

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

January 3 & 4, 2026

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 Gloria Erickson in honor and memory of loved ones.

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 this Sunday. Join us again in the 2nd Floor Sunday School Rooms on January 11.

Kountze Café 9:30—11:00 AM

Continental breakfast this morning, but join us again next Sunday for a hot 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-6th 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

No Youth Forum from December 14—January 4. We'll be meeting again on January 11.

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.

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!

This Week at Kountze Memorial

January 4 Sunday

Epiphany
Homebound Communion
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Worship
9:00 AM Nursery (0-2 yrs)
9:30 AM Kountze Cafe -
Continental Breakfast
10:10 AM Fellowship—No Sunday
School, Children's Choir

January 5 Monday

10:00 AM Pantry

January 6 Tuesday

Epiphany of Our Lord
9:00 AM Staff Meeting

January 7 Wednesday

12:15 PM Worship
6:00 PM Confirmation @ St.
Timothy
7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

January 8 Thursday

9:30 AM WELCA Board
11:30 AM Property Committee
4:00 PM Healing Gift Free Clinic
7:00 PM Worship & Music
Committee

January 9 Friday

5:00 PM Pantry

January 10 Saturday

9:30 AM Undecorate from
Christmas—Can you help?
5:00 PM Worship

January 11 Sunday

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

For Your Calendar/News & Notes

Confirmation Classes

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

Wednesdays, 6-7:15 PM

We'll meet each Wednesday until Lent begins, with the exception of January 21 when we will take a "field trip" to St. Michael Lutheran Church (13232 Blondo) for a **Digital Safety for Middle Schoolers Workshop** from 6-7 PM. Please meet at St. Michael Lutheran Church (13232 Blondo) on January 21. **Confirmation families** - be sure to check your email for a more detailed schedule, updates on a Middle School Lock-In at Camp Carol Joy Holling, sign-ups for snacks, adult helpers, and more!

Youth Ice Skating Event

Saturday, January 17

3-6 PM

Riverfront Skate Ribbon

1109 Howards St.

We'll meet at the Riverfront Skate Ribbon at 3 PM and then at 4:30 PM, we'll walk to Zios in the Old Market for pizza and pickup there. Plan to come and bring a

friend! RSVP to Sheila at sheila@kmlchurch.org so we know how many to plan for.

Digital Safety Workshop for Parents on Sunday Sunday, January 25

6:00-7:00 PM

St. Michael Lutheran Church (13232 Blondo) Childcare provided

This is for parents of youth of any age, and we'll have childcare provided so parents can focus on the presentation.

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



sheila@kmlchurch.org

For Your Calendar/News & Notes, *continued*

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.

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 QR Code or link below and follow the directions above:



Camp Registrations

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

Calling all Artists and Makers!

Join us for an Art Show featuring members of our congregation. Enjoy charcuterie while viewing the talent on display. There will be a silent auction for all pieces of art, with the proceeds benefitting the Youth Group Mission Trip. If you are interested in donating your handiwork, please contact Kristin Boe at Kristin@kmlchurch.org.

Behind the Scenes on Sunday Mornings

Church Media is looking for volunteers to help with sound, video, and computer graphics. No experience is needed—we provide hands-on training. If you're curious, stop by on Sunday morning at 9:00 AM and see how it all works. Try it and you might discover a role that's a perfect fit for you. Call the church office or

talk to Ron Brown if you think you might be interested.

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, socks, 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.

Omaha Lutheran Campus Ministry Presents

Evensong—A Grand Choir Experience

Chili Cook-off & Silent Auction

Holden Evening Prayer

Sunday, January 25

4:30 PM—chili feed & judging

6 PM—worship

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church (1031 Sunset Trail) We have been invited to consider joining the choir. If any choir members would like to sing, please let Barb Carlsen know. Everyone else is invited to the chili feed and worship.

Attendance & Giving

Thursday, Dec. 23—Wednesday, Dec. 31

Saturday: 32

Sunday: 9:00: 68 11:00: 63

Wednesday: 12:15: No Service

Total: 163

Streaming: 96

Christmas Eve: 4:00: 305; 7:00: 237; 11:00: 96

Christmas Day: 31

Total Christmas: 669

Pantry Guests Served: 446 (inc. 149 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served:

Offering:

\$11,347.88 (Regular)

\$19,825.76 (Specials)

\$1,445.15 (Debt Reduction)

God's light shines through Jesus.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

EPIPHANY BIBLE READINGS

Sunday	John 1:1-18	The Word became flesh
Monday	Jeremiah 31:7-14	The joyful return of the exiles
Tuesday	Ephesians 1:3-14	Spiritual blessings in Christ
Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	The glory of God shines on the people

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Epiphany observances.

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	All shall bow down
Ephesians 3:1-12	The gospel's promise for all
Matthew 2:1-12	The wise men worship Jesus

Wednesday	1 Peter 5:1-11	Tending the flock of God
Thursday	Genesis 50:14-21	Joseph's promise to his brothers
Friday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Visions from the Lord
Saturday	Psalm 147:12-20	Sing and praise the Lord
Sunday	Matthew 3:13-17	The baptism of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR EPIPHANY

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. Isaiah 60:1 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Epiphany:

Dear God, in Jesus you show your glory to the nations. Come, Holy Spirit, bless all the nations of the world with peace, joy, and love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord God, as the star shone over Bethlehem to reveal the presence of your Son, may this meal remind us that this food is a gift of your love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the light of Christ bring you peace and joy.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- When is a time you were with someone from a different culture or religion? Tell about it.
- God used a star to lead the wise men to find Jesus, the Light of the World. What or who has God used to lead you to Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 2:1-12.

People from another religion and another part of the ancient world used astrology to guide them to Jesus, and it worked. God wants the world to be blessed by the light of Christ that shines from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and on to the ends of the earth. It is God's powerful light that has entered the darkness of fear. Not only is King Herod frightened by the message that a king has been born to the Jews, but so are all the people of Jerusalem. Even the people faithful to God's reign are fearful. A new day that brings astonishing news signals a change and is feared by all. We, ourselves, fear change, even if it has come to benefit us. The moment something new happens to us, we lose a sense of control. In this reading, the change is about God's rule, God's ways, and God's love that shines brightly into a darkened world. Thanks be to God for the light that breaks into the dark corners of our world and of our lives. It is the only light and only hope that really matters.

Discuss: When is a time that change was difficult for you? Where do you feel God was in that moment?

Pray: **Dear Jesus, bless us to see in you the one who takes our fears and worries and turns them into joy and gladness. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Epiphany Bible Readings and theme for this day, how can you help or support someone who is going through dark times?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Epiphany is traditionally associated with the blessing of homes as a place to welcome friends and strangers. Light a candle to symbolize Christ. Go from room to room as a group.

Pray: **Lord Jesus, please bless this room and all that takes place here. Light this room and our lives with your presence. Amen.**

After you have gone throughout your home, use chalk to write above your entrance door: 20+C+M+B+26 (It stands for the year 2026, the traditional names of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar given to the wise men, and also for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which is Latin for "Christ, bless this home.")



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In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life
as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17