

**Child Dedication for Leland
South Nassau UU Congregation
July 13, 2014**

Introduction

This morning we are taking some time in our worship service to welcome a new child into our religious community. Would Leland and his parents, siblings, and godparents please come forward?

Naming & Blessing

Minister: Kristen and Josh, what do you name this child?

Parents: *full name omitted in sample*

Minister: Leland, we welcome you into this spiritual community, and give you this name as yours forever.

You are unique, like no other person in this world. We welcome you in all your uniqueness. This rose is a symbol of that uniqueness. Each rose, like each child, is beautiful in a way that is like no other rose in this world.

We bless you today with this rose dipped in water. Water is the stuff of life; water connects all things, all of humanity. We dip the rose in water to symbolize each child's essential connection with all of life and with all of us in this church community.

(touch child's forehead with rose, then hand rose to parents)

Minister: In honor of Leland's dedication, Leland's aunts, Kimberly and Sarah will offer a reading of the poem "On Children," by Kahlil Gibran

On Children
Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Charge to Parents

Minister: Kristen and Josh, just as Kahlil Gibran wrote, Leland is not only your son but also the child of Life itself. To you is entrusted the sacred joy and privilege of guiding his life in all its possibilities and teaching him to recognize his own path, hoping that he will find his own truth and know the beauty and goodness of life.

Do you, then, promise to the best of your ability, by your example, your teaching and your affection, to provide Leland with roots, so that he may feel safe and wings, so that he may fly? Do you promise to raise him in the ways of truth, beauty and love?

Parents: We do.

Charge to Siblings

Minister: Alden and Violet, you are special to Leland. You will help Leland to talk, to play, and to share. Will you try to be good examples to Leland and do everything you can to make Leland a strong and happy person?

Sibling: We will.

Charge to Godparents

Minister: Josh and Kristen, in thinking about the future of your child you have chosen to name Godparents who will be available to your child with love and caring as he grows. Will you now introduce the Godparents?

Parents: Justin McQuay and Michael DiGennaro are the Godparents we have chosen.

Minister: Justin and Michael, as Godparents, you have written brief promises to Leland. Will you share those promises now?

Godparents: share what they have written

Honoring the Larger Circle of the Family

Minister: Parents, siblings, and Godparents are only a small part of the larger circle of extended family that will hold Leland with love and care as he grows. In honor of that larger circle, and particularly in honor of Leland's Great Uncle Eddie, who passed away this week, Leland's father, Josh, will read the poem "A Family is Like" by Nicole O'Neil.

A Family Is Like
by Nicole M. O'Neil

A family is like a circle
the connection never ends
and even if at times it breaks
in time it always mends
a family is like the stars
somehow they're always there
families are those who help
who support and always care
A family is like a book
the endings never clear
but through the pages of the book
their love is always near
A family is many things
with endless words that show
who they are and what they do
and how they teach you so you know
but don't be weary if it's broken
or if through time its been so worn
families are like that-
they're split up and always torn
but even if this happens
your family will always be
they help define just who you are
and will be apart of you eternally

Charge to Congregation

Minister: Members and friends, adults, youth, and children of the South Nassau Unitarian Universalist Congregation, you too are part of the larger circle of love and care that will nurture Leland as he grows. Will you please rise in body or spirit?

No child grows up outside the influence of his community, and no parent raises a child alone. If our hopes for Leland are to blossom, we must water them with love and commitment, creating the community for him that we wish to see flourish in his time.

Do you promise to freely and wisely love this child, to offer him your steady presence and best selves, to nurture and sustain him and his family as they learn and grow and change together?

Congregation: We do.

Minister: Blessings on this family!

