

A couple of months ago, Peter Smith interviewed us for an article he was writing about the youth at St. Annes. During the course of the interview, Mr. Smith asked us “when you think of St. Anne’s, what is the first word that comes to mind?”

For me, that word was home. I have grown up at St. Anne’s. I was baptized here, went to preschool at PASA, took piano lessons from Mr. Kimble, went to Sunday School, then youth group, joined the acolyting team, and was confirmed last February.

St. Anne’s is a supportive, loving, and lively community. We are so blessed to be in this fantastic environment. Until recently, however, I didn’t realize how many different types of communities St. Anne’s has to offer.

Approximately two years ago, I attended an overnight weekend retreat called Happening. It was there that I realized that our church, our Community extends much farther than just this room. When I went to Happening, there were people my age from all over the Diocese of Maryland coming together to spend a weekend worshipping. I have been to several Happenings since then, and with these retreats I have connected more and more strongly to my Episcopal community and more strongly with my Faith as a Christian.

So when I learned about a week long event in June, to be with my world-wide Episcopal community, naturally I jumped at the chance. Little did I know how much this event would change my life.

For those who’ve been on spiritual retreats before, I’m sure you can relate to the difficulty of explaining to others what it meant for you. What I *can* tell you about EYE are facts.

Fact: on June 22, 2011, 1300 youth from all over the world came to Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Fact: we had a fun filled intense 4 days of worshipping, singing, and praising God. I can give all the facts I want, but facts *alone* won’t convey the atmosphere that *was* EYE.

It won't convey what it meant to me and to others there. The gospel reading today says, "I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." The youth at this conference were completely infused with the Holy Spirit. *Each* and *every* person there was alive with His spirit. When the gospel talks about the Holy Spirit, that helps to convey what EYE showed me and meant for me.

Advent is all about letting the Holy Spirit into your life to prepare for the coming of Jesus. When I think about letting the Holy Spirit into my life, I think about the people at EYE and how they truly let the Holy Spirit into their lives, that was evident in the energy there -- letting their faith shine through. During the season of Advent, I commit to give attention to the Holy Spirit that was so evident during EYE.

I challenge our congregation, our community, to connect with the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, and make way for the coming of Jesus.

Let your Faith shine.