



BAPTISM TESTIMONIES

JULY 28, 2024

OUTDOOR BAPTISMS

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Salvador Tellez
Raquel Rego
Eric Kittleson
Amanda Fahy
Leah Schrader
Anna Keebler
Lydia Keebler
Kate Schrader
Noah Seay
Madeline Seay
Sandy Melika
Weston W**

PETRA LANDON

I grew up Catholic and outside of religious education and church; I didn't really think about God in my life. I went on two summer mission trips in high school, but it was hard to keep that passion for God when school started up again. In high school I met this group of friends growing in their fellowship with God. They didn't judge others for how they looked or what clothes they wore. If there was someone sitting alone at a lunch table, they would invite that person to sit with them. No matter what they always seemed grounded in God's love for others.

When the pandemic happened my senior year of high school, it felt like my world was turned upside down. The loss of social interaction and connection made me feel lost and empty. I stopped turning in assignments for class. I tried finding comfort in alcohol and drugs. In the midst of trying to impress guys, I lost respect for myself. And turning to God was the last thing on my mind.

Freshman year of college, I did not come to campus in one piece. I went to the gym so I would be smaller, not stronger. I looked at food like it was going to hurt me rather than nourish me. I preferred to be alone rather than around people. For a while, I believed God

didn't have a purpose for me anymore. I used to be that friend who could support others when they needed me. But I wasn't in a good place to give that support, and I no longer knew who I was.

During the fall semester of sophomore year, I heard about Christian community through a campus ministry, Cru. I thought it wouldn't hurt to meet some new friends - a community of friends that welcomed everyone and wanted to grow closer with God. I shared my struggles with others and discovered I wasn't alone. It was at a conference that year in Minneapolis that I realized how judgmental of a person I was in thinking about mistakes people made in their pasts without looking at my own mistakes. It was at that conference that I realized how broken I truly was and how much I needed God. He sent Jesus down to earth to die for our sinfulness and brokenness. And through accepting what Jesus did on the cross, we can truly experience freedom from sin and live in the light of Christ. It was then that I surrendered my life to Christ.

The semester after I surrendered my life to Christ, my roommate noticed how content I was. I realized she was right. I was content. I did not feel the need to seek approval from others anymore. I didn't turn to alcohol or drugs to make me feel happy. Instead of God being a part of my life, God was the center of my life. Instead of doing things for me, I

was choosing to walk in obedience to God's commands and bring Him glory. It is through Him that I am learning how to love myself and love others well. Because of Him, I finally felt full and satisfied.

SALVADOR TELLEZ

I grew up attending a Lutheran church, but I never felt a real connection with God; it was just a routine activity on Sundays. Growing up in a broken family filled with anger and sadness, I often felt alone. I learned to mask my true feelings, pretending to be happy while refusing to let anyone in. For the first 20 years of my life, I was driven by a desire to prove everyone wrong and to succeed on my own, believing that I needed no one. During one of my lowest points in senior year, a friend invited me to church. I agreed to go, not because I was seeking Jesus, but simply to escape being at home with my family and to do something different.

I gradually became more bitter towards the world, convinced that nothing could go right. I believed that my own strength was all I needed and that no one truly understood me, which I thought would always be the case. When COVID-19 hit, I sank into a deeper darkness that seemed inescapable, and I lost hope. My sophomore year of college was marked by partying, which left me feeling empty but provided a temporary high. During this time, seeking to escape my loneliness, I joined my friend at Cru—the same friend who had invited me to church—just to meet new people and start over from my past failures in friendships. There, I slowly met some of the best people who made me feel like I

belonged. Although I struggled with my own thoughts, I felt a presence and love unlike any other. That year, I attended the Cru Winter Conference and, through various experiences and conversations, I released the weight I had been carrying and gave my life to Jesus Christ, rather than trying to bear everything on my own forever.

