

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

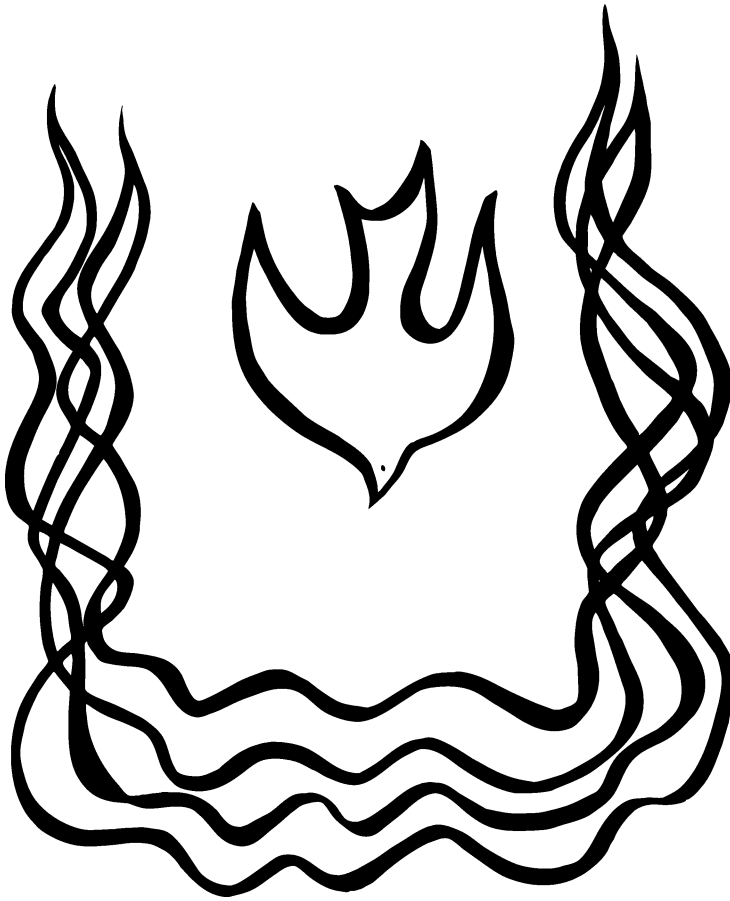
Lucy Wynard, Senior Pastor
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December 15, 2024

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(rise in body or spirit)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

C Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P God of mercy,

C we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

P God of might,

C we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.

P God in our midst,

C we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.

P A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

C Amen.

ADVENT WREATH HYMN

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

ELW 240 vs. 3

**3 Light three candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
for the King of glory.**

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

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND PRAYER

- P** Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.
- C** **Cultivate our hope in you, Amen.**

(light three candles)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242 vs. 1, 2, 4

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.</p> | <p>2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.</p> |
| <p>4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.</p> | |

