



Confirmation Sunday

"For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."
1 Corinthians 12:13

October 31, 2021
Bethany Lutheran Church
West Branch, Iowa

Auron Marsh

Parents: Scott and Amber Marsh

Baptismal Sponsors: Heidi Halligan, Jenna McGill, Phil Marsh

I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. – Joshua 1:9

I was baptized at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Independence Iowa on January 28, 2006. To me my baptism means that I was accepted into God's family, and I need to do my duties that come along with being in this family. When I was baptized God promised me that he would always be there for me and strengthen me, no matter what. To me being baptized into Jesus Christ's death and resurrection means a lot because he sacrificed himself and died for me and for all of my sins.

Worship has helped grow my faith because it helps me learn more about God and all he has done for me, and it also shows that there really is proof that he was real, but sometimes that doesn't matter because faith is all we need. Worship is important to me because, like I said, it helps grow my faith, but it is also important to me because I get to learn more about God. I believe it is important to attend worship after confirmation because there is always something new you can learn about God, and it would also help build a stronger connection between you and God. It is kind of like reading a book that you really like. You wouldn't stop halfway through the book and never finish it; it doesn't make sense to do that.

I really enjoyed educational experiences outside of worship, such as Sunday school or Confirmation, because that is where I first heard most of the parables I know about Jesus, and almost all of the parables are very interesting and fun to learn about. Confirmation has helped me grow because it has enabled me to learn more about both the New and the Old Testaments of the Bible in more detail and break it down to further know what it means. It also helps me daily because we got deep into talking about prayer and that encouraged me to try to pray at least once or twice every day.

The three people that have taught me the most about Christ are my mom, my dad, and my pastor. These three people taught me nearly everything I know and helped me to continuously build a stronger relationship with God and help me understand things a lot better. These people continue to help me with this because we all care about each other, and we are all part of God's family, and we want to help each other out in as many ways as possible. I am glad and thankful to have these people in my life.

My favorite Bible verse is Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous, do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." The reasoning behind this is because my mom taught me a song version of this verse when I was younger. I would always sing this song to myself or just out loud whenever I got scared or was in a bad situation. To this day I still sing this song to myself to help me get through tough obstacles, or whenever I feel like I need help from God to give that one last push towards accomplishing one of my goals. Joshua 1:9 will always and forever be in my brain and in my heart.

Chloe Klabo

Parents: Mike and Sara Klabo

Baptismal Sponsors: Michael and the late Jessica Baglien, Jill Klabo

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. – Psalm 23:1

This is my faith journey. I was baptized November 20, 2005, at Faaberg Lutheran Church in Rindahl, MN. I am the child of Mike and Sara Klabo. My godparents are Michael and the late Jessica Baglien and Jill Klabo.

Someone once asked me what does Jesus mean to you? I said to them what Jesus means to me is freedom and love. Jesus died on the cross for us, to give us freedom. Is God real? To me, yes, I believe in him. How do you know he is real? God had once said, "I have designed you to live by faith not by sight." Just try and pray and he will get back to you when he chooses to. God has your life planned out, he knows when it is your time, and when the heavens will be open to you no matter what.

What baptism means to me is you are becoming a part of God's children. We are getting the gift of the Holy Spirit and he becomes a part of us. You are a child of God. You get blessed with the holy water to become a part of God's special life for you. When you get baptized God makes a promise, as he says in Acts 2:38 "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." I see God in everyone. He is within us even if you are not baptized, he cares for you and if you just take a little bit of your time to pray, he will answer you.

Three years ago, my aunt died because of cancer. She was also one of my godparents. When we had first found out I had no idea how to react because nothing like this has ever happened to me before. That night we prayed for her and her family, then it started to get worse. Every day we prayed, it did not matter what time of day, we just sat and prayed for a few minutes. We kept praying hoping the cancer would leave her, but it just kept getting worse. I cried to God, then asked myself if God was really listening to what I was saying. Then I thought to myself, thinking is God really real because if he is, I would like for him to help my aunt in fighting this cancer off. Then one night I went to bed and had a dream about God telling me that he is doing everything he can to help out the family and her. Then on April 10th, 2019, it happened, we went to the funeral except it really felt like she was there because we all had memories to share about her. They were the best memories.

I serve God by going to church and helping with communion and being an acolyte. I tell people about church and what we do and what we believe. When I am done talking to them the first thing, they ask is what is an acolyte? An acolyte is when you light candles that lead all the way up to Jesus on the cross symbolizing that he is here with us in church. Then as we leave, we walk out with a flame on the stick to symbolize that Jesus is still with us even out of the church building.

