

Hello everyone, my name is Logan Knight and I've been a member of First Presbyterian Church for over a year now. My pronouns are He, His and Him. I wanted to share a little bit about myself: I was raised in a small conservative town just south of Chattanooga, TN where, when I was 14, my parents got divorced. My parents' divorce affected me drastically in a few ways: the first being that the previous church I attended asked us to leave because, "a family of divorce was not welcome there;" the second, choosing the parent I would live with. My father out of anger decided to ask my mother to leave the house, making her homeless. He gave me the option to stay with him, in an abusive household or leave with my mother. I chose my mom, I chose to be homeless.

Later we moved in with my grandparents and would live with them until I was about 16. At that age, I came out as gay. Like every person who "comes out" I was afraid of what I would lose, like my family and friends. However, that didn't happen, mostly. I did lose the relationship that I had with my father, but the bond with my mother grew tremendously. My friends, who were all theater maniacs, accepted me with open arms, as did most of my high school peers. The one relationship I lost that I didn't know was deeply important to me was my connection to an accepting religious community, because the one I had before shunned me.

After graduation I moved to Alabama to attend The University of Montevallo, which is known by the LGBTQA+ community back home, as a place of refuge for the different. A few months into my first semester, I became friends with Nate Burt. He and his family introduced me to First Presbyterian Church here in Birmingham. At first I was skeptical, but the Burts are very active within the church, and with their help came my help. Soon, I was taking on tasks I never thought I would ever do — like being the liturgist for a Sunday morning service or joining a task force to make the church more welcoming and accepting. Through these experiences my love for this community became clear. And as time passed I grew in my faith, which brought confidence I never knew. This confidence would eventually help mend the broken relationship between my father and me.

I wanted to end with a few things that being part of a welcoming community and church like First Presbyterian have given me:

- It has given me hope for a brighter and safer future.
- It has given me a group of people to turn to in times of need.
- It has given me acceptance where others shunned me for being my true self.

- And lastly, it has given me a “Home in the Heart of the City” where no matter who you are or where you come from; no matter your race, gender identity, or sexual orientation; no matter how you vote or who you love; no matter your faith or your doubts; we welcome all whom God welcomes, and **THAT. MEANS. YOU.**