



**South
Mecklenburg**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Confirmands'
Statements of Faith
2026**

Hannah Angerer

Hello my name is Hannah Angerer. I live with my parents Kristen and Marc Angerer, my sister Caroline, and my two dogs Winnie and Charlie. My mom has helped me grow in my faith. I am in the 8th grade at Community House Middle School. I love to swim, attempt to paint when I can, and hang out with my friends. I am very involved in the church. I attend choir and youth group and serve on the youth committee. My family has been going here since before I was born and I was baptized here.

I believe that God is all around us and that God is someone who is there for you whether you know it or not. I would describe God as a good person and someone to talk to. Everyone was created in God's image meaning that we all are connected through love and goodness. I have seen God love in many places including camp and the beach.

I believe that Jesus existed a long time ago. Jesus is a person who came to help humanity and to make the world a better place. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. Jesus, like God, lets us believe that there is someone with us at all times who wants what is best for us. Jesus's mission and ministry are an inspiration because it teaches you to be kind and forgiving.

To me the Holy Spirit is a spirit that is there for you and will help you and protect you. The Holy Spirit is present in my life and in the world when I feel happy, but also when I am sad. It helps encourage me. The Holy Spirit has pushed me to make good decisions, but also bad ones so I can learn from them. I can feel the Holy Spirit around me when I see people get inspired and empowered.

Following Jesus in my life looks like doing the right thing even when it is hard. It also means being a friend to the friendless and being trusting and humble, just like Jesus did. Something that Jesus did that inspires me is when he fed 5,000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish. This is important because he helps those who need it. Following Jesus is loving others and being kind even when they don't return the kindness.

Sin is when you do something that goes against God. But sin itself is not bad as we are all human and will always mess up. None of us are perfect, no matter how hard we try. But Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that grants us grace and mercy. When you sin it draws you away from God, but when you confess you come close to God.

When I think of prayer, I think of a quiet time that includes a time to think, a time to reflect, and a time to share. Prayer is a time to talk to God honestly and openly. Prayer is amazing because when I pray to God, I know God will not judge me. Another good thing is that you can pray anywhere, in a quick moment or in a long span. Prayer is important because it connects me deeper with God.

The people who have guided me along my faith journey are my family, my grandparents, my aunts, Pastor Lindsey, Pastor Matt Brown, and Mrs. Rebecca, and of course, my dog named Winnie. They all supported me, especially my mom by encouraging me to go to church even when I did not want to. This encouragement taught me that Jesus will always be there for you and love you, just like our church family at SMPC, even when it does not feel like it. Lastly, I would like to thank my mentor Alicia Bickett for always helping me and encouraging me in my faith. Thank You.

Owen Bickett

Hello, my name is Owen Bickett. I serve on the youth committee at SMPC. I have been in youth group and involved in youth music for 3-4 years now. My parents are Alicia and Brian Bickett. My brother's name is Ben and he is into theater and choir at Ardrey Kell. I go to Community House Middle School. I have enjoyed doing Martial Arts for the past 2 years. I like going to youth choir and chimes practice and hanging out with friends at youth group. I look forward to continuing my faith at SMPC.

During my life, my family and I have always gone to church and followed in God's footsteps. I believe God provides peace and trust. If God had to be described in one word, I would choose the word, "loving." God cares for everyone. As I go through Confirmation and get more involved in the life of this church, I will be able to show and put my trust in God more. I believe God created everyone in our world in God's own image. Because of that, we are all different in our own ways. During hard times, I know that I can put my trust in God and God will provide. An example of this was when I first attended a youth group and was very nervous and two older youth, Davis Lee and Colin Cushman, made me feel welcome and helped it be an easier transition.

I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. Jesus makes sure that we feel loved and seen. I believe Jesus is forgiving and dependable. He loves every person even when we sin and mess up. Jesus's teachings, mission, and ministry makes me want to be more like him and do things that he would do.

The Holy Spirit is something that never leaves my side and is always there when I make decisions. When I'm having trouble with something, I know that I have the help of the Holy Spirit to lead me closer to God. Following in Jesus's footsteps means going to Confirmation and church every Sunday, participating in Youth Group, serving on youth committee, and being active in youth choir and chimes. Scripture, which is one of these ways that I follow Jesus, helps lead and guide people to become closer to God by connecting them to Jesus' teachings for us. Being a follower of Jesus and God takes commitment and reliability from ourselves. Showing love and kindness to others could look like sitting together during Sunday morning worship, spreading God's word together, doing mission projects together, and attending choir.

Baptism is a welcome and initiation into our community of faith and our church family. Baptism symbolizes the beginning of our faith journey since we are officially a part of the church. I was baptized in 2014 at 2 years old at SMPC. Being baptized to me means that my heart is with the church and my connection with it will show as I grow closer to Christ and to my community.

I believe that forgiveness is settling conflict between another person and yourself. God forgives people every day. When we talk bad about someone, sin without knowing, or just make a mistake, God's mercy and forgiveness still comes to us. You can practice forgiveness in your daily life by being nice to people, praying, coming to youth group, and giving up grudges.

As I reflect on my relationship with God and keep connecting with God, I see Confirmation not as a graduation, but as a continual growth process in learning what it means to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. I would like to acknowledge and thank my pastors and mentors, such as Dan Webb, my parents, my youth pastor Lindsey Odom, Zach Bowyer, and Pastor Matt. These are the people that have guided me through my faith journey the most and always been loving and supportive of me and my gifts. Lastly, my family has had a big part in my faith by supporting me on my journey of faith through taking me to Confirmation, attending worship with me, and talking to me about faith. Thank you.

