Confirmation Reflection by Julia

I believe that all of this years’ confirmands have learned different things from confirmation. However, I am sure that the first thing that all of us would like to say is Thank You. This past year it has been a recurring theme in our classes that sometimes the bet prayer is simply “Thank you God” but, there are so many people that we have to thank. We have to thank the people that are fighting for our country as opposed to sitting with their families today. We can thank the familiar faces in these seats that have stood by our friends and family that have made an extra effort to be able to sit in the congregation today to support us as we bloom into the church. And lastly we can thank our Sunday school teachers, Confirmation leaders, Pastor and others in the church that have taken the time to hold our hands and to lead us through this path that we are all taking, as well as teach us along the way. It is truly amazing. But, as we know most good things must come to an end. Today we don’t come to a complete end. Instead we come to a fork. A fork in the road where we must let go of your hands and become independent. Sure, we will be on committees or in youth group, and we will still attend church. But now we are somewhat by ourselves, stronger and wiser because of you all. And today in front of you, we will declare our independence in the church with the promises that we will agree to. And we know we won’t ever be completely alone, whether or not people leave us. Because we have God on our side. Thank You God. Amen.

Confirmation Reflection by Kyle

When you think of confirmation, you may think it’s a ceremony of being a member of the church. Though that is true, I personally think it’s more than that. I think that you start out as a member, everyone already accepts you. You are already a part of the family. But when you are confirmed, you don’t only get more respected by those around you, but you also show you accept them as your family. You are accepting and confirming the challenge of spreading the love and word of God to more than just the church, your relatives or even you community, but instead the world. It shows you can do this without too much and that you are old enough and courageous enough to be independent. I think that is what confirmation means.

Confirmation Reflection by Liam

I began confirmation class with knowledge mainly consisting of Bible stories and parables. As the year progressed, I began to see that there were many more levels. There is more to the Bible than just stories. A lot of the depth and meaning are things we have to perceive for ourselves.

An example is part of the story of Jonah. Jonah was angry at God for not destroying Nineveh and said he would rather die than live. He lay seething on the ground outside the city and God gave him a bush to give him shade. This alone could be interpreted in many different ways. For me, it shows that God has unconditional love for all of us, and it reminds us that it’s God’s plan, not our plan.

The Bible is not the only place where these multi-leveled stories exist. Judging by the messages their books carry, I would say that authors such as C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling and Madeline L’engle have all been inspired by the Holy Spirit. The overarching themes in these books are similar to those in the Bible; good versus evil, betrayal and redemption.
The Holy Spirit is not only alive in literature, but it is alive everywhere. It is alive in my fellow confirmands, it is alive in our teachers and it is alive in the congregation. The Holy Spirit inspires us to help our local community by feeding the homeless, and the global community through Heifer International and Fair Trade programs. I believe that it is leading the church to help others and strengthen our connection with God.

Becoming confirmed didn’t feel like a difficult decision for me. I knew it was important to me, my family and my church, but at the time, I didn’t think much would change. I realize now that my decision will have more weight than I first anticipated. Becoming a member will change the way I am viewed by others. I think that I may grow closer to God and I will be able to help people in need.

**Confirmation Reflection by Nora**

I am going to start with honesty. This could either be a very good way to start or it could be a disaster. A couple weeks ago, without thinking, I volunteered to write a reflection on my faith journey. I struggled a lot with the concept of “my faith journey” and frankly even confirming my faith.

I have always been a skeptic. Teachers in school would get annoyed with my constant barrage of questions. Why? How? I wanted solid evidence that something was for sure one hundred percent true. At home, my parents had a bit more patience with me. I wanted to know why there were no dinosaurs anywhere In Genesis. I mean, look at the people of medieval Europe, they fully, with all their hearts believed that the world was flat. The ancient Greeks devoted their whole lives to pleasing Zeus and the other gods and goddesses who we study now as myths: to them, these figures were as real as sticks and stones. I worry that someday people will look back on Christians and laugh just as I do when hearing about those who thought the sun revolved around the earth.

I’m not sure what I believe about God. I know I don’t believe that God is some looming figure in a cloud looking down on us, or that we are God’s puppets and that he controls everything that happens. I want to believe in God with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength, but frankly I am not quite there yet. I’m not sure about stories like the burning bush, Adam and Eve and Abraham’s test. In some ways Jesus is easier, having been human. But the virgin birth and the resurrection-I just don’t buy that...

I would be lying if I stood up here today and told you that I, will always, from this point forward, believe that God is as real as you and me. I honestly hope to one day be able to confirm that. Today is not that day. When I have these thoughts I think to myself “Oh gosh, what is God going to have to say about my doubtful thoughts?”

But what I can confirm today is my belief that God is in all that is good, that God is love. I can confirm my belief in Jesus’ message about loving God and our neighbors and that by loving one another we are loving God. I can confirm that this is a message that should be carried throughout the world regardless of the details of Jesus’ birth and death. What counts most to me right now is his message of loving everyone.
I am only fourteen, a high school freshman. Confirmation has not been a journey to a final epiphany but a part of a search. Maybe I can't find God today but I am looking. I have always been and will always be looking. Someday I will find my peace with God but for now: patience. So please God, it's me Nora, the skeptic, wherever you may be I am looking, could you wait a little longer? Confirmation of my faith is very hard for me, but I can confirm to you today that I am looking for you to the best of my limited ability.

**Confirmation Reflection by Andrew**

The Holy Spirit is everywhere. At least that's what you're taught. So is only makes sense that the Holy Spirit should be present all the time in a faithful church. All the food decisions made by committees or fun times or uplifting spiritual services I believe are the result of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. You may ask, “If the Holy Spirit is everywhere, then why do we tend to feel the uplifting quality of the Spirit here compared to other places people gather?” The fact is, though the spirit always attempts to enrich the lives of all, some don't let it in. Some are so blinded by hatred and greed that they don't take the time to allow God's love to make them truly happy. It is this love that causes the many wonderful things that happen at our church. These include the Harvest Fair and Family Game Night to Bible studies and the Christmas and Easter Pageants. The Holy Spirit makes people feel moved to volunteer for services and step out of their comfort zone. The Holy Spirit has even been at work in my life: I will be joining the music committee after being confirmed. This was a difficult decision that caused me to gage the value of the different aspects of my life. Likewise, going on the UCC retreat caused me to learn many things about my faith, including the now famous line: “God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it”, which completely changed the perspective I have on my faith. All in all, the combination of the powerful feeling of the Holy Spirit and the wonderful people that make this place feel like home makes me happy to be a future member of this church.