

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

309 4th St NE Valley City, ND

Rev. Jamie Desai

Ministers in Daily Life: People of God at Faith

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023 REFORMATION SUNDAY

9:30am worship service



Confirmation Class of 2023

(back row, l-r): Abby Wilmes, Alyssa Wilmes, Brenna Storly,
Pastor Jamie Desai, Kaleb McClafin, Mavrick Ludwig, Jack Samuelson;
(front row, l-r): Lauren May, Autumn Anderson, Faith Schmidt,
Mazie Ludwig, Jacksyn Thornton.

WELCOME IN JESUS' NAME!

It is good to encounter Christ together. At Faith Lutheran we rise up to: **Worship Christ, Welcome All, and Serve Others** because of Jesus. A special welcome to visitors and guests! May God bless our time together as we celebrate Christ's presence in the bread and wine, the Word of God, and the community we share. Please fill out a welcome card if you have changes: address, phone number, prayer request. Break off the bottom half to place in the offering plate; keep the top as a bookmark and a reminder of worship times.

The order of service is printed in the bulletin. All bold font is spoken by the congregation, the regular by the worship leader.

*Indicates those who are able, please stand. (ELW - Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal –cranberry color)

Service

Prelude
Welcome

*PROCESSIONAL **"Lift High the Cross"** ELW 660

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, the one who fashions us, the one who heals us, the one who reforms us again and again.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, calling for God's transforming power.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Source of all life, **we confess that we have not allowed your grace to set us free.**

We fear that we are not good enough. We hear your word of love freely given to us, yet we expect others to earn it. We turn the church inward, rather than moving it outward. Forgive us. Stir us. Reform us to be a church powered by love, willing to speak for what is right, act for what is just, and seek the healing of your whole creation. Amen.

God hears our cry and sends the Spirit to change us and to empower our lives in the world. Our sins are forgiven, God's love is unconditional, and we are raised up as God's people who will always be made new, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Beloved, we gather together to celebrate the love that God has poured into the world.

We have received God's love, and together we worship.

Beloved, we gather together to bear witness to God's love that unites us.

We have received God's love, and together we proclaim.

Beloved, we gather together to share God's love in water, wine, and bread.

We have tasted God's love, and together we give thanks.

Let us rejoice in the presence of God, who unites us in the promise of the Holy Spirit, and calls us forth in service and love.

We are God's love, and together we serve.



<u>Serving Today</u>		<u>Attendance & Offering</u>	
Greeter:	<i>Kylie Van Bruggen</i>	Attendance:	10/22 109 109+ online views
Ushers:	<i>Sorensen, Metcalf, Johnson, Rodin Families</i>		
Lector:	<i>Alyssa Wilmes</i>		
Communion Ministers:	<i>Autumn Anderson, Lauren May, Faith Schmidt, Brenna Storly, Jacksyn Thornton, Abby Wilmes</i>	Offering:	10/1 \$4,785.00 10/8 \$4,570.00 10/15 \$4,935.00 10/22 \$2,299.00
Grape Server:	<i>Mazie Ludwig</i>		
Kitchen:	<i>Sorensen, Metcalf, Johnson, Rodin Families</i>		
Acolyte:	<i>Kassidy Schultz</i>	Mission Plan monthly	
Keyboard & Vocals:	<i>Cyndi Hill</i>		\$21,265.25
Vocals:	<i>Julie May</i>		
Processional—			
Cross Bearer:	<i>Jack Samuelson</i>		
Pascal Candle:	<i>Kaleb McClaflyn</i>		
Bible Bearer:	<i>Mavrick Ludwig</i>		

<u>The Week Ahead: October 30-November 5, 2023</u>	
<u>Monday, October 30</u> Pastor's Sabbath	<u>Saturday, November 4</u> 9:00am - Ladies Crafting Day
<u>Tuesday, October 31</u> 10:30am - Women's Bible Study 1:30pm - Text Study	10:30am-1:30pm - Trinity Lutheran Fall Festival
<u>Wednesday, November 1</u> 1pm - Quilters 3:15pm- Faith Kids Club 6:30pm - Confirmation at Our Savior's	<u>Sunday, November 5</u> All Saints Sunday Daylight Savings Time 9:30am - Worship Service 10:30am - Coffee Fellowship 10:45am - Sunday School 10:45am - 3rd Grader Bible class w/Parents

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY -**

Almighty God, **gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS (PB - Pew Bible)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (PB p. 217 - Old Testament)

