

Dedication of Children and Youth

UU Church in Reston

Dedicated December 15, 2013

Barbara: Call children and a few responsible adults forward, to sit in front.

To The Gathered Community

Barbara: In this free faith tradition, a child dedication is a covenantal act of the community, a promise from the faith community to the children being dedicated and their parents. The faith community promises to participate in creating and sustaining an environment that nurtures them in the values of free faith. It is this sacred ceremony of child dedication that we celebrate today.

Behold our children. They come into the world with stardust in their hair. The rush of mighty oceans is in their blood and the sparkling of sunlight is in their eyes. Their hearts beat out with a rhythm of eternity and their imaginations reach to the furthest corners of the Universe. They are part and parcel of Life. They possess a divine spark and they stand as pure potential. And we, therefore, must smile and lose our hearts to a child.

Barbara Naef: From time immemorial, women and men have brought their children to houses of worship for ceremonies that celebrate the uniqueness of each child, that dedicate the parents to the care and nurture of their children, and that dedicate the life of the child to the values and ideals of the community. In our tradition, this dedication is a public ceremony because we believe that it is our task to work together to create a world of peace and justice that our children come to know and love. It is our task to share our hopes and ideals. And so, in this place made

holy by the hopes and dreams of generations, we recognize, celebrate, and honor the unique beauty of these children and of the relationships that are present here.

Barbara: Would the families wishing to dedicate their children please come forward.

Barbara: To Parents and Grandparents

Cheryl, Marylou, Ben, Dana, Mark, Tracey, Jim, in bringing your children before us you are acknowledging that they are not only your children, but also children of Life itself. To you is entrusted the sacred joy and privilege of guiding their lives in all their budding possibilities and teaching them to recognize their own genius and worth. Do you, then, promise to the best of your ability, by your example, precept, and affection, to raise these, your children, in the ways of truth, beauty, and love.

(Respond: We/I do.)

Barbara : To the Godparents and guardians

___ and_____, as grandparents of ___ and _____, do you also now pledge yourselves to the care and nurture of these children---to offer yourselves as examples, guides, and compaions---as well as to the support of these parents?

(Respond: We/I do.)

For each Child (individually): What name has been chosen for this child/ these children?

Skylar Hennessey

Skylar is one of the bravest girls you will ever meet, and a great swimmer too. She doesn't really like doing things that require sitting; it's got to involve her whole body to be considered "fun" in her book! She also loves music: a fan of Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Taylor Swift, and Adele since the age of three! Skylar really likes coming to UUCR, especially to play on the playground out back. Her goal there is to master those monkey bars!

Jackson Hennessey

Most of the time Jackson goes by 'Jax.' He loves helicopters, Thomas the Train, and going for boat rides with Mimi. He is happy to be here to Herndon with his big sister Skylar since August because his mom had been very sick, and he was very brave adjusting to a new house and daycare. Now he loves "school" and everyone there loves him! The word from teacher is that Jax is quiet and cooperative, kind and gentle.

Sean Neal

Sean is a very laid back and loyal person who cares deeply about his circle of family and friends. Sean is a "people person" and loves to spend time with others. He really enjoys going to preschool. Story time is a major highlight of his day, along with working on puzzles, and playing in a small group. His favorite activities at home are snuggling with his mom and dad, mealtime (this is an event that is not to be rushed!), and sleeping (also, an event not to be rushed!). Sean appreciates the most simple things in life, and because of this he is a content person.

Seth Neal

Seth is a very social, energetic, and tender person who has no trouble making friends and loves keeping busy. Seth's favorite activities are playing sports in his after school program, participating in art and science class, and playing with his many neighborhood friends - the doorbell is always ringing at the Neal house because friends are looking for Seth! Seth is currently enjoying flag football, Cub Scouts activities, and has recently discovered how much fun it is to read chapter books.

Sophie Neal

Sophie is always in motion! She is a very funny, and free spirited person. Sophie loves her preschool program, and must be an event planner in training as she has taken on the role of planning parties and events in her classroom, and also at home! Sophie has determination that we can all learn from - she doesn't let a mess up keep her down. She tries again without frustration until she gets whatever it is that she is trying to do right. Sophie's favorite hobbies are art, gymnastics, and cooking with her mom.

Kate Sheppard began attending UUCR as a toddler, and she always enjoyed her time with Ms. Anjum in the nursery. These days, she looks forward to her RE classes, likes playing the bells, and is especially fond of snacks after the service. She is a thoughtful and artistic soul, who enjoys writing, reading, crafts, cooking, acting, music, and dance. She cares deeply for her friends and family, and she has a real talent for cheering people up when they are feeling down, often offering them some help, or a hug, or a beautiful hand-made card. She also loves animals and plans to be a veterinarian/author/accountant when she grows up.

Beth Sopp Beth is a friendly and active 4th grader. She likes to be busy and is involved in Girl Scouts, 4-H and her elementary school running club as well as recently joining the UUCR Ringers. Her favorite activities include baking, playing minecraft on the computer and spending time with friends.

Barbara Naef assist with elements: stand on one side of Rev. Barbara, leaving sight lines for congregation to see child

Earth: (full name) With earth, which is as solid as you are, I bless you. Take care of your body, for it is a gift. (*Place dab of mud on forehead.*)

Air: With air, which is as boundless as your imagination, I bless you. Let your mind wander freely, for your thoughts are gifts. (*Gently fan face.*)

Water: With water, which is as fluid as our emotions, I bless you. In your life, you will know rage and contentment, resentment and love, sorrow and joy. Feel all of your emotions, for they are gifts. (*Place wet finger on forehead.*)

Fire: With fire, which is as bright as your spirit, I bless you. Let your spirit shine in the days and years ahead, for your spirit is a gift. (*Pass lighted candle near child.*)

Barbara Naef hand Rev Barbara roses

Rose: _____ I give you this budding rose as a sign and symbol of the unfolding beauty in your life. Life is a gift. You are a gift beyond measure. There has never been, nor can there ever be, another person exactly like you. Love yourself; honor yourself. It is good that you are here. (*Give child a rosebud.*)

Barbara: To All Dedicated Children: Skylar, Jackson, Sean, Seth, Sophie, Kate, and Beth, I hope that you will remember and be reminded of the promises that your family has made this day and that you will one day look back and recall the faith, the love, and the dreams that everyone here today has shared with you.

Barbara Naef: To the Children of the Congregation:

(ask them for agreement to support these children being dedicated; make it fun: maybe ask for high-five, or ‘WE DO’ or something creative)

Barbara: To the Community

For the gift of childhood, and the promise of new beginnings, let us rejoice and give thanks. May these children whom we have recognized this morning receive abundantly all blessings and, in turn, give back richly to the common heritage that endures from generation to generation.

Will you, this community please join with me in the words of dedication?

We welcome you into the world of light and shade, of work and play, of laughter and love. We welcome you into this community and into the larger human family. In you we find hope for a better world. In you we share a new life.

We rejoice with your parents, families, and friends, and take upon ourselves the privilege and responsibility of helping to nurture you in character and spirit. We wish you all joy and happiness in your life, so full of promise. It is a beautiful world, and you have made it more beautiful still.

Barbara: Families, please be seated

Child Dedication

Dedicated December 11, 2011

Today we honor and dedicate these children:

Jane Elisabeth Eppersen (born November 10, 2011), daughter of Gabe and Elisabeth Epperson

Annika Berg Surles (born August 8, 2003), daughter of Kris Berg and Collin Surles, big sister to Kari Surles

Congregation's Covenant

Children of this congregation, we welcome you into the world of light and shade, of work and play, of laughter and love. We welcome you into this community and into the larger human family. In you we find hope for a better world. In you we share a new life.

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