Once I gave my life to Christ, my perspective on life began to shift. Instead of being bitter and angry at the world, God revealed to me the blessings He had given me and showed me that my past didn't have to dictate the future. I learned to forgive my family for their shortcomings and recognized that they were only human, doing their best. I realized that following Christ wasn't about achieving perfection but about relying on Him rather than trying to manage everything on my own. I understood that faith is a rollercoaster, and while I will continue to do things I was not proud of, the Holy Spirit in my heart will convict me and help me grow. Through this process, I will not remain stagnant but will truly evolve and become more like Jesus, fueled by gratitude for all He has given me.

Since giving my life to Christ, I have gradually grown closer to Jesus. Although I am far from perfect and recognize that I will always fall short of God's glory, having Him in my life allows me to truly grow, change, and experience His fullness. I have come to

understand what being saved truly means and how powerful it can be. Reflecting on how far I have come since entrusting my life to Him, I have moved from merely knowing about God to deeply yearning for Him. I realize the profound impact of His presence in my life.

Whenever I drift away and try to do things on my own and fail, the struggle only strengthens my desire to lean on Him more. I now trust in Him alone for true joy and love. God has worked in my life in ways I never thought possible, and I could never give Him enough thanks for how He has transformed my heart and my life for the better. Now, I strive to be more like Jesus and to love like Him, because I want others to experience Him the way I have been so fortunate to.

RAQUEL REGO

Hi, my name is Raquel Rego. Before truly knowing Christ, I grew up in the church thinking that religion was not enough for me. I wanted to pursue the world and be who other people wanted me to be, but still believe in God. This led me to indulge in the world in such a way that I became chained to it, full of shame and regret. I was trapped in a double life, stuck in a cycle full of lies from the devil. I believed his lie that God could never love me and there was no reason for Him to love me. In fact, I believed God must hate me.

I went through my teenage years feeling lonely, fearful, angry, worthless, and hopeless. I tried everything to remedy the pain and sorrow, focusing on a desire for love from the world that I thought was real. When that didn't work, I fell apart and so did everything else in my life. The world went into pandemic lockdown, and I was shut away in my room, working through online college, and isolated with all these feelings I could no longer ignore.

After a month or so of this, I hit my lowest point. I clearly remember sitting alone in my room, late in the night, crying out to God from the depths of my heart. I knew God was real, but not why or who He was. So I asked Him if He could be with me, if He could forgive me for everything that I had done and heal me from my immense pain.

He did, in that moment and in every moment after that, I have turned away from my sin and towards Him. In the three years following, Jesus introduced me to multiple believers who have poured into my faith and walked me through scripture, taught me, and built me up.

Now that I know Jesus and the character of God, my life is no longer the same. I am secure in Christ's love for me and His design for love on this earth. I have seen this play out recently, having just entered a marriage covenant with my husband, Logan Rego, a month ago. I am full of the truth of the Word, knowing that what God says about me trumps what the world says. I am hopeful, knowing that Jesus is with me, interceding on my behalf, so I can spend my life and eternity with Him.

I am choosing to be baptized today with this verse in mind, Romans 6:1-4, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

Thank you.

ERIC KITTLESON

My lifelong journey with Jesus has been a tapestry woven with threads of joy, sorrow, and redemption. Growing up in a Christian home in Fort Atkinson, my faith was nurtured, and I experienced profound moments of connection with God. Even as a young child, lying in bed in silent prayer, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and knew that I was loved unconditionally.

However, as I grew older, I allowed the world's definition of success to cloud my understanding of true faith and devotion to Christ. The insecurities I carried from childhood, including struggles with weight, fueled a relentless pursuit of external validation and worldly achievements. I worked tirelessly in my career, seeking affirmation through financial success, often at the expense of my spiritual well-being.

My father, though a good man, battled alcoholism, which cast a shadow over my childhood. Witnessing his struggle shaped my understanding of both the human condition and the need for God's grace. It was through these early trials that I began to learn the importance of perseverance, but my focus remained on finding fulfillment in worldly accomplishments rather than in Christ. Life led me down many paths – school, career, marriage to my high school sweetheart, Laura,

and the incredible joy of becoming a father. The birth of our son, Rhys, in 2000 filled our lives with immeasurable love and purpose. In 2003, seeking a change of pace, we moved our young family to Bermuda for my job. There, we were blessed with the birth of our daughter, Emma, in 2004.

