

VPOSITIVE PARENTING  
MARILYN SHARPE  
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## DRENCHED WITH THE WATERS OF BAPTISM

I have called you by name, you are mine...

Isaiah 43:1c

All in one astonishing day, I experienced the Confirmation of a beloved young man and the dying words of a cherished friend in Chicago. The entire day was drenched with the promise of baptism.

Taylor, at 14, was confirmed in a glorious worship service, reminding us all of the gifts of baptism, of deeply faithful parents who kept their promises, and the affirmation of his baptism that Taylor was ready to make. Now, Taylor proclaimed, "I believe!"

Taylor is part of my family, not created by birth, adoption, foster care, or marriage, but by loving and journeying together, by choosing each other, and by recognizing that we are "water family," linked in baptism.

First, I met and loved his mom, when he was just a very little boy, and we were in a parenting group together at church. His mom and dad created their family by adoption. With his family, I celebrated the arrival of his brother and so many other milestones in their lives.

Today, my husband Les and I were invited to stand with Taylor's family and lay hands on him, as he was blessed. What a gift to us. We got to celebrate afterward with his family, and I had the privilege of fastening a cross around his neck.

It took my breath away. I was honored and awed.

I arrived home to the news that Alice, a friend of many years is dying, dying well. This is a woman of deep, authentic, lived faith. Cancer struck suddenly, with ferocity, and this vital, larger than life woman, astute theologian, gifted child of God is ready to die.

Her daughter's email said it this way:

“I’m dying. It’s okay, I’ve seen that it is all okay.”

And then she looked [her daughter] directly in the eyes, smiled, and said, “It’s all okay.”

What more is there to say really? Clearly she knows the most important thing and we do too. She has begun her transition.

She is moving towards the light and making her way back home.

Her son shared this:

Last evening, Mom was laughing in her sleep, while I was writing her a letter. Eventually she did wake up and, although it took her quite a while to form words, what she said was that “everyone everywhere should die this way.” She went on to say, “It is all so perfect. How did God figure it out to make this all so perfect?” I believe she was talking about her life and her death and how nothing else matters except being with God. I texted my sister to get back to the room, as I wanted to share this moment. Mom was smiling, glad she was surrounded by pictures of her family and by family ... just very happy.

This all has been very, very comforting. So much so that I shared this in our church service today. My daughters just beamed, and my son got a bit choked up.

When I asked one daughter for permission to use her story, she and her siblings granted permission, with this insight:

What a wonderful way to honor mom. She had said this week that her ministry is over, but clearly it is not!

As Taylor stood to affirm his baptism, I recognized that Alice’s words, blended with her children’s, are all about their mom’s ultimate affirmation of baptism: She knows the God who created, claimed, and loves her and will never, ever let her go.

What a rich legacy of faith she is leaving for her children and grandchildren. May it be so for all of us. Amen.

