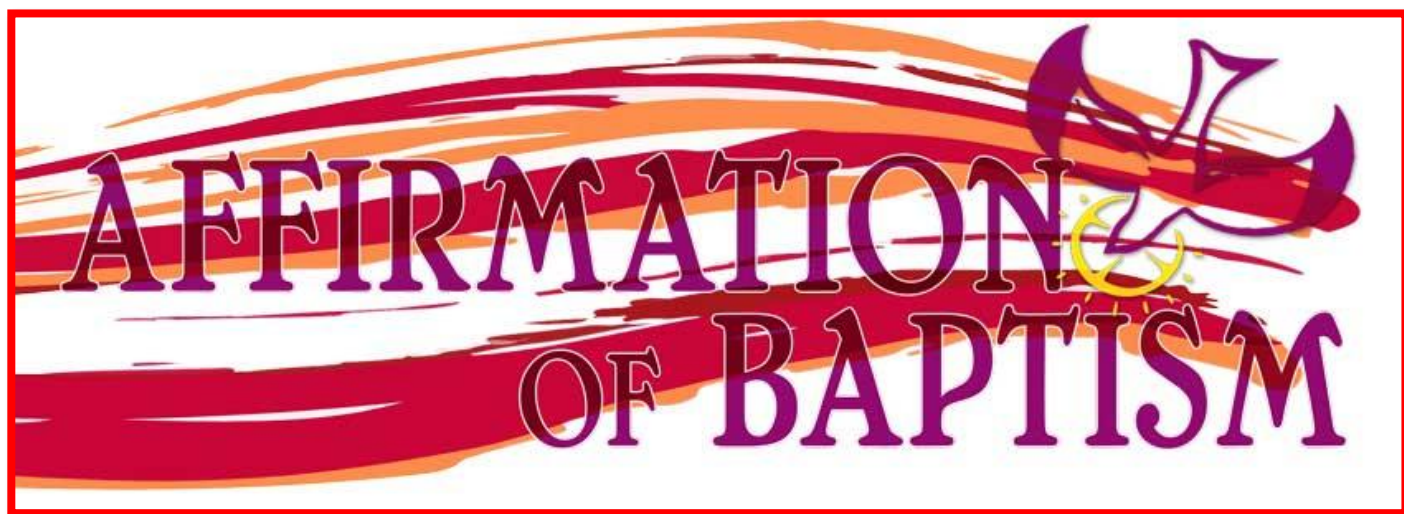


Affirmation of Baptism Worship Service

October 25, 2026

4:00 PM



**EASTSIDE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
COMMUNITY**

Prelude

Welcome

Pr. Lara Forbes, Saint Andrew's Lutheran

Gathering Prayer

Kate O'Brien, Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church

L: The Lord be with you

All: And also with you

L: Lift up your hearts

All: we lift them to the Lord

L: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family, and through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. At the river your son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you set us free from the power of sin and death and raise us up to live in you.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, the power of you living Word, that those who are washed in the waters of baptism and today affirm their faith, be confident in your gift of new life. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.



Gathering Song

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Refrain



Shine, Je - sus, shine, fill this land with the Fa - ther's glo - ry;



blaze, Spir - it, blaze, set our hearts on fire.



Flow, riv - er, flow, flood the na - tions with grace and mer - cy;



send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light!



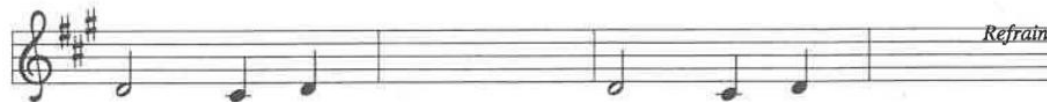
1 Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing, in the midst of the
2 As we gaze on your king - ly bright-ness, so our fac - es dis -



dark - ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, light of the world, shine up - on us,
play your like - ness, ev - er chang - ing from glo - ry to glo - ry,



set us free by the truth you now bring us.
mir - rored here, may our lives tell your sto - ry.



Shine on on me,
Shine on on me:
shine on on me:
shine on on me:

Refrain

Introduction to the Day: What is Confirmation?

Doug Johnson, Director of Youth and Family Ministry for Saint Andrew's and Sammamish Hills Lutheran Churches

Scripture Reading: Luke 5:1-11 Brennan D'Alessio, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

A reading from Luke, the 5th chapter.

