

## "You Should Love One Another"

John 13:31-35

Jesus has shared the bread and wine of his last supper is yet again feeding his followers and preparing them for the journey ahead. Jesus has washed his followers feet in that Jerusalem upper room to unite them in the intimacy of a serving community of faith.

Now after Judas had departed, Jesus said "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

As I share with you excerpts from our confirmand's faith statements, you will hear the faith and love of young men and women whose parents have now fulfilled their baptismal vows to raise and nurture these young people in the Christian faith. You will listen to words of Christian men and women who are ready to affirm their baptisms and assume responsibility for their relationship with Jesus Christ and his church. Listen to their faith . . .

### **Alexandra Moe**

My favorite sermon note, would have to be the one where I talked about how we are all equal. How we are all God's sons and daughters. I was so into that sermon that I wrote on the whole back too. I thought that God treats us all the same and he loves us all the same. He won't ever favor one of us over the other. I won't ever doubt him.

The Lord's Prayer is very special to me. I realized that you could say the Lord's Prayer anytime anywhere. When you are happy, sad, excited and nervous. The Lord's Prayer has helped me through a lot. I can't make it through the day without it. It lets me know that God is always there for me and he won't ever leave my side. I feel protected.

## Megan Desmond

### I Corinthians 13:8

Love never fails. But where there are Prophecies, they will cease; where there are Tongues they will be stilled; where there is Knowledge, it will pass away.

When I first read the words of I Corinthians 13:8, I sat back and thought to myself about what I had just read. Love conquers all was the message in this verse, but surely it meant so much more than that. In my life, I have always been surrounded by love. Whether that love was from my close-knit family or simply from the friends I had when I was young. Quite some time has passed since I was at a naive age and yet the wonderful thing is, the love that I felt then still envelopes me today with the same greatness if not more. Of course there is a straightforward meaning to this verse, but there is no concrete meaning because surely each individual )having his or her own life experiences and beliefs( must have different feelings and meanings that have ties with this particular verse. In my case, this verse means a great deal to me. If life and faith have taught me anything it's that an individual without love is one with nothing. I've observed this in many situations but none more so than at Redeemer. Those we call the "less fortunate" often have so much more than we could ever dream of. In my sincere opinion, one's wealth should not be measured by the amount of money or other material objects but by the amount of love in their lives. If the rest of the world thought this way, then the people of the world would not be so prejudice towards those whom we call the "less fortunate. Without love, knowledge and prophecies would be useless. What is there to understand if love cannot be understood? Love is and always has been the most powerful force under God and without it; the world could not function as it does now. Of course there isn't nearly as much love as there should be, but the love that we share for ourselves, for each other, and for God is more powerful than anything we could ever come to understand and will always prevail even in the very end.

Two years ago at this time I would have hardly considered myself a godfearing person. I would say that my thoughts toward religion have changed a great deal since I started attending confirmation class. To be completely honest, I was eager to start coming to church not because I wanted to find God but because I wanted to find some sort of companion. My unspoken prayers were answered and I soon found companionship but my quest for a friend soon turned to a quest for knowledge. Each Sunday we would learn more and more about the bible and our relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I was not yet baptized, so I could only attend Sunday classes and the knowledge that I acquired during those seemingly short hours only made me want to know more about my newfound religion. When confirmation began that fall I had already been baptized and not really knowing what to expect from the lessons that we were to learn. It was bit hard to adjust to my new schedule of Wednesday classes and Sunday services, but I really couldn't thank my Nan and mother enough for haven taken on the responsibility of driving me to and from services, classes and all the events in between. I came into confirmation in search of a friend, but in the end rll be confirmed with more knowledge and companionship that I could've imagined.

I couldn't be more grateful to have had the experiences that have brought me to my faith. I still have so many unanswered questions and so many things about my faith that mystify me. In my years to come I know that not all of my questions will have an answer, but when I have truly become one with God in His never ending kingdom, I know that the things that I question now, will seem trivial later on in time. I used to be terrified of dying. That was normal, I know that now. Every mortal has at least the tiniest fear of death. Something that has helped me to cope with this fear has been the Lenten services in which I learned that when I was baptized, I died and was raised with Christ and will walk with him on a path until my mortal death. I know not to be arrogant and say that I'm much too young to die and will be for quite some time. All our lives are in God's hands and whatever he has planned for us is meant

to be. We should never truly mourn the loss of those close to us because we will always meet again sometime. Love will bring us together again, for love is a powerful energy that ties us all together and can never be broken. Not by hate, jealousy, or even the seeming might of death.