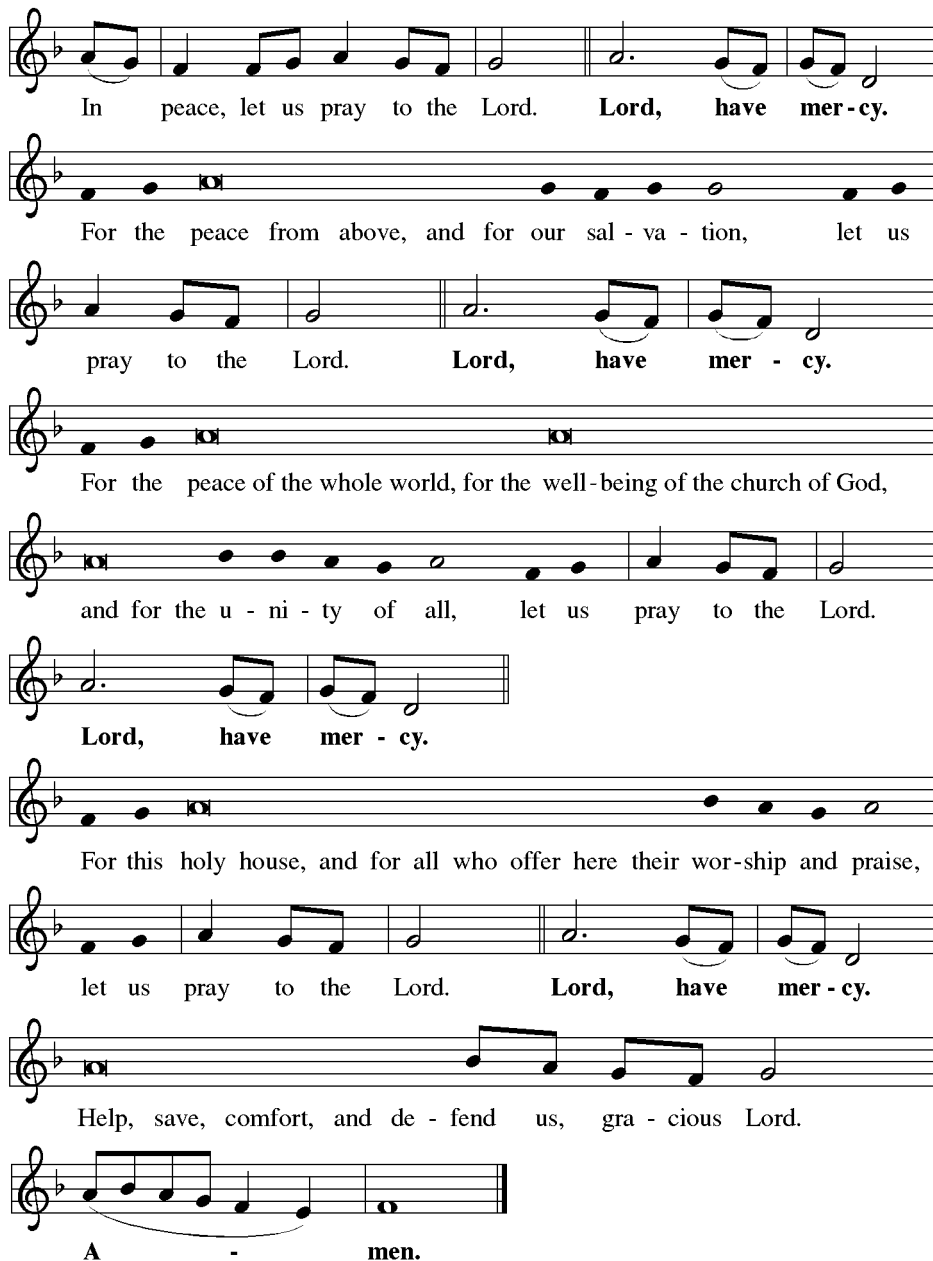
Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.

For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us

pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God,
- ☑ and open our ears to the preaching of the prophets, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

11:00 AM worship service continues on page 8 with the First Reading

WORD

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (9:00 AM)

During the sacrament of baptism, we are given the responsibilities to share God's promises with our children. Today, our children will share the message of Christ's birth with us. We hope you will enjoy and appreciate our children's offering. We thank the parents and the staff at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church for helping our children prepare.

When Jesus was Born! **By Joseph M. Martin & Jeff Reeves**

When Jesus was born, a promise came true. God's Son came to earth for me and for you.

Long before Jesus was born, a man named Isaiah predicted that Jesus would come one day. Isaiah said that Jesus would be known by different names. One of those names was Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us."

Many years later, the angel, Gabriel, appeared to Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph. Gabriel told Mary and Joseph they would soon have a son and they should name him Jesus.

SONG *There's a New Song in the Air!* By Joseph M. Martin

When Jesus was born, no room could be found for Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem town.

Near the time of Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. They had to go and be counted in a census ordered by the governor.

After arriving in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have her baby. However, there were no rooms left in the inn for Mary and Joseph. But they found a stable where cows, sheep and other animals lived. And that's where Mary and Joseph stayed. It was the place where Jesus would be born.