When we talk about prayer it does not mean sitting for an hour praying to God. It could be, but you can have even the smallest prayer; it could be less than a minute. When I pray, I pray for

things I could wish for to happen in the future or I ask God questions like, “why did this have to happen to me today?” You could also pray for things you want to happen, or you could just pray like me and my sister pray a bedtime prayer that we have on a cross. We read it every night asking God to keep us safe through the night and wake us up with morning light. Praying helps me get through some rough times in my life and if someone gets hurt who I care about, I can pray for them. Praying tells me that God is listening, and he is helping me through the way.

A favorite Bible passage of mine is Psalm 23, which states:

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Additionally, there is a saying I find meaningful, “She who kneels before God can stand before anyone,” which is based off Romans 8:31.

Thank you, Pastor Chad, for helping me in my journey of faith. Confirmation was really fun even though some of it was on Zoom. I had a great two-years, and I will keep on doing everything you taught me even if I do not have confirmation. Also thank you to my parents and everyone who has helped me in my journey of faith.

Cole Crosthwaite

Parents: Kevin and Darla Crosthwaite

Baptismal Sponsors: Chris and Deb Feeney, Rich and Denise Feltes

The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. - Psalm 118:6 (NIV)

My name is Cole Crosthwaite, I was born on April 6th, 2007. My parents are Kevin and Darla Crosthwaite. I was baptized in September of 2007 at St. Paul's UCC in Wheatland, Iowa. To me,

baptism means committing yourself to be a disciple of Christ and living a faithful life. By being baptized, God promises to wash away your sin and he also promises hope, faith, and love through him. I was really young when I got baptized, so I wasn't aware of what was going on, but God promised me these things. I grew up going to church on Sundays and worship helped me understand what it means to believe in God through reading Bible passages and listening to Pastor Chad's sermons. Going to worship on Sundays has helped me continue my journey in faith because I'm constantly learning new things. For these reasons, I believe that worship is very important, and I think it's also important to continue going to worship on Sundays so my faith can keep growing and I can keep learning new things.

Worship isn't the only way my faith in God has grown; I've also gone to Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and of course Confirmation. These three things have provided me with lots of great memories and helped my faith grow by teaching me all sorts of things about Christianity. Confirmation specifically has helped my faith grow through teaching me to pray and other useful things like stories in the Bible. One of the stories in the Bible that has always stuck with me is the feeding of the 5000. This story in particular has stuck with me because it shows just how much God is capable of and it also shows that God's great and he likes to help others.

My parents have helped to shape my faith and have walked with me through my faith journey. They've helped in any way imaginable, but one huge way they've helped me become more faithful is by taking me to worship on Sundays. I'll admit that when I was younger, I didn't always want to go to worship, but they took me anyways and that helped to boost my understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

I am a child of God, and that makes me excited. It makes me excited when I think about how God loves me, and I get excited when I know he's forgiven my sins. To me being a child of God means doing God's works and spreading God's love. When I say I believe in God, for me it means something special. It's not like saying you like a certain football team, for me it's like saying that I'm proud to believe in God, and it makes me feel good. When I say that I believe in God, someone may ask, well who's Jesus? I would say that he's God's only son and that he died on the cross to forgive our sins. I would also say that he spreads God's word and love.

God watches over us and I know that God's in my life because he answers my prayers. I also know that God's present in my life because when my grandma died, I felt really close to him, and his presence comforted me and helped me get through that tough time. Christians also confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. To me that means that he died on the cross for us, therefore he saved us from sin. When I get forgiven, it means that God is giving me another chance, and it reminds me that everyone makes mistakes, but to try to be the best that I possibly can. If one of my friends asked me what they have to do to be saved and forgiven from their sin, I would simply just say to believe in God and pray for forgiveness. Forgiveness is something that God promises to do for us, and that's just one of the many reasons why God is great.

I'm a member of a church and that comes with some responsibilities such as donating to the church, praying, and just overall being a good Christian. Most people don't like having responsibilities, especially me, but these responsibilities are different. After confirmation I see

myself still following them and I also see myself involved in the church by donating my time and services and coming to worship on Sundays. Talking about being a good Christian and helping others out makes me remember the time when my mom and I were in a drive thru line, and we paid it forward and paid for the person's food that was behind us. Did we know them? No, but that's what being a good Christian is, helping others out and doing the right thing. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that means a lot to me because it shows how much God cares about us. My immediate response to that event is just that I'm thankful. I'm thankful that he died on the cross to forgive our sin because it helps me and everyone else start over and be a better person. I've sinned before, everyone has, but he forgives our sins, which makes me appreciative.