Jordan Booker

Bonjour, hola, hello, my name is Jordan Booker. My parents are Kimberly and Bert Booker and my brother is Dylan Booker. Our family joined this church in 2018. I am an 8th grader at Marvin Ridge Middle School. I am part of the Youth committee here at SMPC, and although I was baptized in Pennsylvania, this is the only congregation that I have known and that feels like home. In my free time, I enjoy rugby, hiking, camping, battle of the books, playing my saxophone, and reading.

God's grace touches everything around us. God is gracious, eternal, omnipresent, and omniscient. I believe that God created heaven and earth. God created life, that includes each and every one of us. Although, we brought sin into God's perfect world, God remains gracious and merciful toward our sinful selves. I have felt God's presence several times, through nature, in serving others, and simply everyday life. I have felt God's grace a few times in my short life. First, I felt God's grace when I was playing my saxophone for our congregation. I could feel God guiding my fingers to the right positions, the right notes, and guiding my sound throughout the sanctuary. Finally, I experienced God's grace when I was camping on a ridge and I woke up first to see the sunrise because in that moment, God's glory enveloped me.

I believe Jesus was the son of God, born of a virgin named Mary, and died for our sins on the cross. He suffered under Pontius Pilate to save us from our sins. After Jesus died, he descended into hell and on the third day, he rose again from the dead. During Jesus' life, Jesus performed miracles such as helping the blind to see, feeding the masses, and turning water into wine. Before Jesus died, he gave us the sacraments of baptism and communion. Baptism signifies the start of a new life with Christ. Communion offers an opportunity to remember Christ' sacrifice by breaking the bread and pouring the wine.

To me, the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our daily lives. I believe that the Holy Spirit presides over our lives and choices, and compels people to make good choices. The Holy Spirit guides us towards a faithful and godly life so that we can bring glory to God. I have felt the Holy Spirit's presence a multitude of times. For example, during my grandfather's funeral when I felt a sense of comfort in the midst of my sadness and during our Christmas Eve service. This is because peace and happiness seemed to spread throughout the narthex on Christmas Eve bringing me closer to Christ. I also feel the presence of the Holy Spirit through daily prayer.

What being Christian and following Jesus means to me is having a rock, a redeemer, and an anchor to always return to, even in the most difficult times. Although Jesus's time on earth has physically passed, his principles, teachings, and love for others are lived out by us. And as the Lord's Prayer says, we should "give this day our daily bread(,)" through our service, our prayer, and our love for others. In my life I serve Jesus through mission projects, and when I share my musical gifts with others.

During Confirmation classes, we learned about the concept of sin. Sin surrounds us because none of us are perfect and we all mess up. Sin includes the imperfections that make us different from our Holy Spirit, God, and Jesus. It is what separates us from God and each other. It draws us away from God because our actions cause us to stray. When we confess our sins, it brings us closer to Christ through prayer. Our salvation and our confession comes from the sacraments and prayer. Our Baptism helps us remember that we were created for a holy and distinct future as we are all God's children. Being baptized comes with expectations for how to live. Communion serves as a reminder of Jesus's sacrifice for our sins, and prayer helps us repent and recognize our daily sins.

The church and its people are called to do a multitude of things. As Christians, we are called to share the Word of God and help turn non-believers into faithful disciples of Christ. As Christians, we must “love God and love thy neighbor” through actions of dedication and service. The church is supposed to bring justice, peace, and compassion into our world by caring for the sick and needy, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and housing the homeless.

My faith journey has included many people especially, my mom and dad, for always being there and nurturing my faith outside of church. It has also included Zach Bowyer, who has been my faithful mentor this year and helped me embrace and share my musical gifts with others. Zach is so patient and always listens. He creates space for faith to grow through music and helps us create music that glorifies and honors God. I also wanted to thank Lindsey Odom for guiding our class and myself through the spiritual journey of Confirmation, creating exciting, fun, and faith filled youth group events and retreats, and for always being there. I also wanted to thank our retired pastor, Dr. Matt Brown for being an amazing and inspiring pastor, as well as Gayle Ireland, Helen Castle, and Blythe Kinsey for helping with youth chimes and choir and devoting your time and energy in us and helping us make beautiful music together. Lastly, I would like to thank Rebecca Guzman for helping me begin my faith journey at SMPC, and for all of my close friends I have made in youth group that continue to shape me and my faith.

Mason Briganti

Hi, my name is Mason Briganti. My parents are Heather and Mark Briganti. I am in 8th grade at Jay M. Robinson Middle School. I like to play video games, swim, and play football and basketball. I better understand myself by knowing that I am deeply loved by God and Jesus Christ.

I believe God sent Jesus Christ down to pardon us from our sins as well as many other things. I believe God is the almighty protector of us. This impacts my faith by knowing God is my protector and our almighty Lord. I saw God at work in my life when I was recovering from an injury. The way in which I would describe God is powerful, gracious, and strong. I believe God created all of us and our world. Because God is our creator, God cares deeply about all of us and values us.

I believe Jesus is God's son who pardoned us from sin. I would describe Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Jesus died on the cross for us. Jesus helps me in my daily life by guiding me and my days to make sure they are good days. Jesus's teachings inspire me to live more faithfully by living in accordance with scripture. Jesus works in my community through making miracles happen every day.

To me, the Holy Spirit is magical and holy. I believe the Holy Spirit is present by gracing us with gifts that we can use to make a difference in our world. One of my gifts that I think the Holy Spirit has blessed me with is the gift of swimming and being kind to others. The Holy Spirit helps me make decisions in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. I notice the Holy Spirit at church, always gracing me with its presence. I feel guided by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit helps me reflect on my life in connection to God's ways.

Following Jesus to me looks like practicing my faith, going to church, and praising Christ. I strive to be like Jesus by following the teachings of the Trinity and the Bible. I try to show kindness by following in the ways and teachings of Jesus. I love when I have opportunities to serve people on retreats, during youth groups, or service projects at church. My faith shapes how I treat others by giving them grace and kindness every day.