SONG *There Was No Room* by Joseph M. Martin

In this stable, with only Joseph to help her, Mary gave birth to a baby boy.

A child was born, so pure, so small, The King of Kings, the Lord of all.

SONG *Away in a Manger* by William J. Kirkpatrick

When Jesus was born, the earth did rejoice, with shepherds and angels in jubilant voice.

The night Jesus was born shepherds were in the fields watching their sheep. Imagine their surprise when angels appeared! The shepherds were very afraid, for they had never seen anything like this before.

One of the angels said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid! I bring good news to you and to all people! Today, in Bethlehem, Jesus is born! You will find him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Then, a large choir of angels joined together and sang, "Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, let there be peace to all people."

SONG*Angels We Have Heard on High*

by Edward S. Barnes

Now when the shepherds saw Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the stable, and saw that what the angel had said to them was true. They went out and made it known to whomever they met.

Go tell it to the nations, the message loud and clear, that God is with us, near and true, and perfect love is here.

SONG*Go Tell It on the Mountain*

African American Spiritual

When Jesus was born, a star in the night led Wise Men to Jesus with glittering light.

After Jesus was born, Wise Men from the East saw a bright star in the sky. The Wise Men followed the star knowing it would lead them to Jesus.

After travelling a long distance, the Wise Men stopped at a house where the star was directly overhead. There, the Wise Men found Jesus with his mother, Mary.

The Wise Men bowed down and worshipped Jesus and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

SONG*We Must Follow*

by Joseph M. Martin

Where Jesus was born, the Light from above came down in a baby filled with God's love.

When Jesus was born, the world was filled with hope and joy! Today, we continue to worship and celebrate the birthday of our King. May we seek to be like Jesus as we love and adore Him now and always.

SONG*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

by John Francis Wade

Children will sing the first verse. Congregation, please join in at the second verse.

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*

4 **Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:** *Refrain*

(sit)

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments
against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your
midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to
Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
 L Word of God, Word of Life.

he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸ as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6 (choir or cantor sing verses / congregation sings refrain)



In your midst is the Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

- ² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not | be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become | my salvation.
- ³ With joy you | will draw water
from the wells | of salvation. *Refrain*
- ⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call | on God's name;
make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name | is exalted.
- ⁵ Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done | gloriously;
let this be known in | all the earth.
- ⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O | royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy | One of Israel. *Refrain*

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

☐ Word of God, Word of Life.

☑ Thanks be to God.

(rise in body or spirit)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

☑ Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

Children may follow along using the Spark Bible turning to page 234

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

SERMON

Pastor Wynard

(rise in body or spirit)

HYMN OF THE DAY

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

ACS 901



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.

3 Christ, è - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rōse of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

☐ With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

☑ **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response: **P** Lord, in your mercy,
 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)

Prayers this week: Dayle Johnson, Myron Osentowski; father of Melissa Osentowski

On-going Care: Sharon Ambler, Betty Callies, Cheri Biggs, John Bodnar, Don Burton, Mike Cswercko, Marilyn Dichsen, Shirley Dietrich, Mike Edris, Kathy Englert, Jessica Hannon, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Jason Klonglan, Orville & Julie Knapp, Marie Kubat, Ruth & Charles Martis, Tracey Mason, Lara McCormick, Lynn Meyer, Nita Mueller, Diane Nickeson-Ray, Linda Peltz, Kathy Preininger, Dan & Ginny Rath, David Samaria, Laurine Savine, Dorothy Stanzel, Joyce Wachal, Gary Westerman, Allyson White, Deb Woosley

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Wyatt Johnson, grandson of Ken and Linda Johnson; Tyler Johnston, son of Robert and Michelle Johnston, Daniel Milstead, nephew of Darlene Anderson; Cody Ray, grandson of Betty Callies; Dannika Rees, daughter of Eric and Toby Rees; Joel Woosley, son of Debbie Woosley, nephew of Steph Stephens, and grandson of Vinn Stephens

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; Rev. Robert & Kathy Moore, Leipzig, 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, 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

MUSICAL OFFERING

Mark Jones, *organ*

(rise in body or spirit)

OFFERTORY HYMN

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

ELW 247



1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geon-yong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
Text © Geonyong Lee.