Lector: The Word of God *Congregation: Thanks be to God.*

Psalms 46 (please read responsively - see screen)

Romans 3:19-28 (PB p. 160 - New Testament)

Lector: The Word of God *Congregation: Thanks be to God.*

***Gospel Acclamation**

"Thy Word"

see screen

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John, the 8th chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord

John 8:31-36 (PB p. 105)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord - People: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

Pastor Jamie Desai

***SONG OF THE DAY**

"My Lighthouse"

see screen

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Introduction of confirmands by Kent Gronlie, Council Member

These persons have been instructed in the Christian faith and desire to make public affirmation of their baptism: Autumn Kay Anderson, Mavrick Glenn Ludwig, Mazie Lila Ludwig, Lauren Meredith May, Kaleb Hayes McClaflyn, Jack Theodore Samuelson, Faith Marie Schmidt, Brenna Marie Storly, Jacksyn Brad Thornton, Abby Ann Wilmes, Alyssa Ann Wilmes.

CONFIRMANDS SHARE BIBLE VERSES

PASTOR: *Let us pray. Gracious Lord 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 Jesus Christ our Lord. Congregation: Amen.*

Now, therefore, I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

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

CONFIRMANDS: I renounce them.

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

CONFIRMANDS: I renounce them.

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

CONFIRMANDS: I renounce them.

PASTOR: *Do you believe in God the Father?*

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

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

ALL: 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.

PASTOR: *Do you believe in God, the Holy Spirit?*

ALL: 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. Amen.

PASTOR: *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 His Word 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 the example of our Lord Jesus; and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?*

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

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

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

(Confirmands will gather at the altar and kneel as family/sponsors lay hands)

PASTOR: *Let us pray. We give thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.*

PASTOR: *Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, stir up in (name) the gift of your Holy Spirit; confirm her/his faith, guide her/his life, empower her/him in her/his serving; give her/him patience in suffering; and bring her/him to everlasting life.*

CONFIRMANDS and CONGREGATION: Amen.

(Response after all confirmands have received their blessing)

PASTOR: *Let us rejoice with these sisters and brothers in Christ.*

CONGREGATION: 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.

*PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE—Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING

*OFFERTORY

"Give Thanks"

see screen



LET US REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

SMP Health - St. Raphael:—Clara Bredeson; Marlys Freadhoff; Mark Hill; Mavis Johnson; Diane Kohn; Paula Krall; Laurette Zachrison.

General Prayer List:—Sue Olson; Christl Durand (Tami Kratz' sister); Paul & Doreen Vangerud; Dave Heley (Shawn Ranisate's stepfather); Rick Anderson (Bud & Verna Anderson's son); Curt Tufty (Sue Olson's brother-in-law); Dan & Bea Faust; Sandy Mulvaney; Doug Altringer; Samuel Hill (Cyndi & Mark Hill's grandson); Lori Hill (Tami Kratz's sister); Mary Schram (Becky Kratz' mother).

Contact Info

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Facebook Page: Faith Lutheran Church Valley City

YouTube Channel: vcfaithlutheran

Last Sunday, October 22 we turned in our pledge cards for the giving in 2024. You can still turn in your pledge card to Julie in the office. Thank you for your generous giving.

Trinity Lutheran WELCA Annual Fall Festival—Saturday, November 4th.

Bake & Lefse Sale: **10:30am-1:30pm**. Luncheon Hours **11am-1:30pm**. Menu: Baked Potato Bar, Salad & Dessert. Adults: \$10, Children 6 & Under: \$5. Lunch Pick up & Delivery available 11:30am-1pm. Call 845-8987. **New this year**—Christmas Corner! Gently-used Christmas items & décor.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Fall Bazaar—Sunday, November 5th, 8am-12:30pm at

Tower City Community Center. WELCA Pancake & Sausage Breakfast, Quilt Raffle—\$2/ticket, Bake Sale.

Creativity for a Cause Arin Lutiker Benefit—Taco Bar (free will offering) & Sale of Handmade Items, Monday, November 6, 5-7pm at The Eagles.

You are invited to support VCHS sophomore Arin Lutiker & family in a courageous battle against childhood cancer. Most recently, Arin underwent a leg amputation to remove a tumor and is now recovering from surgery. Arin is also the recipient of an upcoming Make-A-Wish experience. A variety of Handmade Items will be for direct sale with a few special pieces sold through silent auction. Items vary as widely as the creativity of their donors: needlework, pottery, woodworking, photography, jewelry, baking, & more.



