

Sunday After Confirmation
June 20, 2011
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Shari Young, Preacher

I have been looking forward to this Sunday for 9 months. It has been my desire to lift up our confirmands, and honor them, on this day after their Confirmation at Grace Cathedral. I will be sharing with you some of their words about their new understandings.

Stephen Smith, our Youth Minister and I have been privileged over the past 9 months to work with 7 of our youth for this church ceremony of reaffirming Baptism in an act of making a mature commitment to our faith and to our church, and undertaking the work of healing, peace and justice that baptism calls us to. We have been using a wonderful national Episcopal curriculum called Confirm Not Conform written by Scott Denman, rector of St. John's Oakland. (10AM I want to note that the Creed we will say together after this sermon is an adaptation of the Nicene Creed written by our Confirmands.)

Confirmation is an important part of our Episcopal culture. After months of learning about both Christianity and the uniqueness of our Episcopal way, at the center of Confirmation the Bishop bestows anew on each candidate the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. He says "Defend O Lord your servant with your heavenly grace that he may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until she comes to your everlasting kingdom."

With the help of wonderful mentors: Theresa Muscat, Michael Richman, Locke Loughran, Bob Hartnett, George Brown, and Lisa Capelloni our youth, Karl Menzel, Tilly Gieselmann, Connor Hancock, Grace Painter-Chapman, Matt Hartnett, Lucy Tantum, and Elizabeth Duncan were confirmed yesterday by Bishop Marc Andrus at Grace Cathedral.

I would like to share with you the words of our Confirmands written as they reflected on their new understanding of faith.

Confirmation

- +is showing that you want to be a Christian and want to live this way of trying to go into the light and follow Jesus
- +I will be part of my church and that I will be actively participating in the church
- +Impacts my life by helping me follow what I believe in and helps me understand more about what I believe in
- +Helps me understand others' faith in God.
- +Means renewing my baptismal vows.
- +Becoming part of the church and understanding the services.
- +Confirmation is becoming closer to God and closer to yourself.
- +Means that I know and support the ideals of the Episcopal church
- +Instead of just going along with the church services, I can really understand and participate in them
- +I definitely understand our religion better. This has helped me know why religion is so important in our lives and why we should embrace it.
- +Means acceptance into the church, the community and into the faith
- +Confirmation means that you are now closer to God

+How to live as a Christian

- +Means following the teachings of Jesus and believing in God.
- +Being a Christian means being a good person and spreading the good news that God forgives us for what we do wrong..
- +It means being respectful for those around me; doing the right thing and caring for others
- +Being a Christian is facing not ignoring problems; we are asked to not give up and trust that good will come out of it;
- + Being a Christian is helping others, trying to be good and not always succeeding but trying
- +We are asked to spread the good things that we have received in our lives
- +Being a Christian is believing that everything is in God's hands
- +It means I'll follow what I believe in and can't be pulled away by others.
- +Christianity impacts my life by telling me to take action to help stop problems. Reaching out to care for people in need and overall just being a good person.
- +I want to help people who need it, and make the world a better place

God

+I've learned that it does not matter what you have done in the past. God still loves you and forgives you and will always watch over you and take care of you.

+I have learned that nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes but as long as we are faithful to God, and don't do bad things, then we are happy and God forgives us.

+We are God's children and he is our father and that's how he treats us. I learned to turn to God in troubled times

+I feel watched over me and protected by God. I can know that no matter what happens it will be OK.

+God means Hope, trust, love and faith. This is basically God for me.

How we live out the faith in the Episcopal Church

We are not against certain people

We let lots of different groups in

We are open to different ideas and stress equality in this church

We are welcoming

Being Episcopalian is a way of showing faith in our God, but in a more loose, open and welcoming community as a whole

+Community

I feel like I'm part of a tightly woven community of people upon whom I can depend. I feel like I'm connected to others in the community and that we can share our problems with each other: I have a group of people who care about me.