



Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

Wednesday Prayer – Baptism of Our Lord Sunday

**When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."
Luke 3:21-22**

With you I am well pleased.

How many children long to hear these words? I presume *ALL* children long to hear these words. How many “likes” did you get on your Facebook or Instagram post? Is it enough? Does it fill the void of longing to hear “with you I am well pleased”? Our youth face a challenge many of us in an earlier generation never imagined. The barrage of sexualized images and perfection shown on social media create in many a need to hear from their followers that they are beautiful, that they are liked, that they matter.

As adults, we can step in to let youth know of their value above and beyond what is shared on social media. They are longing to hear this from us. And this doesn't mean the social media piece will go away, but it means that they are also hearing true, authentic messages from the people who care for and love them the most. One of my Sunday School students shared this week that “at church, people seem to have more hope than out in the world.” At first this made me a little sad. And then I realized we can all make an impact on this out in the world. This middle school boy seemed to long for that hope, that caring and supportive love he receives from our church community. I asked our class how each of them could be that hope in their daily lives, when they return to school, in their after school activities, with their friends, or with someone in need of a friend.

How can we be that hope out in the world for our youth, sharing with them that we are pleased with who they are, even when they may be struggling? If we aren't stepping into this role, there are too many others waiting to exploit those who are vulnerable, those who are looking for a void to be filled. Reach out, sharing a message of acceptance and love.

Dear Loving God, you sent your Son who shared messages of acceptance and love with all, especially those who were not accepted in society. And you let him know you were pleased. Help us to spread this message with all children and youth, filling the voids with acceptance and love. Amen.

Today's Wednesday Prayer was written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.