

Today, we will enjoy a rare privilege.

Our bishop, Wayne Miller, will be the preacher at our joint celebration with Lake View Lutheran Church this morning at 11:00am.

Our two communities are sharing a worship service after two years of sharing confirmation classes with seven young people who will affirm their baptisms, whose faith will be confirmed.

This means that today, we will enjoy an even rarer privilege than hearing the bishop speak.

We will hear our confirmands speak.

They will read a composite statement of faith compiled from excerpts of their final confirmation papers.

They will stand up like Peter and speak the faith that is in them to the crowd that is gathered, a faith as old as God's promises and as new and fresh and unpredictable as the new day.

Their faith is young, and we will pray for the Holy Spirit to be stirred up in them and to companion them with care and wisdom for years to come.

Their faith is different; their diversity of voices is a microcosm of God's whole church, seven very different ways of speaking of God's deeds of power.

Their faith is real, organic, growing, challenging, changing: they have the Spirit already, and the Spirit has their hearts and minds on the move.

And today the Spirit will give wing to their words just as the Spirit did for Peter's, because the Spirit is still with us, still teaching us, still guiding us all into all truth.

Today, in their words, we will enjoy a common privilege, a very regular and reliable privilege: we will get to hear God speak.

Listen now to their composite statement of faith, and savor the privilege of hearing in it the wise, fresh voice of God's Holy Spirit...

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. God is our father, who brought us into being. God is our mother, who gave birth to us in this abundant world that She created. God is the creator, who in His power made the sky and the stars, the sea and the land, the forests and the mountains, the valleys and the hills, the marshes and the deserts. He created this beautiful earth for us and He expects us to take care of it. He is the one who made everything but, he still works today. If he didn't nothing would change much. Believing in God can be difficult for some people. Sometimes, even me. Sometimes I find it hard to keep him alive in my mind, for I have not had any logical explanations as to why God is here or what He is doing. I am a hard person to persuade. I often require solid evidence that I can see and touch before I believe in it. However, I have learned that whilst it is impossible to prove God's existence, it is impossible to deny his existence as well. God is a mystery to every single soul anywhere, this powerful force that nobody can really explain, but I believe that He is always there for us, and that He is a part of everything and everyone. You can never really understand God but, he always understands you. He is also always watching you which seems a little creepy, always looking at you. However, he loves you no matter what he sees you do. God loves all people, no matter what race, color or way of life. He is all, but one, governing us with justice. God sets our boundaries like parents setting down rules. He shows the way like parents help with our homework. God also restricts us, like he restricted Adam and Eve from eating fruit from his tree. But he also bestows trust on us and lets us do our work; He trusts us because we are shaped in His image, so God sees himself in each of us. I also think that God can't help us with every decision we make because He gave us minds of our own, so we