LADIES CRAFT DAY—Saturday, November 4, 9am-8pm at Faith

Lutheran Church. Enjoy a day of Fellowship and Fun. Bring your own craft project or work on card kits (cards will be used by the visitation team). Bring a friend. Stay all day or for a few hours. Bring a lunch or order in. Contact Julie May @ 490-1143 with questions.

Announcements

Stop in the fellowship hall for a cup of coffee or juice and a treat served at 10:30am following worship. It is good to enjoy each other's company and conversation.

We do have a sound-proof nursery with a speaker so you can hear (and see) the service while rocking an infant to sleep or calming a crying child. There is a diaper changing station there and in the family bathroom near the office wing.



Daylight savings time ends Saturday, November 4th. Don't forget to turn your clock back 1 hour.

Next Sunday, November 5th is All Saints Sunday—Join with your brothers and sisters in Christ as we remember those beloved who now reside with Christ and ask for God's strength and peace in our sorrows. During the worship service we will remember those who have died in the past year. A candle will be lit for each person as their name is read. Those at worship may also light a candle in remembrance of a loved one that has went on before them.

Community Thanksgiving Baskets Event—

The baskets will be filled **Thursday, November 16 at 5:30pm. Friday, November 17** deliveries will begin at **5pm** and pick-ups will **begin at 5:30pm** here at Faith. A sign up sheet is on the table in the gathering area if you would like to help either day or both. We are beginning this year with a lower amount in savings for this project so we hope you will consider giving a monetary donation of any size toward the Thanksgiving baskets. You may enclose it in one of the donation envelopes and mark it Thanksgiving Baskets and put it in the offering basket, drop it by the office or mail it to Faith. You may also give online on our website: www.faithlutheranvc.org. Under the Online Giving Tab is a choice for Thanksgiving Baskets. Volunteers are an important part of this project. We are grateful to all who give of their time, talents and monetary gifts so others may enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with their families.



Throughout the months of October and November the Mission Team will be collecting **new socks** of any size to be donated to APOC (Abused Person Outreach Center) as well as **winter gloves/mittens and caps** for the elementary schools. A collection container is under the table in the gathering area.

New Member Invitation—Sunday, November 12, we will be having a meal and information for those who would like to learn more about us and are considering joining our Faith Lutheran family. If you or someone you know would like to join FLC or learn more about us please let Julie in the office know.

A reminder for our 7th-9th grade confirmation youth: You will meet for confirmation at **Our Savior's beginning November 1st—January 31st**. Confirmation is 6:30-8pm. You are welcome to enjoy a quick snack and drink beginning around 6pm.

As you may know, Howard Opegard has recently moved to Jamestown. This is his new address if you would like to send him a note. Howard Opegard, 1505 3rd St SE, Jamestown, ND 58401.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW p. 129

Pastor: The Lord be with you. **People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts. **People: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**People: (singing) Holy, holy, holy Lord. God of power and might
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest**

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION - We welcome all the baptized to the meal celebrating the new life we have in Christ Jesus. Come to the communion rail as the ushers direct. Please take a communion cup from the center boxes as you come forward. Kneel or stand. The communion minister will pour wine or grape juice into your cup. Take a raspberry color cup if you wish to receive grape juice or indicate your preference to the communion minister. The grape juice will be in the gold chalice and the wine will be in the silver chalice. Please place your empty cup in the boxes at the side when you return to your seat. Stay as long or as brief as you like at the communion rail. Gluten-free wafers are available. Young children will receive a grape from the student at the center and a blessing from the person bearing the bread at the rail. If you wish -to refrain from communion, God knows your heart.

COMMUNION HYMNS

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

ELW 471

"Borning Cry"

ELW 732

"Sanctuary"

see screen

"God is the Strength"

see screen

"You Are My All in All" chorus

see screen

*COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

*BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*SENDING SONG

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing"

ELW 543

*DISMISSAL

Go in peace! Serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

We Depart to Serve the Lord

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2023
FAITH STATEMENTS
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Autumn Kay Anderson

Daughter of Bob & Misty Anderson

Birth Date: October 31, 2007 Baptismal Date: April 30, 2008

Baptismal Place: St. Paul's Lutheran - Kathryn, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Rocco & Marcy Murano

Scripture Verse: **Proverbs 17:22** - *“A cheerful heart is a good medicine,
but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.”*

Faith Statement: Laughter is a gift from God. I chose this verse because I love having fun and if I'm ever having a bad day I always feel better after I laugh. I would like to thank all of my friends and family for blessing me with joy and laughter.