Once while Jesus was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Faith Statements

Kate O'Brien (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

Alina Knapp (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

Gabriel Isinika (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

Song

Sing vs. 1, 4, 5

Earth and All Stars!



** 1 Earth and all stars! Loud rush - ing plan - ets!
 2 Trum - pet and pipes! Loud clash - ing cym - bals!
 3 En - gines and steel! Loud pound - ing ham - mers!
 ** 4 Class-rooms and labs! Loud boil - ing test tubes!
 ** 5 Knowl-edge and truth! Loud sound - ing wis - dom!



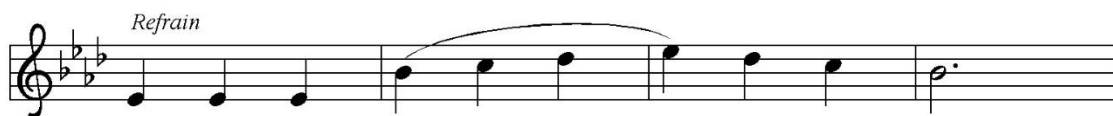
** Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 ** Sing to the Lord a new song!
 ** Sing to the Lord a new song!



** Hail, wind, and rain! Loud blow - ing snow - storm!
 Harp, lute, and lyre! Loud hum - ming cel - los!
 Lime - stone and beams! Loud build - ing work - ers!
 ** Ath - lete and band! Loud cheer - ing peo - ple!
 ** Daugh - ter and son! Loud pray - ing mem - bers!



** Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 ** Sing to the Lord a new song!
 ** Sing to the Lord a new song!



Refrain
 God has done mar - vel - ous things.



I too sing prais - es with a new song!

Faith Statements

Micah Andersen-Markee (Mt Si Lutheran Church)

Gordon Isinka (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

Melanie Grad (St. Andrew's Lutheran Church)

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:37-39

Megan O'Brien, Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, the 8th chapter. No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Word of the Lord.

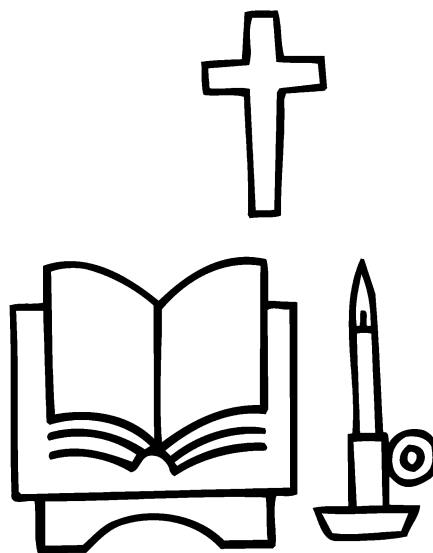
All: Thanks be to God.

Faith Statements

Megan O'Brien (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

Marcus D'Alessio (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

Brennan D'Alessio (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)



Song

Here I Am, Lord



1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my peo - ple cry.
 2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my peo - ple's pain.
 3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.



All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
 I have wept for love of them. They turn a - way.
 I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.



I, who made the stars of night, I will make their dark-ness bright.
 I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love a - lone.
 Fin-est bread I will pro-vide till their hearts be sat - is - fied.



Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"
 I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?"
 I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?"



Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you



call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you



lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

Rite of Confirmation

Presentation: Doug Johnson, Director of Youth and Family Ministry for Saint Andrew's & Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church.

I present, *Micah, Melanie, Gordon, Gabriel, Alina, Brennan, Marcus, Megan, and Kate*, who desire to make public affirmation of their faith.

Let us pray,

Merciful God, we thank you for these sisters and brothers, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

Profession of Faith

Pr. Nyla Schoeld, Sammamish Hills & Cross of Christ Lutheran Churches

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

Response: I renounce them

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

Response: I renounce them

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

Response: I renounce them

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Affirmation in Presence of the Assembly

Pr. Lara Forbes, Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following in the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Response: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Leader: I would like to invite the families of those being confirmed to please come forward and stand behind them. I ask the confirmands to please kneel.

Blessing: *The pastors will pray over each student one at a time saying these or similar words:*

Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, stir up in name the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. Amen.

