

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Lucy Wynard, Senior Pastor
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor

2650 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68131-3616
402-341-7761
www.kmlchurch.org

January 5, 2024

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

EPIPHANY of OUR LORD



The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(rise in body or spirit)

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.
- G** **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.
- G** **We give you thanks, O God, 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.
- G** **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** Almighty God, who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- G** **Amen.**

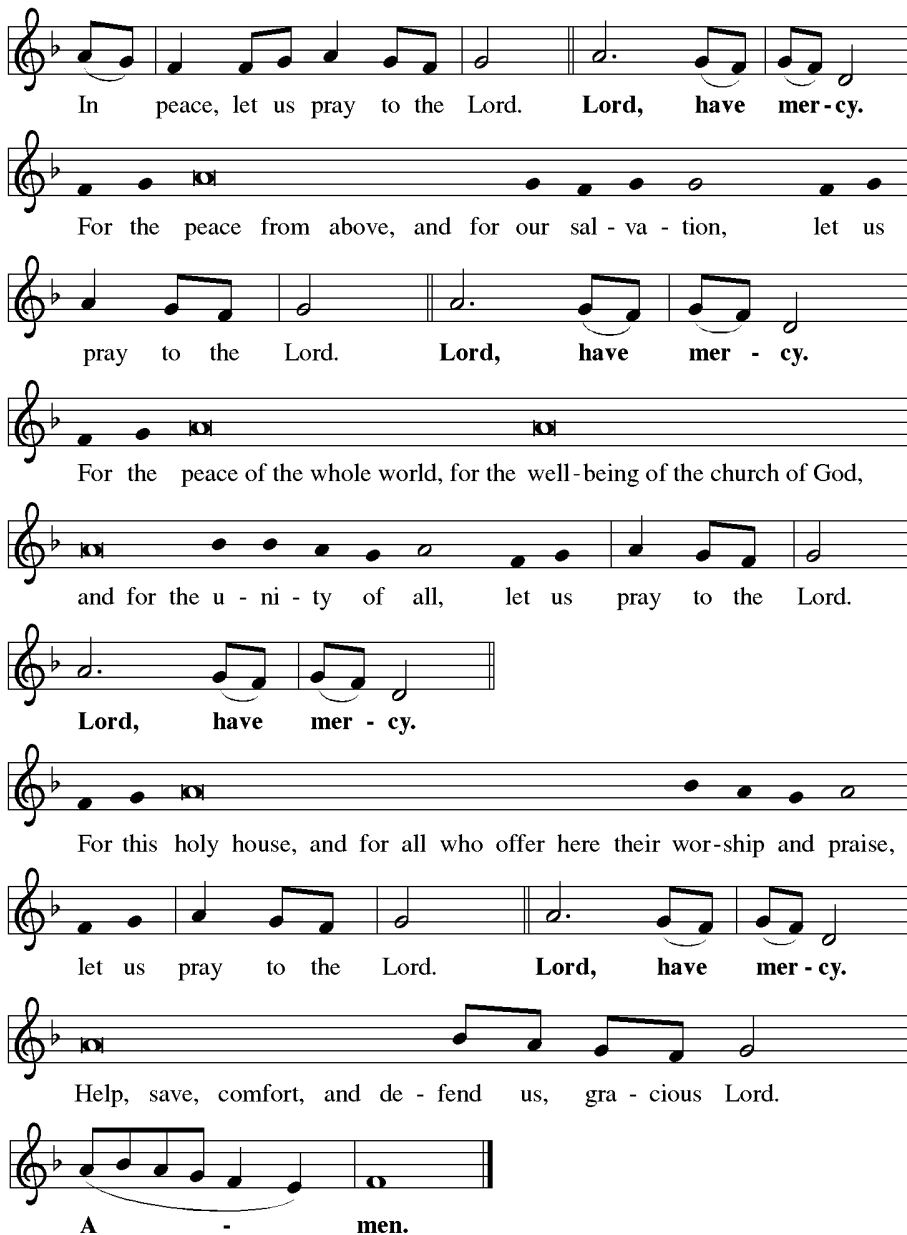
- 1 Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered
our human story; God in him is centered.
He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded,
with grace unbounded.**
- 2 See how he sends the pow'rs of evil reeling;
he brings us freedom, light and life and healing.
All men and women, who by guilt are driven,
now are forgiven.**
- 3 Come, celebrate; your banners high unfurling,
your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.
To all the world go out and tell the story
of Jesus' glory.**
- 4 Tell how the Father sent the Son to save us.
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.
Tell how the Spirit calls from ev'ry nation
God's new creation.**

Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.
Text © 1974 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. 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



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

P O God,

C on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your 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 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

📖 Word of God, Word of Life.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (choir or cantor sing verses / congregation sings refrain)



All kings shall bow down before him.

- ¹ Give the king your jus- | tice, O God,
and your righteousness to | the king's son;
² **that he may rule your | people righteously
and the | poor with justice;**
³ that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people,
and the | hills, in righteousness.
⁴ **Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people,
rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor. Refrain**
⁵ May he live as long as the sun and | moon endure,
from one generation | to another.
⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon | the mown field,
like showers that wa- | ter the earth.**
⁷ In his time may the | righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall | be no more.
¹⁰ **May the kings of Tarshish and of the | isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba | offer gifts. Refrain**
¹¹ May all kings bow | down before him,
and all the nations | do him service.
¹² **For the king delivers the poor who cry out | in distress,
the oppressed, and those who | have no helper.**

¹³He has compassion on the low-ly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴**From oppression and violence he re-deems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight. Refrain**

SECOND READING

Ephesians 3:1-12

What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

L Word of God, Word of Life.

G 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.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

G Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

Children may follow along using the Spark Bible turning to page 218

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been

written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

☞ 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 return to their seat and use the Spark Bible and/or activity bags during the regular sermon.

SERMON

Pastor Wynard

(rise in body or spirit)

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!

ELW 308 vs. 1 & 3

**1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright!
You shine with God's own truth and light,
aglow with grace and mercy!
Of Jacob's line, King David's son,
our Lord and Savior, you have won
our hearts to serve you only!
Lowly, holy!
Great and glorious,
all victorious,
rich in blessing!
Rule and might o'er all possessing!**

**3 Lord, when you look on us in love,
at once there falls from God above
a ray of purest pleasure.
Your word and Spirit, flesh and blood
refresh our souls with heav'nly food.
You are our dearest treasure!
Let your mercy
warm and cheer us!
Oh, draw near us!
For you teach us
God's own love through you has reached us.**

Text: Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship
Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

THE NICENE CREED

☐ God has made us God's people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

☑ **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)

Prayers this week: Mike Cswercko, Linda Johnson

On-going Care: Sharon Ambler, Betty Callies, Cheri Biggs, John Bodnar, Don Burton, Marilyn Dichsen, Shirley Dietrich, Mike Edris, Kathy Englert, Jessica Hannon, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Dayle Johnson, Jason Klonglan, Orville & Julie Knapp, Marie Kubat, Dwight Kurbis, Ruth & Charles Martis, Tracey Mason, Lara McCormick, Lynn Meyer, Nita Mueller, Diane Nickeson-Ray, Myron Osentowski, 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

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* – Joseph Daffer, 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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

(rise in body or spirit)

OFFERTORY HYMN

What Feast of Love

ELW 487 vs. 1 & 2



1 What feast of love is of-fered here, what ban-quet come from heav-en?
2 What light of truth is of-fered here, what cov-e-nant from heav-en?



What food of ev-er-last-ing life, what gra-cious gift is giv-en?
What hope of ev-er-last-ing life, what won-drous word is giv-en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav-en.
This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav-en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man-na giv-en!
Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv-en!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Text © 1993 Delores Dufner, OSB. Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland OR 97213. All rights reserved.

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ God of heaven and earth,
- ☑ **from the beginning, you have called forth life in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the oceans sing for joy. Gless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation. 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.