Mavrick Glenn Ludwig

Son of Danielle Holmstrom and Mitch Ludwig

Birth Date: November 7, 2007 Baptismal Date: February 10, 2008

Baptismal Place: Trinity Lutheran - Lisbon, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Stephanie Holmstrom, James Ludwig, Robin Voelk, Brad Anderson

Scripture Verse: **Proverbs 3:5-6** - *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on
your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”*

Faith Statement: I believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I believe he died on the cross for our sins and I believe he is always watching over us.

The first time I truly saw God was the day my grandpa died. It was the last day of school, May 25, 2023. I walked to the car and right as I got in my mom told me the news. I was shocked. We went to his house and as I sat there it was like I could still feel his presence and it felt as if he was letting me know everything is okay. In that moment I felt like God was talking to me and standing by my side to help guide me through this. After that I truly believed in God. I believe he helped guide me through everything and let me know to keep pushing on.

Mazie Lila Ludwig

Daughter of Danielle Holmstrom and Mitch Ludwig

Birth Date: November 7, 2007 Baptismal Date: February 10, 2008

Baptismal Place: Trinity Lutheran - Lisbon, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Tim Hildebrant, Tawny Hildebrant, Ty Michaels, Gage Holmstrom

Scripture Verse: **Romans 15:13** - *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

Faith Statement: I believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I believe he died on the cross for our sins and I believe that he is always watching.

May 25th I was at a friend's house and while I was there my dad called me. He asked if I was on steady ground and told me I should sit down. I was so confused and asked “Why, what's going on?” My dad proceeded to tell me that my grandpa had died in a car accident. Nothing could have prepared me for those words. My family, including myself, was absolutely devastated. I was in need of somebody to talk to that would understand what I was going through and would help me. I realized that the somebody I was looking for was God. I prayed and asked him for help and he

Dear Confirmands of 2023,

You are becoming the person God designed you to be, a person of faith—a person with strong values—a person who loves God and other people. As you confirm your faith in Christ, may God's Spirit of love, joy, peace and grace become more and more a part of your spirit. In every situation and relationship be the person you believe Jesus wants you to be, trusting always that Christ will be with you—no matter what! Be strong in the knowledge that you are deeply loved by God, your Creator, and deeply loved by all of us, too! God bless you in Christ forever! Amen.

Please keep these confirmation youth in your hearts and lift them up in prayer as they continue their faith journey.

We would like to acknowledge and say **thank you** to Patty Gronlie, Julie May and Pat Edinger for serving as the confirmands confirmation guides.

Thank you to Nancy Sorensen, Krista Johnson, Julie May, Nancy Ost, Nancy Bjerke for their help in the planning and construction of the Confirmation Banner! Their help is greatly appreciated by all!

Thank you to the 9th grade class and their parents who prepared and served the confirmation banquet!

Abby Ann Wilmes

Daughter of Scott & Wendi Wilmes

Birth Date: February 19, 2008 Baptismal Date: May 24, 2008

Baptismal Place: Washington Lutheran - Northwood, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Mike & Kirsten Gensrich, Tim & Rachel Gronlie

Confirmation Mentor: Patty Wilmes

Scripture Verse: **Proverbs 16:4** - *“The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.”*

Faith Statement: When I was a little kid, I thought church was something that your parents just made you go to, but when I grew up, I realized it means so much more. It’s a place where you can hang out with your friends. It also is where you can go to camps, service projects, and most importantly get closer to God.

As I’ve grown up, I’ve realized that there are things in your life for a reason and Jesus puts them there for a reason. For me personally, it was speech, something that I’ve never thought I was going to be good at. It ended up being where I have found amazing coaches that have helped me and teammates that God put in my life to show me what my true passions were. Now as I’ve grown up, I realized that you can’t control everything that happens to you. Even if it may be tough, God is always there with you and guides you on the right path.

Thank you to my Sunday School Teachers, Confirmation Mentors and Guides, my grandparents, and my parents for guiding me through my faith journey.

Alyssa Ann Wilmes

Daughter of Scott & Wendi Wilmes

Birth Date: February 19, 2008 Baptismal Date: May 24, 2008

Baptismal Place: Washington Lutheran - Northwood, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Mike & Kirsten Gensrich, Tim & Rachel Gronlie

Confirmation Mentor: Julie Moritz

Scripture Verse: **Deuteronomy 31:6**- *“Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.”*

Faith Statement: Growing up you experience several different things in your life, whether it is serving the winning point or missing the winning point. I’ve learned that God is there to help and guide you through it all. I felt closest to God when I went to Duluth this summer for a mission trip. I got to speak to elderly people with more experience in life and they taught me that God will help you with everything. Even when you are having the worst day of your life, God will be right by your side. Even when you are having the best day of your life, God will be right by your side. God is always with you through darkness and through sunshine. Although sometimes it may feel like God isn’t there when you’re struggling, I promise you he is. He believes in you and is proud of you even when you don’t believe in yourself or you are not proud of yourself.

