of every gift,
- C** Christ’s body is our food, and we are Christ’s body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

DISMISSAL OF EUCHARISITC MINISTERS

BLESSING

- ☐ God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, ✠ bless you and remain with you always.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Arise, Your Light Has Come!

ELW 314

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 1 | Arise, your light has come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today. | 3 | Arise, your light has come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones
and comfort those who mourn. |
| 2 | Arise, your light has come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor. | 4 | Arise, your light has come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing,
God's pow'r will make us strong. |

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

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DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. You are God's beloved.
☑ 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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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

February 3 & 4, 2024

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

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 in the 2nd Floor Sunday School Rooms.

Youth Forum

10:10 AM

Grades 7—12

Lower Level Youth Room

Grab your breakfast and meet each Sunday. Join us for time to grow our relationships with God and each other.

This Week: Bible Study "Created to Be"

Next Week: Spiritual Practices

Adult Forum

Join us at 10:10 AM on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall. **This Week:** Lutheranism in America: C.F.W. Walther and Charles Porterfield Krauth

Next Week: Budget Presentation

This Week at Kountze Memorial

February 4 Sunday

Epiphany 5
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-6)
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast
10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour

February 5 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

February 6 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

February 7 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship
6:00 PM Confirmation @ St. Timothy
7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

February 8 Thursday

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

February 9 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

February 10 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

February 11 Sunday

Transfiguration of Our Lord
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-6)
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast
10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour
10:10 AM Budget Presentation
11:30 AM Youth Gathering Lunch @Immanuel in Bellevue
12:15 PM Book Group

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Wednesdays in Lent

"Created for Community"

Wednesdays, February 14, 21, 28, March 6, 13, & 20

- Worship: 12:15 & 6:30 PM (6:30 PM is livestreamed)
- Lunch: 11:00 AM – Noon (free-will offering)
- Supper: 5:00 – 6:30 PM (free-will offering)

This year, Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday coincide, creating a unique opportunity to celebrate love and spirituality together. We encourage all members to bring their valentine to lunch or dinner before joining us for Ash Wednesday worship. It's a special day to cherish both love and faith, and we look forward to sharing this meaningful experience with our community. Join us for a heartwarming meal and a soulful start to the season of Lent. If you would like to help Jim and Crew in the kitchen for any of the Lenten meals - lunch and/or dinner - please contact Jim Smejkal in the church office or at jim@kmlchurch.org. No experience necessary.

Love Thy Neighbor Food Drive

February 14 - March 31

The Kountze Food Pantry will hold a spring food drive this Lenten season to show how we Love Thy Neighbor. The Love Thy Neighbor food drive is also to honor Wayne Simmonds and the generosity of Sherri Labeledz and Terri Gogetap, who named the pantry Love Thy Neighbor to honor their father. Sherri, Terri, and their father, Wayne, have been faithful and generous members of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church. Wayne loved the Kountze Food Pantry and made it a priority to volunteer at this very special ministry to help "the least of these" in our community. The Pantry is in need of unexpired, nonperishable foods in cans, boxes, and plastic jars (no glass jars please). Possible donations may include canned beans, meats (chicken or tuna), vegetables, fruits, and soups/stews - pop-top cans are a plus, boxes of crackers, granola bars, oatmeal, pasta, rice, instant potatoes, and plastic jars of peanut butter or pasta sauce. There are pantry drop off locations in the Fellowship Hall, the accessible entrance, and the Narthex. Please encourage your

fellow parishioners, family, friends, coworkers, and social circles to help in this wonderful cause! We would love the support from clubs and troops as well. Questions or need to arrange a delivery of food? Please contact Jill Conway at 402-341-7761, ex. 222 or jill@kmlchurch.org or jill@kountzecommons.org.

Recovery Celebration Service

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

113 N 18th Street

February 7, 2024

7:00 PM

Each year Trinity hosts a Recovery Eucharist for the Diocese of Nebraska commemorating Dr. Samuel Shoemaker who was the Episcopal priest advising Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. in developing the 12 Steps. All are welcome to attend.

Men's Lunch

In February, there won't be a Men's Lunch, but there's a tentative plan to gather in March with the delightful possibility of corned beef and cabbage. Given the busy season of Lenten Meals, we'll give Chef Jim a touch of flexibility to our plans. Stay tuned for updates, and let's look forward to a potential March Men's Lunch!

Women's Lenten Retreat

Hear Us! Heal us! Send Us!

Saturday, February 24

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Cost: \$10 (Pay at the Door)

Join Spiritual Directors Lisa Kramme, Midland University Campus Ministry and Pastor David Pinkston, NE Synod Director of "Seeking the Spirit Within," for a time of learning spiritual practices to guide us through the Lent season. Lunch will be served. Sign up today to save your spot. Please RSVP to the church office by February 19. You may also register online at

<https://form.jotform.com/232905425173050>

Scholarships

Deadline to Apply: March 1

The KMLC Scholarship Program makes scholarship funds available to any eligible college-bound student member. Active members of Kountze Memorial planning or continuing to attend ANY college, university or seminary may submit an application. Additional eligibility requirements are noted on the application. Applications can be picked up in the Youth Center, Church Office, or downloaded from the church website at www.kmlchurch.org and go to Grow > Youth Ministries > Scholarships. **Applications are due on March 1, 2024.** **Applications received after this date will not be accepted.** Please note: Scholarships are not automatically renewable and recipients must re-apply each year. Funds are sent directly to respective institutions. Submit your applications, along with supporting documentation, by mail to KMLC, Attn Scholarship Committee, 2650 Farnam St., Omaha NE 68131; in person to the church office; or by e-mail to info@kmlchurch.org

UFO (Unfinished Objects) Retreats

March 17 - 19, 2024

April 21 - 23, 2024

July 7 - 9, 2024

September 22 - 24, 2024

October 20 - 22, 2024

December 6 - 8, 2024

Carol Joy Holling Camp

These retreats are for crafters of any kind. Bring your own projects and use this time away to get caught up or do new projects! It's a great time to meet new friends, learn new skills, and be inspired by others' creativity. These retreats fill up fast - there's a wait list for March - so be sure to sign up early! Register online at: <http://tinyurl.com/5ymm67rp>

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>

Summer Bible Camp at Carol Joy Holling

If you didn't get a chance to register for camp by the Early Bird pricing deadline (January 31), Kountze Memorial will still cover the cost of the Early Bird pricing, but 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

We will then submit the Early Bird portion of the payment on behalf of your youth. You'll need to mail in your portion. If you have any questions, please reach out to church staff. To register go to

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

Kountze Food Pantry

Thank-you to everyone who donated gloves to the Pantry. They came at the perfect time to coincide with the bitterly cold weather we experienced in January. We are once again requesting contributions of toothbrushes and toothpaste. One of our goals is to always provide oral health products, along with razors, bar soap and feminine hygiene products. If you would like to donate, you may leave your gifts in the box marked "Food Pantry" in Fellowship Hall, or order online and send directly to the church at 2650 Farnam St 68131. Be sure to set delivery dates to Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:00 pm, closed holidays. If you would like to advance the ministry, consider volunteering by signing up at the following link:

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



Attendance & Giving

January 25— January 31

Saturday: 37

Sunday: 9:00: 127 **11:00:** 76

Wednesday: 12:15: 12

Total: 264

Streaming: 73

Pantry Guests Served: 1,138 (inc. 378 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 13

Offering:

\$38,422.11 (Regular)

\$950.21 (Specials)

\$25,422.66 (Debt Reduction)

Jesus' followers are sent to serve.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 1:29-39	Jesus heals many people
Monday	Isaiah 40:21-31	The Lord gives strength
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	For the sake of the gospel
Wednesday	1 Timothy 1:12-17	Gratitude for mercy
Thursday	Joshua 22:1-6	The eastern tribes return
Friday	Acts 20:25-35	Paul speaks to the elders
Saturday	Psalms 147:1-11, 20c	Praise the Lord
Sunday	Mark 9:2-9	Transfiguration of Jesus



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SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

He [Jesus] came and took her [Simon Peter's mother-in-law] by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. Mark 1:31 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and living God, we give you thanks and praise for raising us up to a new life to worship you and serve others with joy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord, you feed the animals and even the young ravens. We thank you for nurturing us with your presence in Jesus and for this meal today. Amen. (Psalm 147)

A Blessing to Give:

May God bless you with the joy of service.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- Describe someone you know who likes to serve others.
- A disciple's life is one of service. How is this important to the good news of Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 1:29-39.

Jesus heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law from an illness, a condition possibly approaching death. There is a clear association with the resurrection in this reading. This woman, whose name is not given, is touched by Jesus, lifted up, and begins to serve. This is a description of discipleship of all the unnamed followers of Jesus throughout history: touched and healed by Jesus, given new life, and sent out to serve. There is no hesitation about her calling; as a disciple, she serves. Other references to serve are found in Mark 1:13 when the angels of God served Jesus in the wilderness, and again in Mark 10:45, Jesus as the Son of Man came to serve. Service is the life of a follower of Jesus. It is not a burden. It is the great joy of life. Those who think the "good life" is to be served by others miss the point of the "gospel life" of Jesus. The joy of living is the ability to use whatever gifts one may have to bless others with service.

Discuss: In what ways have you experienced joy when serving others?

Pray: **Living God, help us to see and believe that the life worth living is a life of service that brings peace, joy, and your saving grace through Jesus Christ, our great healer. 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 bring Jesus' healing touch to someone in need?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Isaiah 40:21-31 expresses great joy at the saving presence of God in the lives of the exiles, those who have felt abandoned and imprisoned by others. Write a list of names of those you know who are experiencing difficult times. *Pray:* **Lord God, help (read list of names) feel your presence and know that those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. In Jesus' name, amen.** (Isaiah 40:31)

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9