OFFERING PRAYER

P Creator God,

G you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

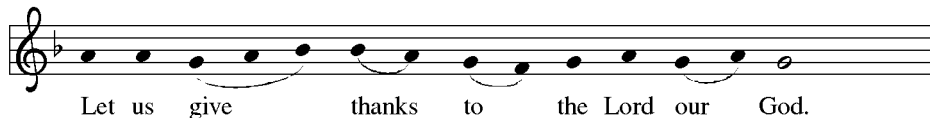
HOLY COMMUNION



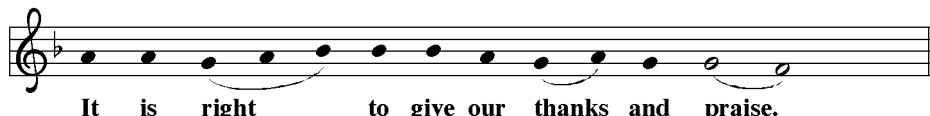
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

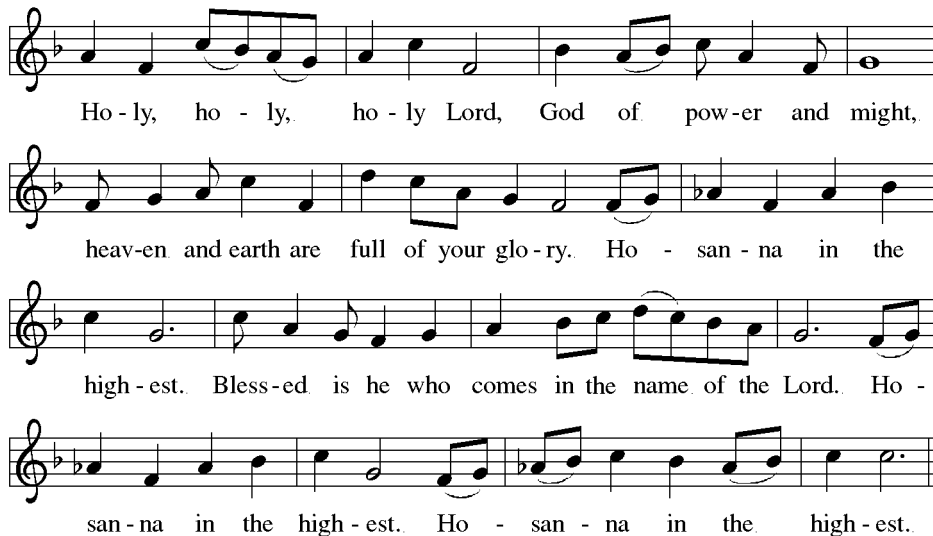


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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 - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. 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 has 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

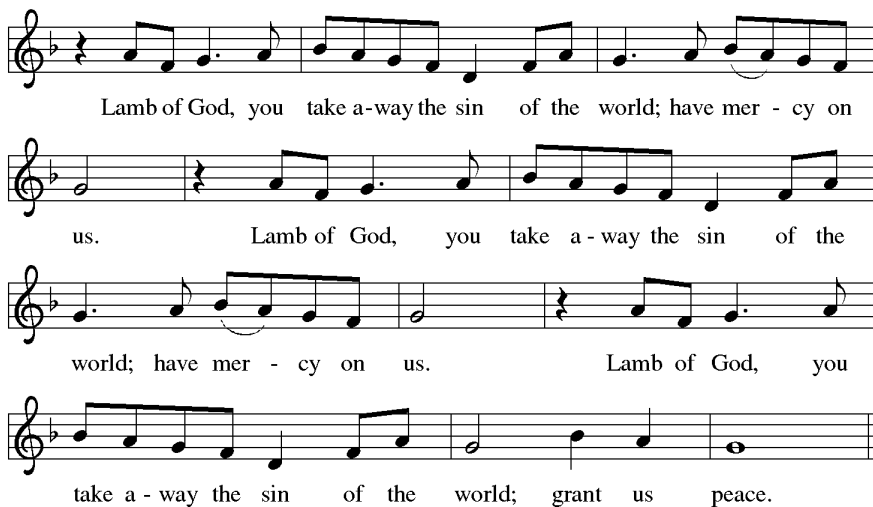
P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come to the table.

