

## *Blessed by the Spirit* Confirmation Results

 **from solid training**  
 **in eternal salvation**

In the name of our faithful Savior Jesus, dear fellow believers, especially you, dear Naomi:

Who could have guessed we would need to hold your Confirmation by virtual livestream? And yet nothing is simulated or cybernetic about your Confirmation. We live in an age of confusion, injustice, violence and depravity, desperately in need of the dear Holy Spirit. But what really hangs in the balance is eternity and the anguish of every soul to turn to the Lord in repentance. So we gather on this PENTECOST SUNDAY to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised. But we also extol our God of grace for His CONFIRMATION RESULTS in your life and confession. We are seeing Jesus' words come true again as they always do: ***“Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on bedrock. The rain came down, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall, because it was founded on bedrock.”*** (Matthew 7:24f EHV) With you, Naomi, we are ***Blessed by the Spirit*** with **Confirmation Results...**

 **from solid training**

Your confirmation verse in the NIV11 reads: ***If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*** Both ***declare*** and ***profess*** come from the same Greek term inspired by God the Holy Spirit. *Homologeō* is usually translated ***confess*** (NIV84, ESV, HCSB, EHV), but literally *homologeō* means *to say the same thing*. The Holy Spirit says in God's Word, the Bible, ***“Jesus is Lord!”*** You say the same. The Holy Spirit says, ***“God raised him from the dead,”*** and you say, “Christ is risen indeed!” Christian faith is a miracle because the same Holy Spirit through Paul says, ***“No one can say, ‘Jesus Christ is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”*** (1 Corinthians 12:3) And we have learned to ***confess*** as Martin Luther echoes God's Word in his Small Catechism: “I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith....” This He does for all believers in Jesus who are therefore part of Christ's hidden Church, the body of all believers, enjoying full and free forgiveness of sins.

Naomi, your Catechism paper, “Faith and What It Means” expressed this beautifully. The Holy Spirit not only has you believing, but declaring, professing, confessing – ***Blessed from solid training***.

Your family has built on the solid rock of Christian confession – not just hearing, but doing God's Word – back five generations to your Great, Great Grandma Rose Rabenberg. I'll miss telling Grandma Rose stories in Catechism class. That tough Dakota farmer's wife had a soft heart for classmates of her many grandchildren, four out of 24 in my high school class. For boarding school, Grandma Rose adopted “her boys” to share her blessings. Her kindness meant being included as family far away from home.

These tiny little things, so insignificant in the eyes of the world, are diamonds and emeralds of faith. One Sunday Children's Lesson include a small branch from the yew bushes beside the front door. On the Saturday Work Day before while I was wondering how I'd clean up all the little clippings that missed the tarp, your mom led over a few sets of little hands. **Solid training** was doing God's Word.

You know that none of this results from the Law hanging over you. It doesn't just come from going to church and Lutheran School. **Solid Training** must start with parents in the home; pastors and teachers assist. We need the Law first to show us our sin, so that we can rejoice in the Gospel that shows our Savior. Then we confess with David in Psalm 25:7 – **“Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your mercy remember me, for you are good, O LORD.”** (TPA) “Thank you, O my Father for giving us your Son and leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.” (CWS 747)

Sometimes the brightest results of **Solid training** are silent as stone. Few of our members witnessed one of the major contributions you made with your brother and sisters. Yet it's visible every time we worship. If we flashed back to our altar before the remodeling, it's hard to imagine the shock of that dark wood paneling behind the altar. Viewers comment how beautiful the altar looks today – long hours of your family cleaning up and rearranging the sanctuary for worship. “To God be the glory; great things He has done!” (CW 399) And He's just getting started. Rejoice that **Confirmation results...**

### **in eternal salvation**

Again, ***If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*** The *declaring, confessing and professing* all happen simultaneously as you *believe*. Not to be professing your faith would create a disturbing silence, like a livestream service with no sound. It takes only a few seconds of silence for us pastors to get a signal to turn on our mic. Who would argue that viewers should just be satisfied with looking at us. What would a beautiful altar area be worth without the sound of our Savior's saving Name, His reputation ringing out from hymns to hearts, from pastors to people? The Holy Spirit's blessings are meant to produce far more than good feelings. God's goal here far surpasses healthy families, respectful teenagers, peace and good morals for society. God's **Confirmation results in eternal salvation.**

As we often heard about faith and good works, “Faith alone saves, but faith is never alone.” Memorizing Bible passages won't do any good unless you believe God's Word. And when you do, you talk about it. Learning all six parts of Luther's Small Catechism accomplishes nothing unless you're convinced that Martin Luther didn't make this up or invent something new to Christianity. He searched the Holy Scriptures of the Bible, especially Romans, to heal his hurting soul. He summarized the main teachings of the Bible so *the head of the family could teach it in the simplest way to his household*. The goal is not heaven on earth, utopian society. God's gift of faith is created by God the Holy Spirit with His chosen tools of Word and sacraments. Saving faith treasures God's Word to keep learning...growing...going with the Gospel. As long as God gives you breath, keep confessing your faith **in eternal salvation.**

The Holy Spirit's miracle of faith seems so natural, you don't always know you're confessing. One of my favorite ministry memories came years ago when we could still shake hands at the door. A little girl in first or second grade looked up and asked, “Pastor, can you come and give chapel at my school?” What could your pastor say? You were confessing your faith and blessing me too.

There's such power in childlike faith that can't help expressing itself. The quote we'll close with today is familiar to many. It was heard by a battle hardened combat veteran who was terribly sick. It led to his humbling before God and blessings on him, his family and the entire nation. One simple statement from a girl about your age. Her name could have been Naomi for all we know because she was a young girl from Israel. Remember? She was a captive slave who **said to her mistress, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.”** (2 Kings 5:3 NIV84) Naaman the Aramean commander was cured of that deadly disease by God through Elisha.

We have plenty of work to do for our fellow Americans to be cured of the deadly virus of sin and unbelief. Today we pray, Naomi, that you will always be **Blessed by the Spirit** with **Confirmation results – from solid training...in eternal salvation.** Blessings always and all ways! Amen.