

Welcome to the World, Andrew Wynn Zuckerman!

Welcome to all who have gathered here to celebrate Andrew's existence and his entrance into our community!

Blessing for childbirth

(Rachel:)

Holy One of Blessing, thank you
for bringing me through pregnancy

through labor and delivery
safely and (w)hol(l)y.

Thank you for sustaining my body,
my emotions, mind, and spirit.

Ha-rachaman הרחמן
ar-rahman, ar-rahim الرحمن الرحيم

You nurture all creation
in Your compassionate womb.

Praised are You, my God,
creator of embodied miracles!

Lighting the Havdalah Candle

Rachel's Aunt Vicki Pieser: We light this havdalah candle as a symbol of the intertwined families and communities within which Andrew will be raised. As the flames join each other, making one brighter and more lasting flame, so too does our coming together create a community that is more than the sum of its parts.

Blessing of wine

Rachel's sister Melissa Sunog: In Jewish tradition wine is a symbol of gladness; it's part of every celebratory and ritual occasion. Because we want everyone here to savor Andrew's birth, we're passing around little cups of wine; please take one, and share in our joy! This cup is the vessel of our hopes. It is filled with the new wine of life just begun. The sweetness of its taste is the added joy that this new child brings. Please join with me in blessing the wine, in Hebrew and in English.

All:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Family Prayers

Parents:

We join together in welcoming Andrew into his family and into the world. May he be blessed with the ability to learn from the lessons life gives him, and to be joyful, kind and strong.

Though none can escape sorrow and pain, we hope Andrew grows to have the courage to face them and the strength to transcend them. May he grow to be curious and kind, rooted in his community and interested in the wide world around him.

May he be a builder of bridges; may he be blessed with loving friends wherever he goes; may he find sustenance in the deep wells of family and tradition. And may we be up to the challenge of raising him to be everything that he can be! And let us say, Amen.

Grandparents:

Donna and Don:

Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique. It is the duty of every person to know and consider that he is unique and that there has never been anyone like him before. For if there had been something like him before, there would be no need for him to be in the world. Every single person is a new thing and is called upon to fulfill his particularity in the world. (*Adapted: Martin Buber*)

Marvin and Liana:

May you live to see a world that you create,
and may your future be a time we cannot yet imagine.
May your hope span the generations.
May your heart learn understanding.
May you speak words of wisdom and sing songs of joy.
May your vision be clear before you.
May your eyes shine with the light of wise teachings,
And your face glow with the radiance of heaven,
And may you run to discover the words of the Holy Blessed One.
(*adapted from Talmud, B'rakhot 17a*)

Entering the covenant on the 8th day

Rachel: Jewish tradition holds that the prophet Elijah—the same one who sips wine at every seder!—witnesses every baby-naming. Elijah is the harbinger of messianic time; his presence reminds us that every child has the potential to transform the world.

(Ethan, To Andrew) At this moment, you are not yet formally named. We do not know who you will become. May Elijah, who witnesses this holy moment, guide and guard you as you heal the world through words and deeds which are uniquely yours.

Rachel: In Genesis we read that God commanded Abraham to begin the tradition of circumcision on the 8th day. Today both Jews and our Muslim cousins still carry on this tradition of circumcision as a sign of covenant with God. Andrew's *bris* took place earlier today; now it is time to give him his names.

Naming

Jeff: In the midrash, we read that every child has three names: the one granted by his parents, the one that others call him, and the one he makes for himself. Today we're giving Andrew three sets of names in addition to whatever name he makes or chooses!

[Parents explain names: Rachel will explain Andrew after his great-grandmother Alice, Ethan will explain Wynn after his great-grandmother Winifred, R will explain Yitzchak after his great-grandfather Isaac, Ethan will explain Kwame as follows:]

In addition to these, today he also receives his Ghanaian name. In the Akan/Twi communities of Ghana, a given name goes with each day of the week. These names are conferred at the "outdooing" ceremony, where the child is formally introduced to his community...in some communities, on the 8th day!

Because Andrew was born on a Saturday, his Ghanaian name is Kwame. In Ghana he will be known as Kwame, son of Yao and Afua.

Drew doesn't know it yet, but he's got friends around the world who are excited to meet him. One is Bernard Woma, my dear friend from Nandom, Ghana who I deferentially refer to as "my elder brother". Bernard is home in Ghana now, but offers this traditional Dagara blessing to welcome Drew to the world.

Using a calabash of akpeteshie and another of water, place a drop of water on Drew's forehead.

