

LIVE YOUR FAITH
Confirmation Message
Bethany Lutheran Church – May 17, 2009
By Pastor Vern Oestmann

Confirmation Class, Parents, Family, Friends, and all who are here today, God's peace be with you.

Today marks a very special day in the lives of these thirteen youth who are confirmed members of Bethany Lutheran Church of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Today these youth affirmed their Baptism as they publically confessed belief in the triune God and affirmed that they would remain faithful in loving and serving God the remaining days of their life.

“What does this mean?” It means that every day, for the remainder of the life God grants you, you will live your faith.

How does a person live their faith? God says in His Word, from the book of Ezekiel chapter 18,

⁵⁻⁹ "Imagine a person who lives well, treating others fairly, keeping good relationships—
doesn't eat at the pagan shrines,
doesn't worship the idols so popular in Israel,
doesn't seduce a neighbor's spouse,
doesn't indulge in casual sex,
doesn't bully anyone,
doesn't pile up bad debts,
doesn't steal,
doesn't refuse food to the hungry,
doesn't refuse clothing to the ill-clad,
doesn't exploit the poor,
doesn't live by impulse and greed,
doesn't treat one person better than another,

But lives by my statutes and faithfully
honors and obeys my laws.
This person who lives upright and well
shall live a full and true life.

Or listen to this description from Colossians 3:12-17,

¹²⁻¹⁴ So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

There are many more references in God's Word that describe what it means to live your faith.

Now's the time to take to heart what being a child of God really means. It means that you are given every opportunity to live a righteous life and to faithfully serve God every day.

Here is an example of how your day can be lived:

When you awaken, you remember your Baptism – that you are a child of God. You pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of life God has granted in this new day. You can pray Martin Luther's Morning prayer that is in your Catechism.

When preparing yourself for the day's task: going to school, going to work, relaxing for the day, you have opportunities to review how much God loves you.

At the place where you are for the main part of the day, remind yourself that you are serving God in what you do. You are also loving and respecting others because God loves you. Decisions are made by first discerning God's will through prayer and meditation.

You treat others like you want to be treated. Caring and sharing are part of your virtues of Christian character.

At mealtimes you pray, giving thanks to God for the bountiful blessings He bestows.

When the day is nearly over, and you prepare for a night of rest, you confess your sins of the day (all the sins you committed and those that you are unaware of) to God, knowing with assurance that God forgives you through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Once again you say your prayers and offer thanksgiving to God, interceding for those who are in need of prayer, and asking God for a restful sleep.

To live your faith is to trust God with your life at all times in every situation. This is not only true for the times when you are doing well and feeling close to God, but also during the times when you feel that God has forsaken you or in those difficult times in your life. It's at these times that you need to fully rely on God. To help you remember this, I have a special little gift for you.

(Hand each one a frog) F – fully; R – rely; O – on; G – God!

This little creature has helped me many times in my life when I have faced difficulties.

I congratulate you and give thanks to God for you because of who you are and for the statements of faith you have made. I now charge you to go live your faith and be bold witnesses of your faith declaring the love of God that has given you the blessing and joy of salvation through Jesus Christ. Amen.