

Confirmation Sunday May 1, 2016

Reflections on my confirmation

By Molly Freeman, 7th grade

So, Pastor Susan said that basically I could just get up here and say “I BELIEVE!” and that would be enough.

But I decided that I wanted to do a little bit more than that. After all, this is like the whole “Oh my gosh I’m getting confirmed and I actually have a say and I’m not a baby that doesn’t really care, but would like to know why on earth there’s water getting dumped on them.”

However I’m focusing less on the baby part and more on the confirmed part. I’m finally being accepted into the church that I love and have grown up in. Which for me is super big, and I can’t tell you all the times I’ve watched a baby being baptized here, and thinking “Dang. That baby is so lucky. They get to be baptized here, and get this fantastic church family.” and then feeling miffed that the baby doesn’t even care, while I care so much.

Because while you might argue (and I would agree), that just because I wasn’t baptized here, doesn’t mean I’m not a part of the family, but there’s something special about it being official. So I am crazy excited to be able to finally *finally* feel like I am a 100% Willow Glen United Methodist church, and not 99% Willow Glen United Methodist church and 1% some church in Illinois.

But for me to feel really validated that I was becoming a part of this church, I had to do some soul searching about what I really believed, and whether this church aligned with my beliefs. Most of the soul searching was provided by prompts from youth group, but it was soul searching none the less.

What I found was, yes this church meets my beliefs. And I also found that I find God in very interesting places. I found that I’m very varied in my ways with reaching out to God. I found that I really truly was interested to know in how I could improve my connection with God. And I found some deep things, that I can’t even name.

But I want to tell you about those things, because I want to tell you how I’ve grown in my faith, how I’m finally not feeling like church is something I have to go to, but something I *want* to go to, something I *need* to go to, how I’m finally feeling that what I’ve been told about my whole life in this church, is finally, bit by bit happening to me.

To be able to finally feel and know God, and not just feel awkward or uncertain or jealous when people talk about them knowing God, because I understand now. Maybe my understanding isn't the same as theirs, but it's understanding just the same.

Now about the things I want to tell you, I'll start with where I find God.

One thing that I like to think about when I think about where I find God, is what a character said in one of my favorite books. The book is called *Summer of the Gypsy Moths* and what character says that I really relate to with God is, "The earth spins a thousand miles an hour. Sometimes when I remember this, it's all I can do to stay upright ---- the urge to flatten myself to the ground and clutch hold is that strong. Because, gravity? Oh, gravity is no match for a force that equals 10 simultaneous hurricanes. No, if we aren't all flung off the earth like so many water droplets off a cartoon dog's back, it must be because people are connected somehow. I like to imagine the ties between us as strands of spider silk: practically invisible, maybe, but strong as steel."

Except for me, the ties aren't connected with other people, they're connected to God. And they keep me more stable and rooted in my faith, and in his love. So where I find God, I'm also finding another tie too, that will keep me from spinning off my earth. I find him in the most random places. I hear him in laughter of my friends, I watch him in the careful deliberation and knowledge of toddlers, I see him in the sky with all the many shades of blue. My personal favorite, is when I'm just talking, and laughing, and listening with my friends or just random people, and all of sudden, it hits me. The rest of the world will blur and fade, the sounds will mute, and just for a second, I get a glimpse through his eyes, I know him as he knows me. And then poof! I'm back. But I am safer, more secure, with another tie, linking me to him.

But sometimes, it's not him reaching out to me, it's me reaching out to him. I suppose some call that prayer. I don't. I call it, Conversation With God. I talk to him, tell him my innermost thoughts. Sometimes I'm angry, because I just went through a tough time I feel that he could have helped me avoid. Sometimes I'm grateful, because a good thing happened. Sometimes it's nothing. And I just tell him about my day. The ups and downs. The joys and sorrows.

My favorite place to do that used to be laying on my back, in the hammock, of my mom's old house. It was my special conversation spot. Usually I only went out there because the laundry machine was in the garage, and I had to go through the backyard to get to it. So I'd see the hammock, and decide you know what, I haven't talked to God in a while. I need to do that. So I'd put the

laundry where it needed to go, then go and lay on the hammock. Stare up at the sky. Watch the clouds. Gaze at the stars. And talk. That was all. But I always felt better afterwards. Like God had listened, and answered me. Now I do it less. Because we moved. And I don't really have a reason to really go outside and lay on the hammock anymore. And it's been harder. Like God is slipping away, and my ties are letting me loose.

But even if my talking to God on the hammock has been diminished, and I *feel* like God's sliding away, and my ties are falling apart, I know that I will never be separated from him and his love. Romans 8 verse 35 sums it up perfectly, "Can anything separate us from the love of Christ?"

Even if I know that I can't be separated from his love, it's still nice to still be able to reach him. Fortunately, even if Conversations With God On The Hammock Specifically are no longer an option, I can reach him in other places. Singing in church is my favorite. Listening to my voice mixing with others, until it's all one long scarf of music, winding it's way upwards to God. And I can feel his joy in my chest, where the notes are humming and thrumming and most alive. It fills me up. Makes me light as air, but still so secure and snug in my ties.

I'm always on the lookout for ways to strengthen ties, or how I'm strengthening them, because becoming closer to God is something that's important to me. I never understood why people kept talking about how they wanted to get closer to God, at least not until a little bit ago. Because there's this indescribable feeling, that just welcomes you and it's incredibly addicting. But in the best way ever.