

“Back to the Basics Part III: Christian Identity With a Grateful Heart” Confirmation Credos

In Part III of the sermon series, “Back to the Basics: Christian Identity With a Grateful Heart,” we are discovering what it means to be a Christian and how gratitude as a practice has been present in the church’s past, present and future. This week we will give thanks for the students who have professed their faith before the congregation of Wichita First UMC.

Confirmation Sunday is a very important marker in an individual’s spiritual journey. Confirmation is an opportunity to respond to the grace of God available to us, as acknowledged in baptism, and to promise to live as a person of faith. Confirmation consists of three aspects; God confirms the divine promise to those who were too young to grasp what God was doing in their baptism, they respond by professing their own acceptance of the grace they have received and their own faith in Christ, the Church, as represented by this congregation, confirms the commitments they make. Confirmation is not a destination. It is more of a way station, a place where we renew our commitment to the journey we have been traveling under the care of others. This week you are invited to remember your baptism and commitment to the church universal. Please pray this week for the for the confirmation class of 2017: Caleb Godbey, James Hole, Victor LeRock, Adia Maupin, Yitzak Tristan, Christal Shaner.

Prayer for the Week: Prayer of Susanna Wesley, mother of John Wesley.

You, O Lord, have called us to watch and pray. Therefore, whatever may be the sin against which we pray, make us careful to watch against it, and so have reason to expect that our prayers will be answered. In order to perform this duty aright, grant us grace to preserve a sober, equal temper, and sincerity to pray for your assistance. Amen. (18th C. England)

Study Guide

Study Guide: This week’s study guide will be focused around five themes discussed during Confirmation classes. You might be surprised with this confirmation refresher!

Monday, November 13: United Methodist History, Ecclesiastes 4:12

United Methodist History actually begins years before John Wesley was on the scene, it stems from the evangelistic movement in Great Britain. Young Wesley disgruntled with the complacency of the Church of England, met with a small cohort of college peers at Oxford. Focused on true salvation, Wesley brought grace and assurance to the forefront of theology. This emphasis eventually transformed into the United Methodist Church. Did you know that the Christmas Conference of 1784 in Baltimore, MD was the marker of the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America? *How do you see this evangelistic heritage play out in church today? How can we reclaim this experiential part of our tradition?*

Tuesday, November 14: The Wesleyan Quadrilateral, 2 Timothy 3:14-15

While not explicitly written by Wesley, theologian Albert Outler compiled Wesley's sermons, journals and notes and upon doing so, discovered a central thought process in Wesley's writing. That process, known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral is comprised of: scripture, tradition, reason and experience. These four sources served as Wesley's method of approaching theological issues and carrying out the mission of the church. *What are your sources for approaching life situations? Journal using the quadrilateral as an approach at looking at your day.*

Wednesday, November 15: Worship, Isaiah 25:1

Being born out of the British evangelical movement in the 1700s, Methodists were known for their lively worship services in various locations not being restricted to chapels or cathedrals. In early America, tent revivals and worship services in fields were common to the time. Worship in its most basic sense is the public praise of God. There are many ways to profess faith in worship and many ways of carrying out different liturgical elements. During confirmation, the students attended various worship services. We attended a Jewish Shabbat service, Greek Orthodox Vespers, and three different and distinct worship services within First UMC. This was an opportunity for youth to explore how worship in different traditions and styles gives insight about why we worship doing certain things and what we do while in worship. *How do you experience God in worship? If you are gutsy, attend a worship service that you have not been to, and draw comparisons and commonalities, share about this experience with a friend.*

Thursday, November 16: Sacraments, Luke 22:19-20

Sacraments are our sacred moments within the life of the church. They are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The United Methodist Church observes two sacraments; Holy Communion and Baptism. Jesus directed his disciples to "do this in remembrance of me.." in regards to Communion and to "go therefore and make disciples baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." These two direct commands from Jesus are why the Methodist Church upholds two sacraments. *How do you experience God in each of the sacraments? You are invited to share about the sacraments with somebody who might not get "churchy" language.*

Friday, November 17: Grace, Philippians 2:13

For Wesley, the foundation for everything is God's unmerited favor, which is also known as God's grace. According to Wesley, grace can take one of three forms. Prevenient grace is a subtle grace that is extended to us without us even knowing or being aware. It is most closely associated with the Methodist stance on infant baptism, that before we are able to respond, we are already admitted into the holy family. Justifying grace, referring to the freedom to respond, choose, and join in the work of Christ. And sanctifying grace, or the gradual transformation of our lives into a more complete image of Christ by holy living. *How does it feel to know that God loves you no matter what? Think about ways to redefine grace that best connect to how you engage with the world.*