C **God feeds us with tender mercy.**

(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

People, Look East

ELW 248

- 1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Guest, is on the way.
- 2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flow'r may flourish.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
- 3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Star, is on the way.
- 4 Angels announce with shouts of mirth
him who brings new life to earth.
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor E. Farjeon, 1881-1965

Text © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates.

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

ELW 261

- 1 As the dark awaits the dawn,
so we await your light.
O Star of promise, scatter night,
loving bright, loving bright,
till shades of fear are gone.
- 2 As the blue expectant hour
before the silv'ring skies,
we long to see your day arise,
whole and wise, whole and wise,
O lucent Morning Star.
- 3 As the moon reflects the sun
until the night's decrease,
may we your healing light release,
living peace, living peace,
unto your holy dawn.
- 4 Shine your future on this place,
enlighten ev'ry guest,
that through us stream your holiness,
bright and blest, bright and blest;
come dawn, O Sun of grace.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953

Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

(rise in body or spirit)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Generous God,

G we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☞ God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✝
bless and keep you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Joy to the World

ELW 267 vs. 1, 2, 4

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

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
☞ **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

✝ ✝ ✝

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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

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www.kmlchurch.org

December 14 & 15, 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 165 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.

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.

Large Print Bulletins and Listening Devices

Please speak to an usher if you would like a large print bulletin or an assisted listening device.

Scan to Give Online



Thank you for supporting the ministries of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church.

Connect with Pr. Lucy

Schedule a time to meet with Pastor Lucy by following the link or QR Code. <https://calendly.com/pastor-lucy/45min>



Today at Kountze Memorial

Eternal Candle is given to the glory of God by Amanda Plantz in memory of David Penning.

NO Children's Choir or Children's Sermon Today upstairs during today's service - our children ARE the choir and will offer the message today! After the Children's Program during the 9 AM service, children will process to the back together and will return to their seats for communion and the remainder of our worship. After the 9 AM service there will be a short Sunday School activity. Children should go upstairs to receive a treat and a brief time together before they will join everyone downstairs in the Fellowship Hall with their Noisy Offering and a special celebration. Regular Sunday School and Children's Choir resume January 12. Children's Sermon time upstairs during the 9 AM worship resumes next week.

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.

Adult Forum

Sundays, 10:10 AM

Join us on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall for a lite breakfast and then stay for Adult Forum.

This week: Stewardship and 165th Anniversary

Next week: Fellowship

Today at Kountze Memorial, *continued*

Alternative Gifts—Last Sunday!

December 15

Between services ~ 10—11 AM

ELCA Good Gifts, Global Mamas, and

Omaha Bridges Out of Poverty

This Sunday is the last day to do some Christmas shopping and give a gift that shares God's love and truly makes a difference in someone's life. Honor your family and friends with an Alternative Gift this Christmas. There are also some physical items available for purchase.

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 15

9 AM

We are excited to hear our children sing and tell the story of Christ's birth this Sunday morning. The children (grades Pre K-6) will present the Christmas story with music.

Your Pennies for a Cow?

The Sunday School students have been collecting their change for Alternative Gifts and have a goal of purchasing a

portion of a cow. Please consider donating any change you have with you this Sunday, and join us in a "Noisy Offering" as we combine all our donations together in one large pot. We need your help to surpass our goal for Alternative Gifts.