I'd like to thank Lindsey Odom, Rebecca Guzman, Matt Brown and my friends for guiding me in my journey of faith. I would also like to thank my mentor Steve Williams for making confirmation fun and interesting, and for helping me grow. And finally, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me, taking me to church, and helping me grow in my faith.

Alayna Calderwood

Hi, my name is Alayna Calderwood. I am in 8th grade at Marvin ridge middle school. My parents are Jennifer and Sean Calderwood. I do competitive cheer and I enjoy hanging out with my friends in my free time. I was baptized here at SMPC. It was very special to me because this is my church home.

I strongly believe that everything is a part of God's plan, even when we may not fully understand it at the moment. I also believe that God is not only our creator but our friend and companion who listens to our prayers and guides us through life. God is very patient and is always here for us. I always feel God's love and guidance when I'm on stage for cheer and God reassures me that I can do all things through him (Philippians 4:13). And in those moments, I am reminded that through God, I have strength and ability.

I firmly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He died on the cross for our sins and rose again, showing His power, love, and sacrifice for humanity. I believe He was born to Mary and lived a life full of compassion, mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Jesus continues to guide me in my daily life by helping me make good choices and encouraging me to treat others with kindness and respect. His mission, ministry, teachings, and service inspire me to live more faithfully and to do what is right, even when it is difficult. His example reminds me to stay patient, trust in God, and never give up, because through Christ, I can continue to grow stronger in my faith and become a better person.

The Holy Spirit is God's presence that lives inside believers helping guide them in their daily lives. The Spirit gives wisdom, comfort, and strength, and helps people understand what is right from wrong. Through Christ, I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and can grow in my faith. I believe the Holy Spirit is present in our lives by guiding us and supporting us everyday. I have felt the Holy Spirit in my life when I noticed a homeless person struggling without food, so I asked my mom if we could buy them a sandwich. As I gave it to her, she held my hand and said "God bless you, I really needed this today." You truly never know what one is going through in these circumstances. This moment really stuck with me because I will always remember what one little act of kindness I did to make her day. I believe the Holy Spirit is a little figure on the side of our shoulders guiding us through life. Going to youth groups this past year has made me realize that the Holy Spirit is with everyone and inside everyone.

I follow Jesus currently by reading the bible, attending worship, going to youth groups, and listening to Bryce Crawford, who is a 22-year-old Christian evangelist, podcaster, and founder of "Jesus in the Street" ministry. I strive to be like Jesus because Jesus was kind to everyone and appreciated everyone for who they were. I am eager to be a part of the SMPC youth ministry more by attending the upcoming summer retreats to Massaneta and Montreat. I will also continue going to worship and other church events, even after Confirmation is over!

I strive to show love and kindness to everyone by complimenting them and making people feel great about themselves. I think this is important because we are all God's beloved children and we are all loved, valued, and known by God and should treat each other like that. I see opportunities to help serve people by doing community service hours, helping at the diaper bank or even picking up trash in my area. I have also helped Lindsey with a lot of mission projects since I cannot attend youth group every Sunday due to cheer. I feel that as I grow closer to God, I am learning how to treat everyone with respect and kindness because that is how God wants us to treat each other.

When I started my Confirmation journey I never expected how much it would influence me in such positive and meaningful ways. My parents supported me and encouraged me so much. My Confirmation teacher, Lindsey, enlightened my understanding of faith and has been supportive and fun. My mentor, Brynn Holder, has held my hand when I needed her and pointed me in the right direction when it comes to faith and life decisions. Pastor Matt Brown baptized me when I was 2 years old and even though I don't remember it, it was the start of my relationship with God. Lastly, my best friend Paxtyn, has been right by my side through our Confirmation journey and has helped me grow deeper in my relationship with God. I am also very thankful for this church community in raising me up in the life of this church from the time I was 2 and for praying for our Confirmation class and supporting us. Thank you.

Hannah Heath

Hello, my name is Hannah Heath. My parents are Jess and Dan Heath. My grandparents are Kim and Brian Heath, I have one brother. His name is Hudson. I am on my school cheer team and I also do Allstar cheer at Impact One Allstars. I go to Marvin Ridge Middle school, and I am in 8th grade. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with my friends, family, and shopping. I have been going to SMPC since I was 4.

I have learned in confirmation that God is always around us whenever we need assistance or help throughout life. I believe that God is forgiving and loving. I think God created us all differently to help guide us through life. I have experienced God's love during church and praying with my friends before a cheer competition. I believe that God is always watching over us to help us through life and to help me through uncertain times when needed. I think God tries to make things better when you are in some of the hardest times.

I believe Jesus died for each and every one of us. I think Jesus is loving and forgiving. I know that Jesus is always watching over me and trying to help me in my daily life. Jesus Christ died on the cross because Jesus wanted everyone to know they are loved and always forgiven. Jesus helps people to know that they are seen and valued in many different ways. Jesus helps me daily by remembering that I am loved and have a special place in his heart.

To me the Holy Spirit means that you are guided through life in the easiest and hardest times while being watched over from above. The Holy Spirit teaches me the do's and don'ts of life. John 14:26 says, "Whom the father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." To me this verse means that the Holy Spirit is a companion and comforter. Lastly, I think the Holy Spirit means that people all over the world help each other in many different ways, making sure everyone feels loved and cherished.

In my life being a Christian looks like going to church and praying alone or with others. It also means being nice and kind to the people around me by welcoming others. In John 13, we see Jesus washing the disciples' feet. From that story in scripture, it has taught me to follow Jesus' example by serving others and making sure everyone is happy and feels seen.

