



Confirmation Class Song: "Praise"

Confirmation Class Colors: Pink, Blue, Green

2026 CONFIRMATION CLASS
TESTIMONY BOOKLET

Brooklyn Joy Bergsieker
Jaxson Samuel Cowherd
Emory Breille Gash
Beau Raymond O'Dell
Garrison James Salyer
Charles Jewell Bernerd Thaller
Bailey Annette Urfer

Brooklyn Joy Bergsieker

Good morning! My name is Brooklyn Bergsieker. I am the daughter of Tim and Courtney Bergsieker, and the sister of Blair Bergsieker.

For my scripture, I chose Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.”

I chose this verse because it reminds me that I don't have to have all the answers. Life can feel uncertain—especially as a teen—but God's guidance is always there if I choose to trust Him. It's a verse that encourages me to let go of worry and step forward in faith, knowing I am never alone

I do believe that God is present in our lives today. I see Him in the people who support and care for me, and in moments when things work out in ways I didn't expect.

The Holy Spirit works in my life by guiding my choices, reminding me to show kindness and compassion to others, and helping me grow in my faith each day.

A question I was prompted is why do I need the church?

For me, our church Salem UCC is more than a building—it's a community and even more a family. It's a place filled with people who walk alongside me, who encourage me, listen to me, and challenge me to grow. Our church is where love, service, and faith come alive, and where people of every age have a role in shaping one another.

I want to take a moment to thank the people who have helped me get to this point.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for always taking me to church, for showing me what it means to live a life of faith, and for giving me endless opportunities to grow closer to God.

I also want to thank my sister, Blair. She's someone I look up to every day. Her mostly kindness, work ethic and passion through everything we have done together are an example of faith that inspires me, and I'm so grateful to have her as a sister and a role model in my life.

Thank you to my best friends, Emory and Greenlee, for being companions on this faith journey. I treasure our sleepover Bible talks, our honest conversations, and the way we help each other understand God's love in our lives.

Thank you to my grandparents, for your constant support and for showing me what love and faith look like in action. And to the rest of my family—your guidance, encouragement, and example have shaped who I am today.

Thank you to my ILS family for helping me grow in my faith and helping me build a never ending faith in God.

I want to especially thank June and Lydiah for always making youth group a place full of fun and inspiration, and for being role models I can look up to. You guys have put so much time and effort into making our church a place of fellowship and love, and I truly will never forget that.

And finally, my mentor Amy. Amy has been more than a guide. She listens, challenges me, and encourages me to deepen my faith. I truly look up to her, and I am so grateful that God placed her in my life to walk alongside me on this journey.

I am beyond grateful for this opportunity to be confirmed and to publicly declare my faith. Thank you.

Jaxson Samuel Cowherd

My name is Jaxson Cowherd. My parents are Robert Cowherd, Sara Vandiver, and Mason Vandiver. My siblings are Koltan Cowherd, Clara Vandiver, Sue Vandiver and Kamryn Cowherd. My grandparents are Pam Homfeld, Chirs Homfeld, Demert Cowherd, Paddy Cowherd. I do scouts and I play soccer

"The scripture I chose was Mark 10:27. Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." I believe that this means that you need God in all situations. Like sports and working up to your task or to a goal. When you are working out and you are trying to hit your pr.

I need the church to tell me the word of God and Jesus. Tell me more about God and Jesus. The Church needs me to spread the word that God and Jesus said. The Church needs me to volunteer in the church such as helping with soupper suppers.

God is present in the good stuff like winning at something, helping other people out. When you go into the church, God is watching you.

The Holy Spirit leads you to your own path. Like a teacher on a field trip leading the kid to a destination. Leading me through stuff such as confirmation, scouts and sports.

Thank you Aaron Knipmeyer for being my mentor. Thank you mom for guiding me. Thank you church for your support.

Emory Breille Gash

Good morning, my name is Emory Gash. I am the daughter of Justin Gash and Shona and Jeff Damron. The verse I chose for my confirmation is from the Book of Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” This verse shows me that God is always with me because it reminds me that He already has a good plan for my life. Even when life feels confusing, scary, or uncertain, this verse reminds me that God is thinking about my future and wants good things for me.

One question I was asked during confirmation was why I need the church. This question really stood out to me because I need the church in so many ways. One of the biggest reasons is that the church feels like a family I can always come back to. Whenever I am feeling down or struggling, I know I can come back to Salem and continue to grow and strengthen my worship for God.