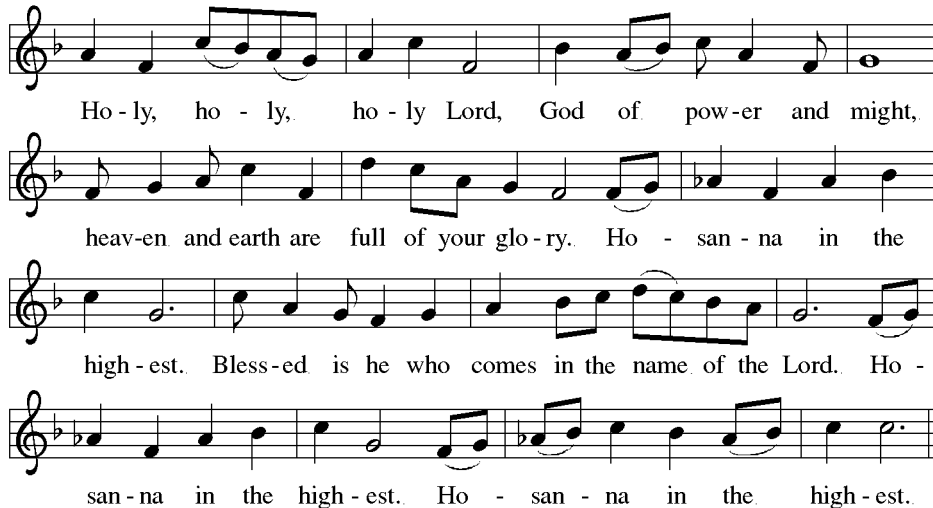


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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 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

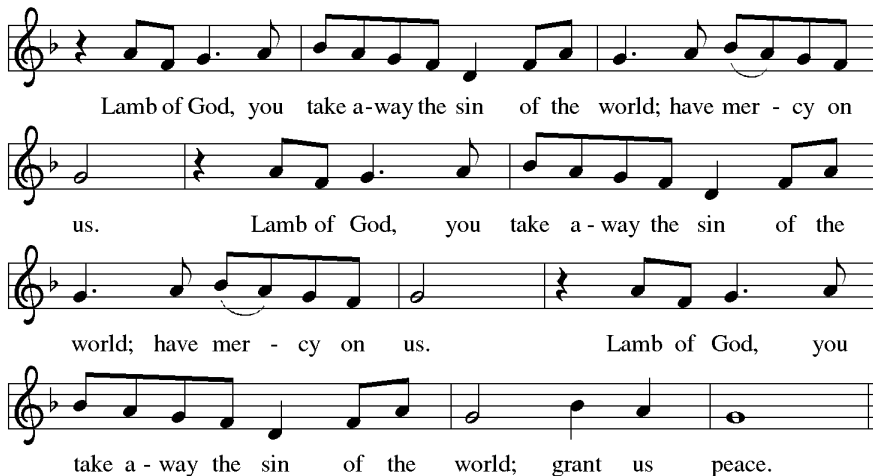
P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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



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, receive the gift of Jesus.

C **A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.**

(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.



1 When a star is shin-ing o - ver east - ern hills,
 2 Where the world is wait-ing for an un - known day,
 3 Lead us on, O Day-star, in the qui - et night;



when the air is si - lent, and the clam - or stills,
 where a voice for - got - ten cries, "Pre - pare the way!"
 guide us through the shad - ow with your gen - tle light;



when the night is wait-ing, and the old hopes rise,
 Where an earth - ly pow - er makes the heart turn cold,
 show us in a man - ger our re - demp - tion's sign;



then the time has rip - ened and the heart grows wise.
 there the gifts are of - fered— in - cense, myrrh, and gold.
 bring us to a morn-ing where the prom - ise shines.



Lead us on, lead us on, to a morn-ing where the



prom - ise shines. Lead us on, lead us on,



to a morn - ing where the prom - ise shines.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993
 Text © 1995 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

- 1 **Brightest and best of the stars of the morning, 3**
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant redeemer is laid.
- 2 **Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining; 4**
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him in slumber reclining,
maker and monarch and savior of all.
- 5 **Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,**
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant redeemer is laid.
- 3 **What shall we give him, in costly devotion?**
Shall we bring incense and off'rings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?
- 4 **Vainly we offer each ample oblation,**
vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

(rise in body or spirit)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☩ Merciful God,
- ☩ we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy. Amen.

