

Brantley:

Calling all children of the living God:

The gospel is good news for every age and every stage.

Let us worship God together, the young and the old.

Payton:

The good news is proclaimed in God's words,

And also with crayons, silly songs, snacks, and rest time.

Let us worship God together, every generation.

We come together with different abilities and disabilities,

Learning in a rainbow of ways and styles.

Let us worship God together, with our family of faith.

K.J.:

All are welcome in the arms of Christ who proclaimed, "Let the children come!"

Let us worship together, united in our eternal hope.

Prayers of the People:

Christina: With you, every transition and new start is a reminder of your goodness, for you are always creating fresh, amazing things in us and through us. Though we are sad about the summer ending, we are grateful for this school year. We appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, knowing it is one of the biggest privileges we have. With thanks and love, we now offer everything we are to you, asking for your blessing.

We pray as and for students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for our hearts and all they hold—excitement and nervousness, disappointment and hope. We give you all our loves and fears. We pray for steady self-esteem and deepening resilience.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Sarah: We pray for our minds, that they will expand in wonder and celebration, learning not just from the books studied but the people beside us. Open our minds with a willingness to be changed in unexpected ways, and settle our thought loops in peaceful places.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Wyatt: We pray for our hands, that they will reach out to help welcome and care. Bless our hands with patience and dedication as they grip pencils and type on keyboards, swish paint brushes and clap in song, grip monkey bars and lunch box handles, spin wheelchair tires and basketballs.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Kay: We pray for our mouths, that they will speak words bringing life and connection. Help us use our mouths to honor the dignity and belovedness of all. Remind us to open our mouths for deep belly breaths when we're feeling anxious or afraid.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Amanda: We pray for our feet, that they will move toward those different from us and help others in safe ways. Plant our feet next to those who feel alone, and bless our steps down hallways and sidewalks. We know you are with us wherever our feet go or stay.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Laura: We pray for our eyes, that they may see ourselves and others with compassion. Point our eyes toward those who are forgotten or struggling. Grow us in flexibility to see from all kinds of angles. Bless what and how we see, whether we're looking at a screen, a whiteboard, or the beauty of a person's face. And help us see with the most important eyes—the eyes of the Spirit within us.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Brooke: We pray for our ears, that they will genuinely listen to all voices, especially those that haven't been listened to much. When things get noisy, help us listen extra carefully for your voice. Help us hear with the most important ears—the ears of the Spirit within us.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Blaire: We say a special prayer for parents, as the start of a new school year is always another leap of faith. Wrap them with your reassuring love as they entrust their children and trust in you. When questions remain unanswered, and the realm of control is finite, bless them with peace and the promise you are right there with their child, whether heading to preschool or driving to college.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Paula: We also pray now for teachers, staff and administrators. Bless these faithful servants with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classroom with a steady hand on their shoulder. Give them peace, patience, and balance in the pressures they face, and bravery to build structures and systems which justly serve all your children. Give them delight in the young ones before them, and recognition of the sweet ways children are also teachers.

Loving God, in your mercy...

Hold us and our prayers.

Name: We pray for health and wholeness, fun and growth, surprise and amazement, for this school year ahead, knowing you will hold us all the way through. All of this we pray in Jesus' name who taught his disciples to pray, saying, ...*Our Father, who art in heaven...*