

GRADUATION BLANKET PRESENTATION & BLESSING

PASTOR: Today we celebrate those who are taking another step in their faith journey as they approach the end of their high school careers. Will the parents and sponsors of those graduating from High School, the graduates, and their families please come to the front of the church as your names are called.

(All parents and graduates come and stand by the communion railing.)

PASTOR: Parents and sponsors, in Christian love you presented your children for Holy Baptism. In their baptisms, sacred promises were made. As parents of these young people, it was your calling to see that those sacred promises were kept:

- † To faithfully bring them to the services of God's house
- † To teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments
- † To place in their hands the Holy Scriptures
- † To provide for their instruction in the Christian faith

You have fulfilled those promises. We now ask you to covenant with this congregation for the ongoing support of these young people's faith journeys. Do you intend to routinely lift your children up in prayer?

PARENTS & SPONSORS: I do, and ask God to help and guide me.

PASTOR: Congregation, do you promise to support and encourage these parents in the keeping of these sacred promises?

ALL: We will, with God's help.

PASTOR: *(to graduates)* You have participated in ELC's worship, fellowship, education and service programs. As you move ahead to this new step in your life's journey, we ask you, will you continue:

- † To live among God's holy people,
- † To hear God's Word and share in his supper
- † To proclaim the good news of God in Christ
- † To serve all people, following the example of Jesus
- † And to strive for justice and peace on earth?

GRADUATES: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

PASTOR: On this important day, the day when we mark your "Stepping into the World" and bless you with the gift of a blanket, we ask God's blessing on you and on the whole people of God in Christ Jesus. Let us pray:

Dear God of creation, we ask your blessing on these young people as they enter a new period in their lives of faith. Bless them and grant them your gifts: joy as they live among your faithful people; openness in hearing your Word and thankfulness in sharing your supper; eagerness in sharing the good news of Christ through their words and actions; dedication in serving all people following the example of the Lord Jesus; and a hunger for justice and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Presentation of the Blankets

(Graduates kneel. Parents wrap their child in the blanket and lay hands on to bless the graduate.)

PASTOR: Dear Friends in Christ, there was a day when your parents held you in their arms and rocked you to sleep. They cuddled you in a blanket to keep you warm, safe and comforted. Very soon you will be launching a new life, away from the safety and security of this home, family, church and community.

QUILT PRESENTER: As you go out into the world, may this blanket be a reminder of your parents' love and the nurture of the Christian community of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mt. Horeb. Wherever you go, when the night is cold and you feel alone, may it help you remember you are never alone.

PARENTS' PRAYER: We come this day before God to bless you and thank the Creator for the gift you have been to us. You have given our love a deeper meaning and a deeper calling. Through you, we have come to understand the nature of God's love, of joy, of forgiveness. We thank God today for the gift that you have been to our lives. Wherever you go, you will always be a part of us. Wherever you go, our love goes with you. Whatever you do, you will always be a part of our hearts. We bless you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. May this blanket remind you of our love, the warmth of this faith community and the power of the Holy Spirit; and on those nights when we cannot wrap you in our arms, may you wrap yourself in this blanket and know that in God's family you are never alone.

(Graduates rise. Parents kneel. Graduates place hands on parents' shoulders to bless them by reading these words:)

GRADUATES: You have given of your heart and of your home. You have loved and cared for me, even when it was difficult. I bless you this day for the sacrifice you made to give me life. I thank God this day for the power and selflessness of your love. I honor you for your courage, your patience, your wisdom and your undying love. Wherever I go, you will always be a part of me. Wherever I go, your love and example will continue to bless me. Whatever I do, I will always be your child and I thank God for blessing my life with you. I bless you in Jesus' name. *(All parents and graduates may stand together.)*

PASTOR: Wherever you wander, no matter how dark the night, may the warmth of this blanket, the love of your parents, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of this church, the power of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever. Go with God's blessing. Amen. Let us honor the parents & graduates who have kept the promises made to God in baptism with our thanks and applause.