Rejoice

Pr. Krista Johnson, Mt Si Lutheran Church

Let us give thanks to God that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin and raise us to eternal life. Let us rejoice with these sisters and brothers in Christ!

We rejoice with you in the life of baptism! Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.

Prayer For Confirmands:

Pr. Kristin-Luana Baumann,
Our Savior Lutheran Church

*Confirmands are invited to stand and face the congregation.
Family is welcome to stay with each students and pray with them.*

Let us pray.

Holy Spirit, we are so grateful for the way you touch all of us and guide us in our faith. Today, we ask you especially to bless our confirmands. May they always know that you are with them. I now invite those present to share their prayers for these confirmands.

Please share your prayers for the confirmands.

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

Pr. Krista Johnson, Mt Si Lutheran Church

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Sending Song

Let All Things Now Living

1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the forc - es: the stars in their cours-es and

God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;

who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -

fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

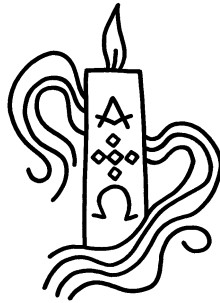
till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To

for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Dismissal

Pr. Lara Forbes, Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
Thanks be to God.



We thank the following worship participants:

Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church:

Pastor Lara Forbes, Doug Johnson, Dr. Will Simpson, Kurt Lutterman (livestream)
and Sharon Gurtel (audio)

Our Savior Lutheran Church

Pr. Kristin-Luana Baumann

Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church & Cross of Christ Lutheran Church:

Pr. Nyla Schoeld, Pastor Dave Schoeld, Kate O'Brien, Megan O'Brien (Sammamish Hills), Brennan D'Alessio (Cross of Christ)

Mt. Si Lutheran Church:

Pastor Krista Johnson

LITURGY and MUSIC: Unless otherwise noted, liturgy, liturgical music, and hymns are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and All Creation Sings (ACS), and Scripture readings are from New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV) Liturgy and NRSV text from Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress; streamed/reprinted with permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SASoo6660. All rights reserved. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Reprinted / podcast / streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-718073. All rights reserved. Reprinted / podcast / streamed with permission under CCLI #2042297 and #CSPL048062. All rights reserved.

Faith Statements:

Kate O'Brien (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

One of my greatest challenges in my life so far was learning how to reconnect with God. I was raised going to my hometown church in Illinois every Sunday, I made friends, learned about being Christian, and learned about God. My family and I were always involved in the church, and we had made such strong connections.

Right before my 7th birthday we moved to Washington; this meant that we had a completely new start. We had to find a new church and new community to connect with. We went from church to church, not really staying at any specific one. Then less than a year later everyone went into lockdown and my family, and I had still not found a church for us. As covid went through, I had lost my connection with God, and it would stay that way for a couple years. After covid my family and I were still left without a church that we were regularly going to. I still knew that I was Christian and believed in God but I struggled showing it.

When I was in 6th grade, we found Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church and knew that this was where we were meant to stay. We started going to church more often and I started taking confirmation classes around halfway through the year we stopped going to church and going to confirmation classes often. Other things in my life became an idol instead of God. I started to feel emptied and like I was doing all of the things I needed but still not fulfilled. So, I started to pray. I began praying every night after that and asking for help with my relationship with God. After a few months I realized that I wanted to continue through with my relationship with God, I started going to church again this time more committed. I bought my bible and talked to my family more about my faith. Now I'm here getting to say how I choose God and want to spread the love and joy that he brought to me when I was struggling.

I chose Psalm 23 as my Confirmation Bible passage.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

He leads beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I will 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 your goodness and love will
follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

I chose this Psalm because it reminds me of having worries and Jesus always being there throughout them and being with you.

Alina Knapp (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

Hello, my name is Alina Knapp, and I am 14 years old and a freshman at Skyline High School. I was baptized at Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church in 2012 and have been a member since. My favorite bible verse is Philippians 4:6-7, which says "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This verse really resonates with me because I have struggled with bad anxiety for a long time, and this verse has helped me get over that. I actually discovered this verse about a year and a half ago while at a gymnastics competition and got "clipped" (like in cheer where they put little clothes pins with a positive message on it on your bag), and that clip had that exact verse on it.

I feel like this point in a teenager's life, specifically for a person that is religious, is one of the most challenging spots, because you tend to question a lot of things in the process of trying to figure out life. I don't know if any of my family even knows this, but I have struggled with trying to figure out what pieces of life are real or just have been told to us as a white lie, like bits of religion. Never have I actually thought "well I don't believe in God or whatever", but I have thought about how the bible doesn't make sense at times from a logistical or scientific standpoint. For example, now this might sound a little weird, but how on earth did two people, Adam and Eve, somehow spawn an entire population, and then Noah and his family did the same after they wiped out all of humanity? If you really think about it, it doesn't make a whole ton of sense.

But eventually, after a few more years of life and therefore experiencing more, I don't think making sense is what the bible is about. I don't think the whole of the bible is meant to be taken completely literally; it's more like all of biblical history condensed into a poem, because in a poem, if you are truly dedicated, you have to really think about the meaning, are forced to understand it, to really take it in. And that in a sense describes life in itself too; you are almost never handed stuff on a silver platter, you must work for it first, and that makes you understand its importance and worth all the more.

This realization along with other moments I have experienced, have really shaped and strengthened my faith. For instance, one of the first big losses I experienced was the passing of one of my chickens Blackie back in 2023. I had lost two other pets who were close to my whole family's hearts, which were our first two dogs, Sadie and Hailey, but I was too young to have a strong memory of that. Anyways back to the chickens. A lot of people and all of my close friends know that my chickens are one of the many things that I hold at the center of my heart, they are my little babies and my best friends. Unfortunately, chickens only have an average lifespan of 5-8 years, so I have dealt with numerous pet losses. Blackie, as I mentioned earlier, was one of the first really big losses that I experienced.

She was a favorite of everyone around, even to those who never thought that they would learn to like chickens. That hen was so special in so many ways; she was calm, loving, friendly, kept the others in check, and was a great cuddle buddy and therapy chicken. We had gotten Blackie as well as her four sisters when I was around 3 years old, and her batch were the first chickens we ever got.

Unfortunately, time does exist, and we all got older. Three of our original chickens had already passed on, and then God decided it was her turn, except it didn't feel like it should have been. I won't go into details, but she did not pass peacefully, it was not a pretty death. However, my family did get to spend her last moments with her, which doesn't tend to happen with poultry as their deaths are often sudden or seemingly out of nowhere. Her passing did not feel just. I kept blaming myself, thinking of all the things I could have done to help her had I realized how sick she was. But in reality, she was 8 years old and had already begun slowing down. That night I went and sat on our front porch, the stars shining bright, and the moon illuminating the world around me.

As I was sitting there crying, I prayed to God asking him to make sure that my birdie was safe and happy up in her little corner of chicken heaven, using the exact word “birdie”, I felt a small prick on my finger. Now keep in mind I was sitting there with my head down and my knees tucked to my chest with my arms wrapped around them, not making a peep. In the moment I felt that small prick on my finger I wondered “what the heck hit me, I’m under a covered porch, there’s not a gust of wind, and it is ten o’clock at night”. I lift my head up and look over at my hand resting on my shoulder, and there perched on my finger is a small and curious junco, tilting its head at me as if to ask, “what’s wrong?”.

The first thought that came to my head was “OH MY GOSH A BIRD JUST LANDED ON ME HOW COOL AND CRAZY IS THAT!!”. And then my second thought was that maybe, just maybe, that was Gods way of letting me know that my birdie was still watching over me.

From there on, I started paying more attention to more of the little details in life, and in my mind, some of them are God letting us know that he is still here. I began to try to understand more parts of the bible that didn’t make sense to me before, started looking at them as poems and metaphors, trying to decipher each and every little word. This made my faith so much stronger, which has helped me through countless times in life where I have struggled. Now, instead of letting my anxiety overcome me in those moments of struggle, I look to God for answers, try to see the messages he sends us every day to show us his presence, that he is here for us, watching over us all the time and is there for us when we need him most even if we can’t see it until later.

Thank you for listening.

Gabriel Isinika (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

Hello, my name is Gabriel Isinika. I am 14 years old, and I have been a member of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church for all my life, where I was also baptized. My faith is about noticing and being thankful for all the good things and opportunities God has given me. Being part of my church for my whole life has helped me learn about God’s love and shape how I treat others every day.

