

St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church
804 Grand Avenue
Story City, Iowa 50248-1417

You can also view the newsletter online at www.stpetri.org

The St. Petri Messenger

A publication of St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church

St. Petri Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday School *thru May 10*
10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
11:00 a.m. Coffee/Fellowship

St. Petri Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
except, Wednesday afternoon
Church Office Phone: (515) 733-4623
Email address: stpetrilutheran@stpetri.org
Website: www.stpetri.org

Pastor – Rev. Tim Malek

Youth Director – Briton Mohr

Missionaries– Patrick & Jacqueline Bencke, Japan

Parish/Financial Secretary – Veronica Wright

Custodian – Deb Lancaster

PENTECOST



MAY 2026

ST. PETRI LUTHERAN CHURCH, STORY CITY, IA

MAY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><u>Every Sunday AM</u> (unless noted) 9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Worship Service 11:00a Coffee/Fellowship</p>					<p>1 Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>2 8:30a-noon Riverside Work Day</p>
<p>3 NEW MEMBER SUNDAY 11a Greet new members 6:30p Confirmation at Bergen</p>	<p>4 10:30a Staff mtg.</p>	<p>5 9a-3p Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>6 5:30p Property Comm. Mtg. 5:30p COMPASS 6:30p Youth meal 7p AXIS</p>	<p>7 National Day of Prayer</p>	<p>8 Pastor's Day Off Sec. Day Off</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>10 Happy Mother's Day Communion Last Day of Sun. School 11:15a Council Mtg. 7p Confirmation at St. Petri</p>	<p>11 10:30a Staff mtg.</p>	<p>12 9a-3p Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Pastor's Day Off Sec. Day Off</p>	<p>16 8a Women's Weekend Bible Study at parsonage 9a Story Book Child Care Spring Concert 10a St. Petri Work Day</p>
<p>17 11:15a New Testament Adult Class</p>	<p>18 Pastor Tim's Birthday! 10:30a Staff Mtg</p>	<p>19 9a-3p Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>20 June Newsletter articles due</p>	<p>21 9:30a R-S Minist. Mtg. at St. Petri 2p WELCA Study 6p Bethany Life Annual Mtg</p>	<p>22 Pastor Day Off</p>	
<p>24 Day of Pentecost Graduation Sunday Communion <u>Summer Worship Schedule</u> 9am Worship Service 10a Coffee/Fellowship 31</p>	<p>25 MEMORIAL DAY Office Closed</p>	<p>26 - LWR Quilt making 9a-noon</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 Pastor Day Off</p>	<p>30 3-5p Hayden Gossel Graduation Party at Comfort Inn -All invited!</p>

St. Petri Messenger



MAY 2026

Faith Seeking Understanding . . .



Pastor Tim Malek

Now is the spring of eternal life

Sow for yourselves justice, reap the fruits of steadfast love, break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord that God may come and rain salvation upon you. – Hosea 10:12

Now is Easter and Pentecost comes. Now is the spring of eternal life. Now is the time to sow the seeds of love, forgiveness, and justice. May the love of God empower you to greater acts of love. May the resurrection of Jesus gladden your heart and embolden you to tell others the good news. May the Holy Spirit fill you with the fire of God's love so that you may transform the world. May the communion of the saints, the body of Christ, bear you up and strengthen you. Christ is alive and you will rise again, you have been redeemed, Alleluia!

Happy Easter and Pentecost!

Pastor Tim Malek

May 24th is Pentecost Sunday

Remember to wear red clothing to worship Sunday May 24 to add a component of visual celebration to our observance of Pentecost.

New Youth Director Hired!

We have a new Youth Director hired for the Compass and Axis Youth Groups which is a joint venture between St Petri along with Bergen Lutheran and Grace UMC Churches.

She is a parent of youth, and her name is Briton Mohr.

Let's thank God for this happening!



