



**First Congregational Church
College Street Congregational Church
of Burlington
United Church of Christ**

May 28, 2023

*Pentecost Sunday
Celebration of Confirmation*

Reflections on Confirmation

Tegan Bushey (First Congregational Church)

God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Christian community, mission, love. For the past 4 months during confirmation we have been exploring each of these topics. In the process of doing so I have learned a lot. I have learned that God is not one being. God is unique to every single person. God can be physical, a hug from a loved one after a long day. God can be mental, overcoming a fear and finally being able to do something you truly enjoy. God can be hope, a wish for a new day. God can be sorrow, a need for a new day.

To me God is community, the church, a group of people coming together in common interest. God is the friendship between the one with everything and the one who has lost everything. I also learned to better appreciate the little things, and see God's love reflected in the world around me. I am able to connect with God through my relationships with nature and people in my everyday life.

Another thing I have learned is that worship is not something meant to do by yourself. You can do it alone, but you gain a new sense of understanding and unity when in a group. This is one of the reasons I am so grateful for the opportunity confirmation has given me. Being able to discuss your questions with a group of people who understand what you're going through is a feeling I have taken for granted.

There is so much to worry about in this world, and so many problems that need to be solved. Worship has been a way for me to take a step back and deal with the problems I will soon face. It has taught me not to hide, but to hope.

However the most important thing I have learned from confirmation is that I don't have all the answers. No one does, we're not supposed to. Faith is not knowing. Faith is trust, it is opening yourself up to others in order to truly be seen. Faith is vulnerability, belief, It is keeping an open mind and open heart. I promise to do just this, to keep my mind and heart open so that I can love, and hope, and learn. I promise to continue to ask questions so as to further immerse myself in the ideas I have just started to explore. Confirmation is only the beginning to my faith journey, and while I don't know the answers I am learning how to ask the questions.

learned that the church is not just a place, the church is about the people inside it. The church was made to support this community of people, with the same beliefs in it, to help people understand something much bigger than us, but to also understand ourselves. The church community has helped so many people, including me. I know that God, and all the people in the church will support me no matter what, and that is what God is for. God is for help. That's why people pray. People need to know that other people care about them and support them no matter who they are or what they believe. The spirit of God always sees the good in people and that's why church is an amazing place to be.

Virginia Titcomb (College Street Congregational Church)

I think people's beliefs, no matter what they are, are too big and powerful to put into words. So this is just a mere summarization of my beliefs.

The foundation of my faith is that God is always with us. Even if you don't believe in Him, He's still there, always with you. So in my proudest moments, like, winning a basketball game or getting a hundred on a difficult quiz I studied really hard for He's with me, cheering me on. He's also there when I lose that basketball game or fail that test. It gives me a warm feeling to know God's always with me, guiding me through life.

Although there's a lot I believe in, I'm still uncertain about a lot of things, that I wouldn't even begin to know how it actually is. I like having my ideas and not knowing everything,

but learning along the way. I think that's what faith really is, not knowing one hundred percent everything and kind of just putting your life in the hands of the Lord and just trusting Him.

Although I like not knowing everything, I love how much I've learned and grown during confirmation. It's grown some of my views on things, or even changed them. I've also learned more about God, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It's also helped me to branch out and feel comfortable in instances where I wouldn't have before. I'm really happy with how my confirmation journey's gone.

I'm really excited because, although it's the end of my confirmation journey, it's kind of the beginning of my faith journey overall. I know I'll learn and believe more as I get older and as God guides me through life. I'm really enthusiastic about how my faith journey and life will go.

Damien Lilly (College Street Congregational Church)

I have faith that God will help me and help us through the worst of times. I feel that God is near us and comes to us in different ways through different people and things.

Even though I do not fully understand God, I know God is near, and the kingdom of God is around us.

I believe that God will help me walk through life on the path of love and that God gives hope to the world and that the love God spreads can help me spread love.

I want to live a life filled with God, with love, and hope. I want to recognize God in the best times and be thankful and to see God in the times where I am hurting. I believe that recognizing God and trying our best to spread love is what life is about and I know that love will set us free from my sadness inside if I can recognize it. I want to thank God through prayer through worship, and by loving others.

I feel this, because I love, the breath of God, the gift of life, shall emerge, triumphant over hate.

What is love?

What happens after we die?

Where did we come from and how did we get here?

What is the meaning of life?

What is right and what is wrong and how do we determine this?

Why do we believe in God?

Why do we have faith?

What does it mean to be human?

I believe to be human is to know that you are flawed and still do your best to serve others.

Aven Jorgenson (First Congregational Church)

I believe that the spirit of God is always with us and meant to help us through the times we need God. We need God whenever we are in pain or feel alone. We might need God if someone we love dies or we have had a bad day. I believe that God is here physically and mentally, up above us but right here walking with us. God is so big but also so small at the same time. You can see God through almost anything. All because God made the creation and therefore is in all of it as you can see when you look hard enough. You can also hear God anywhere. You might be hearing a bird or a car and that is a reminder that God started this all.

Sometimes I feel very close to God, and other times I feel so far away. If I feel as if God is in the sky, or above me, I feel far away from God. Whenever I ask a question, I also feel far away from God. It makes me overthink and it makes me confused. Sometimes when I ask

questions though, the confusion is just all a part of the journey along with God. Knowing that you don't need to understand everything for things to make sense is very comforting. There's a huge Wonder in questions being asked about God and faith. God is Wonder. God makes mistakes along with humans and that is another thing that makes me feel close to God. If I think of God as this person that does everything right and is always perfect, I feel super far away from God because I know that I am not perfect and that I could work on myself.

That's what this whole thing is about, knowing that you don't need to be amazing and perfect to be enough for God and enough for the church. I've

Bellamy Crehan (College Street Congregational Church)

I began my confirmation process at the beginning of this year. It included weekly readings and meetings with my mentor, plus two overnight retreats. When I began my confirmation process, I was not sure what to expect. I had never done something like this before. But through it, I learned many things about God, Jesus, and the church. There are still many things I do not know, but this is a bit of what I believe so far.

I believe that God is here to help us, and that no matter where you are, who you are, or where you're going, that God is always with you. I like to think of God as a guide and kind of a friend, not just a powerful, all-knowing being in the sky. I feel a similar way about Jesus. I think that Jesus is always with us, and I believe that we can find God and Jesus' love in different ways, even when things are really hard and it seems like no one is there. A few examples of where that love shows are family, friends, a tree, or even a good meal.

I believe that a church is more than just a building. I believe that it is a community of people who share a belief, a group of people who support each other and build each other up. Even if those people don't always agree, or are from different backgrounds, we are still bonded and should treat everyone with kindness, love, and support. I find hope in seeing how members of a church help each other and care for each other. In this time, with so much fighting and disagreement, church feels like a safe space to find good people and share joy.

Will Cunningham (College Street Congregational Church)

In the gospels Jesus is asked 187 questions. He only answers 3. Jesus then asks 307-339 questions.

Confirmation is a place where we explore questions, difficult questions, faith based, deep questions, the ones that have no answers except a series of faithful guesses. We hate the unknown, are afraid of it, so we rely on God to carry these questions for us. We rely on God to help us confront the unknown. And we share these ideas. By nature we are flawed and therefore our ideas are also narrow-minded. However, flaws can be reduced if we come together as a congregation. This is positive because we know that we can get close to the truth if only we share our ideas with one another.

Here are the questions we think about regarding faith: