

Testimonies from Today's Confirmation Candidates:

Stephanie Jayne Cooke

I was baptised and raised in the Christian faith, and greatly enjoyed attending Sunday School and family services as a child. Religious Education was one of my favourite subjects at school and I enjoyed the assignments set, which included, amongst others, presenting a case for the Resurrection. As I became older, attended college and started work, I stopped regular church attendance, and my faith was not always at the forefront of my mind during this time. However as I have entered my 50s, I have found myself drawn once again to the Christian faith. My mother started regular church attendance a few years ago, so I have enjoyed attending church with her. A close friend has chosen to become a priest, and I have had the pleasure of sharing her ordination journey. Her faith has been an inspiration to me. I feel that in my middle age I have been guided back to the church, and the time feels right to affirm my faith with Confirmation.

Suzanne Smith

I was christened as a child and have always felt I had faith but have only recently worshipped in church after my great granddaughter was baptised earlier this year. I felt I had been called to confirm my faith and I have attended ever since.

Becoming confirmed to me will reaffirm those promises made by my parents and godparents when I was young but now I am making them for myself and I will publicly declare that I want to belong to the church. It will strengthen me with the holy spirit, bring me peace and strength to do God's will.

Alexandra Turner

I've always considered myself to be a Christian.

I was baptised as a baby, and attended Sunday school until my early teens.

All of my Sunday school cohort were confirmed except for me, my mother deemed me too young.

Fast forward a few years ...

I was married at 18 to a wonderful young man, in the same church I worshipped in as a youngster.

Our 4 children came along, life was a hectic whirl of playgroups and school, Dancing, football, brownies, guides and cubs.

Although we went to church for weddings, christenings and funerals, we weren't regularly attending.

Even so I felt I was a Christian by doing God's work in the community, such as being a Guider, a member of the Royal British legion, and generally being a caring person.

In 2016 my husband became gravely ill with Lymphoma, he is now in remission but has been left totally disabled and his needs are now met by myself and a carer. This takes up a great amount of my time and energy.

I still wanted to be of use to others so I started to volunteer at a tots and tinies group at Rearsby Parish Church.

From the moment I walked into the church, I had a great feeling of calm and serenity.

One day I was walking around the church putting toys and activities out for the children before they arrived. I stopped at the lectern, the bible was still open from Sunday's service, I read what it said, I knew then that I wanted to acknowledge my faith by being confirmed as an adult. I felt like God said "come on it's time".

Due to my situation I won't be able to attend church every week, but when I do it will be as a Christian looking to serve the Lord in any way I can.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes [*Romans 1:16*]

Maereen Clarkson

I was born on the 21st June 1943, right in the middle of the War. I was baptised in St Mary's Parish Church, Hunslet, Leeds when I was about 6 weeks old.

Growing up I always felt that God was always with me. Life, like a lot of people's, has had huge highs and lows and I have seen and experienced things that have, made me question my faith. Ultimately, I now believe things truly do happen for a reason. There are many instances when God has told us, through the bible, that He knows us and loves us. I feel very loved by Him.

My faith has deepened when illness/tragedy/loss afflicted my family. When my beloved husband, Brian, died I thought I would not be able to carry on. But, after a while, I just knew that he was with God and that I would join him in God's time.

I want to share this. Love, friendship and kindness really do help to being calm, heal and restore. I like to think that I have been called to be a member of the family of God. With the surety that He will help me to fulfil this in my daily life.

For me the words in the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind' capture periods in my life – its got 5 verses – very much in keeping with my long and settled life. I want it as my funeral hymn!

K Elaine Bonsall

I was born into a Christian family and attended church until the age of 9 years. Then sport and school took over. Over the next 35 years I occasionally attended celebratory services and I was married in a church. I took my son to church but sport took over.

In recent years I have found myself in the churchyard reflecting on life. In 2023 my only son went to University and I found myself in the churchyard again. My son returned that first term a devout Christian and persuaded me to enter Rothley Parish Church, with the words 'Jesus will be your friend'. I allowed myself to go through the door. What I found was a community and a place to ask God for help when life events threatened to overcome my reserves and fortitude.

I am now at the crossroads of continuing to drift or take the leap and commit to Jesus by Confirmation. I have decided to leap and find out more on my journey of faith.

Josh O'Reilly

Throughout my life I had never been someone who followed religion. I knew of it as I learnt of it in school and from friends who were religious. In fact I thought it was an impossible theory that there could be a God. However, in the past year I had a truly amazing encounter with God. I saw a figure when I was alone in my room which was glowing and it walked towards me, through me and I woke up in the morning to the most uplifting and joyous feeling. I thought about God that day something I never even took time to look at before. A week or two after that encounter my sister was involved in an incident in which she was shot with an air rifle by my cousin. I had a strange feeling before this happened and I asked my mum to take me home. She underwent a double brain surgery and the doctors weren't sure if she was going to make it. But she recovered quickly and I could not deny a miracle like that. Since that day I have pursued a relationship with Jesus, put my faith in him as my saviour and keep him in the front of my mind in everything I do.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes [*Romans 1:16*]

Jade Morrison Dow

One day when I was 10, I felt a strong calling to church and to God. I knew where I was going, but not yet the purpose. I made my way to the local Baptist church on my own and was welcomed by the local church community. I soon found that I had friends at school who were also Christian and I began to go to another church with my friend Bethany and her family. My Mum would soon join us and we began our church family journey.

This set me on a path of faith exploration and after a number of years not knowing quite where I belonged I found a home of faith in my local church in Rothley.

My Baptism is a poignant moment for me both spiritually and emotionally, that I have found home and peace in my faith and community with God.

Ric Jones

Aside from attending a Church of England infant school, I had little or no Christian influence in my early life. Although I was baptised when a baby at my Dad's childhood church in North Wales. I only attended church for weddings, funerals or baptisms.

That changed when I met my first wife. She invited me along to her church after a couple of months of dating. The church was an evangelical, independent Methodist Church with a big focus on lively worship. I soon gave my life to Christ, being baptised a year or so later in 2005.

In 2011 we lost my wife and step-son in a house fire. In the immediate aftermath, I found comfort and support in Christ and my church family. However, after a few months, I started questioning my faith and became angry with God. I drifted away from church.

Until 2020, just before lockdown, when I met my wife. As lockdown lifted, she started attending Rothley Parish Church. I decided to tag along. And my relationship with God was rekindled.

I was still living and working in Manchester this time last year, despite marrying in June last year. I decided to put all my trust in God with the timing and job. A job opened up in Coventry, doing exactly what I did in Manchester! A job I love!

Although not perfect, it meant I could move in with my family. I trusted God's timing. And that, in His timing, I would have a move closer to home. This came in September when a position opened up in Leicester!

I think this has cemented my faith in Christ. And has lead me to the decision to make this public commitment to Him.

James Faulkner

The reason I have chosen to confirm my faith with the Lord:

I believe I have been called back to the flock. I have always believed in Christ, but have not understood what it actually means to be a Christian.

Duncan, our Rector, spent the evening with my family discussing the Gospel of Mark, and we came to church to worship.

I did not expect the loving, joyous feeling I receive in me when I worship and pray.

That is why I believe the Lord sent Duncan to me and my family. No matter how far

You stray, or if you have no flock. You will always be welcome lovingly into the flock of Christ.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes [*Romans 1:16*]