

“God is with You Wherever You Go”

John 21:1-14

Jesus has been crucified and resurrected. Having already experienced the resurrected Jesus twice, he comes to the disciples a third time after a night of fishing with no luck.

Jesus is preparing breakfast on the shore as the sun is rising. He shouts to them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. Their nets are overflowing when they join Jesus for a breakfast of fried fresh fish and bread.

God is with them wherever they go just as Jesus has been with our confirmands as their parents and grandparents, as Divinity and their teachers have taught them and exemplified for them what it means to be a follower of Christ.

I share with you their faith statements as they prepare to affirm their baptisms in the Rite of Confirmation.

Kylie Gurkovich

1 Corinthians 13:4. . . *"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude."*

This verse has a special meaning to me. I feel as though this verse explains what love is, and what it isn't. When you truly love someone, you're kind, loyal, trustworthy, and patient. You're not envious, boastful, arrogant, and rude. When I think about love, I immediately think about my love for my family, friends, and God. They all love me. They're always patient with me. I always remember when I was younger constantly needing help with my homework. I would always sit at the dinner table sobbing because I didn't understand my work. However, my parents would always try to help me, and they were patient with me. Now, I'm sure that my

parents would at least get a little bit annoyed with me, though they always were patient with me and tried their best to help me, and I feel as though that is an amazing example of love and patience.

I remember when I was younger in Sunday school, always eating the little cookies beforehand, learning the books of the bible song, learning the unique stories of all of the people in the bible, and so much more. Personally, I believe that ever since Sunday school, my faith has changed for the better and I truly feel as though I am a good person who grew as an individual because of all of the things that I learned in Sunday school. I believe that when a situation gets hard, I can always remind myself that it will be all right because God will always be there for me, and will always forgive me, as that's what I've always been taught. It is very nice and pleasing to know that God loves you so much, and that we will be forgiven by him.

Sermon notes are a huge part of learning about the bible, and the stories within the bible. In our sermon notes, we always write a few main points of the sermon, what the sermon caused us to think about, and what we will remember about the sermon. I believe that each individual sermon is always unique in its own way. They're all different, and I enjoy learning about each one. Though one sermon notes that I did this year really stuck out to me. It was Luke 2:41-52. This sermon caused me to think about how family is always there for each other, through the good and the bad. Which kind of reminds me of my very own family. I know that whenever I'm going through a tough time, my family will always be there for me, and I will always be there for them. Which actually leads me to my next topic.

Around two years ago, my family dog, Hunter, passed away. It was a very tough time for my family, but especially my mom.

My mom really isn't the type of person to really talk about her problems, though, when Hunter died, she was different. She and I talked about Hunter. When Hunter passed away, she was brutally upset. In fact, it's still very hard for her to talk about Hunter, or hear about Hunter without her crying. While for myself, I am able to talk about him, When Hunter died I can admit that I did struggle with my faith. I really did wonder why God would take him from us. It was very hard for me to grasp. Though, eventually, it made me a stronger individual. I actually believed that this changed my faith for the better, not for the worse. I believe Hunter's passing taught me to be the strongest version of myself, and I also believe that it made me stronger once I realized that God was by my side.

Payton Revilock

The Bible verse I picked is *Psalm 23:4 . . . "Even Though 'l walk through: the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your Staff - they comfort me"*. I picked this verse because this is what got me through a dark part of my life. When my grandpa was in the hospital, I felt lost, I didn't want to do anything, my anxiety was higher than ever, I could not handle change. This verse reminded me that I had God with me. I felt a stronger connection with God. God showed me that I am loved, I can do anything, and I don't have to worry.

I remember a lot from sermons, but I always think about Strawberry Fields' Forever. This sermon talks about God's grace. It showed me that God's grace is real. I've never really understood grace, but this sermon taught me about grace. It also showed me that people show

their grace in many different ways. That's why I always give people chances, no matter what they have done.

I believe that God, Jesus Christ, and The Holy Spirit are the same things, they just do different things for us. I believe that God Created the world. He created the Day, Night, Grass, Oceans, Trees, People, Animals, Plants, and many more things. Jesus Christ watches over us. He's there when you're Happy, angry, Sad, Confused, Anxious and any other emotion we feel. The holy spirit is what chooses what things are in our lives. The holy spirit does not choose everything that comes into our lives. He just chooses things that will change our life.

