



Just so everyone is aware: Zena and Kaeva have already been frequenters on Sunday mornings with worship and Sunday school, not to mention Vacation Bible school and other random happenings here at Divinity. They have done so sporting bright attire and contagious enthusiasm, along the way bringing joy to those around them here in this place. But it is only more than fitting that they are baptized together this evening, because they seem to feed off each other's energy and love for one another.

And not only that, but it is also rather fitting for the rest of us to witness these two precious children of God baptized together, because one of the parts about baptism that we often overlook is the belief that the baptized are further united into a family in Christ that connects to people not just in the room where it happens, or the respective congregation membership, but people all around the world, and not stopping there, but to other children of God who have come and gone from long, long ago. Every once in a while we need reminded of that most vast family in Christ, because with this whole baptism thing, comes some rather lofty expectations. Yes, we hope Zena and Keava learn about Jesus' love for them and how that came together in a Bethlehem and a Nazareth and a Jerusalem of long ago, but that they may also recognize that love for them and the world still going on now, and that Zena and Kaeva will find their own way of serving as disciples of Jesus Christ, in whatever way that will ignite their faith that they cannot help but share it with others. No pressure or anything for them, but today we remind them and all of us, that they do not take on such a calling alone, for we have siblings in Christ in this room, in this Divinity community of faith, and with people all over the world.

And in that vast family in Christ are people who show up with the brightest attire on Sunday mornings and most contagious enthusiasm. And then there are others who don't. There are those who aren't so sure they would be welcomed inside church buildings. There are those who aren't so sure where they stand with God. There are those who seem to know their Bibles backwards and forwards, and those who don't remember a single thing since they last opened it from their Sunday school days. In this most vast family in Christ is the full gamut of faith expression and biological family backgrounds and culture and worship attendance and everything else. But through this most vast family in Christ is something that still boggles our minds, is the same love of God for them all.

So, in a way, there isn't any pressure for Zena and Keava, after all, because no matter what happens in their life going forward, God is never going to stop absolutely adoring them. God will cherish them even on the days when they're not so sure they want to wear the brightest of attire or enter a room with not the cheeriest of enthusiasm. That, no matter what, nothing is going to happen to separate them from God's love in Jesus Christ, our Lord. There may very well come days for Zena and Keava, when they're not so sure about Scripture or the church or God. And I like to think that is all the more when the vast family in Christ comes into holy play.

Part of our proceedings tonight will be asking their parents, Ann and William, as well as their grandparents, who will serve as their godparents in Kris and John; we will ask all four of them, if

they believe in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. And in the majority of our worships together here at Divinity, we ask people to proclaim their faith together. Week after week, there is this unison of the Divinity family saying they believe in God the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But I like to think that in that unison of voices are people who really aren't so sure in that moment. And there are others with the utmost conviction who say so with boldness. Sometimes in the moments of our struggle, we depend on the strength of others in a variety of ways. Hopefully Zena and Keava will always provide that for each other, but hopefully they will also experience that in whatever place they can find their precious corner of the vast body of Christ.

Yes, in that vast body of Christ is the full gamut of the faith expression with all the doubts and fears and struggles and joys and strength and brightest attire and contagious enthusiasm and everything in between. But what still boggles our human minds is the very Gospel of Jesus Christ that is further proclaimed in baptism: through that most vast family in Christ is the same love of God for them all, including for God's precious Zena and Keava, who both can be rest assured that nothing will ever happen in their lives to separate them from God's love in Jesus Christ, their Lord, our Lord. For that Greatest News of all, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!