In April 2026

~~ In Our Thoughts and Prayers ~~

OUR PRAYER LIST

Jaye Anderson, Paul Ness, Rolfe Johnstad,
Larry Reisetter, Judy Schnurstein

PRAYERS OF ONGOING CONCERN

Linda Fevold, Paul Wierson

IN MEMORY

Gloria Tussey

PRAYERS FOR THOSE NOT NEAR TO US

Pat & Jacqueline Bencke-Japan ELCA
Missionaries, Soldiers; Peace Workers; &
Humanitarian Aid Workers; For those in
Ukraine and Russia

*"I am the
resurrection
and the life."*
JOHN 11:25

EASTER LILIES St. Petri 2026

**Our heartfelt thanks to
those who sponsored
Easter lilies!**



Nancy Carlson
In Memory of John Carlson

Jerry & Gloria DeRidder
*In Memory of our Parents and Granddaughter,
Maelynn DeRidder*

Eloise Ericson
*In Memory of Arlen (Bob) Ericson
and Warren Ericson*

Carol Foss
In Memory of Ray Foss, Husband

Marlene Helling
*In Memory of James Helling, Scott Helling, and
Gloria Helling*

Seth & Willow Hill Family
In Memory of Steve Nibe

Rolfe & Margaret Johnstad
In Memory of Jennifer Ringler Leonard, Daughter

Deb Lancaster
*In Memory of Byron J. Wille, Evelyn H. Wille
(Challe) and Joe E. Wille*

John & Jan Lekwa
In Memory of Robert & Maxine Lekwa

Leland, Erin, Julianne, Olivia Schwartz
*In Memory of James & Isabell Schwartz and
Diane Schwartz*

Gloria Severson
*In Memory of Husband, Milt and
Sons, Bob & Jerry*



You Are Invited!
Hayden Gossel
is having a **Graduation Party**
on **Sat., May 30th**
at **Comfort Inn** in Story City
from **3-5pm.**
**Come help her celebrate
this wonderful milestone!**

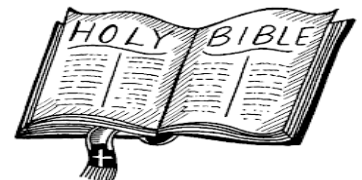


ST. PETRI WELCA

May 21 WELCA Bible Study
May 26-27 Quilt Making

Come join the quilters the last Monday thru Wednesday of each month from 9am-noon for fun, food, & fellowship. There is a variety of tasks – cutting, tying, pinning, and stitching! Everyone welcome!

Check out the
**Women's
Weekend
Bible Study!**



Our next meeting is **Saturday, May 16**, at **8am.** We will meet, as usual, in the parsonage at 915 8th St, Story City on the fourth Saturday of each month (except Nov and Dec). Questions? Contact Debra at 320-905-9510.

St. Petri's Clean Up Day will be Saturday, May 6th at 10:00am. We will be mulching, picking up, trimming...



FIRST COMMUNION 2026

In alphabetical order: Murray DeRidder, Wesley Havens, Emilia Healy, Isla Healy, Blake Holm, Hutson Holm, Benjamin Olson, Alysann Patterson, Maggie Peterson, Talyn Tafolla, Tatum Tafolla, Tessa Tafolla



CONFIRMATION APRIL 26, 2026

Front row from left: Lillian Braucher, Colbie Bauman, Jocelyn Thorson, Julia Hanson, Pastor John Sheahan
back row from left: Pastor Timothy Malek, Owen Patterson, Haydon McConnell, Kalen Bauman, Lucas Zamzow

Thank you to the April CARE group
 for all your help during the month.
 Also thank you to everyone that
 volunteered to make cinnamon rolls for
 Easter Sunday and helped in any way!
 Your willingness is much appreciated!
Cheryl Hoffman and Wanda Holm

MAY C.A.R.E. GROUP 2026
CARE Group 5 Leader
 Sherri Keigan

Lorene Anderson	Troy Bickelhaupt
Gary & Hope Brown	Nancy Carlson
Doris Classon	
Tony Edwards & Jennifer Knutson	
John & Linda Fevold	Evelyn Fink
Seth & Willow Hill	Patty Hoversten
Paul & Karen Jacobson	Jim Keigan
Lowell & Beci Lande	Janet Mortvedt
Paul Ness	Randy & Kelsey Olson
Connie Phillips	Shirley Stakey
Rick & Angie Stover	
Chuck & Patty VanPatter	Wayne Williams