Throughout my life, I have seen that every open door, new experience, and chance to grow is a gift from God. Looking back on my life so far, I have been lucky to travel to amazing places and meet wonderful people. Traveling has shown me the beauty of God's world, and meeting new people has shown me the kindness in others. Traveling and conversation has taught me something good. Knowing that God leads my path, gives me the courage to try new things, make the most of every gift, and to be thankful for every opportunity I get.

The Bible verse I chose is James 1:17: *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights."* This verse is special to me because it reminds me that every good thing in my life comes from God. Every chance to learn in school, help others succeed, and try new things comes straight from Him. None of these things happen by accident or just because of me; they are gifts God trusts me with. Because of this, I know I shouldn't take anything for granted. Instead, I want to use these gifts to honor God and help people. In summary, my faith is built on seeing God at work in my life, staying thankful for every opportunity He gives me, and trying not to take anything for granted. I want to keep growing in my faith, seeing the world, helping others, and trusting God wherever He leads me next. Thank you for listening.

Micah Andersen-Markee (Mt Si Lutheran Church)

Hi, my name is Micah and I am 14 years old. I've lived my whole life in the Snoqualmie Valley. Throughout my life I've been learning about God and His feelings for me and for you. We were asked to come up with a Bible verse that was special to us. The one I chose was 1st Corinthians 13:1-8 & 13:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 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.
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

This chapter in Corinthians is special to me because love is a big part of my life. I like that at the beginning, it says that even if I can do all these amazing things, it's all pointless, unless I have love. It says that love is not about making yourself powerful or higher than others. It requires patience and kindness. God is love. If I'm doing things with love, then I'm doing things with God.

I believe God is with us and around us.

He loves us, no matter what.

I believe Jesus came to earth to show us how to live, to forgive our sins, and to give us a good relationship with God. He doesn't want anyone to go to the bad place.

I believe God helps me and guides us.

I think God wants me to try to be as good as I can be and to live my life happily.

I think He wants me to spread the goodness of His love.

So, I'd like to conclude with the words of Paul from 1st Corinthians 13:13 "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Gordon Isinka (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

My name is Gordon Ntuli Isinika I am 14 years old, and I have been a member of Cross of Christ for my whole life, and today I just want to say thank you lord for finding me such an amazing church and community.

First, I want to thank him for keeping me safe, want to thank him for protecting and helping me with all my problems. I also thank him for keeping me healthy when other people get sick or face big problems. He has looked over me and that is something I am so grateful for.

But I also need to be real about something. I am a sinner and I believe that is a part of being of a follower of Jesus, none of us are perfect we all mess up we get angry we can be selfish and do things we are not supposed to do. but being a Christian doesn't mean we stop sinning it means. we know we need Jesus every day.

The bible tells us what God is like in Exodus 34:6. It says, *“The Lord, the lord the compassionate and gracious god, slow to anger abounding in love and faithfulness.”* God said those words to Moses and that is what we still stand by today. Even when people kept fail him God stays kind and patient even when we fall short to his expectations, he does not anger nor gives up on us. He is ready to forgive and help us start again.

I am still learning. I still need God's help every day. But I know one thing for sure following Jesus is the best decision of my life. My prayer is that I keep growing as a friend, teammate, brother, son, and fellow Christian, whilst I get to find the Lord more often in my everyday life.

We are all sinners, but we serve a God who is kind patients and full of love. that is the God I thank today. All praise belongs to him. Thank you.

Melanie Grad (St. Andrew's Lutheran Church)

Hi, I'm Melanie. I'm 15 years old and was baptized at Christ Church Lutheran in San Francisco. My family moved here in 2019, and we have been going to Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church since then.

As much as I would love to start out this faith statement with Acts 20:9 (a man falling asleep during one of Paul's very extremely long sermons and consequently falling out of a third story window) or Song of Solomon 4:1 (*“your hair is like a flock of goats”*) I would like to focus on Colossians 3:12:

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”

I really like this verse because it expresses one of the things I like most about our faith: the emphasis on positive values and perspective towards life. To get a bit philosophical, none of us really know why we're alive, but I like to think the reason doesn't matter so much as what we do with our time as decision-making influence-having humans. I feel like the bible does a really good job of showing us there is absolutely no reason to be mean or exclusive or negative if we could be kind and compassionate and joyful. Even when it is difficult, it just makes sense in the big picture to “clothe” ourselves with values and practices that make everyone's time on Earth better, Christian or not.