## **Jeremy Landrau**

I believe Jesus Christ is our Savior. I believe this because he died for us and he forgives us our sins. Jesus teaches us to love each other like your relationship with God. I have a relationship with Jesus that can never be broken. Everything Jesus did is for the people of God.

I believe the Holy Spirit is God's spirit traveling through words and prayers. To me The Holy Spirit has been sent to me as an act of kindness in helping me out. The Holy Spirit is spread through Divinity every day. The Holy Spirit is a resemblance of Jesus and God.

My faith has changed. As a young child I never understood the sermons. Now that I've been writing sermon notes for the past two years, I can understand the sermons. The sermons are based on teachings from the bible which can have different meanings to individuals. One thing that has changed my faith was getting my bible in the second grade. I was so excited to have a bible of my own. Every night, I read as much as I could from the bible. I found stories I like such as the ten plaques and of course my favorite Noah and his ark. The most important thing that changed my faith was baptism. Baptism started my journey into the kingdom of God. It is the most important because you are starting you life of faith with Jesus and God.

My faith helps me come through hard times. Faith makes the hard times easier to get over. Like a light at the end of a tunnel. Faith also helps me believe harder in things that I can do. When I started my Sunday school journey, I didn't have as much faith or understand what that meant. After spending two years in confirmation, I now understand what faith is all about.

It is about trusting in Jesus and all that he stands for. In my journey I was able to experience many things that have helped me grow as a child of God. I was able to spend time at Redeemer helping people in need. This experience made my faith grow. It was nice to go and help people who truly needed some help. It made me be thankful for all that I have and to appreciate what God has blessed me with.

As my journey in confirmation is about to come to an end, my faith will forever continue to grow. It was not always an easy journey, but I am glad that I went through it.

**Sean Klemme**

Psalm 91:1-2

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the Shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust?”

This verse means a lot to me, I know God is always with me and He will be there for me until the day I die. I can always turn to him for support. He is my strength. He protects me during tough times and rejoices with me in joyous times. He is my God, my savior, and my leader. He is my most trusted and most loved. This Bible verse ensures my faith in God and reminds me that He is always with me and will never leave me no matter what I do.

One memorable sermon was about the the unchanging Christ. We may change and so may friends, even family will change. But Christ is always our rock and will never change, always forgives us, and never gives up on us. We need to love and trust God more than any person or object. People change, but God will always be there to love and trust. God is the only truly unchanging thing there is, ever has been, and ever will be and we need to listen to him, trust him and love him. God loves us. Jesus freed us from our sins. God calls us to serve him by serving one another. I believe that this goes along with my Bible verse: God is our rock and fortress.

Another sermon I remembered was one based entirely on hope and love. I believe love endures and cannot be stopped. As God loves us, I believe we should love one another. Love is never a wrongdoing and never ends. This has taught me to always love, believe in love, and never become hopeless as Jesus will always give me hope. God is love.

My faith has always been there for me but it has changed quite a bit already in my life and it will only change more as I get older. When I first started Sunday school I remember thinking of Jesus as a perfect man, a man that could perform miracles and taught people to love their neighbors. Also, I thought of God as someone who created life and kind of sat back and watched what we did with it. He was just someone that started everything and someone we could pray to. Now I know that Jesus and God are much more than just that. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and God is there for us whenever we need him and always will be there. The Holy Spirit is the part of the Trinity that has changed with age the most. I never really understood the Holy Spirit until these past couple of years. I now believe that the Holy Spirit is active in every person's lives. It is that little angel sitting on your shoulder that convinces you to say no to drugs, not steal something from the corner store, and to help others when they need it. But the Holy Spirit isn't just that. It gives you the ability to repent, forgive, love unconditionally, and have hope

My faith is a very important part of my life. It has helped me in so many ways from decision-making to prayer. Whenever I am unsure about something or someone I pray to God. I know God will answer my prayers and without my faith I couldn't go very far in life. I believe God is always there to help and guide me. Most of my decisions are based on my faith. I know that if God thinks my decision would be right, I should choose it. I believe God will be with me forever, and my faith will carry me for the rest of my life on Earth and decide my fate after.

The Sacrament of Baptism is an act of God that unites us with Christ and makes us members of the Lord's family. It washes away our sins, bestows God's grace upon us, delivers us from evil and death, and promises us eternal life. I believe baptism gives us new life in Jesus' name. I believe baptism gives us a lifetime connection with God to whom we can turn to anytime. It is the key to Christian life. I also believe that baptism is a promise our parents make to teach us God's word, place in our hands the Holy Scriptures, and guide us as children of God. I believe my parents are off to a very good start.

