

Catherine Ventura

## Confirmation Paper

I would like to become part of the First Church community and become an official member of the church. I grew up coming into the church, waiting for Sunday school where I would do a copious amount of activities to strengthen my relationship with God, and further my education in terms of faith.

I can remember when I was little, I looked forward to the Children's Moment at the beginning of service. My brother and I would walk down the aisle, excited for the story that would be told. Shortly after, I would go to Sunday school. As I got older, I always wanted to be part of the service, and to feel like a member of the church. Once I made my First Communion, I felt amazing, and could not wait for my confirmation in future years. I stand here today as I want to fully commit myself to the Protestant faith, and this church as I make my confirmation

Within our faith, we associate the word "trinity" with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Within the doctrine of the trinity, those beings hold much power, even though it is only three words. Those three words I have come to know as the three things in one God.

The bible says that there is only one God, and these three things are what make up God. God is the father of all things good in the world, and has a path for everyone here, including myself. Throughout my journey in becoming a member of this church, I have gotten a new sense of clarity. The path that has been made by Him for me has become clearer the longer the confirmation sessions continued. And for that, I am forever grateful.

Jesus had come down and died for our sins, which we all reflect upon. He is one portion that makes up the almighty God. John's first verse in the bible says how Jesus was in the

beginning with God. The Holy Spirit is God, and he holds power that we all can see. When you speak to God, you speak to the Holy Spirit. One God holds all the power and strength needed by humankind, and through my prayer, it has been seen.

Prayer is something that can be done nightly, weekly, or monthly. Throughout the sessions I have been a part of, I have learned what prayer truly means to me regarding my journey. With prayer, I can be more cognizant of my surroundings and see a better outlook on life.

Through dark times, and good times, I can look to God for guidance, and or for comfort and reassurance. It is a time where I can let all my words flow without the feeling of judgement, as a secure feeling overcomes those who pray, including myself. In the future, it will establish a relationship with God that may be cherished throughout the entirety of my life.

Because of the confirmation classes over the past several months, I have learned more about the importance of prayer and meditation. The relationship which I have established over these past several months is one that will stick with me forever. The meditation in which I have been taught has allowed me to have deeper prayer sessions, as I am more relaxed and able to focus on the message, I am relaying to Him.

Faith to me is a motivation to live and persevere through the struggles of life. Even though unfortunate things may come my way, and I am unsure of why it happened or what to do, I look to God. Knowing that his intentions were not to cause the somber times in my life, but rather, to help me through them and strengthen my faith and reliance in him. Even in times where distance is a boundary, I have learned that you must know that hindrance will soon pass, and there must be faith within those words to know so.

Without faith, there is nothing. With those who pray and have faith in the Lord, good things are soon to come. As mentioned in Proverbs 3: 5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Faith to me, is willingness to believe. Believe that there is a being above who has all the answers to your life journey. Believe that sometimes there may be a lack of response through prayer, that He is there listening, and has a plan for you. Believe that the negative things that happen in your life were not the work of God, and that there is a light at what seems like the never-ending tunnel. Willingness to believe that there is a God. It's a topic that many struggle with, as they feel as though they are not being heard, and there their prayers aren't being answered. From this confirmation course, I have learned that guidance is not always through a direct response, rather through little things in life that we tend to overlook.

As silly as it may sound, not long after I started these meetings, I noticed a small little event that I knew was a sign. I'm a junior who attends Pembroke High School, and I'm a typical teenager who spends their nights after sports and work studying. This year has been one of the most stressful years of my life, both with school, and ongoing issues within my life.

In a session of prayer, I mentioned that there was a source of stress in my life, and it never seemed to go away. I had an exam in the morning which instilled an unhealthy amount of apprehension within me. I prayed for guidance in the time of stress, even though it was what seemed like a silly little problem in the whole scheme of life. I went to school that day, showing no signs of anxiety as I had minutes prior walking into the school.

