

# The Baptism of Alek

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*A reflection given before the baptism of baby Alek on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022 by the Associate Vicar the Revd Wendy Wale in Beverley Minster*

*Luke 18:15-17*

When Jesus was ministering, young children were not significant. They were often overlooked and they certainly didn't have a voice. They would, as children still are today, have been entirely dependent on their caregivers and they would have been vulnerable and would have had to have trusted that their needs would be met.

And so when Jesus calls children to himself, giving them the highest significance, it paints for us a radical picture of what God's kingdom is like. God's kingdom is where the mighty and powerful are overlooked and those who are often ignored and feel they have no voice are called to the centre. God's kingdom belongs to the children, those whose faith is childlike, open and trusting, willing to be vulnerable, coming to God open-handed and recognising a dependence on Him.

[Wendy addresses the baptism party]

The family this morning is bringing Alek to baptism, where the water symbolises cleansing from sin, a dying with Christ on the cross and rising to a new life in him. And at the end of our service today we will light a candle from our Pascal candle and give that probably not to Alek because he's not actually very big. But perhaps to his big brother, if we're feeling brave. But it's a symbol, the symbol that we carry the light of God --- the light of Christ; the hope of the kingdom where everything is different --- out of here into the world.

And I hope this morning that in this pause and this moment, we can be reminded of our own baptism. And if you've not been baptised, please chat to me afterwards, because we love splashing water on people and recognising their faith and their journey in faith, because that's what it is. For Alek, it's very much a start of a journey, but we're reminded of it in the bread and the wine, where you will be invited later to come like a small child with your hands open, trusting that in that bread and wine are the promises of god; a reminder that each time we come we receive that new life through Jesus's death and his resurrection and it's an invitation to us to carry that

light and life of hope wherever we go, to whomever we meet this week; the light that shines in the darkness will never be put out and we, as God-bearers carry that light.

And as we know in our world, in our country at this time there are difficulties for so many. We continue to pray for places of conflict especially in the Ukraine. We are feeling, especially in these roads right now the impact of global warming. The cost of living crisis will be hitting maybe ourselves, certainly those who we know and love. I know many of us here are feeling the impact of the stretch on our health service and there is a vulnerability that comes with all this uncertainty. But may we get hope this morning from the fact that that vulnerability that we see in children and perhaps feel in ourselves is the place where God wants to meet us.

And I invite you if it would feel important and symbolic to you after you've received communion or at the end of the service to make your way to the font, to perhaps mark yourself with the cross to remind yourself of where our hope and strength comes from, of whose life you have received and to offer a prayer for Alek and for our world.