SENDING

DISMISSAL OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

BLESSING

- ☐ The God of love, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

ELW 310 vs. 1, 2, 4

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise;
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar,
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

2 Manifest at Jordan's stream,
prophet, priest, and king supreme;
and at Cana wedding guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in pow'r divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
present in thy holy word;
grace to imitate thee now
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we might become like thee
at thy great epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in flesh made manifest.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-1885, alt..

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.
☑ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

† † †

From Sundays and Seasons.com. ©2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006828. Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-705181. New Revised Standard Version Bible, ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Evangelical Lutheran Worship ©2006 Augsburg Fortress. All Creations Sings ©2020 Augsburg Fortress, an imprint of 1517 Media. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26828.

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Lucy Wynard	Senior Pastor
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Kristin Boe	Director of Faith Formation
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Danielle Fleming	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

January 4 & 5, 2025

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

Sunday School & Children's Choir

Regular Sunday School and Children's Choir resume January 12.

Children's Sermon

9:15 AM

Grades K-4

Following the 9 AM Children's Blessing, children may join Kristin Boe for a children's sermon in the Upper rooms. The children will return to their seats in time to receive communion.

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.

Youth Forum

All youth in grades 7-12 are encouraged to join us in the Youth Center at 10:10 AM beginning Sunday, January 12.

High School Youth Trip Info Meeting Sunday, January 5

10:15 AM

Youth Center

Come and learn about the week of traveling, exploring what our faith means to us, and providing service work in a variety of areas.

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: Fellowship

Next week: Why Was Jesus Baptized?

This Week at Kountze Memorial

January 5 Sunday

Epiphany of Our Lord
Homebound Communion
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:15 AM Children's Sermon (K-4)
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast
10:10 AM Adult Forum

January 6 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry
7:30 PM Youth Committee

January 7 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

January 8 Wednesday

9:00 AM Sewing Group
12:15 PM Worship
1:00 PM Devotions @ deFreese Manor
4:00 PM Executive Committee
6:00 PM Confirmation @ St. Timothy
7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

January 9 Thursday

9:30 AM WELCA Board
11:30 AM Property Committee
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic
6:00 PM Worship & Music

January 10 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

January 11 Saturday

9:30 AM Take Down Christmas Decorations (Can you help?)
5:00 PM Worship

January 12 Sunday

Baptism of Our Lord
8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Adult Choir
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:15 AM Children's Choir (K-6)
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast
10:10 AM Faith Formation Hour
10:15 AM New Member Class
12:15 PM Book Group

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

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.

Sunday School Volunteers Needed

If you would like to help assist and lead the preschool or elementary youth one Sunday each month, please contact Kristin Boe at Kristin@kmlchurch.org. If you would like to help with Youth Forum, please contact Pr. Lucy.

Confirmation Classes Continue

St. Timothy's Lutheran Church
(93rd & Dodge)

Grades 7 & 8

Classes Resume Wednesday, January 8

6 - 7:15 PM

Un-Decorating Party!

Saturday, January 11

9:30 AM

Your help in taking down Christmas decorations would be much appreciated!

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? Contact the church office (402-341-7761 or debbie@kmlchurch.org). We look forward to connecting with you!

KMLC Book Group

Sunday, January 12

12:15 PM

Fellowship Lounge

***Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt**

Remarkably Bright Creatures is the debut novel by Shelby Van Pelt, published in 2022, and a New York Times best seller. This is a book that features Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus, as the main character and narrator. Marcellus forms a beautiful relationship with Tova Sullivan, the night cleaning lady in the aquarium where he lives. His intelligence is revealed in his bonding with Tova to help solve the mystery of her 18-year-old son's disappearance at sea 30 years previously. This is a heartwarming story of mystery and love between a lonely woman and intriguing, intelligent living creature. The book is so captivating and entertaining you won't be able to put it down. Please join us for a lively discussion.

