

04.24.22 WORSHIP SERVICE

MORNING PRAYER – PASTOR CALEB YODER

God who is source of all life, beauty, and creativity,

We are in awe of the many works of your hands. Water, earth, and sky are yours. In the rainfall and sun, and the green vegetation of the landscape, we are reminded of how you renew the face of the earth.

Just as surely as you inspire natural beauty, you also inspire the beauty of the soul, expressed in human creativity, ingenuity, art, and music. Let us bring our joys and our yearnings to you, knowing that you are faithful to hear our prayers.

We give thanks the students from Bethel college present in our worship service today, sharing their gifts which have their ultimate source in you. We pray for college students and high school graduates in general, at the stage of life of exploring and pursuing possible life directions. We pray for them as they learn about who they are and listen for the stirrings you have placed in their hearts.

We pray for students, families, and school staff in this busy time of year – track, golf, music ensembles, forensics, and academics. We pray for seniors away on their class trip as they anticipate their approaching graduation. Be with them and their families at this point of life transition.

We likewise rejoice with Travis Duerksen and Erica Stolfus as they prepare to join their lives in the covenant of marriage this coming weekend. Give them wisdom and great joy as they make this covenant to each other, promising to love each other in both the joys and challenges of their life-long journey.

At another juncture of life, we pray for the family of Judy Goertzen as they celebrate the life of Judy's mom in Topeka this coming weekend. May they know your comfort as they grieve and joy as they celebrate and reminisce together.

You are faithful to hear our struggles. We pray for those who have ongoing adjustments to health concerns or the problems that come with aging. Give patience, strength, hope, and contentment.

O God, even on days of rejoicing, we cannot forget the tragedies that we see in our world:

Warfare in Ukraine and elsewhere that terrorizes people with death, grief, and poverty. More than one refugee crisis around the world. Reports that warn of impending crisis in earth's climates if we do not drastically reduce our burning fossil fuels.

Even harder is to know that our country's excessive extraction of natural resources and profit-driven economic system is connected to wars, environmental destruction, and poverty around the world.

We are complicit, and even benefit from our unjust and strange world, yet we don't know what to do about it. Give us neither despair nor excessive shame, but help us to have the imagination to picture the radical changes that would witness to another way of life inspired by the life of Jesus.

Author of all things, we give you thanks. In our joy and our struggles, we look to your transforming and redeeming love through Christ who is risen.

Amen

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

(Based on *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, in *Voices Together* 1019)

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things,

Maker of the beauty of spring and the beauty of music,

Through your goodness, you have blessed us with many good gifts, the gifts found in youth as well as the gifts found in advanced age; the gifts of mind, and of every skill, personality, and relationship.

With gratitude we receive your gifts, and we offer our own to the world in hopes of reflecting your love,

Through Jesus who gave himself for us, Amen.