

2018 CONFIRMATION CLASS



May God bless these young people as they affirm their baptismal covenant this morning and continue to grow in their love for Jesus Christ, his church, and his world.

Our Confirmation students were asked to write a faith statement. They were asked: How has being baptized impacted your life? When in your life have you felt closest to God? When has God felt far away? What person (or people) have had the greatest impact on your faith, and why? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? We invite you to read these stories of faith from of our young people and to congratulate them on taking this step of discipleship.

Connor James Black

Baptized: September 26, 2004

Parents: Shawn & Michelle

Sponsor: Emily White

Mentor: Alan Hageman

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

I don't remember my baptism because I was a baby but I have seen the video several times. My mom and dad, Emily, my Godmother, and all of my grandparents were there to see me welcomed into the church. Grandpa Damian had the greatest impact on my faith. He was a positive role model for how to treat people. He showed God's love in all that he did. He was always patient and understanding when I made mistakes. I still love to hear stories about my Grandpa Damian. When my grandpa passed away it was the time that I felt the closest to God and the farthest away from God. I felt closest to God because he was there to help me through the really sad times.

I know a faith statement is meant to look back on your past and how your faith has shaped you but I believe people should look at what you are doing now to make a difference in your world. Not what you said you were going to do or did but what actions you are doing now. People will learn who you are by your actions and what you choose to do each day.

Makenzie Lynn Liby

Baptized: August 8, 2004

Parents: Chad & Sandi

Sponsors: Beth Wealand, Dustin Spellman

Mentor: Allison Hitch

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”. Proverbs 3:5

I was baptized at Grace Lutheran Church. My parents, my sister, and both sets of my grandparents were there with me, along with my Godparents, Beth Wealand and Dustin Spellman and many extended family members. That was just the beginning of my faith. My first time taking Holy Communion was a special experience. I remember standing in front of the altar with the rest of the kids and their parents and feeling a connection to God. I remember feeling a connection to the people around me simply by knowing that we all shared a common belief.

I believe God is a figure of hope and love. In all the stories, I’ve read in the Bible, God has always made humble wise decisions. For example John 3:16, “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son...” This verse shows that God is caring enough to give us his son so that our sins may be forgiven.

To me, being a Christian is knowing God’s grace and being able to recognize it in the world around you. Being a Lutheran Christian is being able to show God’s grace. God’s grace to me is forgiving even in the hardest situations and showing kindness even to someone that you think might not deserve it.

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”. This verse means that you should not give up on your faith in the tough moments because the Lord has a plan. Trust in God and everything will work out in the end.

Personally, I like how our church is being ran. I had the opportunity to attend a Youth and Family Ministries meeting and I think the work our church is doing to get more youth and family involved in things is really great. I think that family and youth involvement is one of the things our church does best.

The most important work the church does in my eyes is Sunday School. Teaching kids at a young age about God is really important because you are starting beliefs and thoughts they have when they are older. You are also helping to grow their knowledge of God and the church itself.

If you asked me a few years ago what I would ask God if I met him, I would have been completely clueless. To this day I still have no idea what I would ask but who does? I guess if I got the chance to I would ask, why he decided to fill people with different beliefs and opinions.

Allison Grace Montague

Baptized: August 22, 2004

Parents: Joe & Kathy

Sponsors: Shirley Galbraith, Greg Montague

Mentor: Ruth Denno

Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.” Mark 10:27

First Lutheran Church has been my second home since I was born, July 5th, 2004. I was baptized, here at First Lutheran, by Pastor Luber on the 22nd of August, which is coincidentally, Pastor Luber’s baptism date. On that Sunday morning, I was surrounded by friends and family who loved me and were there to help me with my journey with Christ. When I was about 6 or 7, I remember thinking how awesome it was that Pastor Luber and I had the same baptism day. When I first received communion, I remember feeling that I was an even bigger part in the church. Every Sunday I receive communion, it reminds me of my baptism but also of how God loves us for who we are and how He is there for us every step of the way, in good times and bad times.

I felt closest to God this past summer when I attended the Triennial Youth Gathering trip in Houston, Texas. The feeling of being with 30,000 youth who share the same love for God is indescribable. Every night when we all gathered in the arena for our daily worship service, I felt closer than ever to God. It was truly amazing to look around the arena and to see tens of thousands of teenagers gathered together, expressing their love for God. "Raise your light if you have experienced God's love". When these nine simple words were said one night at the worship service, I felt the movement of the Holy Spirit and God's love. It's crazy what worship can do to you, great and amazing things.

