

## **Baptism/Confirmation – 2016**

### **Cedarbrook Church**

#### **1. Ben Ehlert:**

I have always thought of myself as lucky when it comes to family. I was very lucky that my parents took me to church as a kid, as it helped shape my faith life. As I grew, church grew on me. Once I hit 10 years old, and I could understand what was being taught I really caught on to the idea of church. At 11, I started regularly going to Ignite youth group here at Cedarbrook. I'm very grateful my mom and dad were able to consistently take me there, because that's where I learned so much about my faith. Any doubts I had about God were whited out. As youngsters, my parents made the decision to follow God, and be a part of the church. Now I'm ready to make that choice my own.

Ben Ehlert

#### **2. Olivia Scalze:**

Baptism means to me dedicating the rest of your life to God by everything you do in God's word as God's servant. It also means God has washed away your past and now you are a new person so to speak. He is now letting you forget about your past sinning and work on everyday for as long as you live be a worker for God. When you decide to be baptised you have to realise that now you represent God's people, and I want to be known as one of God's people.

I want to be baptised because even though I'm young I know Christ lives with me and he has my whole life. I wasn't like other kids with church, I actually wanted to go to church. I love the lifestyle of living with God and so now I want to show my commitment to him to the world. So I'm getting baptized. ~Olivia G. Scalze

#### **3. Katie Talberg:**

I've gone to church my whole life, but I didn't always feel a real connection. It was just something that I did every week with my family. It wasn't until a few years ago that I realized that whatever was happening in my life, I could always lean on god for support and comfort, and realizing that was one of the most amazing moments of my life.

After coming to faith, I joined my youth group worship team, and my relationship with Jesus has grown so much through that. I really feel like this is the year that I was meant to get baptized, and I am so excited to finally be taking this step!

#### **4. Caleb Gunderson:**

I want others to know that I have made a commitment to follow God. I hope that they will see God in me through my life and actions. And also in the way I treat my brothers.

#### **5. Derek Hubbard:**

This year has been a year of change. I lost my brother early January. I wasn't raised in a religious setting but always felt there was something more. Seeking an answer to this feeling, I came to Cedarbrook to learn about God.

This journey has matched me up with amazing people full of wisdom, kindness and knowledge. Everyone who I've connected with here has been instrumental in helping me find my way. Without these experiences I would no doubt still be lost. I pray multiple times a day and look to guidance in the messages of the bible and my peers. This all has been an undeniably positive force in my life.

I have decided to declare publicly my decision to follow the teachings of Jesus and willingness to align myself with his message by baptism.

## **6. Leon Herrick**

I grew up attending weekly church and going to catechism. I was baptized as an infant and at age 13-14 I was confirmed. Now I wish to be baptized as an adult to reaffirm my commitment to God.

I went into the military and prayed often. God granted me peace and comfort (via the Holy Spirit) that if I was killed I would be with him eternally. This reduced the fears that I experienced about death. I moved to Menomonie after service. I went to weekly church services. Because of my military I became a workaholic (65-70 hrs. per week). Gradually I backslid and lost my Christian direction and replaced it with alcohol. I divorced and lost my family. I met Cleo and my drinking stopped. After our marriage we both were missing God in our lives. We started experiencing each other's churches. Because of the difference in our spiritual upbringing it became extremely difficult to understand each other's churches.

Then we were introduced to Cedar Brook. WOW!!! We are both extremely happy here and have found that the more we keep God close the more we are blessed. We want to continue on our spiritual path with God. I have always known that Jesus had died for my sins, but I felt that I was not "good enough" to be saved. Tara's prayer on Sunday "I am enough" and Remy's sermon that adult baptism can be a cleansing of our spiritual being and sole caused me to desire this experience of a personal commitment through baptism.

Cleo and I need the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and marriage. I wish to more deeply recommit my life to God today. Cleo has previously experienced adult baptism and is joining me today as we grow deeper in our journey to keep God close. I know your hearts, prayers and blessings are with us always. Thank you all for celebrating in our joy today in this baptism. Thanks be unto God!

## **7. Diane Samuel**

Had you told me three years ago that I would be getting baptized today, I would have said not likely. Had you told me 10 years ago, I would have said No Way.