I want to thank my mom, Wendi Wilmes. She puts in so much work that nobody has any idea of, just to help kids grow in their faith. I am so thankful for that. I want to thank my Grandma, Patty Gronlie. I aspire to be like her more and more every day, because every morning she wakes up and reads the Bible. She is a very helpful person in growing my faith. I also want to thank my Sunday School teachers, my Confirmation Mentors and Guides, my parents, and both sets of my grandparents. Without all of you I wouldn’t be where I am today in my faith journey! Thank you all for the work you put in to help me grow in my faith!

listened. I knew that I was running on God’s time and I knew he had a plan for me and that he was helping to guide me on the right path. He helped me to realize that no matter what happens and no matter how hard or awful it is, he can make the situations into something new to grow from and to learn to appreciate all the memories spent with them. I feel as though I was saved by him and I’m so glad I turned to God during such a hard time in my life.

Lauren Maredith May

Daughter of Mike & Julie May

Birth Date: August 7, 2007 Baptismal Date: September 30, 2007

Baptismal Place: Faith Lutheran - Valley City, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Todd & Alicia May

Confirmation Mentor: Jodi Miller

Scripture Verse: **Romans 12:2** - *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”*

Faith Statement: Growing up I remember thinking that going to church was an expectation and something I had to do. I realize now that my parents took me to experience unconditional love from not only them but from God. Church has brought me so much closer to my friends and family. I know that God has my back even through the toughest times. He has a plan for all of us and a path to follow. I have just started my journey to become a better person and I’m thankful for all the experience I have received in my life.

Kaleb Hayes McClafin

Son of Ashley McClafin; Grandson of Randy McClafin

Birth Date: August 10, 2007 Baptismal Date: December 9, 2007

Baptismal Place: Peace Lutheran - Devil’s Lake, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Aaron McClafin, Kacy Kidd

Confirmation Mentor: Tom Milbrandt

Scripture Verse: **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** - *“So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure.”*

Faith Statement: I have believed in God for as long as I can remember. My relationship began to build when I was around 4-5 years old. My mom would tuck me into bed and we’d say the common prayer of “Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Guard me Jesus through the night and wake me in the morning light.” God bless. Then we’d pray for whoever we needed to pray for that night. As a little kid when I’d pray I always had a good warm feeling about it like God heard my prayer and watched out for me.

When I’d stay over at my grandma’s as a kid I’d often ask her if she believed in God and then we would stay up all night talking about our faith and what it meant. This grew my belief even further. Just talking about how good God is grew my faith. That is a pretty special thing getting closer to God just by talking about him.

My relationship with God hasn’t always been sunshine and rainbows. I, like many Christians have asked themselves why? Why did that happen to me whether it be something good or bad. I have always asked myself and asking the only one who truly knows the simple question why? Sitting by myself sometimes in tears asking God why would he give me life just to put me down. With the losses of loved ones like my Grandpa, Grandma, and Dad. Family members who have struggled with addiction and the misfortune that came along with that. So for most of my life I found myself mad at the world and God. So mad and asking the one of many why. Why would he take away the ones I love so much?

All throughout this my Grandpa and Grandma gave me hope. They have always been there for me since the day I was born. Whether it was teaching me new things, or having me stay with them to get away and all the little things in between. This gave me a break from the hate I felt. I had time to take weight off my shoulders and reflect on my life. I would come to the head space that God does these things to make us stronger and prepare us for an even larger conflict in the future that we can't see but one he can see. God is all-knowing and only he truly knows why things happen the way they do.

After all my conflict I began to take my relationship with God more serious. I had gone adrift and I moved away from the one who has always been there for me even when I thought he was my evil. I would start to try to take church more seriously. In the past I would go to church tired and not pay much attention. I would also mess around a lot in confirmation.

