

Child Dedication – June 6, 2014, Accotink UU Church, Rev Scott Sammler-Michael

This ritual was within the context of a normal Sunday Service

Hymn #1064 – *Blue Boat Home*

Please turn in your teal hymnal to hymn #1064 – *Blue Boat Home*, and rise as you are able as we join our voices in song.

Child Dedication – [table preset with roses, holy water, small chalice, fan, apples]

Rev Scott – All participating in today’s child dedication, please come forward ...

From the depths of time, from the light of love, these dear young ones have come to us. With eyes shining like stars, blood coursing like mighty rivers, hands longing to mold the world; souls yearning to know why he or she feels at home when gazing at the night sky. Miracle and possibility cry out from every breath. Our sacred duty is to harmonize with these youngsters, easing their paths onto the world’s stage. Today we honor the gift of the youngest among us.

Worship Associate – In every child we see the reflection of all birth, of our own creation, of our own hope. We also see a potent vulnerability which calls us to higher being and greater mindfulness. These children call us to affirm once more our own covenant with life; to dedicate ourselves anew to that which honors life and health and growth. We rejoice, because:

RS - Each night a child is born is a holy night – A time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshipping.

To the Community:

RS - Often we ask “What can we teach this child?” Yet today I humbly charge us to ask - “What can we *learn* from these children?” “What can they teach us?” That is why today we declare these children great teachers, if only we have eyes to see and ears to listen. We offer these apples as symbols of the teachers before us. Thank you. [MC gives apples]

WA - Congregation, please repeat after me

“We long for the lessons - you will teach us.

Help us see the world - through your fresh eyes.”

RS - We acknowledge before the universe and before one another that we have much to learn, that we can once again regain the wisdom and love the child knows.

I ask all gathered here today, Do you promise to do all you can to help raise these children, ensuring their safety and happiness, being present for them in times of fear and elation, times of trial and exultation? If you so promise, say “We Do.”

WA - To the parents:

Dear Parents, in bringing these children before us you dedicate yourselves anew to support your child in the pathway of truth, goodness and love, moving from compassion to justice in life’s long search for meaning.

Entrust a part of the joy and responsibility of your child’s upbringing to the care of your extended family and friends here, ask us to support you and impart those values that promote a caring community of love and mutual understanding.

RS - One at a time, please proclaim your child’s name, and one word or phrase that demonstrates his or her character. [parents respond one by one]

RS – I invite you all to Join us in the spirit of prayer as we begin the blessing: We bless these children with the elements of our common being: earth, air, fire and water.

WA - (hold up a rose, moving from child to child)

With this rose, representing earth, we bless your unfolding life. Take care of your body, be good to yourself, for the earth and your body are good gifts.

RS - (gently fan each child’s head)

With air, as fluctuating as our emotions, we bless you. You will know sorrow and joy, rage and contentment, resentment and ecstasy. Love Intelligently. Breath easily. Feel your passions, for they are good gifts.

WA - (hold a flame aloft before the child’s eyes)

With fire, a symbol of illumination and intelligence, we bless you. Reason with care, test the world, think with compassion, for your mind is a good gift.

RS - (touch the water to the child’s hand)

With water, universal symbol of birth and new life, we bless you. Grow in conscience, be rooted in stories, grow spiritually. May all that is holy, that sacred force known in many ways and by many names, fill our hearts with love and gratitude for this day.

WA – In welcoming a child, we celebrate the miracle of birth. This is a time for joy. We rejoice when a child is born into the care and concern, not only of parents, but also of our community.

RS - Every child deserves to be held in loving arms, encouraged to lead a deep, spiritual life, to be acknowledged as part of the interconnected web of life.

Every child bears gifts that can bless the world; each child is of concern to us all.

In welcoming a child, we celebrate our hopes for life. In welcoming a child, we celebrate the miracle of birth, as together the congregation says:

ALL- AMEN!

Reprise Blue Boat Home as folks go back to their seats