The Lord's Supper or the Sacrament of Holy Communion is the body and blood of Jesus Christ given for us. The Sacrament of Baptism connects us with God so the Lord's Supper connects us with Jesus. It involves Jesus' sacrifices for the forgiveness of our sins. This sacrament is especially meaningful to me because it reminds me that no matter how dedicated Lebron James is to basketball or anyone to anything, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross shows me that He is as dedicated as someone can be to the common, sinning man. This sacrament reminds me that Jesus is my Savior and I can trust in His name forever.

**Mark Ackerman, Jr.**

1 John 5:12

“He who has the son has life; he who does not have the son of God does not have life.”

I picked this verse because I feel to go to heaven and have eternal life; I need to have a good relationship with God. In the sermon notes we took every Sunday I wrote a lot about relationships with God. I did this because I feel God can help you through anything and having a good relationship with him helps you reach him on a higher level.

I believe God is the person you pray to. Jesus is his son that he sent to the world to die for our sins. The Holy Spirit is very important to me. I believe the Holy Spirit is like a guardian angel that guides you to do the right thing. I believe my guardian angel is my uncle

Jeff. My mom says that I resemble him a lot. I never got to meet him but I believe he is watching over me, my mom and all my family.

I believe my faith is very strong. I do believe Sunday school has made my faith stronger because of how comfortable I feel talking with my Sunday school teachers about personal things in my life. Going to Redeemer has made me think of how lucky I am to live in a small Parma bungalow. Seeing those people changed me more than anything else that I've experienced in my Sunday school journey.

**Tiffany Lisy**

**Bible Verse: 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm**

The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul.

I picked this Psalm because the Lord is with me and He leads me to school, the barn and He is with me at night. At school when I fail a test, and I feel like I'm stupid, the Lord will talk to me so that I can focus on school work. When I put in all my effort and I still fail, God will be with me when I tell my parents. When I'm at the barn, and I feel scared to ride a fast horse, God will be with me and tell me that it's only for today and I will get used to it. When I get used to that horse, the teacher will keep me on that horse. Sometimes when there is a thunderstorm, I feel scared but the Lord is with me and will stay with me until the storm is over.

What baptism means to me. Baptism means that kids are welcome into the Lord's family. That means that kids are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I am glad that I am baptized because I can learn the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer and the Last Supper. You don't have to be a kid to be baptized; you can be baptized when you are older or old.

## Chris Panico

### Psalm 143:10

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

This verse means to me that you should follow the will of God. Also that his spirit can lead you on right path in life.

I remember from our class that we would learn about different stories in the bible and what they mean, also we would go over what we thought the reading meant to us. We also had to take tests and memorize different parts of the bible. Also we would go around to different parts of the church and learn what they are used for and the importance of the different things. We would also listen to some songs about God.

I believe God is always watching over you and guiding you through life. I think God does everything for a reason and has a plan for everyone's life. I also believe that he will always forgive you if you ask for forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and he died for our sins. I think he set an example of how to help other people and treat everyone the same. The Holy Spirit is God; I think the Holy Spirit is protecting us and telling us wrong from right.

My faith has changed since I started going to Sunday school. In Sunday school I started to learn the different stories from the bible. And when I didn't go to Sunday school and I would go to church I wouldn't understand what the pastor was preaching about so it made the sermon more interesting when I know what he was talking about. I think Sunday school made my faith stronger by going and learning the word of God.

Going to Redeemer changed my faith also. It changed my faith by being thankful to God for everything that I have. Going there and serving the people meals, making food baskets and sorting clothes I learned that just reading the bible and memorizing verses isn't the only part of your faith. You should also go and serve others that need help.

## Joey Massaroni

My faith has changed greatly since I came to church. My family personally used to worship privately. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that if you ask me. That all changed when I saw a Simpson's episode about Bible stories (they had interesting twists in them as well). I started asking questions about those stories. So, my parents signed me up for bible school. At first it was all about hearing those stories and playing go fish veggie tales edition (which I liked A LOT!!!! ).

Then as time went on it seemed like everyone at church was more and more like Ernest Angly and was *too* into church. This made me dislike church and I dreaded it more and more. I'm not sure why but this feeling seemed to peak in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, even though my teachers were all like the rest of the people in church.