My friend whom I hadn't spoken to a lot this year, looked me in the eyes and hugged me in the middle of nowhere before the exam. She looked me in the eye with a grin displayed across her face saying, "You go this, I know you do".

I acted like I had every day and showed no signs of my nervousness. Her and I lost touch this year as we were both really stressed with the workload that is associated with this year in high school. That night before, I was on the verge of tears asking for help and asked Him for a sign that there was someone there listening to my words. Surely enough, I got what I needed. It was a small event, but it was one that really grabbed my attention. These confirmation classes began to help me more in prayer, and I get to see more signs in my everyday life.

Prior to my confirmation journey, I had always known the line "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," in the Lord's Prayer. I always recited it by heart, but never thought of what the words meant. A goal for me during this journey was to find out what forgiveness is, and why it's so important to everyday life. I have achieved this goal and will carry what I learned with me forever.

Forgiveness to me in my journey is not forgiving and forgetting, it is much more than that. Forgiveness is moving past those who have wrong done you but keeping mind of what has just occurred. Throughout life, there will be instances in which someone will betray you, and you are forced to make a decision: whether a grudge will be held against the person for their actions, or you will forgive them.

For those who choose to forgive, there are branches of this decision that show who a person is. There are people in this instance who do forgive the other for their actions, and act as though it never happened, and go on with their everyday lives.

Others will choose to forgive and move on, remembering what that person has done. In doing so, it acknowledges the wrongdoing, but as a Christian, you forgive the person for their actions.

In life, you can't forget those who have gone against you. We should forgive those as God forgives us for our wrongdoings. Jesus came down and died for our sins, and we can't act as though it were for nothing. Every day, we reflect upon the purpose of this, and how it saved mankind from evil.

Most importantly, as I have learned through this journey, is that you must forgive yourself. In life, everyone makes mistakes, and it will either be a minor one that seems meaningless in the situation, or it will be one that defines who we are in life. With any mistake in life, you must learn to forgive yourself, and accept that in life, everyone makes mistakes.

We all look at certain people in life and think, they're perfect. I just don't get it, as most people think that there is someone who seems to have it all. In life, everyone faces their own struggles and makes mistakes that act as a detriment to their lives or who they are. No one is perfect, and most struggle to see that. Most people, like myself, have concluded that we're not perfect.

I will make mistakes in life, as it's in our human nature and I will mess up. What I do after that instance is what will truly define me. I learned to forgive myself. Learning to forgive yourself is a life journey in and of itself, but this journey in becoming confirmed in the eyes of the church has helped me to come to that conclusion.

In scripture in terms of forgiveness, it is a topic and theme which is brought up often. Someone gave their life for our mistakes and our sins. It is not something to take lightly. In the

book of Matthew, he speaks of forgiveness, and how one should forgive themselves as you forgive others. If you follow this, God will do the same.

In his words, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 16:14-15). The action in which you do upon others and yourself will be reciprocated through the eyes of God. This is a concept people struggle with often, and I have learned to overcome this problem, even though at times I find it difficult to forgive myself for certain actions.

Over these past few months, I have become more knowledgeable, and I am confident in saying that I have become a better person. Through meditation and increased prayer sessions I feel as though I have become a better version of myself that has a closer relationship with God. These past few months have opened my eyes to the little things I failed to notice every day. I am more grateful for the things that I tend to overlook in everyday life.

I want to become an active member of this church, as it is seen as a second home to me. The comfort walking through the door with peace and positivity that overcomes everyone is like no other feeling. I want to further my connection with God, as this confirmation class has opened my eyes to certain aspects of my religious life that I failed to acknowledge beforehand.

Even though I do feel as if I have become a better person, becoming a member of the First Church in Pembroke is another step in bettering myself and becoming a better person in society. I have not regretted a single moment that I have been a part of from the classes I have taken. I am ready to become a member of the church, and I can say that with a proud smile across my face.