Despite these blessings, I continued to chase worldly ambitions, often neglecting my relationship with God. In 2008, our world was shattered when Laura was diagnosed with an incurable brain tumor. During that agonizing season, we clung to prayer and found solace in God's presence. Although Laura tragically passed away in 2010, the love and joy we shared as a family sustained me through the initial grief, but I felt very alone with the incredible responsibility of raising a 10 and 5-year-old. Again, I threw myself into my work, burying my pain and neglecting the healing power of Christ.

In the years that followed, God brought Junella into my life, an extraordinary woman who has an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and dedication to family that is second to none. We married in 2012, and she became my partner in seeking God's purpose. Together, we found fulfillment in giving back to our community and supporting Junella's family in the Philippines. God's hand was evident in our lives. The birth of our daughter Brynn, in 2014 was our greatest blessing as we were

older parents.

It wasn't until the fall of 2019, when I faced my own mortality with a colon cancer diagnosis, that I truly surrendered my life to Christ. It was in that valley of despair that I finally understood the depth of God's love and grace.

We moved back to Wisconsin to be closer to family and medical care, and God led us to High Point Church, a haven of love and support. In this community, we have found healing and a renewed sense of belonging. Throughout my life, I've come to understand that God doesn't allow our pain to be in vain. He uses our trials to mold us into His image, draw us closer to Him, and equip us to comfort others, as Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

My faith in Jesus is now the cornerstone of my life. He gives me peace in the storms, joy in the mundane, and hope for the future. As the Psalmist declares in Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." I am eternally grateful for His presence in my life, and I look forward

to continuing to serve Him and share His love with others.

Through it all, I've learned that God can bring good out of even the most difficult circumstances, just as Isaiah 61:3 promises: "to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."

AMANDA FAHY

I can't really remember a time when I wasn't Christian. My whole family is Christian and I've been going to church since I was little, so I've always known parts of who God is and what He can do, and I think that even when I was really young I fully believed that. As I've gotten older God has helped me grow a lot spiritually, and taught me many things, about who He is and who I can be through Him.

One thing that I feel like God has really helped me grow in is the ability to share about Him. Specifically, how He loved us enough to give us the whole world to rule over. Also how, when we sinned and turned away, He gave us His Son so that we could have joy that we don't deserve. I've never been the most confident person, so talking about my faith has always been something that is hard for me, especially with my non-Christian friends. But what God has helped me realize is that I love my friends, and I don't want them to have to live a life without Him. God is here to help me and I know that He will give me the confidence and the words to say what He wants me to.

I've learned about God's character, and how I can come to Him always and He will hear every word I say. I've seen the things He's created and the people He has given me, in my church and youth group, and at school. I've seen God in me through my own creativity,

and my ability to create, something that I think that God has gifted me.

God has created so much beauty, in people, plants, and places on earth and it's amazing to me that He lets me take part in adding to the beauty in our world. God has given me the ability to tell and write stories. I hope that this can be something in which I can reflect His glory - showing His love for us through my words and characters.

Finally, a very important thing that God has taught me is: if He tells me to do something then that is what I need to do. If I were to only do things the way I want to, I would never get to experience the joy that God can bring from His plan. In the Bible God tells us to be baptized if we believe, which I think was something that I always knew, but never felt. But in the past year I feel like God has been guiding my heart as well as my brain, and now I know that if God says I need to do it, then I will.

LEAH SCHRADER

I first asked Jesus to come into my life when I was 6 or 7 years old and have been a Christian ever since. I have been fortunate enough to have grown up in a Christian home and gone to church every week. I believe that Jesus is the son of God and died for our sins. I also believe that the only way to go to heaven is to repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be a part of our lives.

I grew in my faith in High School and had a lot of growth in senior year. I was in AP Physics and struggled a lot to grasp concepts and understand what we were learning. I failed almost every single test because I just could not understand and that really forced me to rely on God. I would pray before taking tests and studying to help calm my nerves and ask that I would do the best I could possibly do. I remember one test distinctly because I was so calm, almost unnaturally calm and collected while taking the test. I still failed but I knew God was with me and that kept me going and helped me to strive to do better. I ended up getting the lowest B possible in the class but I earned it, and I know it was all due to God being with me.