My faith has definitely changed since I started going back to Sunday school. I've noticed myself praying more, and thinking about God. Before confirmation I really just thought church was so annoying, I hated going every Sunday. Since confirmation I've liked coming to church. I love being with all the amazing people I met through it. During the covid pandemic my faith changed a lot. I noticed that I talked to God a lot more than before, and I really thought about the Bible verses that people read out loud. Faith has helped me in many ways. Before basketball, and soccer games I would always pray. It always made me feel good.

I believe that baptism brings us closer to God. When you get baptized you get gifts that will help you with your life. The gifts are forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe.

I believe that The Lord's supper is all about the forgiveness of sins. When Jesus was betrayed, he gave the disciples bread and wine in the remembrance of him. Jesus said that "because where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation"

I believe that the Apostles Creed is the story of God, and Jesus. The first verse of the Apostles' Creed says "I believe in God the father almighty creator of heaven and earth."

I believe that God created the world, God created people, plants, animals, the ocean, grass, day, night, and many other things. In the second verse it talks about Jesus and his story. The third verse talks about the Holy Spirit, holy catholic church, communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. I believe that the holy spirit has called me through the gospel and enlightened me with his gifts.

I believe that the ten commandments are the rules that we need to follow. God doesn't want us to break these commandments but if we do God forgives us.

Phoebe Crane

To me, loving everyone for who they are is very important and Jesus has shown us countless examples of how to love everyone. I try to follow Jesus' example by being kind to others, and trying to understand other people. This is a big part of my faith.

In *Micah6:8* it says "***He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly; with your God.***"

One thing I appreciate about being an ELCA Lutheran is the way we include everyone. This means anyone can worship with us, anyone can take communion, anyone in love can get married, and anyone that wants to serve God, can.

My faith has grown as I have attended church, listened to the sermons and music, attended Sunday school, and participated in the youth group.

My favorite Bible story is Jesus' teaching on the sermon of the mount called the "Beatitudes." The beatitudes help me to understand that the things the world thinks are important are not what God thinks are important.

The world says that riches, material possessions, popularity, power and status are the most important things. When those things are the most important, everyone suffers.

When Jesus taught the beatitudes, he reminded the crowd that the things that humans value are not the things that God values, As my faith has grown, I have come to see more and more that we need to focus on developing attitudes that will bring blessing from God. When we have the right attitude, our faith grows, and we bless those around us as God blesses us. As a reminder, here are the beatitudes as Jesus taught:

1. ***Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit*** —This beatitude helps me to remember that it is OK to be humble and that we don't always have to be the best at everything. By being humble we can be open to new experiences and have room in our minds and hearts to hear God's voice.
2. ***Blessed Are Those Who Mourn*** — Sometimes when things are difficult our faith grows the most. The last couple of years have been especially hard for me, due to Covid and other things, but with God's help my faith has become stronger.
3. ***Blessed Are The Meek***—The world often rewards people who make a lot of noise and get all the attention — even if their message isn't true or good. By practicing meekness, we can show other's that quiet reflection is more important than being the loudest.

4. ***Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst For Righteousness*** — I think this means that God is happy with us when we try, even if we fall short. This helps me to have faith in God's love for us. He gives us an A for effort! .
5. ***Blessed Are The Merciful***— I really like this beatitude because everyone needs mercy and every has the opportunity to show mercy. At some point in our lives, we will all need to forgive or be forgiven.
6. ***Blessed Are The Pure Of Heart***—This beatitude helps me to look inward and ask myself what I want and why. It is easy to be distracted by school, work, the internet, and peer pressure. Being pure in heart means really looking inside and listening to God and giving him room to help you grow.
7. ***Blessed Are The Peacemakers***— We can all be peacemakers in big and small ways. Faith starts small, but can grow to be very big. We can strive to make peace with others wherever we are and in all situations.
8. ***Blessed Are The Persecuted***— I have not been persecuted for my faith like the followers of Jesus were long ago. But their example has helped me to stand up for what is right even if it is hard sometimes.

My faith in Jesus has grown as I have learned more about his love and acceptance of all. He sided with those who were not powerful and taught them his word. I hope my faith will continue to grow and that I can learn to be more like Jesus.

May the peace of God...

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