I was baptized as an infant and grew up in a family that attended church religiously (literally). If we could not make it to Sunday services, we knelt and prayed the rosary. My family still talks about the Saturday night that there was an ice storm during the night and all the power was out on the farm. My dad had his hands full trying to care for the animals but my mom was determined that we would not miss church. She piled me and my 5 siblings into the family station wagon and off to church we went. Midway down a steep hill, we hit a patch of ice and the car flew out of

control. In retrospect, God really was looking out for us, because we ended up in the ditch on the uphill side of the road when we could just as easily have plunged down the steep ravine on the other side. Mom was a determined church-goer!

In spite of that, I don't recall God being invited into our lives or that our faith was god-centered so much as it was about following the rules of religion. I recall Sunday sermons being focused on sinning and damnation and it created a very heavy burden of guilt in my mind. I remember very clearly at the age of 14, sitting in church and saying to myself, "I'm a failure. I can never live up to these expectations. If I'm going to be damned, I might as well have fun on the way to hell".

When I married, my husband and I went to church semi-regularly but again never felt any sense of belonging or God. I finally completely gave up when the priest refused to baptize our younger son because we didn't attend church regularly enough. I was just done with church.

I completely stepped away from God and faith for most of my adult life. I'm not sure whether I stopped believing, because I'm not sure I ever truly believed in the first place. I started attending Cedarbrook about 5 years ago with the encouragement of my boyfriend Jim. He has always had a very strong faith, and I started going more to please him than anything.

My return to God and faith literally happened in church on the first Sunday of the new year of 2014. I don't even recall what Remy was preaching about but as he was talking, I just felt instantly that God was real and I was meant to be here. We started attending very regularly and I wanted to be here. It was suddenly a very important part of every week. Even so, I kept thinking, "Yeah this is a honeymoon period. It'll wear off or get boring". It hasn't! I continue to feel strongly a need to connect with my faith through church and to grow in my faith.

The idea of baptism crossed my path earlier this year and the time is right. At this point, I know I still have more questions than answers, but that's ok. It's part of growing right? Baptism for me represents a celebration of inviting God back into my life and recognition that I have found my path forward with Jesus Christ as my savior. Dianne Samuel

## **8. Ryan Hovland**

"Use me God, Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself."

For me, this means giving up the fact that I really don't know what I'm doing in life. That I need to quit pretending that I know and trust that God does know. I mean, he has been around a little longer! LOL.

This will be my beginning of a Quest for God. And all quests need a warrior. Warriors are not always the fastest or strongest people. Strength and speed can be developed through training. Warriors are those who choose to stand between their enemy and all they love and hold sacred.

## **9. Sarah Dahle**

I was baptized as a baby and confirmed at 12, routinely went to church every Sunday and prayed over meals and at bedtime my whole life, but the last 10 years have showed me some of my greatest challenges. While I still went to church and believed in God, I was not always listening to God or letting Him be in charge. In the last 2 years the challenges continue, as we will always have life challenges, but I have faced them differently and with less stress because I'm learning to stop and listen to God. As I turn 40 this week and start the next decade of my life, I want to be baptized to acknowledge I believe in the Holy Trinity, I want a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to fill me and guide me the rest of my life.

## **10. Rebecca Schlough:**

I have been a Christian for many years. I felt in my heart that I wanted to be baptized and accept full forgiveness for my sins. To strengthen my walk with Jesus and follow him according to Micah 6:8, which says:

He has shown you what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

## **11. Mary Oehler:**

I grew up in the Catholic Church and my family were regular churchgoers. My sisters and I accomplished all of the milestones--infant baptism, first communion, and confirmation. I felt like part of the church, but not always in good relationship to God.

After I met my husband and attended his family's baptist church, I realized there was more. I felt moved by the pastor's sermons and started to learn about who God is. My relationship got stronger as marriage and family life progressed. I joined Cedarbrook and finally found a church home in which to grow as a believer.

Four years ago, I changed jobs and as a result had more responsibilities with a shorter commute. I discovered the commute time was spent thinking and praying. I felt less connected church friends who support me and pulled too many different directions. This has culminated this year as I feel the world has become more important than God and my faith journey. I want to be baptized today to wash off the distractions of the world and emerge from the water with a new energy to pursue God and renew my faith.

**12. Krystal Kay:** I have been attending Cedarbrook Church since it's early days--since we met in the movie theater. Throughout that time, I always believed in God, loved learning more about the Bible and enjoyed meeting some great people along the way. I see now that something was still missing. Yes, I always strive to be a good person, help people in need, believe that Jesus was sent here to die for our sins. But looking back I see that I still wanted to be the one in control of my life. I had my life mapped out, I made future plans that I wanted. It wasn't until something drastic happened to me and the rug was pulled out from underneath me that I learned that I can plan and plan and plan anything I wanted--but ultimately God is in control.

