

1/29/23 WORSHIP SERVICE

PARENT/CHILD DEDICATION

Today is a special day, not only because of our visiting choral groups, but also because of the opportunity we have to entrust Lilly and Greyson into God's care, and commit to modeling faith for them.

We are truly blessed by the young children who are a part of the life of this congregation.

In a few moments, we'll be inviting the Voth family forward to dedicate themselves to the care and nurture of their children's faith, to ask this congregation to join them in that calling, and to celebrate God's blessing to their forever-family.

We not only will dedicate Lilly and Greyson to the intentional nurture of their growing faith, but we also celebrate with Matt and Laura the milestone of becoming a forever family for Lilly and Greyson.

Jesus gave us an example when he openly received little children into his arms and blessed them, saying "let the little children come to me...for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14)

However much we love our children, we believe they have belonging first of all God's kingdom. We want to be faithful in modeling faith for them until they are ready to claim their faith for themselves and the calling they discover from God.

Both parents, and we as a congregation, assume a great responsibility to teach and model our faith to the next generation.

So at this time, I invite Matt, Laura, Lilly, and Greyson to come forward, and also invite David Voth, Matthew's dad to give some words of blessing.

DEDICATION

Lois: Matt and Laura, as you bring Lilly and Greyson for blessing by God in this congregation, do you consecrate yourselves as parents to bring your children up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord? (we do.)

Caleb: Is it your purpose to try to shape your family life by caring for one another, sharing in God's word, in prayer and Christian fellowship so that Lilly and Greyson will be helped to know and love Christ as Lord and Savior?

Parents – Yes, it is. As Christian parents we are thankful for the privilege of parenthood. We recognize that we have a very special role in the life our children helping them to know and to love God. We pledge ourselves to the task of parenthood with love, patience, with firmness and with faith; trusting God to guide and strengthen us. We ask for the support of you, the congregation, in active partnership in our task of parenting. We need your encouragement. We entrust our children to your loving care in this community of faith.

BLESSING FOR PARENTS -- LOIS

BLESSING FOR EACH CHILD -- CALEB

- Lilly, may God who made you, sent Jesus to love you, and the Spirit to dwell within you, may God watch over you always. As you grow may you come to know the love and presence of God in your life and receive Christ Jesus into your heart. Amen.
- Greyson, may the God who created you, who sent Christ Jesus to love you, and the Spirit to dwell within you, may this God strengthen you always. As you grow, may you come to know the love and presence of God in your life and choose to follow Jesus. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT

As a congregation, we too make a commitment alongside Matt and Laura to nurture the well-being and faith development of Lilly and Greyson.

Please stand, and let's say these words together expressing the promise that we make today:

You have offered your children to the strong and tender providence of God. We rejoice and give thanks for their presence in this congregation. We promise, with humility and seriousness, to share in your children's nurture and well-being. We will support, by our example and words, your efforts to provide a home where trust in God grows and Christ's way is chosen. May our prayers surround your family now and always.

MORNING PRAYER

Source of all life and all that is beautiful,

We marvel at your marvelous works: water, earth, and sky are yours, and all that is in them.

You redeem and restore all that is broken. You forgive our sins and offer abundant life through Jesus. We praise you for the risen life of Jesus through whom you are making all things new.

We sing to you and make music to glorify your name. We thank you for the gift of music, that calls us out of our worries, fears, and distractions, and opens us to the hope that comes from you.

Teach us, O God, to be attentive to your presence, to embrace life purposefully as disciples of Jesus, and to be prepared to answer for the hope that is in us.

We pray for the Voth family, with whom we have made a covenant this morning. You have loved Lilly and Greyson from before their birth, and you will extend your love to them throughout their lives.

We pray that you would give us and give Matt and Laura the wisdom and grace to love these children and prepare them – so far as it depends on us – to receive your love and follow Jesus when they are of age.

Loving father, you have placed us in human families, and like a mother have called us by name and claimed us as your own.

This morning, we are moved by the music of the young singers that have joined us this morning. We pray likewise for high school and college students in our congregation and community. We pray that your light will guide them as they learn about themselves, discover their gifts, and discern their future.

At the latter stage of life, we remember our elders who are both in their own homes or in nursing homes. We know that winter is a hard season with isolation, sickness, cold, and long nights. We pray for your comforting presence with each one.

This week we remember Dwight M. Flaming along with the other volunteers he is traveling with as they work in Louisiana with Mennonite Disaster Service to bless a family with a rebuilt home. Grant success, new relationships, and witness to the hope of Christ as they work this week with uncertain weather.

We give thanks for the opportunity to serve beyond ourselves in our own community through the MDS cabinet shop in Goessel, and pray for your love to be embodied in the cabinets that are made.

O God, we remember also all the families traumatized or grieving loved ones in gun violence with 40 mass shootings in our country this year. We also lament the tragic and unnecessary death of Tyre Nichols and countless others in the abuse of law enforcement authority.

We remain a society addicted and fixated on violence. We pray for wisdom to know how to work for cultural change, and we pray for witness to nonviolent ways of responding to anger and injustice, drawing from the teaching of Jesus.

Loving God, we thank you for the good deposit of faith that you have entrusted to us. Let us not take it for granted as pious words or easy assurance in an uncertain world. Let us be deeply committed to living by that faith and living out that faith in our daily lives.

In Jesus Christ, who shows us your love...

PRAYER OF DEDICATION – ADAPTED FROM VT 1019

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

Through your goodness you have blessed us with good gifts: our possessions, our time, our talents, and our very selves.

You put a new song in our mouths, and so we sing praise to You.

We receive your gifts in gratitude.

May we in turn offer them to the world with your love,

Through the one who gave himself for us,

Jesus Christ, Our Savior. Amen