

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

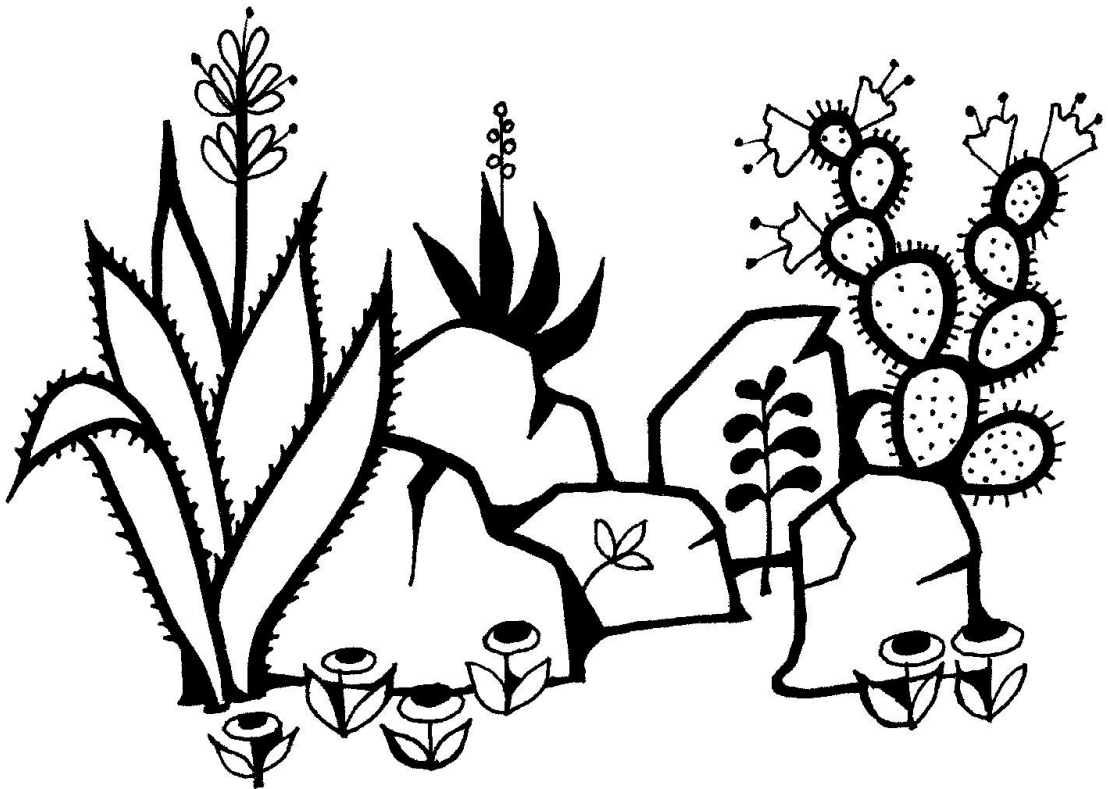
Lucy Wynard, Senior Pastor
Eric Haitz, Deacon
H. Ashley Hall, Associate Pastor

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

December 14, 2025

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Mark Jones, *organ*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(rise in body or spirit)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

ℒ Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

✠ Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

ℒ Long-expected God,

✠ we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide.

We reach for swords and spears,

reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.

We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.

Free us from self-reliance,

and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.

Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us,

that we may abound in the hope you have promised.

Amen.

ℒ God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

☩ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

✠ Amen.

ADVENT WREATH HYMN

Hark, the Glad Sound!

ELW 239 vs. 3

3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND PRAYER

- ☐ We light three candles for the mystery of the Trinity: Creator, Christ, and Spirit. We light three candles as we worship that which we cannot ever fully name.
- ☑ We light three candles to say YES to the invitation to look for the holy in the most surprising of places.

(light the third candle)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242

- | | |
|--|---|
| <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>3 In darkest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.</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

- ☐ 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

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

GLORIA

1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;

yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.

Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;

ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.

Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;

yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- ☐ Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God,
- ☑ and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; 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.

Welcome everyone to Bethlehem!

Let us open our eyes and ears and listen to the story of when Christ was born.

Mary and Joseph

Mary and Joseph – so humble a sight, all travel-worn pilgrims arriving at night.

Were the ill? Were they starving? What trouble was near?

“A room at the inn?” I replied, “None is here! Every bed has been taken, no lodging remains – not a chamber stands open in Bethlehem’s lanes.”

Yet their eyes held a plea filled with hunger and need, and my heart couldn’t turn from compassion’s good deed.

I tidied the stable; Rachel brought them a meal’ we gave what we had – simple, honest, and real.

And Mary, we noticed, was heavy and due, so we readied the straw ‘neath the stars shining through.

The child came so swiftly, his face glowing bright, as though heaven itself filled the manger with light.

Then Joseph said softly, “It’s Jesus, my friend. God sent Him to break what our sins would not bend – to banish the darkness, the hatred, the fear, and open the way for God’s love to draw near.”