It wasn't until this past year when things changed and my PRAYERS finally changed--I asked and begged God to guide my life so I live a life He wants me to. I opened my heart to accepting God's plan-even if it was excruciatingly painful...which it was! With His strength alone I went through things I never thought I wanted to go through and didn't think I ever could. It's almost ironic--it brought me to the lowest point in my life but turned out to be the best thing for me! I have never seen so many blessings in my life as I do right now. I faithfully laid my life in His hands and He protected and cared for it!

This is why I am being baptized--it's a way to claim this new faith and die to my old life.:)

### **13. Cody Hanson:**

Growing up, I was not raised around the church environment so I had only known that Jesus was God, but never really had learned anything else about him. It was only recently within the last year that I had started attending church on a regular basis and learned the wonders of his powers, and knew that I wanted to declare him as my savior and was prepared to start my new life with him. Within the last month, I finally decided that I was ready to be baptized and leave my old ways at the bottom of the water, so I can live my life the way the lord has planned for me.

### **14. Shelly Hanson**

Growing up Catholic, we did the infant baptism, confirmation, church every Sunday & CCD classes. Through all of that I don't recall ever even opening a Bible, I honestly don't remember very much about what was taught to me at that point. A few years back I had accepted Jesus as my Personal Savior. It was then that I began to read the Bible and realize how important it is to me to live my life according to Jesus and have him guide me and walk with me through every step of my life. I feel so blessed that he died for our sins and is so willing to forgive us. I am so excited about growing my relationship with Jesus and wiping the slate clean.

Thank you so much!

### **15. Marcy Bauer:**

I was raised in the church, baptized as an infant and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior at the age of 13. As I have grown older my yearning to draw closer to God continues to grow. Twice, I have heard Remy talk about adult baptism. His words have given the visual of going into the water, our sins being released and them falling to the bottom of the pool. As we are brought up out of the water we are made clean again. This brings me to tears – I want that - My soul wants that! By being re-baptized today, this is the rededication of my life to Him – He's Got Me.

### **16. Joe Zimmer**

The first time I learned about Jesus was in August of 2000 during basic training. Jesus was the only one that could keep you safe from the drill sergeants. The next time I heard about God was during deer season, I don't recall the year. I was listening to Pastor Greg Laurie on the radio. I called the # and ordered my new believers bible. I started reading the bible. This fell to the wayside sometime after. When I met my wife Rachel in 2007 after my first deployment, I learned that she was already a believer. After we had Landon, Rachel wanted us to find a church. I knew that a traditional church would not work for me. We heard about Cedarbrook and gave it a shot. I loved the music (Todd Sinz)(Your love oh lord) and the sermons were great. It was very easy to relate to the message. I have contemplated being baptized for some time. This spring I decided to

accept Jesus as my lord and savior, to receive his forgiveness and to start my journey with him. I'm looking forward to becoming part of the church community.

### **17. Greg Reismer**

I was not raised in the church but completed all 3 Catholic sacraments without ever developing a relationship with God. My wife Erin and I made a feeble attempt to attend church after we were first married 18 years ago. We never really made a connection and the experience was very negative and pushed us away from God.

Erin got invited by a friend and attended a Cedarbrook service at the theatre. She really liked it and asked me to go with her. It was fall and I promised her I would give it a try in December after hunting was over. Remy was speaking about the Advent Conspiracy in the banquet room of the Stout Ale House to spend less on yourself and give more to help others during Christmas. I really liked the format and have been hooked.

A short while after we joined a small group hosted by Remy & Lisa. That experience started developing our faith. Every time we met, the sermon notes and real life lessons spoke to our heart and provided some of the best marriage counseling and advice we could have ever asked for.

Almost 3 years ago I had emergency brain surgery to have a tumor removed and have suffered with severe depression since. With the help of medicine, Remy, the Cedarbrook family, and my growing faith in God, I was able to prevent suicide, getting divorced and ultimately separating my family. I turned to God and gave up control I never really had in the first place. Remy has been mentoring me this past year and my faith in God has really grown strong and I am forever changed. I look forward to seeing my Cedarbrook family each week and am so thankful for this journey. I look forward to see what God has in store for my future.

