

Welcome and Announcements:

Welcome to Nutana Park Mennonite Church, gathered to worship on Treaty 6 Territory. This is a wonderful day in which we recognize the place of children in the lives of families, faith communities, and our friendship circles. It is a day we recognize the resumption of fall opportunities of Christian Education for children and parents. It is a day to enjoy sausage and roll-kuchen and watermelon.

The Psalms remind us that children are gift (see Psalm 128); the parents of Jesus brought him to the temple for presentation (Luke 2:22ff);, and Jesus took children into his arms to bless them. We join with communities of faith across the generations to celebrate the new lives among us and ask God for help in raising them well. Welcome to those who call this congregation home, and welcome to those who have come for our child dedication service, and welcome to those who are seeking a church home, and welcome to those viewing on our livestream. May our time of worship honour God, deepen our faith and strengthen our service midweek.

We acknowledge that we are privileged to meet in Treaty 6 Territory, and on the traditional homelands of the First Nations and Metis people. Indigenous people are a vibrant part of our past, present and future. It is important to remind ourselves of the journey we travel together as Treaty people.

Our **Call to Worship** comes from Psalm 131. Please take your Psalters in the pew and we will read this Psalm responsively:

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high
I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me.

But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul within me is like a weaned child.
O people, hope in the LORD from this time on and forevermore.

Announcements appear in your bulletins and I trust you will make note of those that apply to you. I have been asked to highlight several of them:

Our opening hymn is “Children of the Heavenly Father” VT, #517. Please rise to sing.

Lighting the Peace Lamp

I am not certain that it has ever been easy to grow up. It does seem, though, as if the challenges of social media, self image, political polarization, and other aspects of the 21st century create particular concerns for the children of this time and place. And many of us are mindful of the tragedy which took place at Evan Hardy earlier this month. In the face of such issues we light the peace lamp mindful of our children. May our homes be places where love is fostered. May our churches and schools be places of affirmation and invitation to lives of compassion. May our elders offer wisdom and guidance as we seek the good path in this time and place, and in the future generations.

[Invite families forward to front pew: Marc and Kelly // Thomas and Hillary peak in the order their families appear in the bulletin]

Intro to Child Dedication

“On Wednesday [August 28, 2004], the U.S. surgeon general issued a public health advisory in the US about the impact of modern stresses on parents' mental health. Considering that previous surgeon generals have issued advisories around the risks to our children of gun violence and smoking, the public is paying attention. Incredible to imagine that parenting might be considered a danger to parental health!

In addition to the traditional challenges of parenting — like protecting children from harm and worrying about finances — there are new stressors that previous generations didn't have to consider, said Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. These include social media, the youth mental health crisis, and increased financial strain as the cost of some necessities, like child care, have boomed.”¹

In the midst of this public health advisory, we celebrate the presence of children in our congregation. Children offer their parents, and all of us, hope and joy, just as children delighted Jesus on his earthly walk. The gift of a child is a profound spiritual mystery offering a glimpse of deeper mysteries among us. The growth and development of children is an awesome unfolding—they learn from observation, teachings, and trial / error. The dedication of parents and their children to God in the context of a community of faith, is a way of placing the profound mystery of these lives into God's care.

¹ Modern parenting is so stressful that the U.S. issued a health advisory. Parents say it's overdue | CBC News

At this time we invite the parents to share about the gift of their children and hopes for raising their children in a community: **Kelly & Marc // Hillary and Thomas**

Thank you for your reflections. Please move to stage center, and extended family who is present please join them. The support you offer these two families is essential, and we acknowledge the role you play in their lives.

Do you commit to creating a loving home in which a relationship with God can take root and grow within Blake, Sammy and Sophie? If so, answer, "We do."

Parents: We do.

Do you intend to teach your children, by word and example, what it means to live in Jesus' Way of justice, peace, and compassion?

Parents: We do.

Surrounded by God's love, do you invite our community of faith to support you in caring for your children?

Parents: We do.

Blake, Sammy, Sophie....

Lord God,

in whom we find life, health, and strength,
through whose gifts we are clothed and fed,
through whose mercy we have been forgiven and renewed,
be for these children (Blake, Sophie, and Samuel)

Guide, Strength, and Healer all the days of their lives.

We offer this blessing in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Congregational Response: #510 VT "Today Earth Is Singing"

3x: Blake, Samuel, Sophie

Children's Time: (Luke)

Joys, Concerns, and Recognition of Offerings

Congregational Prayer

Congregational Prayer

We are grateful for the many gifts of time, talent and treasure which enable this congregation and its ministry to continue. Today, for example, Zach / Jeff / Dave are overseeing a.v. concerns. Joanne is leading us at the piano. Parents have offered children and their reflections into our care. Luke will soon speak. The Parking Lot Party would not be happening without manifold contributors. We have

much for which to give thanks; and much to give. Our financial offerings arrive through direct withdrawal, the offering plate and the good old fashioned check. I invite the ushers for an offertory prayer and to receive the offering.

O God, to those who hunger, give bread

And to those who have bread, a hunger for justice. Amen

We will conclude our prayer time with “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”. Following my Amen, we will sing it through twice. Please turn to VT #682 so that may seamlessly sing this hymn together.

We join together in prayer:

This day, oh God, we are mindful of the gifts you have offered us and all creation. We give thanks for the seasons and the seasons of our lives. For the coolness of the fall months and the harvest: apples, carrots, beets, tomatoes, and potatoes—the gardens and fields bring joy and nourishment to all our senses. For our youngest participants this morning: Sammy, Blake and Simone—may we learn from them something of the humility and vulnerability which comes with being your people. As we seek to share with them, and all our children the best of our wisdom and warmth, give us patience and compassion. Lord, in your mercy.

We give thanks for Jesus the Christ and that death does not have the last word. We think of those who continue deaths within their families. We remember those in hospitals and care homes whose health is fragile. May those suffering in war zones, amidst floods or flames, famine, addictions, and other afflictions be met with signs of Good News in amidst their challenges. We pray for your ambassadors of mercy in this world: relief and development workers, Mission Board workers, medical staff, fire department personnel, teachers, social workers, and other frontline workers. Lord, in your mercy.

Strengthen us, oh God, in our private and public worship to listen well to the nudging’s you place in our lives and the life of this congregation. May we be encouraged to more deeply love You, ourselves, and our neighbours. We pray for ourselves. Lord, in your mercy.

We offer these prayers in the name of the Risen One. Amen.

Hymn: “Lord, Listen to Your Children” VT #682

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:13-16 VT #18

Sermon: Luke

Hymn of Response and Blessing for our meal: #70 VT "Praise God"

Benediction:

(HWB 770)

The blessing of the God of Sarah and Abraham,

The blessing of the Son, born of Mary,

The blessing of the Holy Spirit, who broods over us as a mother over her children,

Be with us all.

AMEN

Sending Hymn: "Go, My Children" VT #830 Please rise to Sing.

Patrick Preheim, primary pastor of Nutana Park Mennonite Church