

Introduction to Baptism

As Aldred pointed out in his sermon last week, the season of Pentecost is a natural time for baptisms. In the congregation where he grew up – Pentecost Sunday was Baptism Sunday for those who had attended a catechetical class in the past year.

Today we linger in the afterglow of the Pentecost fireworks where Spirit like fire and wind empowered the early followers of Jesus to speak boldly about what they had experienced.

And those who heard Peter speak and saw the newly gathered church were in awe of the signs and wonders that were being done and day-by-day, it says in Acts, “the Lord added to their number.”

But very quickly and already when Paul writes his letter to the Romans (a portion of which the Junior Youth just shared with us) – things have calmed a bit. People were no longer joining the church 3000 at a time. Rather the small Christian church in Rome was experiencing persecution and in Romans 5 the tone of the letter has become one of encouragement in the face of suffering.

Skip ahead to our century and in our culture here in Canada, joining the church has become again as countercultural as it was in 1st century Rome. If the Pax Romana – the peace of the Roman empire could offer a person peace, prosperity and security – why would one want to join a small group of Christ followers? Yes, the peace of Christ was offered as an alternative to the peace of Rome but you opened yourself to the possibility of suffering for that choice.

I offer that it makes as little sense now as it did then, because it's not really about making sense. It's about more than that. It is about the Holy Spirit and the power of Jesus and the great work of God that offers itself to every person of every age.

And according to the scriptures that we've heard this morning it's about wisdom calling out from the street corners in Proverbs and it's about the Sovereignty of God over the whole earth in the Psalm, and it's about the peace and hope provided by the faith of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit in Paul's letter to the Romans....

Said slightly differently - It's about a God who comes to us
as wise Creator,
faithful Redeemer
and a surprising and powerful sustainer.

This morning two persons among us will formalize their commitment to God and this small group of Christ followers through baptism. I invite Autumn and Sherri and their faith partners to come forward now. Autumn and Sherri will be

introduced briefly by their faith partners and then share with us their own faith stories.