Sermon:

What is Christmas all about? Depends who you ask. Some answers might be: family, holiday, children, presents, Jesus’ birth.
Myth – having a baby is wonderful. Are there pains? Like childbirth, afterwards you forget the pain!

Christmas was only a month ago, how did Mary and Joseph cope with Jesus as baby, child, young man?

All babies are different, none without challenges to new parents, including Mary and Joseph.

In fact, all experiences which can bring joy have challenges –marriage, career, buying a house, retiring.

It some ways it is the challenges that make the experience joyful, if only eventually!

Two things are needed – love and advice. Advice can be professional and from family or friends.

Christians believe that love comes from God. **“This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.”** (1 John 4.10) This is not the mushy, romantic love, but the love we have talked about above.

We come to God in baptism not because we want some magic, or need to appease God, but here is the start of all our love, here is the advice we need to love better.

And what kind of love do we see in God? Jesus in Nazareth (Luke 4.18-19). This declares what the Kingdom of God is about, and through that what God’s love is like.

In baptism we declare that God’s love and advice is the best available. Christians come to church not just from habit, or friendship, but to get in touch and learn from each other what God’s love and advice is. Which is why we today promised: *Will you so maintain the Church’s life of worship and service that Freya may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord?*

The best baptism gift is a living connection with a church which displays God’s love and seeks to love better.