

SERMON FOLLOWED BY SERVICE

May 10, 2026 - Confirmation Day

John 14:15-21

A Confirmation Day question - not for you our confirmands, but for you who've already been confirmed. Do you remember your confirmation? I don't. I think I remember lining up in the church basement. But I don't remember answering the Confirmation Questions. I don't remember my Confirmation verse or my Confirmation blessing. I do remember what I wore that day. Back in the 1970s, God must have been very, very angry at the world to curse us with such fashion. I don't remember much of my Confirmation Day, but I do know it was a big deal. Not just as a getting older, rite of passage, but as a blessing from God. Our parents and grandparents and sponsors and god-parents and aunts and uncles all loved to see us growing up with Jesus. Our congregation cheered to see us growing up with Jesus, to worship with them, to serve with them as Christ's church. On Confirmation Sunday, we celebrated, we celebrate today - not just a graduation out of class, but a welcome into the mission and ministry of Christ's church; not just a graduation out of class, but a foretaste of being welcomed into heaven.

In our lesson today, we have something of a confirmation day for the disciples. For three years they'd been in class with Jesus, walking and talking with Jesus, learning and growing with Jesus. Now the three years of class is over. Now it's time for the disciples to show what Jesus means to them. Jesus didn't ask questions like we ask questions - "Do you believe ...? Do you intend ...?" We ask those questions to get you thinking, to keep us thinking; we ask those questions to give you the opportunity to tell us you are all in with Jesus and all in with us. Jesus asked his disciples different questions - "Are you paying attention? Do you know what I am saying? Have I ever let you down?" Good questions for too, aren't they? "Are you paying attention? Has Jesus ever let you down?" And then, instead of asking his disciples: "Do you intend to continue steadfast in this teaching and to endure all things, even death, rather than fall away from it?" Jesus told his disciples they would fall away. Life with Jesus was about to get hard.

We ask: “Do you intend to conform all your life to the teachings of God's Word ...?” Jesus didn't ask. Jesus put it on his disciples' hearts; he lays it on our hearts: **“If you love me, you will obey my commands.”** Jesus knows: It's easy to say we love him; it's easy to feel we love him. But Jesus wasn't and isn't just looking for words and feelings from us, Jesus is calling for action from us. And not just any action. Jesus knew his church was filled then, and Jesus knows his church is filled today with people claiming to love him, but with no real intention of doing what Jesus wants them to do. People perhaps willing to do some of what God commands, but only if what God wants fits what they want. People willing perhaps to do some of what God commands and wants, but not now, only later when it's more convenient. When Jesus says: **“If you love me, you will obey my commands,”** Jesus is making it clear - Jesus wasn't and Jesus isn't looking for mere words and feelings from us, Jesus is calling us to follow him - to live showing off the glory of God - to live doing what the Father wants done - to live serving for the good, the godly good of others - to live not just our way, but God's way. Jesus says: **“If you love me, you will obey my commands.”**

So, do we love him? When we see Jesus take children who were pushed off ... when we see Jesus take those children in his arms to bless them, when we see Jesus stand up for the bullied, when we see Jesus make time to sit down with the rejected, when we see Jesus heal the broken and comfort the heartbroken, when we hear Jesus promise peace and forgiveness - of course we love him, don't we?

When we look in the mirror of God's law and see what we have done with his commands ... when we hear God's judgment - **“Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law”** ... when we look to the cross and see Jesus take our place as cursed ... when we hear Jesus say: **“Peace be with you,”** when we realize those aren't just words from Jesus (no matter what you have done, with Jesus you are forgiven) ... when we hear what Jesus wants for us even after what we have done - how he endured the agony of the cross to have us together with him in heaven ... - of course we love him, don't we?

When we hear Jesus call us today - we get to be his hands and his heart sharing God's life with our dying world; we get to be his hands and his heart sharing God's love with our hurting and heartbroken world. When we see the love Jesus has for us, we don't wonder about loving him; we don't argue with what he says; we don't look for ways around what he says, do we? No, we love him with a love that obeys what he commands.

But it's not always easy is it? The world has different for us than what God wants for us. And we let ourselves get distracted, don't we? Jesus knows that. So he confirms us, not with a command - "you better or else," but with a promise - "I will ask the Father, and he will give you the Holy Spirit." Jesus was about to be taken from the disciples and killed; after he rose back to life, he would ascend into heaven. But Jesus wouldn't leave his disciples alone. He doesn't leave us alone. He won't leave you alone. He gives us his Holy Spirit to come along side us as Helper, to live inside us as Helper. Think about that - you have the Holy Spirit, God himself with you and in you as Helper.

Helper to do what? We sometimes get confused on this. Jesus isn't giving us his Holy Spirit to help us live the life of the world. Jesus isn't giving us his Holy Spirit to help us juggle living the life of the world and the God-life. No, the Spirit of God and the life of this world do not fit or mix. The Spirit's work in the world is to convict the world and to change the world - not to help us live the life of the world.

Instead, Jesus gives us his Spirit to help us live the life God has for us - a life of love, helping and caring - a life as salt and light - a life of sharing the life and the love of God in a world that doesn't always appreciate the life and the love of God. You know that, don't you? Jesus knew it from experience. Jesus knew life in this world is hard, and living God's life in this world can be hard. Jesus knew from experience that living God's life in this world can be lonely, frustrating, tiring, exhausting. He knew from experience how we can feel outnumbered and overwhelmed. So Jesus didn't and he doesn't send his disciples out on their own. No, we heard Jesus promise to set his disciples up, to set us up with his Spirit. But that's not all. Jesus also promised that even though he would be out of sight, he wouldn't be far.

With his Father, Jesus would be as close as one with them - they would be in him and he would be in them. Jesus has that same promise for you. You have the Jesus who is one with the Father ... you have the Jesus who has overcome the world ... you have the Jesus who has put the devil in his place ... you have the Jesus who died and rose and lives forever - you have that Jesus wrapping himself around you and living inside you.

To what end? For what purpose? With what promise? To set you up to be loved by God. Not just as God so loved the world. Not just with mercy and forgiveness. But to be loved as saints who put a big smile on God's face with the way you show and share his heart. May God bless you to love that love. Amen.

May 10, 2026

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... Jesus calls us to live his "Confirmation Life" as we celebrate "Confirmation Sunday" asking our Lord's blessing on our confirmands - Abigail Jorgensen, Sawyer Kolch, and Audrey Massey. What is the "Confirmation Life"? It's not a life of well-meaning promises and empty words, but a life of godly action directed and blessed by Jesus and His Spirit!

OPENING HYMN

"Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"
Hymn 704

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, you always cause your church to grow, and with your light and grace, you strengthen the hearts of those to whom you have given new birth through water and the Spirit. Let all who have been instructed in your truth continue to increase both in faith and knowledge, that they may rejoice in their baptism and grow as members of the holy body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

READING

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 119G

Refrain



Tone



Oh, how I / love your law!
 I meditate on it / all day long.
 Your commands are always / with me
 and make me wiser than my / enemies.
 I have more insight than all my / teachers,
 for I meditate on your / statutes. *Refrain*

I have kept my feet from every / evil path
 so that I might o- / bey your word.
 How sweet are your words / to my taste,
 sweeter than honey / to my mouth!
 I gain understanding from your / precepts;
 therefore I hate every / wrong path.
Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain*

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:12–17

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom

through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Revelation 2:10

Alleluia. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 14:15-21

"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN

"Come, O Come, Life-Giving Spirit"

Hymn 588

SERMON

John 14:15-21

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, in faith today I give you my head, my heart, and my hands. Please use me this week.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



RITE OF CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMANDS
Abigail Jorgensen
Sawyer Kolch
Audrey Massey

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

M: Gracious Father, you have adopted our brother and sisters in Baptism and anointed them with your Holy Spirit. Renew and strengthen them by that same Spirit so that they may continue to grow in faith and boldly confess you before others. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Move them to faithfully hear your holy Word and joyfully receive your sacrament that they may again and again be assured of your gracious love and forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Give them the sincere desire to die each day to sin and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Protect them from the powers of evil and give them the weapons to fight against the devil. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Keep them faithful and holy, so that they may inherit eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN

"Children of the Heavenly Father"

Hymn 502

MOTHER'S DAY

Eternal God, in the beauty of Eden you created a man and a woman and brought them together in marriage. You enabled them to be fruitful and increase in number and so you established the family. Help us to see in your creating wisdom your love for parents and children.