### **18. Jenni Patnode:**

I have always been a Christian for as long as I can remember. So, my story is not one about coming to faith, but a story about renewing my faith to have a meaningful relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I was baptized Catholic as an infant. Christianity was, and still is very important in my family. I was blessed to grow up in a home where we said our prayers every night before bed and went to church every Sunday. I went to Catholic School, and even taught at a Catholic School. Sometimes I had questions about why we believed or did things the way we did, but I was usually told that that's just the way things were, so I learned very early on not to question my religion.

I was married in a Catholic Church to my wonderful husband Weston in 2005. After struggling with infertility, we went on to have two boys, Warner and Brayden. Weston rarely attended Catholic Mass with me, and I never really pushed it. Every Sunday, I took our two boys to church by myself, because I wanted our kids to be raised with some sort of Christian background, and I went because quite honestly, I was afraid if I didn't go, I would end up in hell. I didn't live my life FOR GOD, I lived it just trying to avoid going to hell.

For months, my sister Heather kept inviting me to check out Cedarbrook with her, and one day, she finally asked, “why won’t you come check it out?” And I remember saying, “because I am afraid I will like it too much... and then what.” Part of me wondered if there was another way to know God, but I also had been living this comfortable Christian life where I just said my prayers and went to church for an hour on Sunday. Then, before Christmas in 2014, my husband and I finally joined her at Cedarbrook and we loved it.

Since I felt an obligation to my Catholic church, and feared what people might say, I still took our boys to the 8:30 mass on Sunday at St. Mary’s, and then Weston would join us for the 10:45 service at Cedarbrook. Easter of that year, we had to make a decision. We chose Cedarbrook, and I remember standing in church that Easter Sunday, and as the band started to play, I closed my eyes and heard God for the very first time in my life. He kept saying to me very clearly, “You are right where you need to be.

You are right where you need to be.” In that moment, I started crying uncontrollably! Poor Weston looked over and whispered, “Are you really that sad that we didn’t go to Easter Service at our other church?” After that, I knew Cedarbrook was where our family needed to be, but of course that meant getting some push back, actually a lot of pushback, from my parents. I am sure they were hurt, and they didn’t understand. And that hurt me and was really hard. I also had a lot of questions for Remy! So, the first time I ever emailed him, I was so surprised when he responded with an answer other than, “that’s just the way it is....” SO – I kept emailing him and he kept answering!

My faith started to grow at a rapid pace. I was thirsty for the word of God, so I joined the Thursday morning Women’s Bible study where I finally opened the bible that always sat on my nightstand. I had been working through some anxiety in my life at the time, so surrounding myself with God loving women, and reading the bible together was the best place I could be. Weston and I started to come to church together every Sunday, which was new for our family and we would do the Going Deeper questions together in the car on the ride home. We started praying together, and invited God into our marriage for the first time! Together our faith grew, and our marriage grew on a deeper level. I can’t even describe how much our marriage and family life has changed in the last year and a half.

Worshiping God became a GET TO in our house and not a HAVE TO! I was so on fire for God, that last November, I traveled to Nicaragua to drill a well with Living Water, which was LIFE CHANGING! It changed my entire view of the world around me. I learned that God is EVERYWHERE. His love and word reaches everyone – even to villages that don’t have running water! I saw God there every day, in the people I met. I realized that God is SO MUCH BIGGER than the church I worship him in. His love is SO much greater than that! I had been taking for granted so many things and worrying so much about where I fit in and what the “right way” was to worship God. And then, on that trip, I felt him. I heard him. I knew he was there in everything we did, I knew he loved me and the things I was worrying about, were things I needed to hand over to him. I realized that he has such a bigger purpose for me. He has a bigger purpose for all of us. And worrying about all the little day to day things, and analyzing every move I made and WORRYING about what others would think about me, was preventing me from living a life FOR God.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to worship at Cedarbrook! Weston and I finally have those 2 a.m. friends we had prayed for. 3 years ago, if you had asked us if we would ever go on a Mission Trip together, we probably would have thought that was a crazy question to ask – but in November, together we will be going to Honduras with the team from Cedarbrook. And I am excited to see how God will continue to grow our faith individually, and grow it together as husband and wife. God has always been there, he has always been a part of our lives, but now we actually have an amazing relationship with him. And today, in front of everyone, I want to reconfirm that faith.