

Hey! I'm Heidi and I would like to start off by saying my big influences on my faith journey have actually been my confirmation group leader and my mom. The both of them make me want to go to church and learn everything I need to know. Along with the pastors, they always make me feel welcome and a part of the church when I'm like acolyting or helping around. But before, before I wanted to do all these things you know when you're young and grow up in a lutheran family you go to church because you're just expected to and that's what your family does. The occasional cheerios and soft toys mom packed so me and my sister wouldn't be bored as well as a pain. But we never really knew why we went there every sunday. But as I grew older I started to go to sunday school at bethel downtown where engedi is now and began to learn the first few stories of the bible and really leap into it. Throughout I saw how big church and Jesus impacted those closest to me and maybe not so close. I still see that now and I love it, along with a bible verse from Romans 8: 38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our lord." To me that means no matter where I am or how I'm feeling, God will never give up on me and I know even if that love is one-sided at that moment he doesn't care because it will never go away and hopefully I would find myself back at that place where God is one of the things that matter most to me. Today a lot of times I think to myself ugh my life is rough but then those stories in engedi really make me think how much worse it could be and then I'm thankful. It's a cycle, a normal cycle. And sometimes I do think about if God is really there and who am

I really talking to when I pray? And every time a thought like that pops in my head it spooks me so I push it away. But then in my life I see all his miracles like my family's health, my parents friendship, and the blessed life I lead I just know he's there.

Eventually I **do** want to go on a bunch of mission trips, go to TEC at least once or twice (which I did and I highly recommend it), and stay connected with church, because all those things sound really interesting and fun and are really important to me. And that brings me to the bible verse from 1 Timothy 4:12, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." I want to be a good example to my church now and to my church later, spreading God's word while it's freshly ingrained in my being, because those who follow the path of the father son and holy spirit will be forever in his grace.