

“Continuing the Journey”
John 13:31-35
Rev. Steve McCoy
Confirmation Sunday
May 5, 2007
First United Methodist Church
Marquette, MI

Today as we observe the first in our series on John Wesley and our Methodist understanding of Grace, we have no more of a perfect example than what takes place here today. On Confirmation Sunday we have what Wesley would call a “means of grace”, something where we can really see evidence of God’s grace working in our lives.

We believe that in our lives God loves us before we even know how to love God, we make this known in our baptism, that is what we call **Prevenient Grace**. **“Grace that comes before”** Today you are at a stage in your life where you have taken time, and studied what it means to be a Christian. You have thought about your walk of faith, and the journey you have been on thus far, and now you make that next step. You will take the vows that your parent’s made for you at your baptism, but this time for yourselves, and say: “Yes I believe and I promise to lead a Christian life and to faithful to this church.”

There is a story of several pastors who were having problems with mice in their church. The pastors were all discussing what the best way to get rid of them was. Now the Episcopal pastor said they had tried, trapping the mice and setting them out in the woods, and dealing up the holes, but they kept coming back. The Presbyterian pastor

said that they tried closing up their wholes, taking all the food out of the church, and trapping the mice that were left, but the mice still kept getting in. Finally the United Methodist pastor laughed and said “We got rid of our church mice long ago!” When asked what they did, the pastor said, “Well we formed a committee, and after lots of debate and an Administrative Council meeting, we decided that we would baptize the mice, and confirm them, and it worked. Now we only see the mice at Christmas and Easter!”

The point is, of course, this is a day of celebration and it should be, for it is a mile stone in your lives, but we should not confuse this as the end. Confirmation is not the same as Graduation, rather it is a turning point in faith. This is a memorable part of your journey, but the journey does not stop. The call that God has for all of us is to continue to learn and grow in faith. Now we also know that things are going to get in the way. We know that there will be times of doubt and times of fear. We know that there will be choices you have to make. What is important to know is that no matter what choices you make, good bad or indifferent, that the love of God for you will never fail, the love of this church will never turn you away, for part of continuing the journey is exactly what Christ has said: to “love one another as I have loved you.”

It is God that works in us to will and to do what is right. Grace comes from God and no one, not even we, ourselves can take it away. So the call to you is to hold fast to the promises that you make today. You make them because of God's love for you. And for all gathered here to renew and uphold the promises you made, and to fulfill your

promise to them that together we will continue our journey of faith, and love one another as Christ has loved us. Let us give thanks to God as we celebrate this “means of grace.” Amen.