

KOUNTZE STAFF

Pr. Lucy Wynard	Senior Pastor
Dn. Eric Haitz	Deacon
Pr. Ashley Hall	Associate Pastor
Barbara Carlsen	Dir. of Music & Fine Arts
Kristin Boe	Director of Faith Formation
Jim Smejkal	Bldg. Super./Dir. of Cong. Activities
Toby Rees	Director of Kountze Commons
Sheila Valquier	Youth Director
Debbie Bogue	Office Manager
Danielle Fleming	Administrative Assistant
Noni Cambridge	Staff Treasurer
Judi Boe	Financial Secretary
Louis Flake	Night Manager
Kayla Slaight	Janitorial Staff
Mark Jones	Organist
David Gerard	Saturday Accompanist
Shannon Picha	Nursery Director



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131
www.kmlchurch.org

December 13 & 14, 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.

Today at Kountze Memorial

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

Children’s Choir Grades K-6

The children will be participating in the Christmas Program this morning at 9 AM. No Children’s Choir from December 14—January 4. Join us again on January 11.

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.

Sunday School Christmas Program 9:00 AM

Ages 2 years-6th Grade

Join us during the 9 AM Service this morning when we’ll hear about the story of Christmas as told by our Sunday school students. No Sunday School from December 14—January 4. Join us again on January 11.

Youth Forum Sundays, 10:15 AM Youth Center Grades 7-12

You are invited to grab breakfast and bring it to the Youth Center each week during the Sunday Faith Formation hour.

Adult Forum Sundays, 10:10 AM

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

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 or anyone who does not commune will receive a blessing. It is the understanding of the universal Church that those who wish to commune with bread only (for health or other reasons) have communed fully. Our form of distribution is Intinction, meaning you will receive the wafer in your hand and then dip it 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 plates 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, *continued*

"Noisy Offering"

Sunday, December 14

We will have a "Noisy Offering" competition between the elementary students, youth group kids, and the adults. Save up your change and we will have containers to pour your coins into. All the proceeds will go towards the ELCA Good Gifts program.

Merry Tuba Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 14

3 PM

Held at Kountze Memorial

The concert is free and open to the public. Bring your friends. It's a fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

Advent Alternative Gift Market

Last Day!

Saturday December 13 (after the Candlelight Carol Service)

Sunday, December 14

9:30 - 11:30 AM

Shop ELCA Good Gifts next door to the Kountze Café area for different monetary gifts that fight hunger and transform lives. There are also physical handmade gifts from Global Mamas that support women and their families in Ghana. Donate to the Kountze Memorial Healing Gift Free Clinic and/or our Love Thy Neighbor Food Pantry to help local families in honor of your family and friends.

This Week at Kountze Memorial

December 14 Sunday

Advent 3

Noisy Offering

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 Alternative Gifts

9:30 AM Kountze Café - Breakfast

10:10 AM Adult Forum—No Sunday

School or Children's Choir

3:00 PM Tuba Christmas Concert

December 15 Monday

Good News Deadline

10:00 AM Pantry

11:30 PM Endowment Board

December 16 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

1:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group

6:00 PM Congregation Council

December 17 Wednesday

11:00 AM Advent Lunch

12:15 PM Worship

5:00 PM Advent Dinner

6:30 PM Worship

December 18 Thursday

4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic

December 19 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

December 20 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

3:00 PM Youth Christmas Party

6:00 PM Young Adult Movie & Cookie
Baking

December 21 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 Café - Breakfast

10:10 AM Adult Forum—No Sunday

School or Children's Choir

12:00 PM Youth Committee

Ushers Needed for Christmas Eve

If you are able to Usher on Christmas Eve, please sign up at the back of the Nave or at the Welcome Desk in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks for your help!

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Pledge Cards

You should have received a letter and pledge card in the mail for our Imagine stewardship campaign. Please bring those pledge cards back in December and put them in the designated box in the narthex or mail them back to the church office in the envelope provided. Contact us with questions - we'd be happy to help. And THANK YOU for your generous gifts - they empower us, together, to do even more than we could imagine toward God's work in our community and around the world!

Youth Christmas Party

Saturday, December 20

3—6 PM

We'll have cakepop decorating, a white elephant gift exchange, pizza, drinks, Christmas movies, and lots of fun! Use the QR code to let Sheila know you'll be attending.



sheila@kmlchurch.org

Young Adult Movie & Cookie-Making Night

College Age—30's Adults

Saturday, December 20

6—8 PM

Join us in the church kitchen and we'll bake Christmas cookies together while enjoying a festive Christmas movie. All young adults are welcome—whether you joined us for Friendsgiving or couldn't make it, we'd love to see you there! Feel free to invite a friend. Email Deacon Eric to RSVP—eric@kmlchurch.org.



eric@kmlchurch.org

Summer Youth Mission Trip

Dates: July 6–12, 2026

Location: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

\$50 Deposit required for registration

**Cost includes transportation, meals, and lodging.
Register ASAP by contacting Sheila Valquier.**

The Nebraska Synod Journey is a week-long experience for

For Your Calendar/News & Notes, *continued*

youth in grades 8 through 12 and their adult leaders. In 2026, we will gather in Pittsburgh for service, learning, worship, fellowship, and opportunities to grow in faith while learning from our neighbors in Pennsylvania. We will work as a team to raise funds to offset the cost. Presence and participation at fundraising events required. Scholarships are available.

