



Wednesday Prayer

Baptism of Our Lord – New Beginnings

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Genesis 1:1-5

Our lessons for this coming Sunday focus on the beginnings of God’s creation and the newness of life through baptism. I love new beginnings, a fresh start, accepting the past for what it has taught me and choosing to move forward trusting in God’s goodness. This has been a particularly difficult year for me and for many others. Some are ready to move forward and others may hold on to what has been. These are very common reactions, even when the change leads to a more healthy or more safe way of living.

In our movement to end the suffering of human trafficking and exploitation, we are being led to listen to the voices of survivors each step of the way. We know that some of the ways this movement has worked in the past is through some thinking that we know what’s best for another, or that a person could be “rescued” or “saved”. We have learned more and more that the trauma-bonds created by exploiters, traffickers and even through online “relationships” run deep. Our support must be unwavering, creating new beginnings over and over again, without judgement and as an ongoing process. And our work to **prevent** unhealthy bonds from even starting must be strong and unwavering.

God’s word to Jesus when he was baptized was that Jesus was beloved, that God was well pleased. Our young people need to hear over and over from safe adults how they are worthy, they are loved, and we are pleased with them. Yesterday I posted to the Cherish All Children Facebook page:

What kind of future will I build in this new year to support children and youth?

Join us in 2024* to learn about the national crisis of sextortion targeting youth of all genders online, and what we can do together to prevent this and keep children and youth safe.

God, we are all your beloved. May we share messages with the young people in our lives and communities that they were created in God’s image as beloved children. Let us honor your creation through our work to protect and support all. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

* Join us Sunday, January 21, 2:30 – 3:30pm for a free virtual education event

[Protecting Youth from Sextortion](#)