I believe that worship helps you grow closer to God. Also, it is an essential part of my life. , "Equip the church as the body of Christ in the world" (Book of Order W-10107). This is the purpose of worship. Worship helps me grow closer to my family and church family. Baptism is a sign of God's grace. It brings us closer to Jesus and connects us to God's purpose.

Lastly, I would love to thank Lindsey Odom, my Confirmation mentor Rebecca Guzman, SMPC, and my grandparents for always answering my questions and helping guide me through Confirmation.. I would love to especially thank my Dad for always bringing me to church, his love and support throughout this process, and for guiding me though Confirmation!

Braxton Kasmer

My name is Braxton Kasmer, and I am in 8th grade at Community House Middle School. My grandmother Karen Keough has faithfully attended SMPC for a long time and brings my sister Bergen and I to church as well as my mom Jennifer. I really like track and field, especially running the 800m, 100m, 200m, and the relay. I also like to game and hang out with my friends. Those things are fun for me and help me feel like myself.

I believe that God made us and cares about each one of us. God is our creator, redeemer, sustainer, and provider. When we sin and mess up, God's love still surrounds us and guides us. God redeems us from our sins and grants us grace. God also sustains us and provides for us during hard times. I have seen this when my grandmother was sick and the way that God and our church community came together to help her.

I believe Jesus is God's son and is with us daily. Jesus promises to walk alongside us and help people when they really need it. I believe Jesus shows up when people are at their breaking point and feel like they cannot keep going. In my life, I feel like Jesus can make a bad day a little better and help you feel loved and not forgotten. When I was getting bullied on the school bus to DC, my faith made me feel like I wasn't totally alone at that moment.

I believe the Holy Spirit is how God is with us today. Following Jesus is not always easy for me, but I still try. To me, being a follower of Jesus means trying to love people, do the right thing, and not give up on my faith even when life gets hard. I go to church when I can, and I pray when I feel sad, stressed, or worried. Prayer helps calm me down and feel warm inside, like someone is actually listening. Even when it's hard, following Jesus feels good and healthy to me.

Our church at SMPC is a place where I feel supported and like people are on my side. I've done different things here, like reading scripture and speaking in worship, greeting people at the front door, and going to Confirmation and youth group. One of my favorite things is going to Massanetta, a sleepaway camp in the summer with my church, because I get to grow in my faith and still have fun with friends. I've also helped serve others by feeding the homeless, ringing the Salvation Army bell, and Thanksgiving or Easter making meal kits. Church reminds me that I am a child of God who is loved, valued, heard, and seen. I'm thankful for my parents, my grandparents, my mentor, and my youth pastors because they have helped me grow in my faith.

As I confirm my faith, I don't want this to be the end. I want to stay involved in church and keep learning more about God. I want to grow closer to God and learn more about what it really means to follow Jesus in my everyday life and how this influences my actions, decisions, and choices. One way I want to continue to grow is by trying to be more consistent in my faith and not just go to God when things are going wrong. This Confirmation class year has really helped me learn how to make faith an everyday part of my life and why it is important and I am really thankful to all my friends and family, pastors, mentors, and especially my grandma for bringing me to church and showing why it is needed.

Julia Nancarrow

Hi I'm Julia Nancarrow. I'm in 8th grade at Jay M. Robinson. My parents are Jennifer and Jonathan and I have an older sister named Chloe and an older brother named Andrew. I like going on long walks and drinking coffee. My family has been at SMPC for about 14 years. I was also baptized at SMPC along with my siblings.

I believe that God is with us and God loves us. God is like a companion and a friend. God created our world and us and God helps us to make good decisions. God is peaceful and just. God impacts my faith by leading me into the right direction and shaping me into who I am and how I treat other people.

Jesus Christ is God's son who died on the cross so that we could be forgiven of our sins. He did this because he loves us unconditionally. Traditions we do such as Communion represent Christ' sacrifice on the cross through the elements of bread and wine. We also have baptism to show that we will grow up in the name of God through the support of Christ and our church family. Jesus helps show us how to spread the gospel and expand his kingdom

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God present on earth. The Holy Spirit is present in our lives, in the world, and in our church as it guides us and helps us to make the right decisions. The Holy Spirit also brings us closer together.

Following Jesus looks like being respectful and helping others through hard times. I strive to follow Jesus by going to church, living out the teachings of the bible, and doing community service. One of the ways we learn from God that stands out to me is living out what we learn and takeaway from worship and bible study.

Communion is a very important part of the Presbyterian church and of my faith. The bread represents Jesus Christ's body and the wine represents his blood. Being a part of this sacrament helps me feel closer to God by being able to see the perspective of Christ in making the sacrifice he did for God's own people. Jesus wants us to remember him through the Sacrament of Communion so we can follow in his way of life and grow God's kingdom.

Baptism is the tradition of spreading holy water among someone's head to show that they will grow up to be a beloved child of God. Baptism is the beginning of our faith story as it commissions us to grow up in the life of the church and be supported by our church family in learning the teachings of Jesus Christ and living them out. I have been baptized and it is important to me because it helps me know and understand that I have been accepted and loved by God before the time I was born and also by this church community. Baptism is important to the Christian faith because it helps to guide your way of life and help you learn how to live and act as God's beloved child.

People that have guided me in my faith journey are all of the pastors including former Pastor Matt, Pastor Lindsey, Rebecca Guzman, and Melissa White. I have also been guided and mentored by my parents, and my Confirmation mentor, Alyson Vaughan. They have all encouraged me in my journey of faith and in my relationship with God and have changed me for the better. I hope to continue growing with God in the future and look forward to becoming more involved in this church.