May 7: Talyn Tafolla
 May 8: Spencer Dedic
 May 9: Dave Sporleder
 May 11: Landon Carr
 May 13: Amelia Klett
 May 18: Caden Henrichs, Tim Malek
 May 20: Jen Lamoreux
 May 21: Phil Peterson
 May 22: Oskar Keigan Rowe
 May 23: Adam Holm, Piper Jones,
 Judy Watson
 May 24: Kiersten Fevold
 May 27: Roger Hermanson, Tom Wynia
 May 28: Nancy Carlson, Virginia Egemo
 May 29: Isla Healy, Tyler Lamoreux
 May 30: Eloise Ericson
 May 31: Calvin Hill, Olivia Hill, Randy Olson

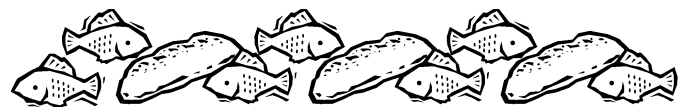


VOLUNTEERS:
VERY VALUABLE!

JUNE C.A.R.E. GROUP 2026
CARE Group 1 Leaders

Mardell Christian, Karen Munson

Dale & Kay Anderson	Jon & Brenda Carr
Travis & Kara DeRidder	
Jerry & Gloria DeRidder	Cheryl Eddy
Virginia Egemo	Alan & Brandie Gossel
Brian & Deb Holm	Adam & Sarah Holm
Anne Howard	Brian Jones
Lance & Angie Keltner	Ben Knutson
Jennifer Lamoreux	
Marc & Colleen Lamoreux	Paul Munson
Carmen Peter	Larry & Denice Reisetter
Leland & Erin Schwartz	



Thank you to all who volunteered at
Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry
 on Saturday, April 25th.
 Your help is greatly appreciated!

St. Petri volunteers to deliver MEALS
ON WHEELS for the month of May.

There is a sign-up
 calendar on the
 table outside the
 church office.
 Your help is greatly
 appreciated! ☺



If you would like to view
 St. Petri's newsletters online,
 go to: www.stpetri.org

**National Day
of Prayer
Thursday,
May 7th**

*Prayer
Works*



OUR MISSION:

We are Disciples of Jesus Christ,
called to grow in Christ
and to invite all to follow him.

**HAPPY
MOTHER'S
DAY!
MAY 10th**



*"Honour ... thy
mother, as
the LORD
thy God
hath
commanded
thee"*

Deuteronomy 5:16

*Summer
Worship
Schedule*



Beginning May 31st
worship will begin at
9:00 a.m. through
Labor Day.

**June newsletter articles are due
Wednesday, May 20, 2026.**



**Monday,
May 25th
(office closed)**

Memorial Day – a day dedicated to
honoring and mourning the many military
personnel who died in service to the
country.

"Compassionate God, we remember and
give thanks for those who have given their
lives in the service of our country".



Bible Camp

**RIVERSIDE BIBLE CAMP
Spring Work Day Sat., May 2nd**

8:15am-noon
8:15-8:30am Check-in (coffee/cinnamon
rolls) in the Dining Hall
8:30am Gather, pray, and be sent out to
work projects
12:00pm Delicious lunch at the Dining
Hall

What to bring:

Dress for the weather (outdoor/indoor
projects)
Work gloves
Chainsaws and loppers (if you have them)

Please RSVP so we know how much food
we need for lunch to 515-733-5271 or

rlbc@riversidelbc.org

Pentecost Sunday



But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom
the Father will send in My name,

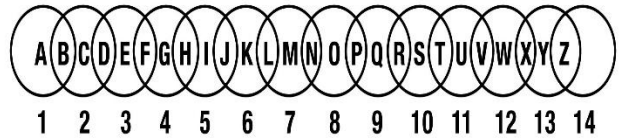
**He will teach you all things,
and remind you of all that
I said to you.**

John 14:26, NASB

Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find
out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:



1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'

3,4 8 9,10 4 5 11,12 5 7,8 4 3 1 2 4,5

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10' 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10

5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11'

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Answer: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV

**St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church
Approved Council Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2026**

Present: Travis DeRidder, Rick Stover, Angie Stover, Nancy Carlson, Jo Murken, Ann Healy, Pastor Tim Malek Absent: Kelsey Olson

Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m.

