

Claire's Scripture Verse

2nd Corinthians 12:9b-10

This Scripture that Claire has selected for her witness to her faith is a concept rarely found in our rugged, self-sufficient, cultural norms today. It also is rarely found at the center of a teen's self-image but rather in the self-perception of a person far more mature. What is it? The willingness to accept one's weakness. The realization that neither life nor circumstance is under one's absolute control is so vital to integrity and character. No need to pretend one is other than who one is. No need to pretend one is better than another. No need to hide or run from easily recognizable flaws. Where on earth does such a stance come from?

For Claire, this strong conviction comes from fully embracing God's acceptance of her as a child, deeply treasured in the heart of the Divine. Claire moves forward into adulthood aware of this foundational unconditional acceptance and, because of that, she realizes that there will be times when things won't always go as planned in her life, but they will always be occurring beneath the eye of a loving Friend Who empowers her to live courageously in this oft perplexing world.

There is something truly refreshing about any person who decides to be real when it comes to the self. As long as Claire holds onto God's acceptance of her she will be strong in all of her weaknesses and she will live with an unshakable resolve to bring the gifts God has given her to the greatest human potential.

Thank you Claire for your choice of Scripture this Pentecost Day, your Day of Confirmation

Ruby's Scripture Verse

1st Corinthians 16:13-14

Aspects of life can seem adversarial at times. Problems aren't always as easy to solve as portrayed in plots of novels and dramas. Being perplexed by issues from time to time, many of us might say we need a "life coach" of some type to help us get through the day, the week, the month, the year of our uncertainty. Ruby has selected two verses from Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth. These verse are reflective of the struggle of the human soul. The four commands of the first verse seem like those of a winning coach to her team: Keep alert. Stand firm. Be courageous. Be strong! Easier said than done, many times. I knew a person once who was facing a critical change in his life. He placed yellow sticky notes around his home with pithy sayings on each. As I stood and shaved one morning in his bathroom, I noted one on the mirror that simply said, "Don't give up!"

Ruby's choice of these verses is wise. All of us need reminders of how to move positively toward our aims in life. Today, Ruby stands among our Confirmation Class as a person of firm conviction regarding her choice to affirm her Baptism in the Church. Today, all things are as clear as a bell that her stance in life is what is sound and healthy for her. Who among us has not had such absolutely clear days as this?

But, tomorrow? Ruby has chosen to remind herself this day that there will come times when her faith will be tested. At such times, she intends to keep alert, stand firm, be courageous and strong. And, knowing that life rarely confronts us with what might be described as absolutes, she has resolved to also remind herself that on such occasions it is good to have a prescription for action that is based on none other than Christ who taught that *all that we do ought to be done in love*.

Thank you Ruby for your choice of Scripture this Pentecost Day, your Day of Confirmation.

Jack's Scripture Verse

Jeremiah 29:11

We like to say at First Congregational Church that ours is a congregation of God's people who recognize that it is entirely possible to form a community of faith made of people who are walk different paths, but who are on the same journey. However, the journey of life and the journey of faith are equated in ways that are not easily grasped. Jack's choice of Scriptures speaks to the ambiguity of our lives.

The Scriptures teach that God know each of us intimately and God is acquainted with all our ways. Indeed, the God of the Prophets and Psalmists knows us so well that even before the words we speak are heard by others, God knows our intent and will. God is so close to us, said Jesus, that even a hair cannot fall from our heads without God's attention. But, in our journey through life we often find ourselves standing where, as Robert frost wrote so eloquently, *two roads diverge in a yellow wood*. Which path is best is not so obvious. We must decide to trust that the choices we make are right for us in each time and place.

In the face of a consequential universe, Jack finds meaning and strength in the words of Jeremiah, *I know the plan I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope*. Jack is taking a path today that he believes will make *all the difference* for him as he affirms his Baptism. In doing so, Jack joins that great multitude of witnesses who throughout the centuries has found meaning in the thought that *though we have the freedom to plan our route through life it is God who directs our steps*.

Thank you Jack for your choice of Scripture this Pentecost Day, your Day of Confirmation.

Spencer's Scripture Verse

Romans 12:9-10

Spencer has chosen the words of the Apostle Paul, written to new Christians gathered in what was then the heart of western world power, the Roman Empire. At the heart of this Scripture is the message for how to survive in such a context. Strangely enough, it is the very antidote to much that seems to plague many of us as we find ourselves living among a people of the contemporary western superpower.

How does a person of faith survive the wiles and distractions of an Empire? Paul said in another epistle what he hints at in Romans: look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith who taught that love is the way. Genuine love, that holds fast to what is good for others as well as ourselves is how Jesus prescribed the way to follow in faith. Loving with mutual affection that upholds the best for all is how a person of faith walks through life and remains on course in the midst of material overindulgence and delirious addictive behaviors of all kinds.

Like almost every biblical injunction, however, we learn very soon that this kind of life is difficult, especially when the easiest path is one of least resistance to those ethics and mores that divide, oppress, and destroy the lives of so many others around us. Spencer's verses contain the choice each of must make over and over again in our lives if we are to bring the gifts with which each of us is endowed by our Creator to meet the needs of humanity. When we chose to live the kind of disciplined life Paul taught, both our lives and those with whom we journey, will reflect the promise of God: abundant life for all.

Thank you Spencer for your choice of Scripture this Pentecost Day, your Day of Confirmation.