Skye Palmer

Hello, my name is Skye Palmer. My parents are James and Kristina Palmer. I have three younger brothers, and their names are Eamon, Sacha, and Taika Palmer. Out of all of my family members, my father has helped me grow in my faith the most. He is always encouraging me to learn more about Christ and God's plan for me. I am an eighth grader at Community House Middle School, and I enjoy playing tennis, reading, and hanging out with my friends. I joined SMPC in 2023, and I was baptized in 2025. Everyone at church is so welcoming, and ever since I started going, I've begun to truly consider myself a child of God.

Through Confirmation, I've learned about God's provision and council. Using what I've been taught, I believe I've grown more in my faith. Ever since I was a kid, I've felt God's presence all around me, especially in things I love such as nature, and my friends' and family's love and care. I believe I experience God's unconditional love when I'm with my friends at church, having fun and conversing about things that we like and care about. Given these events, I believe that happiness is the key to experiencing God's divine presence. Overall, Confirmation class has shown me the wonders of the journey of faith we all take and how everyone's journey looks a little bit different.

Jesus Christ, who is forgiving and merciful, inspires me to be a better person. I believe he died on the cross for our sins, and he will always understand and love all of God's people unconditionally. He makes sure that each person that he died for is loved and cared for. I see Jesus in each person at church that makes sure everyone is comforted and cared for. His actions influence mine, and he teaches others how to live according to the good that is within him, and the good that he sees in others.

To me, the Holy Spirit is an ever-present being that will walk alongside me for the rest of my life. I believe that the Holy Spirit leads me towards God when I need him most. I know that the Holy Spirit will guide me and help me to make good decisions in my experiences.

To be a follower of Jesus, it takes patience and commitment. I believe that it means that our job as followers is to spread the gospel to those who need it most and allow scripture to guide us in growing in our faith. Overall, forgiveness is a key component of our relationship with God, especially since we are all human and sin and mess up all the time. God's grace has helped me get closer to God and correct my mistakes. Going to church helps me to learn more and deepen my relationship with God, and even if I make a mistake, I know that Jesus is always with me. I've served on different teams and committees at SMPC, and it inspires me to work with the church more.

I'm very thankful for each person that has helped me grow in my faith including my mentor, Jane Brookshire, my father, and especially my friends at church. I'm also grateful for my family's choice of SMPC as a church. I'm especially grateful to Ms. Lindsey for baptizing me, answering all of my questions, and strengthening my faith. My relationship with God has deepened over the years, and I have many people to thank for it.

In conclusion, I believe that everyone who has encouraged me and helped me become a faithful disciple of Christ has contributed so much to who I am as a person today and how I view life, faith, and community. I'm so grateful to have support from the wonderful community that we call our church home, SMPC and my Confirmation class. My relationship with God has helped me through many difficult times, and I appreciate everyone for always believing in me and helping me become a more faithful Christian.

Tuuli Ritchie

Hello, my name is Tuuli Ritchie and I am the daughter of Courtney and Steven Ritchie and the sister of Maddie Ritchie. I am currently an eighth grader at Crestdale Middle School and enjoy acting, reading, and playing piano. This is my third year at SMPC and third year in the Youth Group. Apart from SMPC, I have attended Providence Presbyterian Church and Covenant Presbyterian Church, where I was baptized.

I believe that God is a companion who cares for us and wants to help us grow. God listens to our prayers and guides us through life's darkest and most joyous moments. Even when we sin, God is forgiving, loving, and willing to teach us how to improve. God's creation of us proves that we are designed to love and help others just like God does for us. I experience God's love wherever I go but I experience it most when I am anxious. I always pray to God before performances and never fail to feel God's presence and comfort. I also see God through my church family and their unconditional kindness and inclusivity.

I believe that Jesus is a symbol of goodness and that his image helps us to understand our place and purpose. Jesus's stories from his life and death represent Christian values and Godly behavior. I think that he is a standard for what a faithful disciple of God should do and how we should live, and an example for us.

As far as the Holy Spirit goes, I believe that it is the presence of God in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit can surface in Christian things like the Bible and non-Christian things like music, books, or movies. I experience the Holy Spirit through music and books, where I encounter emotions, characters, and ideas that help me to reflect on my experiences. This then helps me to make better, more guided decisions in my own life. I have also noticed that when other people around me reflect on similar thoughts with the Holy Spirit, they are more empathetic and understanding.

Following God means that we must live a life of kindness, love, and acceptance. For me right now, this means listening and caring for others as well as being open to each person's differences. God also wants us to have positive communities like what I have at church and school. As I grow older, I want to continue these practices as well as improve them. By doing this, I won't just become a happier person, but I will help make the world a better place.

I believe that prayer is how we communicate with God. Prayer is also a time of quiet reflection with God and ourselves, and a break from our daily lives. When I pray, it reduces my anxieties to God and helps me receive guidance on how to live my life. While I normally pray at night through words, I also pray when playing piano. These moments bring me closer to God.

Church is the way we, as believers of Christ, congregate and learn about God. Without church, Christians would only get to experience half of God's plan for us. Through church, I have become a part of a community that demonstrates how to live like a Christian. I felt welcomed, included, and accepted by my church family. This type of community helps people (including me) feel wanted and enjoyed.

Through my faith journey, I have been guided by my parents and family, Dr. Whitney Bayer, Dr. Matt Brown, Rev. Lindsey Odom, Rebecca Guzman, Zach Bowyer, and my mentor, Helen Castle. These people are so smart, kind, and understanding and I have so enjoyed getting to know them. I thank them for their valuable insights, joy, and positivity as well as their wonderful presence. As I leave Confirmation, I hope that I will continue to go to church and continue to live and lead a Christian life.

Paxtyn Sandeen

Hello, my name is Paxtyn Sandeen. I go to Marvin Ridge Middle School and I am in the 8th grade. My parents are Jeff and Tierra Sandeen. My grandparents are Karen and John Sandeen. My brother is Porter Sandeen. He also went through confirmation at SMPC. I play field hockey and I have played for quite a while. I am planning to keep playing in high school. My family is involved with Angel Tree at the church and we do it every year. I love helping with Angel Tree because I get to help families in need and bring them joy and happiness at Christmas time.

I believe that God's grace is very powerful and it helps guide me in my faith. I also believe that God is loving and strong. God is trustworthy of everything, and God will always be there for me. I believe that God created me to spread the gospel so I can live as a faithful disciple of Christ. A time that I experienced God's presence most vividly was when my grandpa was in the hospital and ministers from our church came to pray over him and so did my family and I. It showed me how the church shows up for each other especially in times of illness, grief, or need. We prayed that he would heal quickly and safely. Another time God was there for me and helped me was at school when I was taking a really hard math unit test and I prayed God would help me be strong and not worried or anxious. I ended up getting a really good grade on my test and did not feel as stressed during the test.

I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. Because of his sacrifice on the cross, he is forgiving, merciful, and just. I also believe that Jesus's death shows God's unconditional love for all of us. Then when Jesus rose from the dead, we have what we now call the resurrection and that's how Easter started. Jesus helps me in my daily life by always being there for me. One bible verse that helps me remember Jesus' constant presence is Joshua 1:9, which says "the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Jesus is a role model for me due to his love and kindness shown in his mission, ministry, and teachings. Jesus Christ taught others to love everyone, even the ones who are hard to love. This reminds me to always be nice to others and to remember to show kindness. I believe that Jesus is the son of God who lived a humble, sinless life on Earth and always showed love and obedience to God in the way he cared for others. I believe Jesus's mission was to bring people closer to God, offer salvation, and save people from sin through his death and resurrection. I believe Jesus's ministry was teaching, preaching, healing the sick, and performing miracles. We see all throughout scripture examples of Jesus spreading love, forgiveness, justice, repentance, and faith. Jesus Christ inspires people to treat others with love, patience, and kindness, even when it's hard. His teachings remind me to forgive people instead of holding grudges and to help those in need without expecting anything in return. I see Jesus working through my church and my community when people come together to help others, like volunteering, supporting those who are struggling, and by showing kindness.

To me, the Holy Spirit is God's presence living within us, guiding, comforting, and helping us live the way God wants. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity and helps me stay connected to Jesus Christ and God in everyday life. I believe the Holy Spirit is present through feelings of peace, guidance, and conviction when we know right from wrong. The Holy Spirit works through acts of love, kindness, and people helping each other, especially during hard times. One time I felt the Holy Spirit was when I was stressed and unsure of something and prayed about it, and then I felt calm and knew what the right choice was. It felt like I wasn't alone and that I was being guided to do the right thing. The Holy Spirit helps me think about what is right and what aligns with my faith. The Spirit encourages me to be patient, make better choices, and trust God more. Over time, it helps me grow by learning from my mistakes and trying to live more like Jesus Christ would live.

Following Jesus right now looks like trying to live with more intention in following the example of Christ every day. I'm not perfect at it, but I try to pay attention to how I treat people, how I respond when things are hard, and whether my actions reflect what I believe. I strive to follow Jesus by looking at how Jesus treated people and cared for them, especially those who were left out or struggling. I try to listen more, avoid judging others, and be someone people feel comfortable and loved around. I also try to make time for prayer and reflection, even if it's just a few minutes, so I can stay grounded and remember what really matters.

One teaching that stands out to me most is when Jesus says to "love your neighbor as yourself." It reminds me that love isn't just a feeling; rather, it's something you choose through your actions. It stands out because it applies to everyone, even people who are different from me or hard to get along with. In the life of SMPC, I've been involved by attending church, participating in Confirmation, and being part of the community. SMPC has helped me grow in my faith and feel connected to others. After Confirmation, I hope to stay involved by continuing to attend church, helping with youth activities, and finding ways to serve within the church. I try to show love and kindness by being respectful, including others, and helping when I can. I see opportunities to serve in my community, at church, and even at school. Whether it's volunteering, helping someone who's having a hard time, or just being there for someone, there are always ways to make a positive impact and make a difference in our world with the sharing of our gifts. My faith shapes how I treat others by reminding me that everyone has value and deserves respect. I think that's important because the way we treat others reflects what we truly believe, and I want my actions to reflect my faith in a real and meaningful way.

The following people that have helped me through my faith journey are Angela Skeen by serving as my Confirmation mentor, Jeff and Tierra Sandeen for always supporting me and nurturing my faith at home, Porter Sandeen for being there for me, my grandparents Karen and John Sandeen and my aunt and uncle, Kristen and Jeff Sandeen for helping me grow my faith and encouraging my relationship with our church through staying involved and getting our whole family involved in the Angel Tree. I would also like to thank Lindsey Odom for guiding me through Confirmation, being a positive role model, and helping me grow in my faith. I learned from my mentor Angela Skeen to always be joyful and to look to what's ahead of you and not behind. I am thankful for all these people helping me grow in my faith and for believing in me. I am so thankful for all that they do for me.

Austin Stockstill

Hello everyone, my name is Austin Noble Stockstill. I am the son of Adam Blake Stockstill and Helen Adair King. I have an identical twin brother named Blake Daniel Stockstill. I am currently in 8th grade at Community House Middle School. When I am not in school, I am playing sports like football, track, doing my schoolwork, and spending time with my family.

I believe God created everything and heaven exists. God is merciful, and forgives us even though we have wronged him. I believe God is always there when I need him. When my brother and I were born, my dad brought a pastor to the hospital who prayed for us. But then he said he saw our ancestors from WW2 watching over us and he could recite their specific names, like how God watches over us. I think because of God, that's how we survived being born premature.