Group Devotions. "God prevails."

Angie S. presented the February minutes for approval. Jo made a motion to accept the minutes; Ann seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Rick presented the Treasurer's Report and explained various incomes and expenditures noted on the Green and Purple sheets. Travis looked over and approved the list of checks written in February. One issue highlighted was the costs related to the new copier ... the amount billed seemed higher than expected and the issue will continue to be monitored. Rick noted that Thrivent money that is received each month is being deposited in the Renew and Restore account. The church budget through the month of February is -\$642.97. Ann made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; Jo seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Pastor Tim reported that the Lenten service rotation was going well with the dinners typically serving between 25-30. He also announced that there will be a donkey again this year for the Palm Sunday service.

Ann reported that the Easter breakfast/fellowship time at 9 a.m. on Easter Sunday will consist of cinnamon rolls and that signup sheets for those wanting to contribute rolls will be outside the office.

Jo reported that there has been a wonderful informal "committee" meeting each month to choose hymns and plan the special decorations in the church throughout the year.

Nancy reported that two new computers have been installed and the parsonage sink repair will be scheduled very soon. She said that Jason Patterson repaired the commercial freezer by locating a refurbished fan and replacing our broken one. She also noted that Dave Sporleder has been making many repairs around the church. The Property and Trustees Committee is planning to convert the "flower" closet downstairs into a maintenance and repair closet.

No report from Kelsey.

Old Business: The keypad lock on the northeast door is scheduled to be installed Thursday 3/12. Rick will take required paperwork to the bank to close the separate WELCA checking account. The discussion of the status of the student loan program was tabled until next month.

New Business: Ann made the council aware of two opportunities this spring/summer to help support the Story City Greater Connection. There was a lot of discussion about what these opportunities involved. Pastor Tim made a motion for Ann to spend up to \$100 at her discretion to support the GCC's efforts to promote Story City; Nancy seconded. No additional discussion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m. and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Stover

<p>St. Petri Financials <u>March 2026</u> Income/expense -\$1,188.53 2025 YTD -\$1,831.50</p>



**Faith Confirmation Essays
from our 2026
St. Petri/Bergen Confirmands**

**2026 Confirmation Essay
By Colbie Bauman**

Being confirmed means being accepted into the church, making a promise to continue my faith, following God no matter what happens in my life, and continuing to stay in the community of faith. Even if the church I attend changes as I grow older, following in my faith will always be a constant. Something that I can come back to no matter what happens. Even when my faith is tested, God will still be there and support me.

Once I am confirmed, I still want to be an active part of my congregation. I don't know if that will be through activities such as planning pet supply drives or food drives, but I know I still want to encourage the support of our community. I plan to be an active member of our congregation by attending church, helping with VBS, and always finding ways to help others. Being active in the congregation doesn't mean you need to attend church every week, but instead, you just need to be an active part of God's love. We have the responsibility as believers in Christ to share the love of God through our thoughts and actions. I hope to continue being active not only in the congregation but in the community of people sharing God's love, just like Jesus Christ did.

I believe that Jesus Christ brought people together, although some didn't believe he was the Son of God. The people

who did were drawn towards faith and got to meet others and share their faith with everyone they met. Jesus was brought to us in a time of need when spirituality was missing in people's lives. Many were even looking to false gods, so our heavenly Father gave us the gift of Jesus, symbolizing his eternal love for the community of faith and us. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, we were shown how God was willing to give up his only son so that we could be forgiven. In other words, Jesus was God's way of showing how he had changed since the Old Testament. A man forgiving of sins and loving of all.

That loving God is the reason why I want to continue following Jesus. Following him means being part of a community because faith isn't always religion; sometimes it's about the connections you build through faith that make you believe. I want to follow Jesus not only through going to church, but also in my actions by being part of our community of faith and sharing the love of God through everything I do. Life is never certain, but the community of God is a constant support in everyone's day-to-day life. Sinners, saints, and everyone in between are children of God, and that is why I want to continue following Jesus through faith and being a part of the Body of Christ.