KMLC Week at Camp Carol Joy Holling **June 7- 12/week 2**

\$50 Early Bird Savings Until January 31

Join friends and other familiar faces for fun, faith, and fellowship with other Lutherans from around the state. 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 7 - 12, 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 and follow the directions above:

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

Calling all Artists and Makers!

The Kountze Art Show will be held February 6. If you are artistically inclined, please consider donating a work for a silent auction. All proceeds will benefit the Youth Group Mission Trip. Email kristin@kmlchurch.org for donation information.

Youth Giving Tree

We are invited to the youth room to check out the space for our 7th—12th graders. They use the room to relax, recover, communicate, learn about God, and find friendships. You will see biographies on the tree from some of our youth. The bios are just a little information about them that they want us to know. Their hope is that we can not only learn a little about them, but to sponsor them as well. There is an envelope attached to each bio. Simply take an envelope—leave the bio hanging—and place the envelope inside the offering basket. The funds donated will be used for the Youth Mission Trip and extra-curricular activities that they will have throughout the year. Please help in any way possible as no dollar is considered too little. They appreciate our support and prayers as they Worship \$ Grow \$ and Serve among us!



Camp Registrations

Kountze Food Pantry

Our Love Thy Neighbor Food Pantry is in need of your gifts and service. The current needs for the pantry are chili beans, stuffing, and soup. You may leave your donation in the box marked "Food Pantry," located in the Fellowship Hall. Tax deductible slips are available on the inside pocket of the box. Please join us as a volunteer in the pantry in the Kountze Commons volunteer as it fits your schedule. We have options for volunteers of all abilities. Please use the QR code or the following link to sign up and join our mission.



Pantry

<https://tinyurl.com/uasdddp>

If you have questions about the Pantry, you can call Toby Rees at 402-979-1425.

Pantry Dinner in a Bag: Check out the insert in your bulletin and prepare a bag/bags for our Pantry. These kits are designed to be budget-friendly and easy to prepare, containing shelf-stable ingredients and a recipe card. A different recipe card will be in your bulletin now through Advent, and you can find more recipes online if you would like to pack a bag, or two, or six for our Pantry guests.

Join us on Wednesday, December 17
for Worship and lunch or dinner.
See the menu below that Jim and his kitchen crew
will be cooking up.



Attendance & Giving **Thursday, Dec. 4—Wednesday, December 10**

Saturday: 27

Sunday: 9:00: 155 **11:00:** 72

Wednesday: 12:15: 108

Total: 362

Streaming: 62

Pantry Guests Served: 605 (inc. 174 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 15

Offering:

\$15,880.54 (Regular) \$7,939.81 (Specials)

\$657.00 (Debt Reduction)

Advent is a season of joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 11:2-11	Jesus and John the Baptist
Monday	Isaiah 35:1-10	The return to Zion
Tuesday	James 5:7-10	Patience in suffering
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 5:12-23	A final greeting
Thursday	Nehemiah 8:9-12	Ezra reads God's Law
Friday	Philippians 4:4-9	Paul encourages the people
Saturday	Psalms 146:5-10	Praise for God's help
Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us



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as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:5-6 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, you who bring healing, hope, and joy to the world, give us the faith to trust your never-ending care through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you who made heaven and earth, we thank you for this food, a sign of your never-failing love. Amen. (Psalm 146:6)

A Blessing to Give:

May you receive joy and gladness through Jesus Christ.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- When is a time you have been filled with joy?
- In what ways does God's love for us bring joy?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Isaiah 35:1-10.

The people of Israel were exiled far from home, imprisoned in Babylon, a foreign land. The people were wondering if there was a future for them. Did the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob abandon them? We can ask similar questions. Will our children have faith? Has our Lord abandoned us? To all such concerns and questions Isaiah responds with unbelievable images of God doing amazing things: the blind will see; the deaf will hear; the lame will walk; and those who can't talk will sing for joy. God makes the impossible, possible. Advent reminds us of God's power and promise that is like no other. Advent is a time for joy and being patient for God to do what only God can do, that is, save God's people.

Discuss: How does God's promise of care for our daily needs bring you joy?

Pray: **Come, Lord Jesus, help us to trust your amazing healing power for our lives and our 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 help supply daily needs to those in your community who are dealing with hardships?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

This week light three candles on the Advent wreath: The Candle of Hope, the Candle of Peace, and the Candle of Joy. The Candle of Joy reflects the joyful return of God's people to Zion.

Leader: **This is the third week of Advent. Advent means *coming*. We are waiting for the coming of Christ. Let us light the Candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy.** [Light three candles]

All: ***Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.*** (Isaiah 35:5-6)

Leader: **Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives us joy.**

Pray: **Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope, peace, and joy. May we see with the eyes of faith the work of your kingdom in our lives and world. Amen.**

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25