My faith grew even more while I was in college this past year despite only just finishing my freshman year. I had an absolutely awful roommate who said she was a Christian but

didn't act like it unless it was a Sunday. I am also fairly sure she hated me, which made living with her difficult. I was praying a lot more for God's help to find little ways to be patient with her when she was mean to me. I was also praying for her because I didn't know what she was going through but maybe by praying for her she would stop hating me. I also found myself relying more on God to do assignments, study for tests, and work on projects. Relying on God looked like praying I wouldn't forget what I had studied, saying thanks to God when I got a good grade on something, and asking God to be with me throughout my day-to-day life.

I was especially thankful to be a Christian and have God with me during Fashion without Fabric, a major project that all freshmen in the UW Stout art and design program have to participate in, because I know I would not have gotten through those three weeks without Him. I started praying more and being mentored by someone from Cru. This helped me work reading the Bible into my weekly schedule and gave me a nice break to just talk with someone. I wasn't ever fearful in my faith - I didn't shy away from discussing it and wasn't worried about being mocked.

I have grown more confident and more willing to talk to people about my faith. I think one reason I have grown more confident in my faith is because I wasn't surrounded by people

like my family or friends who I've known my whole life. That forced me to be the person that had the joy of the Lord and the person that would bring faith up instead of letting someone else bring it up for me.

I am choosing to be baptized today to publicly profess my faith in Jesus. I want to show that I am taking the next step in making my faith my own as well as admitting that I can't live my day to day life without God anymore.

ANNA KEEBLER

James 1: 2-3 states, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of faith produces perseverance."

I think that my testimony starts in a way that is very similar to many Christians. I grew up in this church and was surrounded by people who loved the Lord. I grew up with a rosy view of the church and of God, because faith is easy to have when things in your life are going well, but it is much more challenging during times of struggle.

When I was 18 and moved to college, my faith was tested in ways I was not prepared for. Throughout my college years, I struggled with anxiety, depression and an eating disorder that consumed my life. I was putting my worth in worldly things, trying to be the best athlete, the best student, the best person, and not focusing on the person that God intended me to be. I lost faith in the Lord and was angry at a god I wasn't sure I even wanted to believe in. I couldn't comprehend why a god that was so good was leaving my prayers unanswered.

I didn't understand how I could be any more faithful, I was leading a bible study, constantly praying and attending church, feeling like there was not much else I could do. At the beginning of my senior year of college, I hit what I hope

was my rock bottom, and I constantly wondered why God was keeping me in the situation I was in.

During this time, I was attempting to read the whole Bible and I had just gotten to the book of Job, which is now my favorite book of the Bible. Job suffered horribly and through all of his pain, he praised the Lord. Job 5 verse 18 says, "For He wounds, but He also binds up; He injures, but His hands also heal."

As a Christian, I was naive to the fact that I might suffer and that the Lord would place me in situations that test my faith. Like Job, I am now choosing to remain faithful and praising the Lord through the highs and the lows, for my circumstances do not change the fact that He is a good God. I am choosing to trust in a God who loves me regardless of anything that is going on in my life. My life may not be perfect, and probably never will be, but my prayer is that I find my strength in Him. He has placed me in a position to spread His Word and be a light for other people, and I pray that He will continue to use me for His good.

LYDIA KEEBLER

For as long as I can remember, I have been a follower of Jesus. My parents were going to this church when I was born, so I feel like I have grown up here.

I have gone through all of Awana and onto the youth group where I joined the student ministry team and have found a place where I can serve God through serving people who attend this church.

I accepted Jesus as my savior when I was young. God put it on my heart that the next step in my faith journey is to be baptized. I thank God for providing me with this strong foundation in Christ, especially as I am heading off to college in two years and will most likely be away from my church family. I have made some of my best friends through this church and have found amazing leaders who help bring me closer to God.

I am grateful that God gave me such an amazing community of believers through my family and through this church, and I thank Him for giving me this opportunity to be baptized today.

