

Come Holy Spirit and open our hearts and our minds to the God who gives us true life through you.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth;
I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

These are hard words to hear from Jesus!

Especially on such a happy day as a baptism, this ancient, ancient rite!

What do you mean, you didn't come to bring peace?

We like A JESUS

Who makes us feel good...

(HOLD UP smiling emoji pillow)

Who gives us the warm fuzzies.

Who's cozy and cuddly.

Didn't many of us grow up singing, “Jesus loves me, this I know”

But this is not that Jesus.

Today, we get something more like this:

(HOLD UP ANGRY RABBIT)

So what's up with this scripture?

This Jesus SOUNDS pretty angry.

He's upset.

THIS Jesus is here to make trouble.

But I am here to tell you,
This is GOOD trouble.

This Jesus here to uncover and expose
what is has been kept hidden.

This Jesus is here to upend generational patterns...
Disturb business as usual.

This Jesus is here to tell us the hard truth about ourselves and the world.

Speaking of scary hard truths lets....

Look in your bulletin at

The Presentation and Examination on the Candidates.

These are the vows the parents and Godparents take for –

Penny and Liam and Greg

before they are baptized today.

These children would be saying these things themselves if they adults.

These first three renunciations:

-Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness
that rebel against God?

-Do you renounce the evil power of this world which
corrupt and destroy the creatures of God

-Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you
from the love of God?

These are words of exorcism.
And that means casting OUT of evil.

These are strong words.

Cutting words.

The work that that Penny, Greg and Ian have before them
(and that is before all of us) as Christians
to fulfill our baptismal covenants...

...it is no joke.

It is not easy.

Look at Jerimiah.

He prophesized God's justice and transformation and it got him kicked to the curb because he made Good Trouble.

And he got cut off from everyone.

But it is into the Good Trouble Jesus Christ that they are baptized today.

The love of Christ is transformative.

And it calls us to live bravely.

When we are REALLY loving God with all our heart, mind and soul

When we are REALLY loving ourselves and loving our neighbor...

We will not tolerate poverty

We will not tolerate racism.

We will not tolerate prejudice based on gender, or sexual orientation.

We will not tolerate the abuse of our environment for our own comfort.

Because these things lead to death.

Jesus doesn't want us to live with a false, cartoonish kind of peace.

....A life of complacency and peace

built on over-consumption

and on the back of someone else's suffering.

Jesus says, sure we may have that comfortable life,

but we will surely loose it -

maybe when the whole society eventually falls apart...

because of climate change,...

vast income inequality,...

or even revolution (it's happened here in the past!)

But when we loosen our tight hold on our own gratification –
and live a life of generosity,
humility,
modest consumption of goods,
we can find a way that is life giving for all.

Jesus doesn't want us to cling to a God that is comfortable and comforting
but not challenging.

And Jesus says every generation will challenge the generation before it.
Each generation will disrupt the next one.
And this is Good Trouble.

Don't we want Penny and Greg and Liam to make a better world for their
generation?

A world that more just,
more loving,
more life-giving for every person??

Don't we want them to reject the sins of the generations before them?
Don't we want them to make Good Trouble.

Holy Trouble...

Necessary trouble in the name of Jesus?

We need the power and the true transformative love of God in Jesus Christ –
The sword of Christ, - to go before us
To cut down evil and create a path before us.

This kind of power is not what we get from a shallow peace
that might feel good.

The hope of the Christian life is this:
Jesus died.
And rose again.
He was resurrected.
His resurrection that was the very real fusing together
of the Kingdom of God-
With the body of Jesus of Nazareth

God's powerful, perfect, transformative love and justice
Fused with this imperfect world of the solid matter.

That was the power of the Resurrected Christ.
God with us....God fused to us.
Forever.
And we have access to that power through Him in our baptism.

And it into this resurrection is what we baptize
these beautiful children [this beautiful child] today.

Forever, they [he] will have the sign of the Holy Trinity upon them.
Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Godspeed to them
As they make Good Trouble.

.