

10-15-23 Worship Service

Welcome

It's especially lovely to welcome David and Twila Stoltzfus, Erica's parents who are here this morning all the way from Virginia, as well as Marlo and Lynette Duerksen, Travis' parents. These grandparents have come to offer their prayers of blessing for Erica and Travis and baby Luka. Welcome!

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

- Sr. Coffee this Friday with Brian Stucky talking about Mennonite Flour Mills in central KS

Call to Worship -- (printed)

Invocation – O God, you come to us just as we are, ready or not, eager to give what is needed. Open our hearts and minds to receive what you have for us as we worship. May our words and thoughts be pleasing to you. Amen.

Hymns

Children's Story – Ann

Child/Parent Dedication

Travis and Erica, I invite you and your parents to come forward now with Luka.
We welcome your prayers...

Erica and Travis, as you bring Luka for dedication it is an act of praising and thanking God. And it is also bringing Luka into a relationship with the body of Christ – the church. When children are presented to God and to the church, they are placed in the care of the church. With Christian parents, and grandparents, children can grow up with and come to their own understanding of their parents' faith. As parents dedicate their children, they are committing themselves to this calling.

In Mark, chapter 9 Jesus made an example of a little child to quiet the disciples' argument about which of them was the greatest. He took a little child in his arms and said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Because children are dependent and trusting, they are also more receptive to God's presence in their lives. It's the task, then, of families and the church to nurture this faith and to prepare children for a time when they are more mature and can make their own decision to accept Christ and the call to follow him in their lives. So parents, families, and we, as a congregation, share great joy as well as a great responsibility to nurture our children.

Erica and Travis, as you bring Luka Stoltzfus for blessing by God in this congregation, do you consecrate yourselves as parents to bring him up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord? (we do)

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 Luka will be helped to know and love Christ as Lord and Savior? *(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 of our child, helping him 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 child to your loving care in this community of faith.*

Travis and Erica – may the God who has entrusted you with this child grant you fullness of love in raising him. May God grant you to live lives of faithfulness to the gospel before your child so that he might know the ways of God's kingdom.

And Luka Stoltzfus Duerksen – may the God who created you, who sent Christ Jesus to redeem you and the Spirit to dwell within you, may this God watch over you, bless you and keep you always. As you grow may you come to know the love and presence of God in your life and welcome Jesus into your heart. In the name of the God who gives us birth. Amen.

As you can see, there on the table, is a rose for you to take home, there's a certificate of dedication. A faith marker book for you to keep photos and written memories of your child's faith journey will be prepared for you and there will also be either a memory box or a step-stool – whichever you choose.

I invite the congregation now to stand and respond with the words of support and covenant at number 970.

Leader: Erica and Travis, you have offered Luka to the strong and tender care of God.

All: We rejoice with you and give thanks for the gift of your child.

With God as our guide, we will share in your child's nurture and well-being.

We will support, by our example and words, your efforts to provide a loving and caring home where trust in God grows and Christ may be known.

Our prayers are with you and for you.

May our shared life and witness help you grow as a family in faithfulness and joy.

Hymn--*Child of Blessing, Child of Promise, #508 in Voices Together*

Morning Prayer –

O God, you have created all that is, you've hung the moon, the sun and the stars in the sky, you made the seasons ebb and flow, you've created every human being in your own image and you know when we lie down and when we rise. We're awed by your greatness and humbled by your love. We're grateful for your faithfulness to us – in spite of our foibles and failings. We ask for your mercy and grace as we try to be faithful to you, following as best we can the life and examples of Jesus. We thank you for this Sabbath day, a day set aside for a different rhythm in our lives, a day for being still, for re-memembering, for re-centering, for re-juvenating. Thank you for your Presence with us.

We thank you God for families and other loved ones, for the support and security within them. As we will soon hear in the story of Ruth, we thank you for the ways our loved ones challenge and stretch us, helping us to find our full potential and bringing us back when we've

overreached. Give us courage, God, to be honest and loving. Give us compassion when we need to forgive – as you've forgiven us. Give us humble confidence as we try to follow your call.

We pray for those who are struggling with physical illness; grant your healing for their bodies. We pray for those whose struggles are mental or emotional; grant your comfort and calming of anxieties or fears. We pray for those who are grieving – losses of loved ones, losses of relationships, hopes or dreams. You are the great healer, God and we trust in your love.

And you are the God of righteousness and justice. You sent Jesus into the world to bring your Light and Peace. O God we pray for Israelis and Palestinians, for those who live in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv, for those in Gaza and on the West Bank. We grieve the violence that has been done and we pray for the wisdom of Jesus to somehow be known in his own land.

Be with us now through this time of worship, be with those who will participate in the Harvest Giving Walk this afternoon and with the youth as they gather this evening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Choir Anthem

Offertory Prayer –

O God, we offer these gifts of money to you, through your church. We ask for your blessing on the gifts and on those who give them. Bless also the gifts of our time and energy, our love and our work. May our lives reflect your light into the world. Amen.

Benediction –

Go about your week knowing that God can create many meanings from one small story. Pay attention and live with gratitude so that you may be delighted and encouraged by the many meanings that come from your story.