"Drew, you are welcome to this world. Your name is Andrew Wynn Yitzchak Kwame Zuckerman, and may your many names make you welcome wherever you roam in the world."

with a second drop

"Drew, this water is for all the blessings you'll need on this earth - blessings of peace, prosperity and fertility"

use a drop of akpeteshie

"Drew, This is what the world has to offer you. If this taste sweet for you, take it in moderation. If this taste bitter, advise yourself."

Pour libation and declare that all of us gathered here are witnesses to this ceremony and we ask their blessing and wisdom to help Drew become an honorable member of this world.

A story

*Ethan's sister Elizabeth Zuckerman: One of the traditions into which Andrew is born is Judaism. In light of that tradition, a *midrash*, an interpretive teaching from Torah.*

When our community stood at Sinai to receive revelation, the Holy One said, "Present to Me good guarantors that you will guard these words which aim toward wisdom, and I will give these teachings to you."

They said, "Our ancestors are our guarantors."

The Holy One said, "Your ancestors are not sufficient guarantors. Bring Me better guarantors."

They said, "Our prophets are our guarantors."

God said to them, "Your prophets are not sufficient guarantors. Bring Me yet better guarantors."

They said, "Our children will be our guarantors."

The Holy One said, "These are certainly good guarantors. For their sake I give you these words which aim toward wisdom, these aspirations and inspirations written on the human heart."

Prayers for Andrew

"As you are wrapped..." (read by friends Emily Banner and Daniel Beck)

Andrew, as you are wrapped in your parents' arms, so may your life be wrapped in justice and righteousness. As we embrace you today, so may you embrace your traditions and your communities. As your eyes are filled with wonder when you gaze at the world, so too may you be filled with wonder at the everyday miracles of life. As you startle to the world around you, so may you remain ever open both to the happiness and to the pain of those you encounter in the world. As you cry for food and comfort now, so may you one day cry out to correct the injustices of the world, to help clothe the naked and feed the hungry. As your hand tightly grasps your parents' fingers, so may you grasp hold of learning to grow in knowledge and wisdom.

"Blessing," adapted from Rabbi Leila Gal Berner (read by friend Sandy Ryan)

May you know great joy, happiness, and fulfillment.

May you honor your parents, recognizing that they have brought you into the world in love and in hope, and may you bring them great joy.

May you go from strength to strength, yet always be able to accept your own weaknesses and those of others.

May you judge yourself and others with fairness and compassion, and without harshness.

May you have the confidence and self-esteem to move towards whatever goals you choose for yourself, and may you have the wisdom and courage to change your mind if your original goals are replaced by newer and better ones.

May you allow yourself to dream your dreams and soar with flights of fancy and imagination.

May your ears be filled with music of every imaginable kind, and may the rhythms be of your own making, allowing yourself to march at your own pace.

May you experience inevitable moments of sadness and pain in a way that will give these moments meaning and add value to your life.

May you live in a world blessed with peace and harmony, and may your future be as bright and as hopeful as the world's first rainbow.

And let us all say: Amen.

"Here is Your First Gift" (read by Ethan's great-aunt Adele Zuckerman)

Here is your first gift
(this blessing, this echo):
sound you'll answer to
turning, always, to see who spoke.

Here is your name,
which people we don't know
will call you years from now,
when your infant face

with its astonished look
is just a picture
and our huge, parental love
a blur of hands.

—Jody Bolz

Blessings from the community

Jeff: Each of us here has a unique role to play in Andrew's life. By being part of this naming ceremony, we affirm our intent to be a part of his growing up. I'm going to ask you three questions; please respond with all your hearts by saying "We do."

Do you promise to be involved with Andrew and to care for him?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to listen when he needs to talk, and provide support when he needs to lean; to teach him the things that you alone can teach?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to be his friend, to encourage him as he grows, to help him take pleasure in life's beauties and to weather life's storms, to help him connect with others and with himself; to encourage him to laugh and to cry, to hope and to dream, and to grow into the best Andrew he can be?

(Community: We do!)

Andrew, we pledge to you that we will be your community. We will be here to teach you what we know, to listen to what you have to say, and to support you into growing into the baby, the kid, and the adult you will become.

Closing

Chanted by friend David Markus:

יִבְרַכְךָ יי וּשְׁמַרְךָ / *Yivarechecha Adonai v'yishmarecha.*
May God bless you and keep you.

יֵאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנַךְ / *Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.*
May God's presence deal kindly with you and be gracious unto you.

יֵשָׁא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם. / *Yis'a Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem lecha shalom.*
May God's presence radiate upon you and from within you,
and give you peace.

Jeff: Please join with me in reciting the *shehecheyanu*, the Jewish blessing which sanctifies the passage of time:

All:

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment!

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh!