

## Litany of Blessing for our Sunday School Year

When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And *when your children ask you*, ‘What do you mean by this observance’ you shall say, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses,” And the people bowed down and worshiped. (Exodus 12:25-27)

*When your children ask you* in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your children, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. . . . Then the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive, as is now the case.’  
(Deuteronomy 6:20-21, 24)

*When your children ask* in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When [the ark] crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever. (Joshua 4:6b-7)

God, we come before you, asking that you bless our Sunday School Year here at First Mennonite Church. We believe you call us to be your people. We believe you transform us through your Spirit when we gather to share and learn together.

**We ask for your presence as we learn to listen more deeply  
to each other.**

**We pray for boldness as we find words to share your saving  
acts in our lives.**

We bless the learning of young and old and in-between. We know that faith is a life-long journey, guided by your hand.

**We offer ourselves as learners, teachers and mentors in this  
community of faith.**

We believe you are moving in our world. We believe you act to keep us alive, in body and in soul.

**We commit again to give daily time to listen to you, to listen  
for you.**

**Send us courage to trust you more.**

**Bless us and keep us in your unending love. Amen.**

## **Joshua 3:1-5, 9, 11, 13-16**

<sup>1</sup> Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. <sup>2</sup> At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup> and commanded the people, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits (a good part of a mile); do not come any nearer to it.” <sup>5</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

<sup>9</sup> Joshua then said to the Israelites, “Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God. . . . <sup>11</sup> the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. . . . <sup>13</sup> when the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.”

<sup>14</sup> When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. <sup>15</sup> Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, <sup>16</sup> the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

## **Joshua 4:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua; <sup>2</sup> “Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, <sup>3</sup> and command them, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight.’” <sup>4</sup> Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. <sup>5</sup> Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites, <sup>6</sup> so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’” <sup>7</sup> then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever.