**Psalm 96:11-13 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; 12Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice 13 before the Lord. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.**

Today, we lit the Advent candle of Joy. Christmas brings Glad tidings of great joy – for unto us a child is born, unto us a son a given. Few events in life bring joy like the birth of a child. Today, we will dedicate two children. This indeed is a joyful occasion.

 Our scripture from Psalm 96 reminds us that nature calls out the glory and wonder of God. Trees and fields rejoice. We know that, when people stay silent, the stones will testify of Jesus (Luke 19:40). At this time of the year, we have much to be joyful for, but the greatest joy is knowing that Christ came, completed His work, ascended, and will come again.

 Today, we celebrate the Child in the manger, and we dedicate two children from our church. Today’s dedication is a reminder that giving our children to God is confirmation of our love for God. In Matthew 10:37- 38, we read - *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.****38****And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.* God must be first in a believer’s life. Our eyes must be fastened on Him for family to flow as He designed.

 Today’s dedication is a reminder that giving our children to God is a clarification of God’s Lordship over our life. In Psalm 127:3 we read – *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.* Children give us the opportunity to focus on Who God is Lord in our life. We cannot serve two masters.

 Today’s dedication reminds us that giving our children to God is a commitment to raise the children in God’s way. God disciplines those He loves. Hebrews 12:6 says, “*For whom the Lord loves He chastens*”. Hebrews 12:8 says, “*But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*” Raising a child God’s way is teaching him the scriptures, loving him, disciplining him, and providing for him.

 Finally, this dedication reminds us that giving our children to God is the start of claiming God’s plans, promises, and blessings for the child’s life. Genesis 22:15-17 *Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*. We cannot claim God’s blessings unless we are willing to lay all on the altar, including our children. God has plans for every child. The start of claiming that plan is dedication to the Lord.

 Proverbs 22:6 says – *Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it*. Brandon and Taylor bring Preston Lee - Hunter, and Hannah bring Hayes Zane to be dedicated before God and this church today. We’ve known Taylor since she was a child. We’ve known Brandon a while. Hannah and Hunter have been part of this church long before they joined. We’ve heard Hudson pray for us. We’re witnessing them grow as Christians. It’s a blessing. Brandon, Taylor, Hunter, and Hannah, will you bring Preston and Hayes to stand by me before this church?

**Hayes Zane Cox Born 08/18/2019** – The name Hayes means hedged area in Old English. The name Zane in Hebrew means God is gracious. May Hayes always feel the hedge of God’s graciousness in his life.

**Pastor:** Hunter and Hannah, Hayes is a gift from God. Before your first prayer, God knew that on August 18, 2019, Hayes would make his way into this world. Hunter and Hannah, God has heard and blessed you.

**Hunter and Hannah**: We are blessed.

**Pastor:** The Bible commands you as parents to raise your child in fear of the Lord and to teach him of Jesus Christ. His spiritual growth will depend heavily on the example he sees in his parents. He will only hear in your words what he observes in your actions. Walk in Christlikeness, love with Christlikeness, treat one another with Christlikeness, and your child will grow towards Christlikeness. In Christ, you find spiritual Light. Hayes will grow towards this light. Hunter and Hannah, are you committed to raising Hayes in a Christlike atmosphere, intentionally seeking God, studying His scriptures, and teaching of Him, sharing openly and freely the things of our Savior Jesus Christ?

**Hunter and Hannah:** We are committed.

**Preston Lee Hargis Born 03/22/2020** – The name Preston derives from the term Priest Town in Old English. The name Lee means peaceful meadow. May Preston always follow His High Priest in the peace of God’s meadows all the days of his life.

**Pastor:** Brandon and Taylor, Preston is a gift from God. Before your first prayer, God knew that on March 22, 2020, Preston would make his way into this world. Brandon and Taylor, God has heard and blessed you.

**Brandon and Taylor**: We are blessed.

**Pastor:** The Bible commands you as parents to raise your child in fear of the Lord and to teach him of Jesus Christ. His spiritual growth will depend heavily on the example he sees in his parents. He will only hear in your words what he observes in your actions. Walk in Christlikeness, love with Christlikeness, treat one another with Christlikeness, and your child will grow towards Christlikeness. In Christ, you find spiritual Light. Preston will grow towards this light. Brandon and Taylor, are you committed to raising Preston in a Christlike atmosphere, intentionally seeking God, studying His scriptures, and teaching of Him, sharing openly and freely the things of our Savior Jesus Christ?

**Brandon and Taylor:** We are committed.

**Pastor:** **(please stand)** As a church family, the Bible commands that we support one another. Support is not just prayer. Support starts with prayer, but we must be willing to place our hands to the plow as well. We must not merely be spectators, hoping for the best, but we must be actively working to help Hunter, Hannah, and Hayes, as well as Hudson on their journey. We must actively work to help Brandon, Taylor, and Preston in their journey. We must rise to the challenge by exhibiting Christlikeness in our speech and our actions, loving one another as Christ loves us. Preston will only hear in our words what he observes in our actions. Church family I ask - do you commit to being a light for Preston to grow towards? If so, please respond – We are his family.

**Congregation:** We are his family

**Pastor:** As family, we must hold one another accountable to walk in purity and integrity of spirit. We have heard Hunter and Hannah make their commitment to raise Hayes and we have heard Brandon and Taylor make their commitment to raise Preston, both in an atmosphere of Christlikeness. Church family I ask - do you now acknowledge these commitments and make a commitment to help them keep their promise before God and this church? If so, please respond: We do.

**Congregation:** We do.

**Pastor:** Let us pray. Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, we come to You now in humbleness of spirit seeking Your blessing upon these children and these parents. Lord, You have heard the commitments. You see the hearts. You know our intentions. This day, in the name of Jesus Your Son, we ask for blessing, health, and prosperity upon this family. We pray that all will seek Jesus. Father, we dedicate Hayes and Preston to You. Make of both mighty men in Your Kingdom. Bless them in Your pathways. Protect and prosper their parents, bless and prosper Hudson, as each walks uprightly and in honor before You. Guide this church as we seek to support them and honor our commitment to You. It’s in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**Sing** – Blest Be The Tie That Bind Page 239