He Came Down

The Animals

My animals were calm, far quieter than normal – creature often so loud and never quiet formal.

Always they nibbled, or else they were sleeping, and the stable around them needed endless sweeping.

But on Christmas night, they stood hushed in deep awe before the newborn Babe and the glory they saw.

It seemed they understood that God Himself hushed them, had watered and fed them, had tenderly brushed them.

They felt, I’m Convinced, that the Lord had been able, to weave his great miracle there in the stable.

Away in a Manger

Angels

We don’t often see angels in flight. But on that first Christmas, they lit up the night.

They appeared to the shepherds and, boy, were they scared!

“Angels!” cried one. “Will our lives be spared? Are they here to destroy us” Is our time on earth up?

Have we seen our last day” Have we drunk our last cup?”

But “Peace on earth; goodwill to all.” Was the angels’ sweet song – their heavenly call. Their brilliance lit heaven for all who could see, as they shouted hallelujahs, rejoicing with glee.

“To Bethlehem, shepherds!” the angels then cried. “To behold Jesus Christ, whom God glorified. Go worship the Lord and walk in his ways, and you will know Christmas joy all of your days.”

Angels We Have Heard on High

Shepherds

The shepherds, I told you, stood there scared and stunned. “Too much hard work or too much hot sun!” That’s what they thought; that’s how they explained. Perplexed and afraid, they loudly complained. But the angels’ song calmed them, and then they believed. They rejoiced when they knew and they were quite relieved.

They went to the stable and worshiped the Lord. Then they left and began to spread the good Word.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Wise Men and Star

The star that shone brightly led Wise Men and night to Bethlehem’s stable, to the manger’s strange light. They came bearing gifts, in worship and love, praising God for God’s wonders from heaven above.

The Wise Men were kings and they knelt on my straw. It was the oddest of things that ever I saw. If kings once brought treasures to honor his name, then you, too, may worship the child who still came. So worthy of praise, he brings light to us all – through him every heart can hear God’s gentle call. It speaks to the soul with a comfort so deep, to waken the spirit that’s fallen asleep. So Listen right now as the Savior draws near, with words that the faithful are longing to hear:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life,” come rest in God, far from sorrow and strife.

“Come unto me, all you who labor,” and I will give you rest forever to savor.

Silent Night, Holy Night

ELW 281

Children will sing the first verse. Congregation, please join in and sing with us verses 2 & 3

1 Silent night, holy night!
 All is calm, all is bright
 round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 sleep in heavenly peace,
 sleep in heavenly peace.

2 **Silent night, holy night!**
 Shepherds quake at the sight;
 glories stream from heaven afar,
 heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
 Christ, the Savior, is born!
 Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 **Silent night, holy night!**
 Son of God, love's pure light
 radiant beams from your holy face,
 with the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

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

Conclusion

'Twas the very first Christmas, and there in the hay, the Christ-child was born in a wondrous display. Shepherds saw angels; Wise Men saw a star, and journeyed to meet Him from countries afar. They knew He was special – God's own precious Son, who came to the world to bring love to everyone. He grew to be Savior, Redeemer, and Lord – the One who we cherish, obey, and adore. So each Christmas season, we pause with delight to remember God's gift on that holy night. And in giving and receiving, may our hearts always live in the love found in Christ and the grace He still gives.

Joy to the World

ELW 267

Children will sing verses 1-3. Congregation, please join in at verse 4.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 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. | 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found. |
| 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. | 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. |

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

9:00 AM worship service continues on page 11 with the Apostles' Creed

(sit)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶ 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; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall

any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

📖 Word of God, Word of Life.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146:5-10 (*read responsively*)

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.

⁸ **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.**

⁹ The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

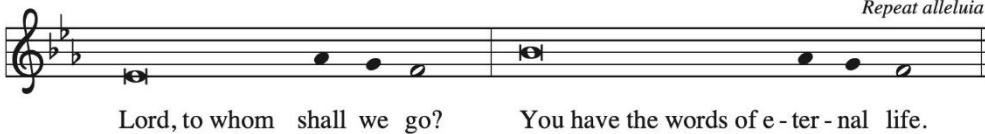
Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

📖 Word of God, Word of Life.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

(rise in body or spirit)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



📖 The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

🙏 Glory to you, O Lord.

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

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

L The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

SERMON

Deacon Haitz

(rise in body or spirit)

HYMN OF THE DAY

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

ELW 255

**1 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway,
a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted,
the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places
where God, our God, may go!**

**2 O Jerusalem, herald good tidings,
ascend to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people
the coming of their king.
Like flow'rs of the field we perish,
like grass our works decay;
the pow'r and the pomp of nations
shall pass like a dream away.**

**3 But the word of our Savior is faithful,
the arm of our God is strong,
who stands in the midst of the nations
and soon will right the wrong.
Lord, feed your flock like a shepherd,
the lambs so gently hold;
in pastures of peace now lead them,
and bring them to your fold.**

THE APOSTLES' CREED

℣ Let us confess together the faith of the Church.

