

### 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 20 & 21, 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**

**Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God by Trish Daffer in celebration of their wedding anniversary - happy anniversary, Joseph!

**New Altar Flower/Eternal Candle/TV Broadcast** charts are up in the Narthex. Be sure to sign up for the date(s) you want to remember or honor someone or an event on.

### **Children’s Choir Grades K-6**

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 Ages 2 years-6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

No Sunday School will be held from December 14—January 4. Join us again on January 11.

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

Youth may join Sheila and Deacon Eric in the Fellowship Lounge to help with a Christmas service project.

### **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*

### Adult Forum

**Sundays, 10:10 AM**

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

### A Service of Lessons & Carols

**Sunday, December 21**

**7:00 PM**

**Trinity Episcopal Cathedral**

**113 N 18th St.**

The Nebraska Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Cantare! Renaissance Vocal Ensemble, & the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Schola & Choir have invited us to attend A Service of Lessons & Carols. No charge but they will take a free will offering.

Refreshments served after the service.

### Pledge Cards

It's not too late to bring your pledge cards back. Please put them in the designated box in the narthex or mail them back to the church office. 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!

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## This Week at Kountze Memorial

### 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)

9:30 AM Kountze Café - Breakfast

10:10 AM Adult Forum—No

Sunday School, Children's Choir,  
or Youth Forum

12:00 PM Youth Committee

### December 22 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

### December 23 Tuesday

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

12:30 PM Circle 3

### December 24 Wednesday

Christmas Eve

OFFICE CLOSED (at noon)

No 12:15 PM Worship

4:00 PM Worship

6:00 PM Confirmation @ St.

Timothy

7:00 PM Worship

11:00 PM Worship

### December 25 Thursday

Christmas Day

OFFICE CLOSED

10:00 AM Worship

### December 26 Friday

OFFICE CLOSED

Pantry Closed

### December 27 Saturday

5:00 PM Worship

### December 28 Sunday

Christmas 1

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)

9:30 AM Kountze Cafe - Breakfast

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### 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!

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## For Your Calendar/News & Notes

### 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 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. Contact Sheila Valquier if you are interested.



sheila@kmlchurch.org

## For Your Calendar/News & Notes, *continued*

### 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](mailto: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 QR Code or link below and follow the directions above:

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



Camp Registrations

### 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](mailto:kristin@kmlchurch.org) for donation information.

### Youth Giving Tree

Our youth in grades 7—12 have set up a giving tree in the Fellowship Hall. 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!

### Kountze Food Pantry

Our Love Thy Neighbor Food Pantry is in need of your gifts and service. The current needs for the pantry are gloves, chili, and baked beans. 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/uauusdddp>

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.



### Attendance & Giving

**Thursday, Dec. 11—Wednesday, December 17**

Saturday: 181

Sunday: 9:00: 149 11:00: 30

Wednesday: 27 47

Total: 434

Streaming: 96

Pantry Guests Served: 647 (inc. 196 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 16

Offering:

\$23,608.48 (Regular) \$14,858.55 (Specials)

\$797.00 (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	Psalm 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](http://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