I notice that this verse starts by addressing “God’s chosen people” specifically. By following God, I believe we are all God’s chosen people. I appreciate the way this verse makes being people of God not only about being Christian and centering our lives around God alone, which for sure aren’t bad things, but also gives us something to do with our faith, which is to make the lives of everyone a little better. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience are all outward-facing values, focused on the way we interact with other people. This is something I find really cool about not only Christianity but also other religions; they challenge us to be better people and look beyond ourselves.

This brings me to why I am choosing to be confirmed today. It’s not because I feel 100% certain about my own faith. I haven’t felt especially ready for confirmation my entire 4 years of learning and preparing for this. I think it’s because I’ve reached a point where I can understand I will never really be ready. I don’t think any of us are ever fully ready to know what we’re doing with something like this, but that’s ok because God has so much more grace than we are ever really ready to understand or appreciate. So, I think all of us are still getting more and more ready to accept and embrace all of who God is. But I think in the meantime, we can focus on the things we are ready to do and move forward with the compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience the bible teaches us.
Thank you!

Megan O’Brien (Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church)

Jeremiah 29:13, “*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*” My journey with God started when I was baptized at a Lutheran church in Illinois, Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church, and from that day forward have been building my relationship and connection with God. When I was 5 years old my family moved houses, leading us to switch churches, and finding a place in an Episcopal Church. I went to this church for about 4 years, ages 5-9 and through there built up and strengthened my connection. I did Sunday school with my friends and went to the early morning music class led by my mom. At this church I went through my first communion at 8 years old. This process was a huge step in my journey and the whole thing made me feel closer to God.

A year after this, my family moved from Illinois to Washington, and in doing this, we had to leave our church. That was really hard for me because I loved our church, the people, the pastors and the community we had there were such a huge part of my life at the time that leaving was one of the hardest parts of moving. When we got to Washington, we struggled to find a new church. We tried out a few, but nothing was really what we had before, or close to it.

Eventually, at the start of 2020 about a year after we moved, Covid began. This pushed us farther away from finding a church due to the fact that we couldn't leave the house. We ended up doing online church sometimes with our old church from before we moved, but for me, I started to lose the connection I had before. Not for any one reason, and not for any bad reason. I just wasn't trying to grow and strengthen my relationship anymore so it was fading. Because I had lost that constant in my life of every Sunday, going to see people and worship, led me to losing the relationship I had.

After covid, when we found our current church, I started regaining my previous relationship I had, and I started praying more and going to church more, and trying more. It helped me realize how important faith is to me. I can't really define what faith is for me yet. I know it's important, I know I have it, but I don't know exactly what it means to me. My friends say that it means keeping their relationships with people and God. My other friends say it's about their connections. While I feel like all those things are true to me, I don't feel like that is what it means to me completely. It's something that I am trying to define and figure out what it means, because for all I know, I have faith in God, my friends, and my family, but I can't tell you what that means yet, and I am working to find that.

Thank you for your time.

Marcus D'Alessio (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

My name is Marcus D'Alessio; I started going to church about a year ago. Since starting I've felt more connected to the people around me and myself. Jesus has impacted my life by being the light I need in times that are dark. Faith is important to me because it has taught me many important lessons that I can use in my everyday life, like always being thankful and stay loyal to God no matter what bad things or how dark life can get because God is that one light that keeps us moving each day.

The impact I want to make on the world is being someone who can be a light in others lives, even if that means just being someone to talk to or someone who can be counted on to cheer people up, I have a friend in my life who is just that he makes me feel happy, and someone I can talk to if I'm feeling down, he cheers me up when I'm down and just over all a very kind person.