Getting confirmed is important to me because it shows my progress in faith, or my faith journey and it shows my dedication to God by making me a member of the church. I renounce the devil and all others that defy God. This changes the way I live my life because it makes me feel more positive and makes me more devoted to God. The Bible passage that I have chosen is Psalm 118:6 "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear." I chose this because it's relatable to me. I know that Jesus is on my side and is with me no matter what, and that makes me feel better and makes it so that I won't fear anything because he's with me. That is my statement of faith.

Layla Samuelson

Parents: Shawn and Tonya Samuelson

Baptismal Date: January 21, 2007, Bethany Lutheran Church, Cedar Rapids

Baptismal Sponsors: Chris and Suzanne Schumacher

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" – Hebrews 13:6

"Let your faith be bigger than your fears" is a quote inspired by the verse above, which can have many different meanings depending on how you interpret it. The way I interpret it is that faith is important to help you through struggles. Those struggles can be a lot of different things including struggle in sports, trying to get good grades at school, or even something that you want to be really good at or want to do. You need to have faith that it is going to go well instead of bad and that doesn't necessarily mean praying all day everyday but have faith in yourself and faith in God that it will go well and get better. This is a very simple verse that really can explain the importance of having faith in very few words and it can be used in almost every situation. Having faith is important because it is something to rely on. If you are having a bad day you can rely on faith to get through anything and everything and come out on top.

Christ is obviously really important, but why? You need to have him in your life because he is kind of like a helping hand for almost every aspect of your life. If something isn't going great you can pray and ask Christ to help you and it might take some time, but he will always be there for you and help you. Some examples of this may be when you have a big game coming up and you really want it to go well you can say a little prayer and ask God to give you success, and hopefully he will answer it. You can do that really anytime. It doesn't have to be asking for

something, it can be just talking. If you have something that you just need to say, you can say it to Christ, and he will listen. If you want to thank him for something that you have, you can say that too. It is important to give him thanks for all the blessings he gives us. Christ is really important, and each person has their own reasons for feeling that way, but that is my reason.

Faith and Christ combined are two things that can make you feel better about yourself and help your life be better in a lot of different ways. My personal experience is that we were going to the biggest rodeo I had ever competed in and before we left, we were doing some practice and it was just not happening for me. I was missing almost every calf I was throwing at. Of course, I was getting really upset so finally I decided to quit so that I wouldn't get more upset. The next day it was off to the rodeo, and I wasn't feeling very confident. Before I needed to saddle up and head to the arena, I was practicing on the roping dummy trying to get my mind off of the bad streak I had just come off of and build some confidence back in myself. I said some prayers to God that he would calm my nerves and help me focus to help me have even just a little bit of success. My first run comes up and I draw a really good calf that runs straight and not too fast. I rope it in under five seconds and was really happy. Then my second run comes up and I was getting more nervous because I wanted to keep that streak going. Me being nervous I was a little trigger happy and broke the barrier which gave me a 10-second penalty, but I still got it roped. I finally settled down and tried to find a little more confidence. When my third run finally came up, I really wanted to catch but felt good in the fact that I would have roped two out of three and thanked God that he blessed me with the ability, confidence, and opportunity to compete and have the success that I already had. I got my third one caught and surprisingly made it to the fourth round. So, I'm first up and get it caught in under five seconds again and finished in the top ten out of 91 other girls. It was a situation that tested my faith being bigger than my fear. I had to believe that I could and not focus on the fear of failing. I know that it won't be perfect every time but if I put in the time, effort and practice God will present opportunities for me and will be by my side no matter what.

Dylan Schiele

Parents: Lance and Jeni Schiele

Baptismal Sponsors: Zack and Jacki Knoor

*For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. – 1st Corinthians 12:13*

I was baptized on June 3, 2007, at Bethany Lutheran Church. Baptism to me means that we are welcomed into the church as a child of God and that he will always keep his promise to us: forgiveness of our sins, child of God, eternal life. The reason that I think it is important to go to church and go to confirmation is because it helps us have a better relationship with God. When we need help with something we can always count on him to be there for us.

I am very close with my godparents; my godfather is my dad's cousin Duston. He is also a farmer; he helps us a lot. He has helped fix our hay mower, and right now he is helping me build my truck. My godmother is my Aunt Jacki. She lives in Solon, and we see their family about

three times a month. They used to live in North Liberty, and when they lived there, we saw each other even more. We would have sleepovers three times a month.