I want to be a part of the Body of Christ because it is a community of people always supporting, loving, and following God. In some ways, it is even more like a family because it is a place of compassion and eternal love, and a place that lacks judgment and hate. So being a part of the Body of Christ is like being given a second family of people who will always be there. Most importantly, it means you will know of the eternal love that you cannot see.

2026 Confirmation essay

By Kalen Bauman

I believe that Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human. Jesus was sent from God to save all of us. His grace is endless and is for everyone. All he asks in return is for us to love our neighbors and share the good news. I know that even though I am a sinner because Jesus died on the cross, I am saved from those sins. He gave us eternal life and is always with us.

Getting confirmed is accepting the promises made on your behalf during your baptism. To me, it is an accomplishment in my faith, and it has taught me more about Christianity. Especially on topics like Martin Luther, I have learned a lot about the early Lutheran church. It is a time for me to think about what it means to be baptized, and how I'm going to continue to grow in faith.

I will keep following Jesus because I can feel his effects in my everyday life. He has helped me through bad times and brought me many good ones. My life is overly blessed, and I've been given a lot more than others. This gives me more opportunity to help others. I'm in a DMACC philosophy class where we have talked a lot about the existence of God. The class answered a problem I had with religion for a long time: why is there so much evil if God exists? The class gave me the logical and evidential answer I needed. All these good things that have been given to me lead me to continue following Jesus.

In the follow-up questions we answered after our service project asked: "What makes a person great?" John and I ended up saying that a good person loves his neighbor as himself, and follows what God wants from us. So I want to be a part of the Body of Christ to be that great person. Being a part of that guides me along that path. I enjoy the community that St. Petri has and how inviting they are to all people, from members to guests, and newcomers. The people of the church are

willing to help and show it by being involved in the community.

I will stay involved in the church and even look to take up more opportunities. I will continue to be helpful whenever needed. I'll continue to go to church until I leave Story City, if I ever do. Even if I leave, I'll continue at another church with similar beliefs as St. Petri because I love St. Petri and the beliefs that the church holds. I'll be helpful, care for everyone, and live trying to live as God wants me to.

2026 Confirmation Essay

By Lillian Braucher

When I was asked the question, "What do you believe about Jesus Christ?" I sat there for many moments, searching in my mind for what I honestly believe. I have always known He is the Holy Trinity. He was a man who once walked this Earth, and He died for our sins. It wasn't until recently that I learned the full effect of His love for us. Through Grace we have been saved. Jesus Christ is not only our Father, but He is our Savior. Through Confirmation, I have strengthened my belief that without Him, I would not be myself. He has saved me, and I am incredibly proud to affirm my baptism in front of my friends, family, and community in Christ.

Lutherans have two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. While Confirmation is not technically a sacrament, the importance of this event is not lost. For myself, I was baptised at such a young age that I have no memory of it ever even happening. My parents made that choice for me to wash my sins away. Confirmation means so much to me because this is something that I have chosen to do. I remember watching my older brother make this decision when he was my age, and I was so happy for him and proud of him that I wanted that same thing for myself. Being able to be a role model for those looking up to me in the congregation and the young people that I may not know are watching me is so

important to me. If I can be the light for one person, or be able to show off the joy and love that being Confirmed gives, my work for that person has been done. Jesus Christ calls for us to love each other, and while we may view this as helping a friend or giving someone a hug, showing off the love that we give ourselves and the Lord through Confirmation is also what he has intended for us. Therefore, I am very ready and willing to take my next step into adulthood.

As I make the next big decision that will influence my life as I grow into a young adult, I reflect on the idea if I want to make such a large commitment. The guiding factor for me is found in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He is the one that gives me the privilege to wake up each day and live a fulfilling life in a healthy body. He gives this to me so I can show others around me how to live their life through Christ alongside me. I want to commit myself to being a neighbor, a shoulder to cry on, and a sister in Christ to anyone who needs me to be there. When someone is feeling doubtful or even hopeless, I will have the confidence to direct them to our Savior. Especially in my generation, and those my age, doubt and insecurity are big issues that are overlooked by many. Not only will I be able to provide support and comfort to my peers, but I will also be able to direct myself to the life I know I am called to live. With the hardships of being an adult, having the constant reassurance from Jesus is so important. If I can get over that feeling the same way I am to find myself as I did, I have succeeded in being a follower of Christ.