can make good decisions. This is the God we fear and adore, the one who is like the judge, umpire, or referee, the one who decides your fate. I know that God has forgiven our sins over and over again even for the most horrible things, and I think that this might help us forgive other people easier. Other religions always have that element of forgiveness missing and you have to earn your way to God somehow. He is our parent, a beautiful artist and creator. God is a lifetime of adventure. He loves and guides us throughout our lives and those of our descendants. I will trust Him.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, my Lord. Jesus is the easiest for us to imagine, and the closest for us to relate to. He is the hand which feeds us, the professor who teaches us, and the guardian who protects us, our savior and teacher, who forgives and heals. Because Jesus is the closest for us to relate to, he is the hardest for us to understand. He is calm when we are not and he is brave when we are cowards. Even in times when he was angry, he fueled that anger and made it something beautiful. The Bible also says that Jesus taught in riddles, I like riddles. But riddles are also a good way to teach, because you have to figure it out the meaning for yourself, so you remember it better. I don't think many people really take Jesus' words seriously because it's very difficult. Jesus was kind to people who were sick and poor. However, he was hard on tax collectors and rich people. If he were a singer he would be a country rapper. Jesus is many things that would normally not go together. Jesus was criticized, hated, and betrayed. I love Jesus because He gave up His life for our sins so selflessly and didn't think about Himself. He always loved else no matter what they did or what kind of person they were. He is the most loving part of God, I think because he gave himself up for us. If he wasn't here we would blow up or something when we sinned. Jesus suffered for us so we may go to heaven instead of hell. When the day came when he was crucified and ridiculed on the cross, He forgave us. Even when we were committing sin and showing Him how good we were at it, He forgave us. Sometimes I wonder how He felt when God told Him that He had to die on the cross. I wonder if he was scared, or if He actually really wanted to do it, or even if He thought of running away. Jesus guides us and never stops showing us the way, even in death. He suffers for us, and then ascends into heaven, where he is one with God. Through him we have been forgiven so we may push forward unafraid. Jesus is my homeboy.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and the Church. The Holy Spirit is inspiration, breath to every living thing, the air that connects us and each of our souls, a ghost of a wind, blowing through us all. The Holy Spirit is the glue that keeps us united in some crazy way. The Holy Spirit is a rope around all of us, bringing us closer together so we will trust each other. A spiritual thing that I think might embody the Holy Spirit is different types of music. I think this because music is like a language that everybody can understand. The Holy Spirit is counsel, it is reason, it is us. The Holy Spirit is the hardest part to explain, the Bible never explains it. It just comes in and bang, somebody has the power of tongues or something. It's just too big of a force for our minds to even begin to comprehend. I think that the Holy Spirit is a connection between me and God. I believe that the Holy Spirit keeps us alive, dancing through our lives, day after day, year after year. I believe that when a person gets baptized, their Original Sin is washed away and the Holy Spirit enters their body. The Holy Spirit helps us and turns us holy. He is sort of like a messenger, he doesn't tell you what he thinks but, what God or Jesus thinks. In every decision we must make, the Holy Spirit has a little bit of influence that pushes us toward the right choice. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God that came back after Jesus died, trying to guide us in our everyday lives, helping us make bonds with our community.

The church is united as the house of God; it is home base, where all are safe. Throughout the entire New Testament, it talks about building the community where people support and help each other, even if it means making some sacrifices. My Church is special to me because it is a place where I can feel safe and secure, and it is also a place that gives me a sense of family. We pray together because it gives us insight. My church is also special to me because all God's people can join; it doesn't matter what color their skin is or where they came from. One thing that stuck out to me at confirmation over the past two

years was a letter we had to write. In the letter I wrote that people should come to church every Sunday. I thought this was ironic because I don't even come to church every Sunday. In the past it used to be the center of everyone's life, but now it is more of a piece. I think God would like it better this way, because then he'd get some time off. I choose membership in a Lutheran church because my parents are both Lutheran and all four of my grandparents are Lutheran. In reality any Church is special because churches are places where people can meet other people and make new friends that last a lifetime. The church holds together our faith, we all believe in God and we can bicker about other less important things, but we will always be united in our faith in God.

I want to spend my life following Jesus because I believe that Jesus offers unconditional love in any situation. The reason to follow Christ is not because of God's power (or because if you don't follow him you'll burn in hell) but because of God's unconditional love. Throughout life, I will have my ups and downs, and I know that God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus will guide me through and help me discover who I am. Jesus is the shepherd and as a lamb, I follow him blindly because I am lost but he knows the way. Following Jesus isn't like a sport where it isn't your life; Jesus' way is a way of life. I follow His teaching because from those teachings could and probably would come an ideal society. Doing good for others, being kind, that is Heaven, the only true joy: not helping yourself, taking whatever you can whenever you can; not buying new houses and endorsing yourself with expensive furniture; not wallowing around, wasting your time, while there is still a way you can help those who need it. Following Jesus doesn't just help others, but in the long run it helps you as well. I don't think that it will be easy to follow a life with Jesus because during my life I will run into certain obstacles and have to overcome certain challenges that will complicate the fact that I'm trying to follow Jesus. Right now I have a lot of questions that haven't been answered. (Why did God decide to create the world? Why is there suffering?) But I feel that if I follow Jesus and take the path that God wanted me to take that I'll get the answers to those questions in time. When I need help Jesus gives me a helping hand and allows me to overcome my obstacles. I think that following Jesus during my whole life will make a smarter person, a kinder person, a more loving person, and most of all the type of person that God wants me to be.

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Lake View and Resurrection Lutheran Churches Confirmation Class of 2010*