Being a child of God to me means that he will always be there and that whenever I am feeling down, I can always ask him to lead me into the right path. I know that God is always there with me even though I cannot see him. He is in the wind, in the sky, in the air that we breathe. He is always there for us to get us through tough times.

To me, being confirmed means that I am an adult in church and that he will never leave my side. He will be there for my entire life. There is comfort in just knowing this in my mind and my heart. My relationship with Jesus means that I can talk to him whenever I need him. He will respond in the best way possible. No matter how many times we sin, he will be there for us.

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is important because it is saying that no matter what you are or what religion you are, you are a child of God, and that God loves you.

One way that I serve God is by being an acolyte. Ever since I can remember we have gone to church almost every weekend, and my favorite job is to be an acolyte. Unfortunately, because of Covid, we can no longer go to church. We can just watch it, which has its benefits, like watching the service even though you are not actually there.

One thing that I like about church is when the service is done, and everyone goes down to the main hall for fellowship. Some of the conversations are very interesting and can teach you a lot. If you are a kid and you don't want to listen to people talk you can go into the toy room and play with other kids or play ping pong.

After I get confirmed, I will continue my church life by going to church when I can, praying as often as I can, and helping out in community service. I will start in high school with silver cord hours. Confirmation and religious education have taught me to serve, and not just in the church. There are many opportunities in my life to serve and help others.

Miley Shields

Parents: Tim Shields and Mabelle Shields

Baptismal Date: April 27, 2014, Bethany Lutheran Church, West Branch

Baptismal Sponsors: Scott Shields, Teresa Davis

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. –
Hebrews 11:1*

GOD:

God is quite honestly a hard concept to grasp. The truth is that I struggle to put into words what or who God is. To me, because I believe in science and evolution and so often have felt as

though God and science couldn't exist together. However, I now believe that a person can believe in science and still connect with a higher power and in this case God.

JESUS:

I have come to view Jesus as a role model more than anything else. He is human just like all of us, but he followed the work of God. He is our connection to God, and he loves us always, even when we are not at our best. He does not judge me, but simply accepts me for exactly who I am. His actions in the Bible show to all of us ways we can put faith into words.

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

I don't think of the Holy Spirit as something that is in all of us all of the time. But instead as something that visits us in our moments of joy and human connection.

COMMUNITY:

Sunday school was something I have gone to in the past, but I didn't always feel as strongly connected with God or the community. But I now feel like I am doing more in the community and for God.

JOURNEY:

I have struggled in the past to put words into my beliefs and take charge of my faith journey. It is difficult to understand at times especially because sometimes I want to see to believe.

Confirmation and church in general have shown me what faith is. In Hebrews 11:1 we read, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not seen." This is evidence that conviction is so positive or powerful that it is described as faith.

Tate Frantz

Parents: Tim and Tammy Frantz

Baptismal Sponsors: K.J. Smith and Stephanie Smith

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me – Philippians 4:13

I was baptized at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Iowa City, Iowa, on September 4, 2021. My sponsors were my siblings K.J. Smith and Stephanie Smith. My parents' names are Tim Frantz and Tami Frantz. To me baptism means showing your dedication to God. Baptism also helps to strengthen your relationship with God. Through baptism God promises that we are a child of God.

My favorite Bible verse is from Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse is important to me because it talks about how you are able to overcome many challenges with the help of Christ. As an athlete this is important because you will face many challenges and you have to prevail over those challenges so that you can reach your peak potential. My cousin also picked this verse for his confirmation, so I've always remembered it.

My favorite part of church is Communion. I like Communion because it is important to remember that Jesus sacrificed himself for us. Another reason I like Communion is because the juice that is an alternative for wine is very good.

I think that prayer is a way that we can communicate with God. I don't pray every day or at any specific time. I usually just pray whenever I have a challenge that I can't seem to overcome.

I will serve God by committing acts of kindness. I will do things such as community service, helping my parents with simple tasks, and helping a friend out whenever they need it. I will also continue to serve God by helping out at the church. I will continue to help run the camera and possibly help out with other things.

I'm choosing to be confirmed because it will help me grow my relationship with God. Once I'm confirmed I will also be able to form a stronger relationship with the church. I will be asked if I renounce the devil and all the powers of this world and ways of sin that defy God and draw you away from living as God's child. This means that in my life I will have to avoid everything that separates me from God.