Along with the idea of being a child of God, that brings others towards him, to me being a part of a congregation is so important because they can help keep me with Him. Sometimes our own direction and reassurance may not be enough. Being a part of a community that can lift you back towards Him is very important to me. While it is easy to say that you will

never falter in the walk with Christ, and doubts will never occur, this is very false. We all have moments that can lead to a bigger problem without the help of others to lean on and learn from. In my time, it is common to listen to outside influences to make bad decisions, and having a community of people looking out for me is so helpful and comforting. When we say the words, "I will pray for you", I want to be able to say with my whole heart that I understand the gravity of my words and to always keep that promise. If someone comes to me searching for help, I will have the knowledge to provide the help they need and have a graceful community to direct them to. That is what it means to me to be a part of the Body of Christ.

When I am confirmed, I want to begin to take a bigger role in showcasing God's love for us. Even though I am very busy throughout the year with volleyball, golf, work, clubs at school, volunteering, and travel sports with independent lessons, I still want to make it a priority to help out in the congregation. Along with the volunteer work I already do, I hope to find more time to help at Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry more often. I am an avid baker, so I plan on doing some donated treats for those at Bethany Life or other causes that arise in the future. I was thinking of ways that I could be more personable with those in my community, and I am hoping to find time to visit those in our nursing home and spread the good news Jesus has proclaimed. I plan to continue to attend church services regularly and continue to spread kindness in my day-to-day life. One of the best ways to be a solid part of the congregation and community is to have grace for people every day. I am extremely grateful and excited to be confirmed and to solidify my love and devotion to our Lord and Savior.

2026 Confirmation Essay

By Owen Patterson

What do I believe about Jesus Christ?

I believe that Jesus Christ is truly real, and the only thing he wanted was for us to have peace and love. I believe he wanted this so badly that he was willing to die on the cross just for us in order to remove our sins and defeat death. Also, I believe that he was sent down from God to help us, then once he died for us, he rose to meet God at the right hand side of the table.

What does it mean to me to be confirmed?

For me, being confirmed is a symbol of God showing that I believe in him and I have learned about him. Being confirmed shows that you understand what God truly wanted and what you can do in order to fulfill his wishes. Also, it means I am a bigger part of the church since I have studied him as everyone else who was confirmed did.

Why do I want to follow Jesus from now on?

I want to follow Jesus because I know that no matter what happens to me, he will be there to help. Also, when I am gone, I know that I will be with Jesus, and I won't be alone. Jesus also wanted his followers to share the word, so I will continue to worship him in order to accomplish the command he gave to us.

Why do I want to be a part of the Body of Christ?

Being a part of the Body of Christ means I will always have a community to help me and guide me. I will also be closer to Jesus and be able to learn more about him. Being a follower of the Body of Christ promises a place in heaven with Jesus as well, meaning that I will never leave him. Within my community, I can share my ideas and beliefs with others and become more a part of my church.

How do I plan to participate in my congregation once I am confirmed?

Once I get confirmed, I will continue to help the church in many of the tasks that

need to be done. I will also strive to help my community of God, sharing the word of God with everyone. Being confirmed also means I will have more chances to do what's needed within the church, allowing me to participate in more roles. I want to continue to help with the PowerPoint and livestream for our services so everyone can watch, even those who cannot attend in person.

2026 Confirmation Essay

By Jocelyn Thorson

I believe that Jesus Christ is the true son of God. He demonstrated God's nature by being kind, accepting, loving, and helpful. Jesus was a miracle birth, born of the virgin Mary. He was a carpenter and honest man who only wanted people to believe in his father and Lord. Jesus never sinned or committed a crime, despite his people believing him to be a fraud. Jesus is a symbol of love and rebellion against evil powers. I believe that God loves all his children and because of this he created hell, which in my eyes is heaven without God. I try to live through Jesus and model being a good, kind, and accepting Christian.