Another meaningful question I was asked is, “Do you believe that God is still present in your life today?” My answer is yes. I believe that God is always with me in every part of my life. He protects me, guides me, and helps heal me when I am going through difficult times.

I was also asked in what ways the Holy Spirit works in my life. The Holy Spirit works in my life by guiding my choices, helping me understand God’s Word, giving me strength when things are hard, and helping me grow to be more like Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, I know that God is always leading me and helping me grow in my faith.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge some very important people who helped me through this journey. First, I would like to thank my parents for always believing in me and supporting my faith. I would also like to thank my grandparents for taking me to many classes and helping me during this time. Thank you to my cousins, Brooklyn and Blair—Brooklyn for helping me write this speech and always encouraging me, and Blair for being a role model in my

confirmation journey. I would also like to thank my confirmation teacher, June, for believing in me and teaching me during my two years of confirmation. Lastly, I want to thank my confirmation mentor, Amy. She has helped me all year, even taking me out to eat, and has given me the best experience I could have as a confirmand. She has guided me every step of the way. I would also like to thank everyone in this church, along with my family and friends, for being here today. Thank you.

Beau Raymond O'Dell

Good Morning,

My name is Beau Raymond O'Dell. My mom is Ashley O'Dell. I have a older brother Carson and a little sister Makayla. I like to play basketball, go fishing and hunting and play with my cousins Maverick and Dawson.

The bible verse I chose is "I can do all things through christ who strengthens me Philipians chapter 4 verse 13. I chose this verse because during all lifes challenges, especially my past couple years, when ive asked christ for guidance he has shown me the way.

I believe god is present in life today because when my mom had seven surgeries in two months and was hospitalized for a month, god helped me get through each day with prayers and guidance.

I need church so I can continue to learn about christ and to continue following my faith everyday. The church needs me so the youth can stay involved while supporting our community.

My biggest thank you is to my mom for helping me threw all lifes challenges, and to Brody for being there for me through absolutely everything. Thank you to Jr, Lidea and June for being my confirmation teachers. Last but not least Dennis, thank you for being my mentor even when you were stubborn and hard to work with, you were funny and took time to help me understand, your the best.

Thank you.

Garrison James Salyer

Goodmorning, my name is Garrison Salyer. I am the son of Justin and Teri, grandson of BJ and David, and Sherry and Ronny, and my brother is Nolan. Some things I love are Pickleball, Piano and Trombone, my family, and of course God.

For my Bible verse I chose Ephesians chapter 5 verse 19 "Address one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart." I chose this verse because I love music, and worshipping God through music, in my opinion it is one of the best ways to worship. The Bible mentions and tells us to worship this way over 400 times. I believe I need the church to learn more about God and Jesus, with people who share the same beliefs as me, and to have people who help each other through times of sin, disappointment, and rejoice in times of joy and accomplishment. I also need the church to get a deeper understanding of faith. I believe the church needs me to serve, through committees, making decisions, and doing any of the jobs the church needs done, like being an usher, or liturgist. The church also needs me to give, so it can keep the lights on, and continue to serve as a place of fellowship, worship, and a place where no matter who you are or where you are in your life's journey, you are welcome. The church also needs me to volunteer and give my time through pantries, breakfasts, and any other thing the church does for the community.

I believe the Holy Spirit works in our lives by fueling, sustaining, and empowering our faith. For example, whenever we sin, the Holy Spirit works within us and helps us come back to God and seek forgiveness. The Holy spirit keeps our faith alive, and helps us to be more like Jesus. I call Jesus Lord because Jesus is God made flesh, this is mentioned in the first chapter of John. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" It later says in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" meaning that God came down to earth as Jesus, calling him Lord shows that he is God made flesh and God's Son. I believe God is present with us and reminds us by giving us

great things like miracles, joy and peace, answered prayers, and his beautiful creations. Another reason we know God is still present is scripture. Matthew 28:20 says, "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Additionally, God is present with us through the Holy Spirit. Meaning that even just praying and having strong faith shows that God is still present because the Holy Spirit strengthens and sustains our faith.

In conclusion, thank you to my family for taking me to this church, thank you to my mentor Delbert for helping me through confirmation, thank you June for teaching us confirmation, and thank you God.

Charles Jewell Bernerd Thaller

Good morning my name is Charles Jewell Bernerd Thaller and I am the son of Pete and Mandy Thaller and I have an older sister named Dixie. I'm in Western Heritage shooting sports and my persona is a preacher named Chuck. I am a Boy Scout, and I am also part of our churches Youth on Mission.

My confirmation verse is Colossians chapter 3 verse 23.

Work hard and cheerful at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not unto men.

I picked this verse because, I work hard to teach and preach the word of God when I can. I volunteer in my community because I am able and capable to do the good work of the Lord. Not because it makes me "look good" or I want praise. It is just because it is the right thing to do. Do a good turn daily, that's the Scout slogan.

I think the church needs me to spread the good word and to get the younger generation to come to church and listen to the word of the Lord. Going out to help in the communities is where we can share a lot of the Lord's word, in a setting that is less like church.

I think I need the church because they give me a reminder to keep going with the good word and see other perspectives of life. I think having the church also lets me know I have more than just my mom, dad and sister as my family.

I believe God is present in my life because of the things that happen. When I know I cannot do something, I pray to God to help me and I try again, and boom I did it. I know it was God and he guided me, allowing me to do that thing I couldn't before. This year we had a very bad fire. A lot of things were lost but our house was okay and none of my family was hurt. That was God's work.

I know he is with me because, I am here standing before you today. He allowed me to wake up and share my life with you all.

Thank you to my mom and dad for helping me get this far in my church journey. Thank you Lydia and Aunt June for being our confirmation teachers. June has to care for me because she is my aunt, but Lydia is not required to, but seems to love me the same. Thank you both for helping me through the hard times in and outside of church. Thank you to the congregation of Salem for helping me along the way. And thank you to my mentor Keill Borchers for helping me through confirmation and now you are stuck with me, to help me through life too. – Thank you

Bailey Annette Urfer

Good Morning, My name is Bailey Urfer and I am one of the confirmands that is going to be confirmed on April 19th. I am the daughter of Sean and Michelle Urfer, I am the granddaughter of Lester and Marry Homfeld and Julia and Dan Hawkins. I have two older brothers Lucus and Alex, my sisters name is Cody Fairchild. I am involved in sports such as Softball, Wrestling, and Track. In my free time I enjoy doing things such as musical theater and hanging out with my friends and family. At school I am also involved in Marching Band, Jazz Band, Honor Choir, and Blue and Gold Singers. My confirmation verse is Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". The reason that I chose this verse is because I believe that in the verse it shows that whatever plan that God has for us is a good plan, a plan to help us for the better so we don't fall into bad habits and sin.

If I was asked if I believed that god was present in life today I would say yes. Because I believe that no matter the time or the day, God is always with you, even if you don't feel like he is, he will always be there as you are one of his followers. So no matter if you've had a bad day or if you're just feeling depressed, remember that God is always with you and won't give up on you so don't give up on him. I believe that god works in the world not just today but everyday as he makes us see the things or the people that are overlooked or mistreated by the world so that you can treat these things with the respect and kindness that they should have and deserve, they shouldn't have to wait for the respect and kindness to come to them but because of how they are so used to being treated it just ends up happening like that. I also believe that God lets us see the good in things so we cherish them and be more grateful for the things we have and not be greedy for the things we don't have and want. The reason that I call Jesus Lord is because he has been with me through all of my hardships and doubts and sadness. He taught me how to not give up and get through the hard times. I say that I believe in fate but I also believe that some people in my life

were sent by my Lord to show me that no matter what happens in life that he will always be with me whether that be in spirit or through these people. In my life the Holy Spirit works by being the little voice in my head telling me that I can do hard things and that I am bigger than how my mind perceives my obstacles to look, as though they seem big but I can be bigger.

After being confirmed I want to help out more than I already do at the church. I want to be a part of committees and be able to make choices to better help my church and community. I want to make sure the Church knows that I am serious when I say that I am always willing to help no matter what. I see the members of this church as family and I am always ready to do anything for my family. Blood or not because no matter what, family is family.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you. I thank June as she has helped me with so much and even after telling her that I didn't wanna do confirmation and then a year later I came to her telling her that I wanted to join and as she was so happy for me she also made it possible. The next person I would like to thank is my mentor Hailey. I remember when June told me that Hailey was gonna be able to be my mentor. I was very happy as she was one of my coaches or softball teams and she was always so willing to help and this year of confirmation she has helped me with a lot of things and the fact that she never fails to make me smile and she always makes me feel welcomed. The last person i would like to thank is God as without God I don't think i would be where I am today. I wanna thank him for letting me get this far in my life right now. If God wasn't in my life, I don't think that I would be standing here with all of you right now. God has taught me how to love and how to forgive, he's made me a better person and the person that I am today. So thank you God for letting me find you and for showing me the good side of life.

(These testimonies were written by the confirmands, in their own words and their own style.)