

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Faith Statement

By: Justin Radel

Hi! I am Justin Radel and I am currently a sophomore at Minnetonka High School. Before I begin, would you please bow your heads and pray with me. Dear God, thank you for giving me the opportunity to further my faith journey beside you. Please be with me today as I share my faith statement and say "yes" to you. Amen.

I have been attending Immanuel since I was born and church has always been an influential place in my life. I have always believed in a higher power that has influence over us and from a young age, I was taught about God and His otherworldly powers. Through biblical teachings, church sermons and Sunday school, I began to gather knowledge about God's one and only son; Jesus Christ. The child of God that once walked upon the earth with our ancient ancestors. I believe in all three of the forms of God; The father who watches us from above, Jesus his child who lived among us and the Holy Spirit that lives in all of us. I have been connected to God since the day I was baptized. That day, He opened his arms and wrapped me in a warm embrace of love, care, and forgiveness. Now it is time for me to fully open my arms in return and accept God into my life for eternity.

I choose to accept God into my life because He is beside me through thick and thin and has a purpose for each and everyone of us. Truly living out this commitment to God has the utmost importance to me. Being an active Christian in society greatly benefits both me and those around me. It helps me to please God and to help spread His love to those who may not know of His greatness. The Bible verse that I chose is Philippians 4:13 and it reads, "I can do all through Him

who strengthens me.” The message conveyed by this verse of scripture, that God strengthens us and helps us persevere, is heartfelt for me.

Over the course of the past winter, I was able to experience God's work in my own life. It all began at the beginning of the hockey season and tryouts. I was extremely disappointed with the results when hockey teams came out, and I was not looking forward to playing my favorite sport. After the first few practices, I was so upset with my teammates and the team that I had made, I dreaded the months ahead. In the days leading up to the first game of the season, I saw my friends on the higher team having a great time, and I wondered why God had done this. I played with disappointment for the first few weeks, but I slowly realized that in every game we played, we were winning. My coaches had called upon me by making me the team's captain, and I slowly grew into that role. My coaches knew how frustrated I was, but they challenged me to step up and make everyone on the team better. By the time we had our first tournament, I had developed chemistry with my line mates, and hockey was becoming fun for me once again. We breezed through the tournament, winning every game by at least five goals. 50 goals, 40 wins, and a district championship later, I had all but forgotten how I once felt. That season was the most fun I have ever had playing hockey, and I know that God was there with me through every game. God always has a plan for us and although it is sometimes nearly impossible to see what it is right away, He is always watching over us. I doubted Him last year, but in the end I had some of the most memorable experiences of my life. God strengthened me, and because of it I am a better leader and I am a better person. All it took was for me to truly trust Him and believe that He did indeed have a plan.

While God has helped me through the ups and downs of life, there are also many people who influenced my faith journey. I'd especially like to thank the Immanuel staff for making confirmation possible. The time and energy that both my student leaders and confirmation guides gave to our group is greatly appreciated. My guides, Sara and Nancy, created a positive atmosphere which made confirmation fun! I would also like to thank my parents for being by my side and helping me to understand and appreciate God. While confirmation is a big milestone of my faith journey, I also look forward to what is ahead for me through Christ. I hope to live out the confirmation promises by continuing to be an active member at Immanuel by being a student leader for a 7th grade confirmation group. I look forward to being a role model and sharing my experiences with others.

For my expression of faith, I have created a cross that I made out of an old hockey stick of mine that I broke. Just as we all may sometimes feel broken, God gives us the strength to get through our personal hardships. As the Bible says in my chosen confirmation verse, Philippians 4:13, "I can do all through Him who strengthens me." We can find hope that God has a plan for us, even if we may not know it. However, as time passes and we can reflect on the situation, God's influence can become clearer.

Please bow your heads as we close in prayer. Dear God, thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my faith, and say "yes" to you. Please help us all be able to see the wonderful plans you have for each and everyone of us. Remind us that with faith and your strength, all things are possible. Amen.