**Baptism talk for Mazie Louise**

**16/1/22**

**10 min – all age – family service**

**Stowe Church**

**Plan:**

* Welcome – great to be with you on an exciting day. So lovely to see so many friends here to support Phil and Shelly, so lovely to have godparents and friends and family here. You are really welcome. And we are very excited to have Maisie here and her big sister Grace.
* My role today is to help us think through what is going to happen in a baptism service. When Maisie is going to be baptised and welcomed into the family of the church here at Stowe. I’d love us to think now a little about what that means.
* Although today is a big day for the Hilsdon family, one of the great things about a baptism is that everyone here has a big part to play. Phil and Shelly and the God parents… you guys are going to make some huge promises on behalf of Maisie, you are going to promise to live a Christian life, promises to care for Maisie and to bring her up in the life of the church, as part of God’s family.
* And it is our sincere hope and prayer that one day Maisie owns and make these promises for herself.
* Secondly St. Stowe Church… you will also make some big promises today…
* When we get to the baptism there is a part for you, you will be asked:
* **Will you promise to support Maisie as she begins her journey of faith?**
* And you will all responded, “**With the help of God, we will.”**
* That means you promise, to love and support this family, to pray for Maisie and to actively welcome her as part of the church. This is not a promise you should make lightly.
* Whenever someone is baptised, it means there is a new member of the family of the church.
* That’s how the bible thinks about being baptised… That someone is becoming become part of God’s family.
* Let me give you an example of what this is like…
* Who knows who this character is?
* Picture of Woodie
* Harder question… can anyone tell me what Woody has written on his boot?
* Andy… that’s right. Andy is the boy who plays with Woody. But more than that…
* Woody becomes part of Andy’s family, as Andy writes his name on Woody’s boot.
* It’s a beautiful image that runs through the film.
* And something similar has happening here today in baptism. I’m going to mark Maisie’s head with the sign of the cross… it’s symbolically saying that she’s now part of God’s family.
* We’re going to think now about how it is that *we* can become part of God’s family.
* I’m going to re-read a little bit of the reading we heard and with your help I’m going to explain how we can be part of God’s family.
* **Galatians 4:4-7**
* **4But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son (Jesus), born of a woman, born under the law, 5to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *“Abba*, Father.” 7So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.**
* As we think about baptism today, I have three props that will help me explain a bit more about baptism.
* The first one answers the question – *How can we be baptised and welcomed into God’s family?*
* Have a look here, what have I got here?
* What is it? It’s a cross… and it reminds us from our passage that God sent Jesus to **‘Redeem’** us… another word we might use for that is to **rescue** us. When someone gets baptised, they are saying I recognize that I needed God to come and rescue me.
* Jesus does this by coming to earth and dying for us on a cross, so we can be forgiven. And Jesus rescues us in order that we can be ‘adopted into God’s family.’
* The cross reminds us, that baptised people have been rescued by God and are part of His family.
* OK Second present…
* A candle…
* At Baptism people who are baptised are given a candle. And when we do, they are accompanied by words… so I wonder if you can open your service sheet to the back page,
* There you wills see the words when giving the candle I say: ***You have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life.***
* Together we then say: **Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.**
* One of the things that a candle represents or is a symbol of God’s spirit.
* When someone becomes a Christian… when they choose to follow Jesus… the bible says that God sends his Holy Spirit… to live in our hearts.
* Today, we are going to do lots of things that have symbolism… I will put water of Maisie’s head, she will be marked with the sign of the cross… they are all good symbols…
* A bit like Andy marking woody with his name, it’s a good symbol, but it doesn’t mean that he is in Andy’s family. If I wright Andy on my foot, it doesn’t mean I’m in Andy’s family… It’s the relationship that Andy and woody have that makes them family.
* Being marked with a cross, is a good outward sign, but the way that God truly makes you part of his family…
* The way that God marks his children is to send His Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. That is how we know that we are truly His.
* How do you know someone is a Christian? How do you know they are part of God’s family? Because they have asked God to send His spirit into their hearts.
* And that is what we are praying for Maisie… that one day she will do this for herself!
* And this invitation to be part of God’s family is something that is open to all of us… not just to Maisie, or Shelly or Phil, but to all of us… We too can ask God to come into our hearts.
* Third and final symbol…
* Can you tell me what it is? It’s a certificate…. Now later we are going to give Maisie a baptism certificate… but I have with me another certificate… what is this? It’s a birth certificate… Now Maisie is going to be given a certificate at the end of today…
* And that is a baptism certificate.
* It’s a bit like a birth certificate… a really important document… because it tell you **who you are** and **what family you belong to**.
* The baptism certificate works in the same well. Our passage today told us that when God’s Spirit comes into our hearts, then we are
* **… no longer a slave, but God’s child.**
* I hope that in the years to come when Maisie looks at her baptism certificate it is there to remind her, that God has made her His Child. She is part of His family.
* And that is what we celebrate today, as Stowe Church and part of God’s worldwide family, we want to welcome you to be part of that family. Stowe Church is a church of people who are part of God’s family and you are welcome to be part of that too.
* Friends, if like Maisie, Grace, Shelly, and Philip, you are interested in finding out what it means to be part of God’s family, I know how much Stowe Church would love to welcome you to………... We would love to invite you to come and find out more and there are lots of opportunities to do that here. In including staying behind at the end of Tea and Coffee, to find out more about being part of God’s family.

**Blessing**

Heavenly Father, by the power of your Holy Spirit you give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism. Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit, that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love, and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit now and for ever.

**Amen.**

Now, may the God of all grace,

who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus,

establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

**AMEN**