

Proper 1C Trinity/Baptism
Peace, Seattle
May 22, 2016
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31, Romans 5:1-5

WISDOM IN THE WATERS

**The voice of Woman Wisdom rings in our ears this Trinity Sunday.
TO YOU, O PEOPLE, I CALL, says she, AND MY CRY IS TO ALL THAT LIVE.**

And where does Woman Wisdom stand as she calls? Where does she meet us?
At the crossroads, at the gates, at the entrances & portals; at the intersections of our lives.

Birth is the first of those portals; that place where She who “*knit us together in our mother’s womb*” bears us from those warm, weightless waters out into the world.

After nine months of waiting and wondering everything changes as that little one gulps her first breath of air, as he is flooded with the sights, sounds and sensations of a whole new world.

These little ones with us today—a trio on Trinity Sunday—have made that journey recently – Gabriel 7 months ago; Jayden and Stella 2 months ago.

And today we’re ushering them, all three, to the 2nd crossroads of their young lives, where Wisdom calls their names once more—here at the Font.

For through Wisdom, by God’s design, this is where the gracious promises of the Triune God enter their lives, washing over them in waters of rebirth.

This the place where, sealed by the Spirit, their little feet, not yet ready to walk on their own, are set on the Way of Jesus.

Yes, this is the place where their families expand exponentially to include not only parents and grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins, but a whole community of lovers stretching through this sanctuary and across the world—the body of Christ, the people of God.

**Wisdom calls their names today – Gabriel, Jayden, Stella – COME TO THE WATERS!
And we too have come; come to pledge ourselves as fellow and sister journeyers.
Come to declare ourselves, publicly and out loud, to be their sisters and brothers.**

I find so much encouragement in these verses from Proverbs, for not only is it the case that Wisdom calls and accompanies us—Wisdom, we learn, has accompanied God from the very beginning!

- Before the beginning of the Earth, She was there.
- When there were no depths, no springs, She was there.
- Before the mountains were shaped, before the first bits of soil were formed, She was there.

WHEN GOD MARKED OUT EARTH’S VERY FOUNDATIONS, I WAS RIGHT THERE BESIDE GOD, LIKE A LITTLE CHILD; AND I WAS DAILY GOD’S DELIGHT, REJOICING BEFORE GOD ALWAYS, REJOICING IN THIS INHABITED WORLD AND DELIGHTING IN THE HUMAN RACE.

Wisdom, says this passage, was like a toddler underfoot, keeping God on his toes, and pointing with glee to the world as it was coming into being. How’s that for a baptismal text?!
Stella, Jayden, Gabriel, as you grow, as you keep your parents on their toes, you’ll be following in the footsteps of Wisdom herself, eh? (At least some of the time...)

This text from Proverbs is a third take on the Creation story, a version written in a new key—a key whose name is DELIGHT, a key whose name is JOY.

There's nothing that brings us more JOY than watching our little ones discover joy in themselves. Seeing their smiles makes our hearts skip a beat—we can't get enough of it—and that feeling of DELIGHT is, this story tells us, at the core of how GOD, in the eyes of Wisdom, sees us.

In the animated film INSIDE OUT the inner life of an 11-year-old girl named Riley is personified by a group of emotion-based characters who inhabit a control center inside Riley's mind. The job of these characters—joy, sadness, fear, disgust, and anger—is to help Riley negotiate her way through the ups and downs of everyday life.

As the movie begins we watch as core memories of unconditional love and well-being—in the form of golden, luminous spheres—begin building a firm foundation for what looks to be a well-adjusted life.

And all seems to be on target, until Riley's family moves from their home in Minnesota to a new life in San Francisco, where Riley's emotional life goes through a series of challenges and transformations.

These challenges, and the new complexity of emotions that accompany them, force the emotions crew in her brain's control center to search for new levels of complexity and strength so that they can help Riley find stability once again.

It's an incredibly imaginative, subtle, and satisfying film—one to which each person in our family has given an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

What I want to suggest this morning is that the grace, unconditional love, and acceptance that are ours in these waters are gifts for our core identity that will never go away...

That the peace which is our birthright in these waters is a peace which never fails, for "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

There will be many other crossroads in the lives of these little ones, as there have been and will be in our own, where voices with mixed motives will vie for attention and allegiance. But there is no portal, no entrance or gate or crossroads more important than this one we celebrate today as we bring them to the Font of blessing.

Here they are marked with the love of God in Christ Jesus indelibly and forever.

Here the symbol of how far God was willing to come to make his love real—the cross—becomes part of their lives forever.

This sacrament doesn't dictate or predict a smooth or trouble free life. There is no such thing. But it promises Christ's constant companionship with these children all along the way—both during the times they can feel it and revel in it, and in the times when they cannot. And this, finally, is the kind of companionship they, and all of us need. Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!

Amen.