

Baker Memorial Church has been a second weekend home to me for most of my life, and because of that this congregation has a special place in my heart. I have gotten involved in many activities and groups at our church, and have loved every single one. Singling out one “ministry” that has done well to me and is meaningful to me is tough, but I’d have to say that the youth ministry has helped me “fit it” here at Baker. It can be hard to get involved in things when you’re a child or teenager, but the emphasis on youth wellness here has been superlative. Jim Best has blazed a pathway of faith for us youth. He has done a wonderful job of putting together fun and spiritual senior and junior high youth group meetings most every Sunday, as well as finding interesting things to do in the community. Our group attends annual community events, like the Renaissance Fair in Gurnee, and these exciting, out of church experiences really put an interesting twist on my Christian education. I have also enjoyed attending Sunday School over the years, and I have continued to get only positive experiences from it (well, maybe except when my mom taught our class in 8th grade!). I have grown to know many kids I would have never met had I not attended Sunday School for all these years, and those people are close to me because of what we’ve experienced together and how long I’ve

known them. I also have gotten a wonderful chance to express myself through music, once again made possible by our youth ministries. Our choir director, Jeff Hunt, has directed me chorally since kindergarten and has watched my brothers and I grow into avid singers. These experiences have only made me a better person, and I'm grateful for it. I want to see our youth ministries grown in the future, and continue to be a strong foundation of our church.

Our mission statement of "Loving God, Serving Others, and Growing Together" fits in perfectly to the youth ministries. Like I mentioned earlier, I have grown into a young adult alongside kids that I've known for ten years, and that has made me realize how valuable relationships are. I have learned about God's love through the blessing of caring Sunday School teachers and through the process of confirmation. It has influenced the way that I work with others outside our church, and has helped me avoid trouble in my life so far. Lastly, I have been able to serve others through our youth ministries by participating in CROP walk and other events. I have learned that our church is always willing to help the youth, and thank all of you for that. It has made me a better individual, learning to "Love God, Serve Others, and Grow With Others." **AMEN.**