Move us to be thankful for mothers and fathers and for all the blessings you bring to our homes.

Today we remember the mothers who loved us even before we were born, who endured childbirth, and who cared for us when we could not care for ourselves. On this day and on other days cause us to recall the hours they spent and the sacrifices they made so that we could be content and carefree as we grew up.

Lead us to express our thanks and return the love our mothers showed to us.

We cannot thank you enough for mothers and fathers, too, who brought us to Holy Baptism, taught us simple prayers at mealtime, and read us Bible stories at bedtime. Forgive us for resenting their correction and ignoring their guidance as they desired to keep us on the narrow path of life with Christ. **Never let us forget the Christian training they gave to us.**

We remember with compassion the mothers who were not always able to reflect your love in our lives. Help us understand the pressures they carried and the sadness they experienced. Take away unhappy memories and rid us of resentment.

Lead us to forgive them as you have forgiven us.

We confess our failures to hold our parents in love. For the naughtiness of childhood, the flare-ups of youth, the overconfidence of adulthood, and for all the words and actions spoken in haste and to hurt, we ask you and our parents for pardon.

Give us courage to make up for past sins when we can.

As their minds and bodies age, help us to support our parents as well as we can. Give us patience to accept their struggles for independence and strength to deal with their weaknesses. Enable us to keep them mindful of Jesus and his promises of a perfect life in heaven.

As they brought us to your Word, so lead us to keep them close to your Word.

Keep in your care all the mothers of our world. Comfort mothers who have been separated from their children. Give strength to mothers who care for children who are sick or troubled. Encourage mothers in societies where mothering is disrespected or discouraged. We pray especially for those who long to be mothers but have not been so blessed.

We pray you to preserve and protect the blessed task of motherhood.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer.

So many women have influenced our lives. Lead us to think about their wisdom, compassion, patience, and encouragement and give us opportunities to say thank you when we can. Help us imitate their care for us as we work and play with children and young adults.

Strengthen us to love others as Jesus loved us. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Fight the Good Fight"

Hymn 876

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(Continued from the following page.)

How Can We (You) Set Up in 2026 for 2027?

- BluePrint Schools Enrollment Study - We're in process!
- Heart of Lake County Demographic Study - is this something for you?
(Who are our neighbors? How can we serve them? How can we matter?)

Build Out for the Future - A Proven Path of Discipleship

We're checking our foundations and building up to be strong and alive with Christ!

- A Next Step - A Member Ministry Coordinator
 - God has blessed us with people who want to serve their Savior; how can we help them connect with ministry at St. John? Ask about an online introductory workshop to energize, equip, and empower our St. John Member Ministry. If you are interested (or know someone who could be interested), let Pastor know.
- A First Step - Small Group Bible Study Coordinator
 - Imagine Small Groups gathering throughout the week, throughout our various communities, growing in Christ and growing together. What's a first step? A coordinator or team to help us move forward. If you are interested, or know someone who could be interested, let Pastor know.

How will we move forward?

With Jesus, we know blessing is ahead!

75 Years on Our Corner

- Seventy-Five years ago - May 6, 1951, we began worship services and Sunday School on our corner at the Brainerd High School (now an athletic field).
- Seventy-Five years ago, we began construction on our corner - check out our cornerstone by our main church entry.
- Seventy-Five years ago, on April 20, 1952, our church building was dedicated and became our St. John worship home.

How will we celebrate God's grace?

- How will we celebrate and thank our Lord for the past 75 years of *ministry blessing* here?
- How will we celebrate and thank our Lord for the past 75 years of *church building blessing*?

I have some ideas, what are your ideas? Let's talk about them!

Would you like to be part of our 75th Anniversary Team? Let Pastor know.

How will we move forward?

- How will we build on the past 75 years?
- How will we build into the opportunities before us?
- How will we address our issues / challenges?
(What issues / challenges need to be addressed?)

I have some ideas, what are your ideas? Let's talk about them!

Here are some ministry plans we are building out -

Early 2027 Focus - What is our St. John Mission / Ministry?

Going forward from 2027, what St. John mission / ministry would be a blessing here in the heart of Lake County?

Later 2027 Focus - What is our Personal Mission / Ministry?

Do we see ourselves as low-expectation Christians fitting in or as high-performance Christians making a difference through Christ's Church?

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