☞ **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: ℣ God of grace,

☞ **hear our prayer**

(In our prayers today, during a time of silence, pray for those listed below and for others according to their needs)

Sympathy: to the family and friends of Paul Carlson

Prayers this week: Dan & Marv Svacina (in-laws of Ron & Pam Brown)

On-going Care: John Bodnar, Don Burton, Betty Callies, Nina Castro, Mike Cswercko, Marilyn Dichsen, Shirley Dietrich, Mike Edris, Kathy Englert, Wanda Frykberg, Tracey Gehringer-Steffen, Dale Grundman, Larry & Michele Hunzeker, Joan Jacobson-Trotter, Linda Johnson, Jason Klonglan, Julie Knapp, Jack & Marie Kubat, Glenn Lindgren, Elizabeth Luczynski, Charles Martis, Lara McCormick, Sharon Miley, Nita Mueller, Walter Nash, Dan & Ginny Rath, Joyce Wachal, Allyson White

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Takao Elliott, husband of Dannika Rees; 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, 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

Other Prayers: *Seminarians* – Joseph Daffer, James Holzer

THE PEACE IS SHARED

- The peace of Christ be with you always.
- 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. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to participate in this portion of worship. You may use the QR code scanner on your smart phone to give online or mail in your offering or donate online. Thank you!



THE TABLE IS PREPARED

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

O Come, All Ye Faithful

by John Francis Wade
Kountze Youth Band

(rise in body or spirit)

OFFERTORY HYMN

We Are Waiting for Jesus

ACS 905

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957
Text © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

OFFERING PRAYER

- God of every good gift,
- we offer what we have back to you, knowing that your son is the greatest gift we will ever receive. Grant us glad and generous hearts, ever and always. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

This musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff contains the lyrics 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.' The second staff contains 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff contains 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' The fourth staff contains 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The melody is simple and hymn-like, using mostly quarter and eighth notes with some rests.

PREFACE FOR ADVENT

- ℣ It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ...
... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

This musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and'. The second staff contains 'God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your'. The third staff contains 'glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.' The fourth staff contains 'Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the'. The fifth staff contains 'Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.' The sixth staff contains 'Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.' The melody is simple and hymn-like, using mostly quarter and eighth notes with some rests.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

L O God triune, how majestic is your name in all the earth. ...
... The earth is full of your glory.

C The earth is full of your glory.

L O God triune, you took on our flesh in Jesus our healer. ...
... The earth is full of your glory.

C The earth is full of your glory.

L We praise you for the heart of Jesus, so filled with your love for this earth.

In the night in which he was betrayed ...

... Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks ...

Gathered around this table, we your children unite in song:

The earth is full of your glory.

C The earth is full of your glory.

L O God triune, you create the worlds, you uphold the living, you embrace the dead. ...
... The earth is full of your glory.

C The earth is full of your glory.

L Amen, and amen.

C Amen, and amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

L Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us all to pray:

Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

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, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

- ☞ Come, receive what God has promised.
- ☞ Here is life. God is with 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. If you cannot or choose not to receive the wine, know that the sacrament and God's promised forgiveness are complete in either element.*



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
 2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
 3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
 Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
 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!
 Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
 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.
 Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm 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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- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 He comes to us as one unknown,
a breath unseen, unheard;
as though within a heart of stone,
or shriveled seed in darkness sown,
a pulse of being stirred,
a pulse of being stirred.</p> <p>2 He comes when souls in silence lie
and thoughts of day depart;
half-seen upon the inward eye,
a falling star across the sky
of night within the heart,
of night within the heart.</p> | <p>3 He comes to us in sound of seas,
the ocean's fume and foam;
yet small and still upon the breeze,
a wind that stirs the tops of trees,
a voice to call us home,
a voice to call us home.</p> <p>4 He comes in love as once he came
by flesh and blood and birth;
to bear within our mortal frame
a life, a death, a saving name,
for ev'ry child of earth,
for ev'ry child of earth.</p> <p>5 He comes in truth when faith is grown;
believed, obeyed, adored;
the Christ in all the scriptures shown,
as yet unseen, but not unknown,
our Savior and our Lord,
our Savior and our Lord.</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926
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(rise in body or spirit)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- L** Christ Jesus,
- C** you have fed us with love incarnate, and we are utterly changed. Send us forth from this meal to be forces for change in this world, as we find the YES within each of us. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

- ☐ May God Most High bless you with courage, as you seek the YES within you;
May God the Christ be born again in every risk you take for the sake of the world;
And may God the Holy Spirit ✠ remind you, again and again, that you are never alone,
and that you are loved beyond measure.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW 715

- 1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.**

Refrain

**Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.**

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain***

- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. *Refrain***

- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain***

- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain***

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

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DISMISSAL

- ☐ Go in peace. Keep awake.
☑ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

✠ ✠ ✠

Mark Jones, *organ*

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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 Pas-
tor Lucy by fol-
lowing the link or
QR Code. [https://
calendly.com/pastor-
lucy/45min](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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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