Pledge Cards

If you haven't brought in your pledge card yet, and would like to turn one in today, ask an Usher for one or pick one up at the Welcome Desk in the Fellowship Hall. This Sunday morning we will celebrate with our children the Christmas story - Jesus' birthday - and in forum the birthday of Kountze. And what do we do at a birthday party? Bring a gift! Your pledge is your gift - in celebration of all God has done and all God is leading us into in the year ahead. And of course, like any good birthday party, there will be cake!

This Week at Kountze Memorial

December 15 Sunday

Advent 3

Good News Deadline

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

9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast

10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour

December 16 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

December 17 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

1:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group

6:00 PM Congregation Council

December 18 Wednesday

11:00 AM Advent Lunch

12:15 PM Worship

5:00 PM Advent Dinner

6:30 PM Worship

December 19 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

6:00 PM Circle 5

December 20 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

December 21 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

December 22 Sunday

Advent 4

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 Adult Forum

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Advent at Kountze Memorial

Wednesday, December 18

Meals: 11 AM & 5 PM

Cost: Free Will Offering

Worship: 12:15 & 6:30 PM

Plan to Worship this Wednesday and come early for lunch or dinner here at Kountze Memorial. We will have a vegetarian option at each of the meals. If you would like to help in the kitchen (always a fun time) please sign up at the welcome desk or email jim@kmlchurch.org

Menu for December 18: White Chicken Enchiladas (not spicy), refried beans, Spanish rice and dessert.

Homemade Peanut Brittle Sale

Urban Ministry Cooperative Parish

December 15

Between services ~ 10-11 AM

Noni Cambridge, our Staff Treasurer, is selling homemade peanut brittle for the Urban Ministry Cooperative Parish. The proceeds from this Fundraiser goes to support the Raven Fund. This fund supports the underserved in the North and South Omaha Communities with food, rent, and utility bill assistance. Stop by to see Noni and enjoy a yummy treat while helping others at the same time! Peanut brittle makes a great gift.

For Your Calendar/News & Notes, *continued*

Kountze Youth Christmas Party **Middle School, High School, College Youth** **Kristin Boe's House** **Saturday, December 21** **3—5 PM**

We will decorate sugar cookies, play games, and have a White Elephant Gift Exchange. Please bring a gift—either from home or something you purchase for \$10 or less! RSVP to the church office or at the Welcome Desk.

Kountze Food Pantry

The Kountze Pantry is collecting gloves for men, women, and children. Men's large and extra-large gloves are especially in short supply. Also, we will accept and distribute new or like-new coats to our Pantry guests if they request them. You may leave your donation in the box marked "Food Pantry", located in Fellowship Hall. Tax deductible slips are located on the box. As always, we are in need of volunteers. We have jobs for most ages and abilities. If you are interested in helping out, please sign up at the link below.

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

New Member Classes

January 12 & 26 **10:15 AM**

Explore the potential of joining Kountze Memorial by attending our upcoming new member classes. Please plan to attend both sessions. We will welcome new members on Sunday, February 2. Questions or planning to attend? Call the church office – we look forward to connecting with you!

Carol Joy Holling Camp

Kountze Memorial will cover the cost for any Kountze Memorial child/youth if you register by the **January 31 Early Bird Registration** date. If you register after this date, you will need to pay the additional cost. Kountze Camp Week is June 15—20, 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. 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 info@kmlchurch.org and we will submit payment on behalf of your youth. If you have any questions, please reach out to the church office. To register, use the link below:

<http://NLOM.org/caroljoyholling/register>

Altar Flowers, Eternal Candle, Television Broadcast

New charts are on the bulletin board in the Narthex. All dates are open. Sign up early to get the date/dates you want to honor someone or to celebrate a special event.