I believe Jesus died for our sins and is always loving. I believe when I sin, Jesus protects me from my sins. I believe when I pray for my sins, Jesus protects me from being sinful. I believe Jesus is there for everyone in the world.

I believe the Holy Spirit is God but in a spiritual form. I believe the Holy Spirit is always with us in our daily life. I feel like the Holy Spirit helps me make good decisions and helps other people. I also believe the Holy Spirit helps people like God does.

I believe following Jesus can lead people to becoming better people themselves. I strive to be like Jesus by being nice and polite to others and helping people in need. I help my mentor Bill with many tasks like getting the lemonade stand ready, cleaning up things, and serving others.

I believe prayer helps me experience God's forgiveness, mercy, and grace from my sins. I also believe when I pray, Jesus listens to me. I believe God speaks to me sometimes to help me improve on certain stuff to do better on and to act more faithful.

I believe Baptism cleanses people of their sins so they can go to heaven. I believe being baptized can help you get rid of the devil and connect you closer to Christ.

Thank you to everyone for supporting me like Pastor Lindsey Odom, Bill Ramsey, David Gaines, my friends and family, and the congregation.

Blake Stockstill

Hello y'all, My name is Blake Stockstill. My parents are Adam Stockstill and Helen King. I have a twin brother named Austin. I also have two younger siblings, Beau and Eden. I am an 8th grade student at Community House Middle School. I enjoy writing, reading, and running track and cross-country. I enjoy the time I spend with my family, friends, and my track team. I just recently joined SMPC in late December before Christmas. I am really liking my new church and feel easily accepted here in faith!

I believe in myself, and my faith roots hold deep. My faith roots have always been deepened by my family. On the day I was born on December 24, 2010, I was born prematurely, with my twin brother. My mom went into labor when we were visiting family in Texas. We were so close to dying after we were born due to complications. My dad prayed all night in the hospital for us. He asked for a priest, and he said our community of faith was all around us but that with God's help, we would flourish and live abundantly. Ever since then, I have stayed close to God and believe that God can do the most wondrous miracles. I also believe God guides everyone, with the right heart, to a life of compassion, service, and care. Just like the values and teachings of God, I personally strive to live out helping my neighbor and loving them and God, and I am glad to be in a faith community that loves me and is fun!

This Church, which I recently joined in December, has led me into such a welcoming Confirmation Group and has helped me grow closer to God with my fellow 8th Graders. I have used my church knowledge and the commandments found throughout scripture to guide my everyday choices. Finally, I believe in Jesus Christ, who is the son of God, and his teachings. I believe his teachings have affected world history and have shaped Judeo-Christian values in Western Civilization!

The Holy Trinity and scripture are very important to my faith journey. Jesus's life is what I strive to be like when I grow-up. Jesus's life shows how the Holy Spirit rejuvenates our love to each other and inspires us to love.

From first being baptized in Charlotte in 2011, I feel like I have grown from a wilted flower to a big rose bush, with lots of watering and nurturing! Through the church's influence and Christ' influence, I have learned what it means to be kind, devoted, and live out from Jesus's teachings, mission, and ministry. I read about Christ teaching the Hebrews and Israelites about God and his message of love to all he cared for. This still guides me and all denominations of Christianity to this day. I believe that scripture has a huge influence and remains very powerful, even after 2,000 years of translation.

I feel welcomed here at South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church and have developed my love for other 8th graders and for talking to older members or new ones at this church, through this beautiful Confirmation group, and the history of our Presbyterian tradition of faith. I believe that our branch of Protestantism continues to spread its message of love throughout America and the world, with Martin Luther starting it in Germany.

Lastly, I would like to reflect on baptism. Baptism is the beginning of our story as a beloved child of God. It helps us stay grounded in the values and beliefs of Christianity. I believe scripture is based on accounts of many prophets, early Christian writers, and have evolved into many accounts that I believe guide my life, my actions, and my relationships in life and forever!

I would consider myself a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and believe that all my gifts are from God and we are blessed to get to share those gifts with others. Thank you to my family for helping me grow in my faith, SMPC, and my awesome Confirmation class for welcoming my twin and I and making us feel valued! I am very blessed for Lindsey Odom, David Gaines, and for everyone at SMPC for including us and making this a positive and nurturing experience for my faith and for me personally in love!

Caitlin Vaughan

Hello, my name is Caitlin Vaughan. I am in eighth grade at Jay M Robinson middle school. My parents are Alyson Vaughan and Ryan Vaughan. I have been a member at South Mecklenburg Presbyterian since 2018 and during these years, I have learned so much about my faith. Outside of church, I enjoy rock climbing, traveling, playing volleyball, and spending time with my friends and family.

I believe that God created the world in 7 days and that includes all of us. I believe God sent Jesus down to earth in human form who died for our sins and granted us eternal life and forgiveness. God answers my prayers and provides me with grace, peace, mercy, and abundant life. I have seen God in my life through answered prayers, helpful scripture passages that made it seem like God is speaking to me, and so much more. God takes care of me and helps me through hard times like during moments when I am battling stress, anxiety, and sadness.

I believe that Jesus Christ is part of the Trinity and is God in human form. Jesus Christ came to earth, lived a sinless life, and then died on the cross for our sins. Jesus is loving, graceful, kind, and a role model for me and the way that I want to live my life. Jesus works in my life by answering prayers, having a plan for us, and so much more.

The Holy Spirit is a part of the Trinity, and is the presence of God inside of all of us. The Holy Spirit gives us our faith, conviction, and comfort, and guides us through the decisions we make. I believe that no matter what, the Holy Spirit is always around me and working inside me.