But when I reached Confirmation class this attitude changed. The kids were just like me. They were wild and hilarious. I realized that the people at church were normal people, not freaky weirdoes that I thought they were.

There are many ways that I am lucky. At Redeemer I saw many poor desperate people. One woman apparently took Halloween candy from her starving children. I heard a man drop the F bomb in the Redeemer diner area and nearly got into a fight with a man there. It all started over who was sitting in a seat. There were people sitting for hours to get a warm meal. We are so very thankful for our warm beds and houses, living with the people we love. We all wanted to go back to Redeemer to help out again.

The Lord's Supper is equally important. Jesus gave his life for us to repeal our sins. So every time we take communion, we rid ourselves of our sins. I remember the first time I took communion. I was 10. I was the narrator of the Maundy Thursday play that all the

kids about to get communion were a part of. After that Pastor Doug washed our feet ) I think my feet liked that(. After that I took my first communion. It sure has an interesting taste

The Lord's Prayer is special to me because it was the first prayer that I ever learned. It is so simple but tells you what you need to do. We have said it at the end of every Sunday school class. Every single Christian over the age of 7 knows about the Lord's Prayer. This makes it the most important prayer of all time.

### **Samantha Knoblock**

My faith has changed tremendously since I started confirmation class. When I was a little girl I went to Sunday school less and less. Then soon we moved from Cleveland to Parma Heights. When we did we didn't go back to church for a long time. Then I met my old neighbor John Smeets. We started to talk more and more. After a while he kept asking that my family and I should go to Divinity. I really didn't feel comfortable going back to church. I had a hard time because I didn't want to believe in God because I thought he took my father away from me before I was born. He was killed and I thought it was not fair because most girls' my age in 5<sup>th</sup> grade had their dad's and I didn't. So I didn't want to ever forgive him for what he did. In 2008, over summer vacation my mom's cousin Julie started to take me to church at 11am service. Then I started thinking about my faith. When I started to go every week then my faith started to grow stronger. Soon then 6<sup>th</sup> grade was almost about to start I finally said I need to go back to church and let my faith grow. I am so glad that John urged me to go back to church. I think my faith has increased tremendously since I started confirmation about 2 years ago. During those 2 years in confirmation I learned that there must have been a reason why my father died. So I was glad I started to believe in God again.

My faith helped me a lot all over the years. I have been taught very well by Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Herald. I have learned so much about God and the Holy Spirit. I was taught not to hate but to love your neighbor as the way you want to be treated. That God will always be with

you even if you don't think he is. That God has brought you into this world for a reason and gave you a special talent. I also learned all the 10 commandments that all have a meaning that you should follow and not betray them. Faith will help us throughout the years because it will strengthen you. I think it will help so that the day goes on and so it doesn't drag.

I will always remember going to Redeemer because it always made me feel good about myself. This had made my faith grow. When I first went to Redeemer I was grossed out. Then after I started to go more and more it was making my faith grow. I saw that these people didn't have as much as we do. That I should be thankful for what I have and not be greedy. I saw that these people can't just go out and go shopping for fun. I am so glad I can take a few hours once in a while to help around at Redeemer. After Redeemer, when I got home I started to search for old clothes that don't fit and put it in a black bag and wait until I go back. When we went to just give clothes and I saw the parent's faces. Wow it actually made me happy to get clothes for them and their family.

I will also remember the nursing home. Usually the people in the nursing home don't get to see people my age. When we sang Amazing Grace most of the people didn't know all the words but they sang along. They were so happy to be singing the song.

## **Brian Berry**

Luke 6:37

“Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you.

I picked this verse because to me its perfect words to live by. Following these words will make you a good person. Basically it means to me is what you do for others will be done to and for you.

I believe Sunday school and confirmation class has changed me in many ways.

It has taught me how to forgive and forget. Also trips to Redeemer have showed me how to be thankful for everything I have. I've learned that something that has none to little meaning to me may mean the world to another.

My faith helps me get through tough situations that step in my way. It helps me believe that no daily struggle can overcome me and that I should not hang my head over struggles that I think can. Faith makes me a better person and as I get older I believe my faith will get stronger.

### **Paige Grey**

What do I believe about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit? Well believe that they are all of the same being. I think that they are all the same just in different forms, but they have the same goal and that is to watch over us. God like a father, Jesus like a brother, and the Holy Spirit like a guardian. Now that I think about it they are kind of like the mafia, God acts like the don, telling everyone what to do and creating us, Jesus his right-hand-man, watching over our progress, and the Holy Spirit is like his left-hand-man, just watches and jumps in when needed. That might be a weird way to think about it but I think that it is partially true in my opinion.

When I first started Confirmation in t<sup>h</sup> grade I didn't have a strong faith, I just went to church, sometimes, and didn't think anything of it. But now I feel like I now have a better understanding about being a Lutheran. But I don't have a full realization about what I believe or what I'll do with my faith as I grow older. This experience has shed light on my faith, but some is still shrouded in mystery. I think that I'll begin to explore my religion and try to uncover the rest of my beliefs, and try to strengthen my faith.

I didn't really gain much experience from my first trip to Redeemer, but that was because I didn't understand why we went. I now know that it was to help others, which I'm still not very good at doing. But I feel that going was a good thing for me

to do so I could learn to love my neighbor as myself. Another place we went was the nursing home. I thought that it was a waste of my time to go visit elderly strangers, but after I went again this year it helped me understand just how important faith is when you get older. Your faith can get you through the hard times and stop you from wallowing in the past. But I have to say that my favorite trip was to Laser Extreme. Even though it was like a reward field trip it was very fun, and felt like I earned it.

## **Drew Boxler**

### 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13

“And now these three remain: Faith, Hope, Love, but the strongest of these is love.”

This Bible verse means a lot to me. It explains that the basis for everything God has done for us is Love. It tells me that without Love, Faith would have no purpose, and that Hope would not exist. Love is the invisible link that keeps everything in a balance.

My faith throughout my year of church, Sunday school, and Everyday life has encountered many changes.

When I started Church/Sunday School, I thought of it as a weekly meeting about different things that had occurred before me. But as time passed, I began to realize that these events were ways that God was speaking to us, that He was talking, walking, and living along with us.

When I took first communion, my relationship with God took another step on this Journey. For the first time, I had bonded with God physically, had ate the body, and drank the blood of our savior. I had realized the importance of communion. I had seen, felt the power of God and his Love for us.

When I entered my first year as a confirmant, I believe my relationship with God took the greatest leap yet. I began to see that God didn't just want us to worship every week, but you go out into the world and help the less fortunate, to spread the word and love of God. One

of the major things that taught me that was the trips to Redeemer. Every time that I would go, I could feel the presence of Jesus there with us, and when I would leave, I would feel as if my heart had left my body, and journeyed to a higher, better place, as if it had walked alongside Jesus.

I believe that the Lord's Supper was Jesus' way of saying goodbye to his disciples, and promising everlasting life *before* he died on the cross, and that only good would come of his death. When Jesus broke the bread and poured the wine, I believe that was his way of saying that I will be with you always, whether or not you take regular communion or not, I will always be there.

The Apostles Creed to me is a quick story of basically the whole bible, let alone the disciple's books and the other stories, it is a summary of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and what their relations are to each other.

The most important prayer to me is the Lord's Prayer. In the Lord's Prayer I feel that I am talking to Jesus. I usually use the Lord's Prayer whenever I can't find the words to use to express my feelings towards something, or to just simply tell God/Jesus about things that have troubled me.

Throughout my life, my relationship, understanding, and Love for God have changed in ways that I could never have imagined. I have learned things that when I was younger thought were just random stories. And most of all, I have come to believe this. That God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit work as one force that, I believe, we will always have with us, but never truly understand.

## Nicole LaPerna

### Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

To me this verse means that God is always with me. I need to be strong and courageous. I don't need to fear. I have nothing to be afraid of because God is always with me. He will be with me forever and always no matter what. He will never ever leave me.

I chose this verse because it says what I believe about God. That he will always be with me, through the good times and the bad times. There is nothing that would separate him from me. There is nothing for me to fear because I have God. With him, everything will be alright.

I see this in others too. Like when we went down to Redeemer to serve the meals to the people. Just because some of them do not have any family or friends or a house doesn't mean they are alone. Giving them their meals, seeing their faces, I see that. They know that God is with them helping them through life's obstacles.