After my reflection I started to listen to what was being said in church. Confirmation became something I actually enjoyed going to every Wednesday because I got to be with my friends and with God. I started to pray more. I had stopped praying before I went to bed because I had lost my space I had made for God. I hadn't prayed in a long time. I remember when I started building back my relationship it was really weird. The only way to describe how it felt was like talking to a close friend for the first time in a long time. But you were the reason you stopped talking to that friend. Slowly you gain back that trust for one another. I became closer and closer with God who is now my closest friend.

God helps me every day and is always there for me. I find him the most when I need to just clear my head. I find the most calmness in talking to him before competing in sports. He allows me to get in the right mindset and release the pressure I feel before the game. God and I have grown our relationship a lot through the past year. Our relationship will continue to grow for the future as he prepares me for the things I cannot see.

God, my closet friend, is who created heaven and earth. Who gives us all the chance to give our lives to him. Believing that he gave us his only Son, Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Allowing us to have eternal life through God. I don't know why everyone would not want to be friend with a guy who loves us so much. God is forever in my heart and in my mind.

Jack Theodore Samuelson

Son of John & Tonya Samuelson

Birth Date: November 29, 2007 Baptismal Date: January 13, 2008

Baptismal Place: Atonement Lutheran - Jamestown, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Ryan Wendel, Cindy Markle

Confirmation Mentor: Scott Tichy, Larry Eslick

Scripture Verse: **Deuteronomy 31:6** - *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of Him, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Faith Statement: On a daily basis I feel Jesus in my life no matter what I am doing. Whether I'm at school, at home, or at sports I know he is with me at all times. I believe in a God who is compassionate, merciful and unconditionally loving. I believe in a God who's like a loving parent, always there with a helping hand and an open heart. Jesus has been my guide showing me the incredible power of love and kindness. It's this love that inspires me to be a better person every day. The idea of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has become a basis of my faith. I find comfort in knowing that God's love, second chances through Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Spirit are always with me.

Prayer has become my way of talking to God. It's where I find peace and express my feelings. I'm learning that our faith isn't just a set of beliefs it's a living relationship with our Christ.

As we approach confirmation, I'm making a promise to live out the values I've learned. I want to represent good in the world, showing kindness, forgiving others, and standing up for one another.

Confirmation is not the end of the road, it's a milestone in an ongoing journey. I'm committed to my faith, it's a journey, not a destination, and I am looking forward to what lies ahead.

Faith Marie Schmidt

Daughter of Mike & Dayna Schmidt, LeAnn Schmidt

Birth Date: August 20, 2008 Baptismal Date: October 18, 2009

Baptismal Place: Faith Lutheran - Valley City, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Jim & Shiaoanmin Grimstad, Dylan Lunn

Confirmation Mentor: Illa Glandt

Scripture Verse: **Matthew 24:13** - *“But the one who stands firm to the end, will be saved.”*

Faith Statement: This verse really spoke to me because all around us, there are so many challenges that can cause us to question God. I am proud to say, I have overlooked these challenges and stuck with God. I'd also like to thank my family and friends for encouraging me all through my faith journey.

Brenna Marie Storly

Daughter of Lacy & Tim Majerus, Tim & Becky Storly

Birth Date: January 8, 2008 Baptismal Date: February 24, 2008

Baptismal Place: Trinity Lutheran - Mitchell, SD

Baptismal Sponsors: Carly & Corey Hines

Confirmation Mentor: Julie May

Scripture Verse: **Psalms 23:4** - *“Even though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

Faith Statement: Something important I learned during my confirmation is how God is always with us, even when we don't think he is. Things happen in your life that you don't expect. Sometimes it feels like God doesn't do anything in your life or that he isn't there to help you get through that time in your life, but he is. Like my Bible verse says, “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” Psalm 23:4. Somedays you may fear what the next day brings but, I have learned throughout my years of confirmation and Sunday School, is that he is there no matter what.

I would like to thank my confirmation mentors, my grandparents, and my parents for guiding me. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today in my faith journey.

Jacksyn Brad Thornton

Son of Jarin & Gina Thornton

Birth Date: April 27, 2007 Baptismal Date: November 20, 2016

Baptismal Place: Faith Lutheran - Valley City, ND

Baptismal Sponsors: Dean & Brenda Klein

Confirmation Mentor: Jason Gerhardt

Scripture Verse: **1 Timothy 4:12** - *“Let no one despise your youth but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”*

Faith Statement: I believe that our God is the definition of perfect. God cares about every aspect of our lives because God is all about love. As God's children we know that God is the reason for anything and everything. When I was baptized that was the moment I received the Holy Spirit. God has helped me and my family through a lot of things with the passing of family members and my grandpa's cancer. He is with us in our darkest days.