

Baptism – 11 September 2022

Luke 15: 1-10

**We thank you, God, for the gift of Life – for the waters of baptism and for your Word that offers us hope in & through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Today we have witnessed signs of life – a new addition to our family. We welcome Briar Maree & her parents Sarah & Adam, siblings of Briar – Austin, and Poppy to be a part of our family here at Applecross – part of the worldwide family of God. Through baptism, we have each been sprinkled, washed & welcomed into the Love of God. It is a time of celebration, of wonder and a time of discovery as a whole new way of life opens before us – we forsake the old & with our eyes being opened – we start to look forward to new possibilities. For Sarah & Adam, life never is the same again– once Briar was born, the whole daily routine changed, priorities were re-evaluated & new plans were made for the future. The old regime had to change, like waking up in the middle of the night to feed or change Briar – you can't hide under the duvet when new life is demanding attention, comfort, or care – whatever time of the day or night.

But if we ask Sarah & Adam whether it is worth it, what will they say? Yes of course it is – worth all the waiting of the 9 months, the labour pains, the delivery & bringing Briar back home – rearranging the home to accommodate her. Each of us here was babies, and I believe all of us have also been baptized – born of the Spirit – the waters of baptism today are a sign & a symbol of God's covenant love.

In today's gospel, Pharisees are certain of their goodness; they assume others fall outside the circle of salvation. Jesus makes clear that everyone falls within the shadow of salvation, regardless of who they are. The question posed by the

parable is whether we will join in the celebration- to celebrate with God one must also share in God's mercy. Pharisees' righteousness had become a barrier separating them from God's mercy and love. Their righteousness did not make God happy.

In this context, the emphasis is on the joy of recovery, the joy of God at those who respond to God's love. The God who loves all is welcoming everyone and inviting us to join the celebration. Love is shown to the least, the weakest, the most vulnerable, that is when we remember the song of God's love deep in our hearts and we know without a doubt that God loves us just the very same way.

In a moment we shall baptize Briar. Through water, we claim for her God's amazing promise, to keep her from the righteousness of Pharisees, and with her parents, Austin, Poppy, Godparents, and community at large, we are beginning a journey of faith. Baptism is the symbol of our faith: its waters are ever nourishing, refreshing, and life-giving, even when the winds of life stir them to a storm. Think about our baptism and how the waters of faith flow through our life. It means that we belonged to the God who created us. So that we might become an agent of what we have received: God's agent of grace, acceptance, forgiveness, and mercy. We all are invited to celebrate that mercy and love.

AMEN