One thing that has brought me closer to God and the people who love me is the summer of 2007. My mom woke up and didn't feel too good. She really wasn't acting herself. She was drifting in and out of consciousness. One second she would be talking the next she would be out. My grandma was worried, and my mom couldn't stay awake enough to get to the car, so my grandma called the ambulance. The ambulance crew )who was mostly a volunteer crew that came in their own cars( helped get my mom into the ambulance. I was scared and didn't know what was going to happen, and I just sat in the corner and cried. One of the older gentlemen saw me and came over and comforted me. He said }Aw don't cry now sweetie, your momma is gonna be just fine." I sure hoped he was right. Our good friend and neighbor from Arizona came up to see what was going on. My grandma explained, and I ended up

going back to her cottage while my grandma went to the hospital with my mom. She kept me distracted from everything, and we played games and everything. When my grandma came back, she said that they were going to have to transport my mom to The Cleveland Clinic. She said that it should only be for a week or so, not even. The next day we came back to Ohio, and my mom was getting worse. We ended up staying for more than a month. The doctors had no clue what was wrong with my mom. They tried everything, but they just couldn't cure her. All they knew was that it was some kind of infection. My mom was so sick that she had to go into the Intensive Care Unit, and she was hooked up to a breathing machine. They didn't think she had much of a chance of living. I prayed to God every night. I wasn't ready to lose my mom, I was too young, and I needed her. I wouldn't let God take her away from me yet. She got worse and worse, and then she started getting a little better. I prayed more and more. Finally my mom was out of ICU. She was in a regular room, but she still wasn't cured. They still don't know what was wrong. I could tell my grandma was really stressed out from everything. One night, I woke up to my grandma coming in my room to check on me. I noticed that all the lights were on, and my grandma had a worried expression on her face. I immediately thought the worst, but no it wasn't. My grandma was having a stress overload and the ambulance took her to the hospital. Now I was really panicking. That night in the emergency room, I just opened my mind and talked to God. I knew he was with me, and whatever happened, everything would be ok. My grandma came out of the hospital that day, and we were back up to see my mom. She was sleeping, and the doctors came in and wanted to talk to us. They found out what was wrong, and they figured out what to do to make her better. As the week wore on, she got better and stronger too. She finally came home and I was so happy I just prayed and thanked God that she was still with me. I thanked him for all of the support from EVERYONE. God was there for me and my grandma too.

My faith helps me in more ways than one. It helps me get through everyday life. The worst days, the best days, and every day in between. He gives me a reason for living, by putting people that love and care for me in my life. I know that even if there is no one for me to talk to, he is there for me. He will listen to everything I have to say. He makes me live life to the fullest, and when it is over, I know that I get to go and spend eternity with him.

Baptism is a very important part of my faith. When I joined the Lord's family on April 19, 1996, I was surrounded by people that care for me. My mom and dad, who promised to teach me about God, and my aunt and uncle who as godparents also promised to teach me through God. It washed away my sins, bestowed God's grace upon me, delivered me from the power of death and promised me eternal life in God's kingdom. It brought me closer to God and closer to others as well. Baptism lets me freely grow in grace. In baptism, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. I was too young to remember my baptism, but I know what it was like through stories and pictures. My mom has a box with everything from my baptism in it, including my candle, my butterfly that I got when I started preschool, the cloth, and everything else. Looking at these tell me what it was like to join the Lord's family.

The Apostle's Creed has several meaningful parts to it. To me, it means that God is love, and he is a giving, forgiving, and seeking God. He loves us, He is our Father, and we are his children. He made Heaven and Earth because he loves us. We don't find God, He finds us. He trusted ordinary people with an ordinary event at an ordinary place to give us our savior, Jesus. Jesus suffered and was crucified, He paid the price for our sins, and it shows just how much God loves us. Jesus died and was buried, but was resurrected. It shows that we never live alone, and there is a continued presence and power of the Lord. Jesus is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He will return, but we don't know when. Only God knows when Jesus will return. The Spirit enlightens our lives, and is with us everywhere. It doesn't matter what race, color, class, or social status we are, we are all part of God, created in his image. God forgives all of our sins, and he is always there for us. There is a life to come. Like in one

sermon I remember we died when we were baptized, and we live when we join God.

The first prayer I learned was "God is great; God is good, let us thank Him for our food. By his hands we are fed, give us Lord our daily bread." I have known that for as long as I can remember, and my mom, dad and grandparents taught me. I used to say it before every family meal, and I still do today.

One of the most powerful prayers I know is the Lord's Prayer. It has several meanings to different people. To some it is a comforting prayer and others a rejoicing prayer. I have learned that the more experience you have, the more meaning it has to you. I feel like it doesn't mean all it could to me because I haven't had much life experience yet. For me though, we did say it at my friend Brandon's funeral. So for now it is a comforting prayer, but as I get more life experience it could be more.

Now that confirmation is coming to an end and I am ready to confirm my faith, I know that without God there would be nothing. He loves us forever, no matter what.

May the peace of God.