Being confirmed is renewing your faith in God and accepting your baptism. To be confirmed you must work for 3 years and learn about our Lord and Savior. I personally wanted to be confirmed so that I could learn more about God but to also say that I was the one who chose God as my leader and that I wasn't just born into it. I have found God through confirmation but also through my friends, family, and strangers. The Holy Spirit is in everyone whether they believe it or not. Through being confirmed I communicate to fellow Christians that I believe in God and that I chose to follow him. Being confirmed is saying that I have learned and studied God through the bible.

I want to commit myself to Jesus in my adulthood because growing up with a community and family at church taught me that God can be seen in everything

and that he truly is love. I think having someone to follow in life is a sign of intelligence because it is saying you are humble enough to know you are not the best and that you can devote time to something. I do not think people who don't follow my God are "dumb" or "unintelligent" because we are all equally loved under God's eyes. Jesus may have lived way before my time but he knew how to be kind and appreciate people for who they are instead of wanting to change them. Those morals are something I devote my life to following, all people are equal and no one is better than anyone else. Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit show this and teach this on a daily basis.

Christ as a body is filled with love, care, and hope. Being confirmed is a way of saying I want to align myself with these morals and that I chose to live my life devoted to God. Being a member of the congregation makes me feel loved and cared about, even if I am not always perfect. Belonging to a community of believers in Christ is very important because it teaches you about God, and also what others believe him to be. For example one summer when I was at a bible camp we were talking about what we believed hell to be and one of my counselors said she believed it to be a place without God. After I heard that I immediately knew that's what I believed in too. Congregations are a great way of learning about and connecting with God.

I plan on participating in my church, after my confirmation. I plan on helping set up and work events, help with worship services and spread the word of the Lord outside of church. I believe God calls me to serve as a Christian by spreading his message and sharing his love. I think this is especially needed in minority groups, such as people of color, queer people, and anyone who does not align with the idea of "perfection". One way of spreading his message is singing worship songs. I am involved in my choir which very often sings worship songs in concerts. My church can count on me to help them

when they are in need or not, I am always willing to help a person in need.

2026 Confirmation Essay **By Julia Hanson**

The first thing that many people think about when they hear Jesus Christ is how he saved us from sin by suffering death on the cross. While I also think this, I think of so much more than that. It's incredible how Christ was so human and lived the life of a regular person but also he was so entirely divine because he conquered death and rose again. I also think of love and grace because he didn't have to choose humanity and all our brokenness and imperfections, but he did and chooses us each and every day. Jesus has been such a huge role model in my life and when I drift away from him he always pulls me back and shows me why he is my firm foundation. I think of the song "Firm Foundation" and how amazing and true the lyrics are, my favorite being, "Rain came and wind blew/ But my house was built on You/I'm safe with You/I'm gonna make it through". This is such a great message of how no matter what's going on God's got you and will always be with you through the highs and lows. I also think about how God is love. He truly loves everyone unconditionally, and that's something that brings me joy and comfort knowing that He loves the world and all of His creation, and wants us to love each other just as much no matter what gender, skin color, or ethnicity we are.

Like many others, I was baptized as a baby, and that day the Holy Spirit was unleashed in me and my name went into the book of names forever. Now that I am coming closer to being confirmed I think of what that means to me. I think of it as not only professing my faith to others but also to myself and confirming my baptism by saying that I'm gonna live my life for God. I also think it's a way to show how I want to continue my journey with God, and learning more about how to love him and others. While I'm still far from living the

perfect Christian life, confirmation has helped me so much in understanding who God is and His word.

I want to commit myself to following Jesus as I move into adulthood because He's my firm foundation and I can pray to him about anything that's on my mind. Also by following him I'm saved from sin and he gives me so much grace when I make mistakes. Following him is so important to me and my success because I'm choosing to believe in something bigger than myself or my possessions, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had" (Acts 4:32). God is so amazing with leading relationships, and in adulthood, it's so important to have strong faith-centered relationships, and God will provide that. Also, through Him I can show others is love and help others follow Him. Commitment shows how I have strength even in the face of judgment and how I can show love no matter what. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1).