Men's Lunch

Thursday, January 16

11:30 AM

Suggested Donation: \$10.00

Kick off the new year with good food and great company at our Men's Lunch! January's gathering promises hearty laughs and warm fellowship—no fancy theme, just the perfect chance to relax after the holiday rush. Stay tuned for menu details, and save the date! Jim's got us covered.

Annual Committee Reports

Due January 19

If you are responsible for a report in our Annual Report, please have them turned in to Debbie Bogue in the office no later than January 19. Reports are welcome—and preferred—anytime before that date. Thanks.

For Your Calendar/News & Notes, *continued*

Dinners for Eight(ish)

February, March, April

Sign up by Sunday, January 19

- Get to know others in the congregation over 3 dinners for 3 months in groups of eight(ish).
- Meet each month for a meal in February, March, & April.
- Enjoy a meal and conversation with one another.
- Consider meeting for lunch instead of dinner!
- Sign up at the Welcome Desk or call the church office by Sunday, January 19.

See you around the table!

Pledge Cards

If you haven't turned your pledge card in yet, it's not too late. There are pledge cards in the back of the Narthex - ask an Usher - as well as at the Welcome Desk. We'd like to have all pledges turned in by January 19 if possible so we have that information for the Annual Report.

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>

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 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!

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>



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 16

10:15 AM

Annual Report and 2025 Budget

KMLC Camp Week

Camp Carol Joy Holling

June 15-20

Vacation Bible School

July 20-23

Ages 2 Years to Grade 5

5:15 PM: Family Dinner

6-8 PM: Class

Attendance & Giving

Monday, 12/23—Wednesday, 1/1

Saturday: 30

Sunday: 9:00: 96 11:00: 72

Christmas Eve: 4:00: 253 7:00: 251 11:00: 80

Christmas Day: 27

Total: 809

Streaming: 116

Pantry Guests Served: 936 (inc. 328 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: Clinic Closed 12/26

Offering: Not available at time of printing.

The light of Christ shines in the darkness.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 1:1-18	The Word became flesh
Monday	Jeremiah 31:7-14	Israel will return to its own land
Tuesday	Ephesians 1:3-14	Spiritual blessings in Christ
Wednesday	2 Timothy 1:8-14	Thanksgiving and encouragement
Thursday	Psalms 18:28-36	David's song of thanks
Friday	John 12:44-50	Jesus came to save the world
Saturday	Psalms 147:12-20	Sing and praise the Lord
Sunday	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22	The baptism of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, our hearts sing with gladness for your grace and truth that blesses us each day through Jesus, the Word that became flesh and lives among us now. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God of abundant love, we thank you for the gift of this food, a reminder of your care for us each and every day through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

Child of God, may the light of Jesus shine in your heart.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- When is a time you remember being afraid of the dark?
- Jesus Christ is the light of the world. How does knowing this help you when you are in a dark place?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 1:1-18.

From the beginning of his Gospel, John wants us to know that *"the Word became flesh and lived among us"* (v. 14). John's Gospel will guide us to trust that Jesus Christ is the Word of God that has come to bring light into our darkest days and hope for the world that God loves so much. Our darkest days might be the lingering grief over the death of a loved one or a relationship that needs healing. During such moments, what we need most is God's grace that accepts us, God's light that shatters darkness, and God's truth that heals relationships. As children of God, we believe that God's only Son has entered our world and our lives to conquer all the darkness that separates us from the love of God. The true light that came into the world shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overtake it. Thanks be to God for this good, good news.

Discuss: Where do you hope for God's healing power over darkness in the world? in your life?

Pray: **Gracious God, you turn our sadness into joy; may we remember that you are present in our lives to give us hope, peace, and compassion through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. 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 Jesus' light with someone who is in a dark place?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Ephesians 1:5, the apostle Paul tells us that before creation began, God *"destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ."* Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have been adopted as God's children. Design an "Adoption Certificate" that includes your name and these words: (name) is an adopted child of God through Jesus Christ. Draw a dove on the certificate to symbolize the Holy Spirit. You could also include your baptismal dates and a picture. Place the certificate in a place you walk by each day as a reminder of God's love for you.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22