

Dear Friends,

The following is the essay written by our 2020 Casie Kerr Scholar, Cassandra Brielle Reagan. Due to the closure of the church in March, Cassie was unable to give the traditional address at our Youth Sunday in June. She came back from Stockton College on September 26/27 to deliver this address to both our Saturday and Sunday congregations; we hope you enjoyed hearing her!

Peace,
Mother Lisa+



Cassie Reagan - 2020 Casie Kerr Scholar

Christ Church Scholarship Essay

Cassandra Reagan

The mission of Christ Church has helped me build a relationship with God that is a bedrock of my strength and confidence. My relationship with God has gotten me through so much -- my chronic illness, the death of two grandparents, and just things we deal with in living and growing up. The older I get, the stronger my faith in God and the more I lean on the Lord.

The fact that Christ Church is so welcoming is something that sets it apart from many of the other churches that I've been to. Christ Church Shrewsbury feels like a family, and going back to it after a long period away feels like coming home. "Household of Faith" is a quite accurate term for I always feel like Christ Church strengthens my faith, yet I always feel comfortable there. Like even though it is the Lord's house, I am always welcome.

Both Christ Church and my own family have always encouraged me to read the Bible, and to think critically about my beliefs. By asking questions, you become stronger and more secure in your answers. There are not many churches, I fear, that would have done such a thing, but without the unwavering support from Christ Church I'm not sure how my faith would be today.

I have chosen to go into law enforcement. I want to be a federal agent with a specialty of behavioral analysis, a profiler. This is the path that I think will allow me to best serve God's will;

to follow His plan. I feel this is how I can best help people, and best serve my country. I have a strong desire to protect others, but I know that I must also learn patience.

When I first got sick, no one knew what was wrong. By the time I lost the ability to walk, I was convinced that I was dying. After all these years, after everything I've been through, I know it was for a reason. There was a purpose. I've said it before, and each time I become more sure of it, if I could go back in time and change things, I wouldn't. I don't know the girl I would be today if I did, and I'm not sure that I would like her. There are times where I have trouble liking me now. And those are the times when I go to God the most. I try to do daily gratitudes, to thank the Lord for all the blessings in my life. But it's hard some days, it's hard to find something I like about myself and not just see the flaws some days. I know that I still have work to do. I am not yet grown. I am not yet ready for the plans God has for me. But I am striving to be.

The reality of God in today's world. Some people work so hard nowadays to convince you He isn't there, don't they? I know many others who don't believe, including some of my teachers. Many more who aren't sure. But faith isn't stagnant, it isn't still. Questions make some nervous, but I've always felt that that proves your argument is weak. God is here, still. I believe, others do too. And if we pause, look around, and see. We'd see all the proof we'd ever need. Far too much for me to list here.

But one of my favorite movies, Secretariat, has a Bible quote in it about just this. While I personally prefer the very close adaptation in the movie, I thought that I would include the actual quote from the Bible here. As an equestrian, a Christian, and just me, I felt that this, well, this was what I needed to include.

From the book of Job, chapter 38 verse 1; chapter 39 verses 19-29:

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

It's a reminder God made everything, so He is in everything. When I am around horses, it feels clear. When I see the beauty of nature, it looks clear. When I hear singing, especially in church, and I hear that *more*-that's the reality of God.

The reality is God is everywhere, we just need to look. In some places, like Christ Church, the connection is stronger, and easier for us to feel. But the Lord is always there. We just need to believe.