

# A Thoughtful Peek into FAPC's 2005 Confirmation Class

By Cathy M. Kolwey

Oh how I wish that each one of you could get a peek at what I see as the Coordinator of the Confirmation class. I wish each of you could see the way Gabrielle shoots her hand up when she knows the answer to a question. The compassion Max shows when he talks of the needs of our city. Or the way Joe always reminds us during discussion to remember the importance of prayer. I wish each of you could meet Adam, whose quiet strength inspires others. Or Will, a born leader, who is often the first to speak and starts up our lively discussions.

It is a very special job that I have, shepherding this group of young adults through their exploration into what it means to be a member of our church. And I often wish that every member of our congregation could get to know these students in the same ways that I do during the 8 weeks that they are in Confirmation, for they are truly an extraordinary group of young adults.



**2005 Confirmation Class. Top (l to r): Michael Braglia, Sarah Canali, Gabrielle Rajerison, Taryn Matiland, Kim Coulter, Nitya Rajerison, Lillie Telljohann, Will Milvaney, Cathy Kolwey, Peter Saghir, Peter Marzulli, Alex Sellers, and Max Wycisk. Bottom (l to r) Will Phifer, Jun Luke Foster, Adam Copeland, Gabe Reale, Alex Supit, and Joe Vione.**

I am tempted to say that this is the best Confirmation class I have ever seen, but I realize that I am tempted to say that every single year. I know that is because each student brings something unique to the class. Kim is gifted at helping others, and is learning that she might enjoy tutoring. Michael loves to make people laugh. Lillie is gifted with knowing the way a church runs (she will be a faithful officer one day), and Alex loves to tease Dr. Tewell with “why do you always tell so many stories?” Actually, Alex loves to tease us all. My joy in teaching comes from learning about their individual gifts while they are learning about what it means to be a Christian. Each year it is different, so

each year it always seems to be “the best”.

While we were studying Presbyterian polity, we had a mock Session meeting. I wish you all could have gotten a glimpse of Jun Luke’s thoughtfulness, as he put forth a motion calling FAPC to lead a mission trip to the Sudan. Or the artful persuasion that Gabe used during the discussion. Or the way Nitya was able to clearly define the pros and cons. You should have seen, too, the end-zone-like dancing that ensued when the motion passed! (If only we could all show that much enthusiasm!) No matter what the topic of the week is, all 17 of our Confirmands come to class ready to be engaged by the tough questions of faith. Taryn is brimming with thoughtful reflection. Sarah has a deep commitment to our church; she was baptized here by Dr. Phillippe. It is truly one of the highlights of my job – to be along for the ride, watching these students on their journey of exploration. They are discovering their spiritual gifts and their social responsibilities.

Responsibilities they are already living out. Their class led worship at the Bowery Mission in January. It was the day of the snowstorm, but that didn’t deter the class. They had the men of the Bowery cheering them

on, that snowy night. And you should have seen the way Peter ran through the Bowery with a pile of hot plates. The confidence with which Will read scripture for worship. Or the ease with which Alex talked to the homeless men while he was efficiently pouring the drinks. Together they are serving and leading, studying and learning. Together they are a class that thrives on animated discussions and lively dialogue. Together they are individuals who are exploring their faith and the meaning of membership

in our great church.

There are times when guiding the Confirmation class feels like watching a new born colt trying to walk on wobbling first legs, or a bird flying from the nest for the very first time. It is a very special privilege. It is something that not everyone gets to see. It’s like watching one of God’s miracles unfold before my very own eyes. Oh how I wish each of you could get a glimpse of it as well.

This year’s Confirmation class will join the church during the 11:15 AM service on Sunday March 6, 2005.

Michael Braglia is in the 7th grade. He really enjoys telling jokes, video games and downloading “stuff”

**On January 28 and 29, sixty-five women from our faith community gathered for our Women's Winter Sabbath at Stony Point Conference Center. Dr. Nora Tisdale and Rev. Jan Ammon provided leadership for this CCS event which involved worship, Bible study, and personal devotional time centered around the stories of women in the Gospel of Luke. Cathy Kolwey, our Director of Youth and Family Ministries,**

**and Katie Givens, our seminarian, assisted in the leadership of the retreat. They created a wonderful opportunity for the women to use art as prayer for women of the world. We are also very grateful to Ruth Nelson, Mary Bostic, and Diana Kypar who provided support and coordination of this sacred gathering. The time was indeed a blessing for all!**

Photo: Cathy Kolwey

onto his computer. He has created a character for a video game that is in production right now. Michael has been attending Fifth Avenue for almost seven years. Sarah Canalija, an 8th-grader, likes playing soccer and hanging out with her friends. She's been coming to church here for a little over a year. Adam Copeland is in the 7th grade at St. David's School where he plays on the 8th grade "varsity" basketball team. He also enjoys building models and has been attending FAPC since he was in kindergarten.

Kim Coulter, a 6th-grader at Birch Wathen Lenox School, loves gymnastics and all other sports. She also likes spending time with her friends and has been coming to Fifth Avenue church as long as she can remember. Jun Luke Foster is in the 7th-grade at Merrick Avenue Middle School on Long Island. He is an accomplished pianist and cellist, and is an avid reader. He also liked basketball, baseball and track and field. He has been coming to FAPC for three years. Taryn Maitland is a 7th-grader who likes food, soccer and working out. She has volunteered in the homeless shelter, and has been attending Fifth Avenue since right after she was born.

Peter Marzulli, a 7th grader at Collegiate School, plays the drums and also enjoys soccer, basketball and running. He is relatively new to Fifth Avenue. Will Milvaney attends Collegiate School and is on the

basketball team there. He also plays piano. Will has been attending Fifth Avenue for five years. Will Pfifer is in the 9th grade at The Buckley School where he enjoys football, baseball and wrestling. He has been coming to FAPC for two years. Nitya Rajendran, a 7th grader Trinity School, likes to sing and play the piano. She enjoys playing basketball and volleyball. She has been attending the church for five years. Gabrielle Rajerison is in the 7th grade and her favorite sport is flag football.

Gabe Reale, a 7th-grader at Collegiate School, plays the guitar and runs track & field. He has been attending this church for three years. Alexander Sellers is in the 7th grade at Collegiate School and likes playing and watching sports, especially baseball and soccer. Music is also important to him – rock 'n roll particularly. He's been coming to FAPC for five years. Alexander Supit is in the 7th grade at Queen of Angels School, and really enjoys the martial arts.

Lillie Telljohann, a 7th grader at Trinity School, has been attending Fifth Avenue church as long as she can remember. Joey Vione, a 6th grader at Garden City Middle School on Long Island, enjoys lacrosse, basketball and boating. He has been a member of FAPC for 10 years. Max Wycisk is a 6th-grader at East Side Middle School. He plays the cello and trumpet and has been coming for Fifth Avenue for several years. V