

Back to School Liturgy – Sept. 14, 2025

Leader: As we begin a new school year, we want to take time to pray a special blessing for the students in this community who face new challenges and embark on new learnings. We also want to pray for the teachers whose daily responsibility it is to guide others into a deepening understanding of the world and all its truth and beauty, and for all the staff who help create the conditions where learning and growth can take place. May we recommit ourselves to prayerfully and actively support all learners, at every stage of life, within our community and elsewhere, and all who give of themselves to promote and assist their education.

Teachers, school staff, and students of all ages are invited to bring forward a backpack, laptop, textbook, or other object representing their calling to learn or teach, and receive a blessing. They may lay their item in front of them, remain standing at the front, and we will hold hands with those next to them to form a chain of blessing with the congregation. Those without an item are welcome to come forward.

Once the chain is formed, a leader will pray:

Leader Jesus, our friend and brother, you learned and grew in the house of your earthly parents and in the house of your heavenly Father, in synagogue and the carpenter's workshop, as you walked along the road and as you sat down to eat.

All We pray for students and all who devote themselves to the work of learning. Give them joy in each new discovery, endurance in seasons of stress, patience in trials and uncertainty, and friends and companions along the way.

Leader Jesus our Rabbi, who taught words of eternal life, you invited your disciples to consider the birds and lilies, captivated the people with delightful stories calling them to transformation, and through your life and example challenged every hard, cold, or uncaring heart.

All We pray for educators as they devote themselves to the work of teaching, and school staff as they help create the conditions for learning. Partner with them and share their load. Guide them in the inspiration and cultivation of heart and minds, and in the tending of thriving, hospitable schools. Give them joy in making moments of discovery, endurance in seasons of stress, patience in trials and uncertainty, and friends and companions along the way.

Leader For these teachers, staff, and students, we pray, O Christ:

All Help them trust in your unconditional love, whatever their limitations, calling, personality, or ability. Encourage them and give them strength. In all things, go with them, sit and walk beside them, and stir in them a desire for You, the living, loving God who teaches and leads us to unending learning, wonder, and worship.

All are invited to join in blessing as we sing:

Blessing Song – Beth Malena

May our Creator bless you
May our Creator keep you
May our Creator make Their face to shine on you
and give you grace

May our Creator bless you
May our Creator keep you
May our Creator lift Their gaze of love on you
and give you peace (4x)

Leader May God bless all of us in the many ways each of us learns and teaches.

Everyone is invited to return to their seats.