Parking at Kountze Memorial **Please Remember**

- There is no Kountze Memorial parking in the lot on the South side of Farnam. That is apartment parking only.
 - No parking Monday - Friday 8 AM - 4:30 PM in the Methodist Clinic parking lot.
 - On Saturday and Sunday, please save spots in the Methodist Clinic lot for those with mobility issues.
- You may park in the deFreese Manor parking lot, at the meters (must pay), or in the West parking lot. Thanks!

Christmas Message

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

View the Christmas Joy video using the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8nj1yxG2vA>

Youth Mission Trip

Kountze Memorial will join other high school youth and leaders from around the Nebraska Synod this summer on mission in Nashville. The Nebraska Synod Journey is a week-long experience for youth who have completed grades 8-12 by the summer of 2025 and their adult leaders. The 2025 Journey to Nashville will feature service learning throughout the Nashville area, worship, fellowship and other activities throughout the city. We will use our gifts as we grow in our faith together and learn about the gifts our neighbors in Tennessee bring to the table.

- Date: July 6-12, 2025
- Location: Nashville, TN
- Cost of event: \$680/person
- We will fundraise to offset the cost to families
- Contact Pr. Lucy or Kristin Boe if you are interested!

Our youth are kicking-off the fundraising for this trip with an Advent Envelope Tree. Just like last year, we ask you to support our youth by taking an envelope and putting a donation inside matching the number on the envelope before returning it. Checks/envelopes should be made out to Kountze Memorial and clearly marked "Youth Mission Trip" in the memo line. Many, many thanks!

Attendance & Giving **Thursday, 12/5—Wednesday, 12/11**

Saturday: 22

Sunday: 9:00: 156 **11:00:** 72

Wednesday: 12:15: 0 **6:30:**

Total: 250

Streaming: 50

Pantry Guests Served: 989 (inc. 333 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 19

Offering:

\$22,284.23 (Regular) \$6,720.77 (Specials)

\$12,273.32 (Debt Reduction)

Living a life of repentance brings joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 3:7-18	One more powerful is coming
Monday	Zephaniah 3:14-20	A song of joy
Tuesday	Philippians 4:4-7	The Lord is near
Wednesday	Isaiah 9:1-7	A child is born
Thursday	Hebrews 13:7-17	Service that pleases God
Friday	Luke 15:1-7	The parable of the lost sheep
Saturday	Isaiah 12:2-6	Thanksgiving and praise
Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth



SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

So with many other exhortations, [John the Baptist] proclaimed the good news to the people. Luke 3:18 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, may the good news of your coming fill our hearts with joy and lead us to love you and have compassion for others. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, bless our homes with joy this Advent. As we enjoy your gifts of food, make us ready for Jesus, the one who is to come. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God bless you with joy.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- What is some good news you have heard recently?
- A life of repentance brings joy and loving actions. How is that good news for us?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 3:7-18.

John the Baptist gets people's attention with words of condemnation, warning, and confrontation. And it works, or at least the crowd is riveted for a while. The people wonder what to do to get their lives in order. Simple: don't abuse your power and wealth; share; be generous. They are to show a life of repentance, which means living life differently because of God's ways and power. However, John's suggestions aren't the "how-to steps" to achieving a successful life. They are examples of behaviors of a life that trusts the good news. A life of repentance brings joy and loving actions. The good news of Jesus changes everything with the power of grace, mercy, and peace. John the Baptist describes it as the life that bears "*fruits worthy of repentance*" (v. 8).

Discuss: How would you describe the good news of Jesus to others?

Pray: Righteous God, we thank you that earthly powers that abuse others are condemned; we ask that your reign of peace bear the fruit of repentance in us, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how might your actions bring joy to someone this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The third candle on the Advent Wreath symbolizes the theme of joy. Discuss or think about the joy that Jesus brings to the world. Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, and the third candle of joy on the Advent Wreath.

Say: In Isaiah's song, he names God as the source of our salvation and the one to trust without fear. Isaiah cries out, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." Let us give thanks for the joy that Jesus brings. (Isaiah 12:2-3)

Pray: Thank you, Lord Jesus for giving us joy. Fill our lives with joy this Advent. Amen.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55
Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]