After starting confirmation, I feel like I can start better understanding of the sermons, the lessons and other things that help me grow in my faith. My grandma has helped my family and especially me, when it comes to faith, every day she sends prayers and checks up on us every day, which gives me something to look forward to each day. My parents supported my brothers and I, every day after church they would ask our take on what we thought of church that day they also would ask like what our favorite part was, and what we learned from that day of service. I need help from God when it comes to thinking negative, when I have negative thoughts they stick to me, but they don't bother me until those thoughts effect how I think, act, and my overall mood, I've been getting better at this by pray every night before bed, giving my thanks and praise, and just being grateful to be born in the presence of God. *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* (Ephesians 4: 32)

I feel the bible prayers that hit me most were the ones about forgiveness, this is because being forgiven is one thing but giving forgiveness is another, giving forgiveness is harder, I think this because when someone does something intentionally or on accident it still affects me it's hard to forgive. When the rush of negative emotions and thoughts takes control, you can only think about those thoughts and emotions and you don't want to think kindly of the person that hurt you, you need time to calm down and when you do that's when you start thinking to yourself like why didn't I forgive them at the start and then you spiral down more and think they don't deserve my forgiveness when I still feel down and bad, so then you take more time and then finally forgive them after a long period of time.

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" (Mathew 18: 21-22)

Hearing Jesus tell Peter to forgive someone seventy-seven times on its own is absurd, but you can learn something from forgiving people. This is sort of like the golden rule, treat people how you want to be treated, but forgive people as they would forgive you. We hesitate when it comes to forgiveness even over the smallest things, there's still that little feeling of anger that we feel when things happen to us. That anger can sometimes build up and when something big happens to us all that anger is let out and we spiral out. I've learned a lot from going to church, about how to treat myself, the people around me, and those who sin against me, I feel if I didn't go to church, I wouldn't have gained these skills or met some fantastic people. This was how church has affected and changed my life. Thank you for listening.

Brennan D'Alessio (Cross of Christ Lutheran Church)

Starting off, I just wanted to thank everyone for coming and listening to my statement, and for giving me this amazing opportunity. Faith has really changed my life and my outlook of this world, before going to church consistently, I would call my past self a rather grumpy person, always negative and quick to blame. Not a nice idea, I know, but now, I would say that I am much more upbeat and less angry. I'd say that a big part of my journey with faith is learning what forgiveness is, and to be honest? It is still an enigma! I still am not sure what it means to forgive or even if I have truly done so yet. I could list many Bible verses which revolve around forgiveness, but I'm going to stick with one which could be very important when I begin to figure out what forgiving someone means. That is Matthew 18: 21-22. *"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"* This tells me that forgiving someone once is good, but it is so much better if I continuously do so.

One person who I aspire to be like and look up to, not only literally but from a faith standpoint is my brother. Marcus D'Alessio has been a pillar of what it means to forgive others, even if I don't understand how he does it. He has been a true example to me when it came to faith, and I hold him in high regards for that.

I want to make a difference in this world by doing small actions to help others. I want to do things that have a good lasting impact on others and the environment. I like doing service projects in boy scouts like clearing ivy or volunteering at Sammamish Hills.

One way I like to make a difference is in church. My favorite way to help is either Day of Service or Vacation Bible School. The thing I remember the most from Day of Service is when I would help make the quilts for people. I remember that I would help tie the small knots for the fringe around the edge of the quilt, which I still love doing today. I also remember making care packages with necessities like toothpaste and soap. Another way I like to help the church is by helping with Vacation Bible School. This past VBS I helped by being a group leader even though I didn't really want to do that. I would have rather been at a station or helping with snacks because those are things that I enjoy. But I still did it because I was needed to help with that position.

Another way that I like to make differences in the world is through Boy Scouts. I like doing different things like service projects to help clear out paths or remove overgrown ivy from a trail. I also like helping the younger scouts. One time I can remember helping the younger scouts was during a trip to Tolt Mac Donald park near Fall City. During that trip, there were young scouts that were not in our troop but had the possibility of joining our troop. On the trip, we hosted a night with smores and short skits to entertain the young scouts. I helped with one skit which was fun to do, and the young scouts liked it. Another time I helped was helping with a project to make a pully system to help get banners up and down on a wall at the church that hosts the troop. Before we made the pully, an older man had to move and climb a very tall ladder to change the banner every time that there was a different event happening at that church. But because we made the pully system, it is a lot easier to get the banner up and down and does not need a ladder anymore.

That is how I want to make a difference in the world. I want to do it with small things that help others and have a good lasting impact on other people and the environment. Being a member of the church will give me more opportunities to do small actions.