KATE SCHRADER

I've grown up in a strong Christian household, attending church every Sunday for my whole life. I became a Christian at a very young age, understanding that Jesus loved me, died on the cross for me, and rose again.

As I grew, my understanding of what it meant to be a Christian also grew. I learned more deeply about God's love, the resurrection, and the Bible. Five years ago, an empty house two doors down from mine caught on fire. I was traumatized by this experience because my family called the fire department. Afterwards, I would wake up to the smell of fire in the middle of the night. In the coming months, I was terrified that my house was going to burn down. In this time, I learned that I can fully trust God and can fully rely on Him.

During the summer after eighth grade, I started thinking more about my faith as my own and not as my parents. I wanted to be a Christian for myself, not just because my parents were. Between then and now, I have seen God working in my life to grow me into more of a leader and to show other people God's love through my actions and words.

This winter, one of my youth group leaders asked me about getting baptized and if I had thought about it. I had been thinking about baptism for a little while, but had never

thought very deeply about it besides that it was the next step. I told her that I wasn't sure why I hadn't gotten baptized yet or what was holding me back. I started thinking more about baptism after that, but still not very seriously.

Three weeks ago at Youth Group, she brought up that baptisms were coming up. I don't know what changed in me, but I knew that I wanted to be baptized today. Today, I am ready to proclaim my faith to everyone here and be baptized.

MADÉLINE SEAY

I grew up in a loving christian home where my parents would teach us about God and would take us to Sunday school regularly. I really liked hearing Bible stories about Moses and how God was with him during hard times.

When I was in second grade my teacher taught us the Armor of God and had us listen to Toby Mac. It really got me thinking about God and wanting to follow Him and have a personal relationship with Him.

One day, on a Tuesday during chapel is when I decided to accept Jesus in my heart, and I prayed the sinner's prayer and repented of my sins and invited Jesus into my heart.

Now that I'm a little older I'm choosing to get baptized in obedience to God's word. I am not perfect, but I know that I am loved by a perfect God and He is with me always.

SANDY MELIKA

Hi. I'll be honest, I had no idea what to write. I just stared at my screen for a few minutes, thinking. But then, I decided I'd just write about the harder, I guess you could say, times of my life.

In first grade, I was bullied. Not verbally or physically, but the people in my class didn't really like me all that much. My classmates back then didn't really hang out with me, and I was left alone a lot during recess. This continued all the way through fifth grade.

In sixth grade, my sister and I switched to High Point Christian School, where I suddenly had a lot more friends than before and didn't really know how to talk to them. But it was a welcome change from no friends at all. God has helped me get through these times by sending supportive people my way, and that showed me that I wanted to get baptized. It took me a while to finally work up the courage to actually sign up for the baptism, but then I decided that I would sign up when the next baptisms came around. That just happened to be the Easter baptisms, and my mom was working that day. I really wanted my mom to be there so I waited. Then this one came up, and I was nervous about signing up, but then I thought to myself "If I don't do it now, I'll never do it." And that gave me the resolve to tell my mom, "Sign me up." So here I am, the girl who

considers herself socially awkward, the girl who God gave supportive friends and family, and experience through hard times. God has always been a part of my life, and in some cases more apparent than others. All I know is God has protected and kept me safe with different methods, and has helped me see the world differently than I had before. Jesus showed me how to have the strength to get through basically being an outcast. His brothers didn't really believe Him, and neither did the people in His hometown, Nazareth. He went through that so that we wouldn't be outcasts from Heaven. I feel like that is really someone to believe in, someone who went through the same trouble we face now.

WESTON W.

I have a simple story. I was born and raised in a Christian home, attending High Point Church since I was a baby.

I have learned a lot over the years and still have a lot to learn. I feel that now is the right time to bond with the Holy Spirit and I look forward to being closer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, so that I get guidance from Him.

I feel that this is God's plan for me and I am ready to fulfill His plan. Jesus means everything to me, as He forgives my sins, is my Savior and is always with me. This is just the beginning of my Jesus journey, but it would not start without me taking the first step.