I felt farthest from God when my Great Grandma Judy died. I didn't understand why she had to pass away. I felt like this was some sort of punishment from God. I felt far away from God and disconnected from my faith at that moment. I remember her funeral in Minnesota. I cried a lot that day. But being surrounded by family, celebrating her amazing, thoroughly-lived life, made me realize that everything will be okay. That day, after her burial, a double rainbow was placed in the sky. I felt that it was a sign that she was looking down on us. My Great Grandma Judy is one of the many people who have had a strong impact on my faith. Whenever I spent time with her, I felt God's presence with us.

To me, being Christian means that you have and hold an everlasting love for God. Being Christian means being blessed and being very fortunate. We are given life, forgiveness, and hope through Jesus Christ. It means sharing the word of God with others, keeping your relationship with God strong, and living through God, for God, and with God.

Haden Anthony Roark

Baptized: January 11, 2004

Parents: Brendon & Brooke

Sponsor: LaDonna Little

Mentor: Dan McCready

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:12-13

My baptism happened at First Lutheran Church. My whole family was there to see. Being baptized was a way to know that I am one with the church and it gives me something to do. I always feel close to God when I'm at home or at church. When my Grandpa died I felt God was far away. My family and best friend have an impact on my faith because whenever we get together we always interact with one another and talk about our days. I feel even closer than ever to God when I take communion. It is a way for people to see that God lives inside everyone. God to me is a Savior. He watches over us. He is always caring about everyone and never hates anyone.

It means a lot to me to be a follower of Christ. I enjoy going to church and learning more about Jesus. The Holy Spirit moved me into helping an elderly lady put groceries into a cart and then load them into her car. Being a Christian means to be a follower of God and to learn more and keep his faith with you. To be a Lutheran Christian is Grace, Scripture, and Faith. We try to be a true Lutheran by only using those three sayings.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." I chose this verse because it reminds me of when I was younger and my Grandpa said it to me before he passed away. I also said this in our church play as my final words.

I would reform speech more. We interact very little till the end. I would like to have time where we talk and or interact with one another.

A congregation is needed to keep the church going and with more people it allows us to do more with everyone like plays, music, and readings.

The question I would ask God is this: Is there a certain amount of faith you need to be a member of the church?

Emma Grace Schultz

Baptized: September 26, 2004

Parents: Scott & Melanie

Sponsors: Amie Stember, Beth Schultz

Mentor: LaVerne Engelhardt

***“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.”
Hebrews 12:1***

Ever since I was a little kid and was baptized, going to church always felt like a weekly activity that I sat through and **had** to go to. I was still involved, but my faith wasn't at its peak, or strongest. But today, going to church weekly is **more** than sitting and listening and waiting until the end of the service. It is more than just going for an unknown reason. People go to church to make their connection and understanding stronger with God. They go because they believe, but some don't yet, and that's okay. What matters is that we spread the Word of God. What matters is that we understand and we pursue the life God has made and paved for us. By this, we can be renewed in God's faith.

Even though God is always with us, there are times when we feel close and far away from Him. In my life, I have felt closest to God at Camp Tomah Shinga in 2016. It was truly a life changing experience meeting new people, conquering fears, and having a common belief in worshipping God. Being without your parents for one week is scary at first, but during that week, I realized I had learned so much in so little time. The experience in going to camp was once in a lifetime. Meeting new friends that shared the same belief was amazing and surprising at first because I didn't realize how many more Lutherans there are. Each day we did a different activity, including hikes, games, and rock climbing. I've always had a fear of heights, and when the time came to zipline down for the first time, I wasn't so sure. But then I knew that God would be with me every step of the way.

Although camp was an amazing experience being close to God, I have also felt very distant from him. Whenever school starts back up again, my family and I always lose track of time and are always busy with extracurricular activities. Sports and clubs start up, and everyone is always on the move. We usually make it to church, but some of the time, we have too many activities and plans going on we lose sight of God and our purpose.

Being both close and far away from God is okay. Even when life gets tough, we lose sight of God and don't realize what we have been missing. Being in church is a very powerful aspect in the process of learning how to spread the Word. It is crucial to seek out the important things in life and inspire others to do so.