

A Service for A New School Year, St. Paul's, Chattanooga, TN. (Adapted from the Rev. David R. Henson.)

Leader: It is the beginning of a a new school year, and God is a God of new beginnings and new creations.

People: We give thanks for a new year and for new beginnings.

Leader: In the year ahead, we might have days when we get overwhelmed by tests, homework, and activities.

People: Grant us confidence and calm, and help us to ask for help when we need it.

Leader: Our teachers, parents, and friends will sometimes frustrate us, and things will feel unfair.

People: Give us peace in the midst of the storms raging around us and inside us.

Leader: We will be measured and tested in our school work.

People: Remind us that you have already made us worthy and called us by name.

Leader: We will see darkness in injustice, mean- spiritedness, and bullying, and will be tempted to join in.

People: Give us courage to resist and to be your beloved people.

Leader: We will want to fit in, and might wish to be different from who you created us to be.

People: Remind us of our identity given in baptism.

Leader: We will learn and grow and find new passions.

People: Thank you for the gift of wonder. Thank you for growing us in love and knowledge.

Leader: This year, we will make new friends and strengthen old friendships.

People: Give us patience and kindness to love our neighbors as ourselves. Thank you for the people who love us and show us how.

Leader: We will accomplish new things and face challenges.

People: Thank you for the delight of achieving our goals.

Leader: These are our prayers, our fears and our frustrations, our hopes and our dreams for the year.

People: We will hold them with each other.

Leader: God, we ask your blessing on these backpacks. They will hold the school work of each student and will be carried from home to school and back again. As these students carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of the love and care of this congregation that surrounds them each school day.

Bless these school supplies for the students of Orchard Knob Elementary School. May they serve the students well, equip their learning, and be signs of love.

Closing Blessing

Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Go in peace to follow the good road and may God's blessing be with you always. Amen. (St. Clare of Assisi)