Being an active member of a congregation provides an immediate community and church family. There isn't judgement in church and I can talk to the people in the church like family. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). My church family is a strong support that will help me learn more about God and teach me about service and helping others. When you stray from God a community of believers can help bring you back and strengthen your faith. It's so important to be in a church because then you have friends and mentors that have the love for God in common with you and they will lead you in the right direction.

Serving in my church is something that is a big part of my life. I currently do videography and acolyte and that is important to me but in the future I would like to use my gift of singing and share

that with the church. Also I think it would be life changing to go on a mission trip. I want to continue to use my voice to show God's abundant love to everyone and to use the power of music. I am so grateful for all the talents God has given me and I want to continue to spread his love, grace, and peace.

2026 Confirmation Essay By Haydon McConnell

What do I believe about Jesus Christ?

He is the Lord and Savior. I know that no matter what I do, as long as I believe in him, he will love me unconditionally. He has given me so many gifts, and opportunities to use throughs in his plan for me.

What does it mean to be confirmed?

By learning more about God's word, I am continuing my baptism. I am communicating to my fellow Christians that I publicly want to pursue my relationship with the Lord. This is my personal commitment to follow Jesus and trust in his plan for me.

Why do I want to commit myself to following Jesus as I move into adulthood?

I know as long as I commit to Jesus I will never stand alone. I want to devote my life to him because I know God's glory, power, and mercy are more than we could ever deserve. Through Jesus is the only way to eternal life and forever glory.

Why do I want to be a part of the Body of Christ?

I want to live in his ways and look up to him and know he's always there, no matter what happens. With that, I also want to show people his word and the power of a prayer. Also, how much it can help you by going to church and reading his powerful word.

How do I plan to participate in my congregation after I am confirmed?

I plan on going to church and continuing to learn his word and his way. Also wanting to share his word to people and

try to have more youth connect to him and show how powerful he is and all the good he can do.

2026 Confirmation Essay

By Lucas Zamzow

1. What do I believe about Jesus Christ?

I believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord. I believe that he died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected to give me new life through him. I believe that he gives us a free gift of grace and salvation and frees us from all our sins. I've witnessed his works and teachings through people who have served in my community, and I strive to follow the path of Jesus Christ, serving others. The confirmation process has deepened my knowledge and understanding of Christ and his good news. Being confirmed is a transition into becoming an adult within the Christian community at Bergen.

2. What does it mean to me to be confirmed?

It truly means a lot to me because it is another step in my faith journey. For me, it means that I am creating a closer relationship with God. The closer relationship will allow me to navigate all of life's challenges easier knowing that I have someone and a community of Christians whom I can trust and lean on. Being confirmed is my public commitment that I am willing to serve as Christ has taught us to. I've seen how Jesus changes people's personalities as he becomes a greater aspect of who they are as a person. I've felt how Jesus has deepened my knowledge and understanding of his works and his unconditional and steadfast love for everyone, throughout the entire confirmation process.

3. Why do I want to follow Jesus from now on?

I want to follow Jesus because I know that he saved me from my sins and that he is the way, the truth, and the life. I want to follow him because he brings me peace, and I know that he will be with me no

matter where I go. I've seen his works through people and noticed how it positively impacts others. Being confirmed is telling the community of Christ that I am committing to a community of believers.

4. Why do I want to be part of the Body of Christ?

I want to be part of the Body of Christ because that would give me a community around me that would be able to support me. It would also provide me with a sense of purpose because the Body of Christ wants to serve others just like Jesus did. Today, it would be nearly impossible to be a good, faithful Christian without a supporting community of followers of Christ. As a confirmed Christian, my commitment is to serve with the community of Christ, supporting them as they would support me.

5. How do I plan to participate in my congregation once I am confirmed?

I plan to attend church regularly, sometimes videographing for the church. I would also serve at some of the days that the church holds for "Turkey Dinners," as well as participating on Thanksgiving, preparing the food for people. As I grow in my faith and go further into my faith journey, I will continue to serve the community around me with the talents that were given to me by Jesus. Being confirmed allows me to become an adult within the church, obligating me the responsibility to further my service for others in new ways.