To me, being a Christian means believing in the Trinity, and that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, who died on the cross for our sins. Being a Christian means believing that Jesus is God, and trusting in God through everything we do. One teaching from Jesus that strongly stands out to me is forgiving people who may have wronged you or hurt you. There have been many times in my life where it is difficult to forgive someone, but as Christians, we are called to forgive as we have been forgiven.

Prayer is the way that I communicate with God. When I pray, I like to ask God for forgiveness, repentance, peace, and help for others. I also use Prayer to thank God for all of the gifts that God has given me, and prayers that God has answered. When I pray, I feel closely connected to God. I feel that Prayer is important because it brings me closer to God.

Forgiveness means letting go of resentment that you may have towards someone and earning peace with somebody who might have hurt you or disregarded you. When we believe in God and that Christ is Lord, our sins are forgiven because of Jesus' sacrifice for us. By having God's grace, we are forgiven and should forgive others too. Forgiveness can be difficult for me, but having grace on others heals relationships and helps me grow closer to God.

Lastly, I would like to thank my youth pastor and Confirmation teacher, Lindsey Odom, my mentor through Confirmation, Kari Wooley, and Julia Nancarrow and Grace Wooley, who are two of my friends that helped me through Confirmation, and my parents, Alyson and Ryan Vaughan, for choosing SMPC and helping me grow in my faith. Confirmation has been so much fun and has helped me grow in my faith so much.

Grace Wooley

My name is Grace Wooley. My parents are Kari and David Wooley. I have a younger brother named Ryan Wooley. I am in 8th grade at Jay M Robinson Middle School. I enjoy hanging out with friends and dancing. I have been at SMPC my whole life and was baptized here in 2018.

I believe God created the world and everyone in it. I believe God created everyone in God's own image. God is loving, caring, and all knowing. One time I experienced God's love was when I was at Massanetta Springs camp and conference center and everyone around me was so kind to each other and helped to share Jesus' love.

Jesus is the son of God who died for us and our sins. Jesus lived to save us and died for us as well. Every time I take the sacrament of Communion, I remember Jesus' sacrifice. Every day, Jesus guides us to do the right thing for making a difference in our world. I believe this is Jesus' mission. Jesus also inspires us to live more faithfully and is always at work in the world around us.

To me, the Holy Spirit is a part of the Trinity that is always with us. The Holy Spirit watches over us. I am guided by the Holy Spirit every day to do the right thing. The Holy Spirit is at work in me and in our church.

For me following Jesus looks like attending worship at church and helping others. I strive to be like Jesus by serving others and doing what is good for others and our world. At SMPC, I participate in the youth choir, the Communications committee and also help during children's worship.

For me, the church refers to a community of people who worship and serve faithfully.. The church has enabled me to deepen my faith by being welcoming, supporting me, and encouraging me and my spiritual gifts. An example of this was first coming into our youth group as a 6th grader, being extremely nervous and shy, and the way in which everyone welcomed me into the community. Being a part of our church community matters because you gain a family of people who promise to support you as you grow in your faith and grow as a person.

I would like to thank my parents, David and Kari, my mentor: Shelby Ulman, and my close friends: Caitlin and Julia for being with me on my journey of faith. I would also like to thank former Pastor Matt, Rev. Whitney Bayer, Rebecca Guzman and Rev. Lindsey Odom for helping me expand my faith and learn what it means to live it out. I hope to continue my faith journey following Confirmation and grow in my faith.

Jake Zagora

Hi, my name is Jake Zagora. My mom and dad, Amy and Todd, attend Sunday church whenever they can. I have a sister, Maddie, who recently graduated from App State University, and she also went through Confirmation here. I also have a dog named Boone who brings me joy. My mom has guided me through my faith journey, beginning from the time when she had me baptized here.

During my Confirmation class this year, I have learned a lot about God. If I were to describe God, I would say God is gracefully powerful, a mentor, and forgiving. God is most forgiving because God relieves us from our sins. I have experienced God's love whenever I am at school and feel stressed or struggle. It helps me to know that God is always with me. God has been watching over me my whole life, protecting me from the bad things in life and leading the way for me. Back during COVID-19, my Nana got sick with the virus, and we were all worried for her. However, I saw God in her because God healed her and helped her return to good health.

When I think of Jesus, I think of the word selfless. I believe this describes Him best because He gave His life for people He didn't even know. All of Jesus's life was dedicated to spreading the word of the Lord and teaching us as much as possible. Jesus is inclusive because He spreads His love to every person. Jesus supports me in my daily life by helping me understand more about his mission and ministry. His life inspires me to live more humbly and accept and love everyone.

If I were to describe the Holy Spirit, I would say it is magical and lifesaving. The Holy Spirit is always involved in our world. It is an active part of our everyday life, and I notice it most when I am at school, because that is where I struggle the most.

Following Jesus to me means attending church, praying, and being reverent. I follow Jesus through mission work and teaching such as serving at Room in the Inn and attending worship almost every Sunday. Room In the Inn impacts my life the most because it shows me how much God has blessed me and how deeply God cares for God's people.

To me, prayer means confessing your sins to God, even when you feel like you have too many sins to talk about. This is because prayer is a two way street and God will always listen. Prayer also helps strengthen and grow your faith.

If I were to put a name to forgiveness, I would say God. This is because God is all-powerful and all-forgiving. God will always forgive all of us and always accept us just as we are. Forgiveness is the leader of our faith because without forgiveness, our faith will weaken.

My faith has been heavily influenced by Pastor Matt, my mom, Amy Zagora, my dad, Todd Zagora, Pastor Lindsey, my Nana, and especially my uncle and mentor, Michael Zagora. After joining the church, I will continue to attend worship faithfully, participate in mission projects, and spread the word of God with my words and actions.