The Boy Scout Law says that “a Scout is Loyal. He is true to his family, Scout leaders, friends, school, and nation.”

The Law also says that “A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.”

Becoming an Eagle Scout has been a goal of mine ever since I joined scouts at St Mark’s in the third grade.

The Eagle process is more of a test of endurance through the ludicrous amounts of paperwork and requirements. If you make it to the end, you are rewarded with the rank of Eagle.

Through abiding in the process of becoming an Eagle, your branch begins to bear fruit.

In the Gospel today, Jesus says “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

The Gospel is calling us to put our trust in God, to abide in God. The branch cannot bear fruit if it does not follow the vine, just as we cannot bear the fruits of God’s kingdom if we don’t obey and honor God.

I am the vine and you are the branches. In the winter, all of the leaves fall off of a vine’s branches, but the vine survives and lives on to bloom in the spring.

The kingdom of God is everlasting.

Even if we fall off the branch, God will always be there to help us bear fruit again.
Merriam Webster defines abiding as “lasting a long time and enduring.” I have been abiding in the community of St Marks ever since my family moved from Flagstaff, Arizona when I was 2 years old. Abiding in God at this church has shaped me into the young man I have become today.

Through St. Mark’s, God has taught me that through hard work you can achieve your dreams, and to surround yourself with others who have the same work ethic, dreams and aspirations as you.

At this church we have outreach programs, such as Family Promise, the Food Pantry, and the Shrimp Boil, that share the many fruits of the Lord we receive with others who are less fortunate than us.

The branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides the vine, so we come to worship and learn and thank God for our blessings.

Some of my favorite memories from my time here at St. Mark’s include being taught by Deacon Len how to acolyte, listening to the Greasy Greens at the Shrimp Boil, playing guitar for VBS’ favorite song “Pharaoh, Pharaoh”, and being a majority of the nativity characters in the Christmas Pageant.

These events are just a small percentage of the time in my life that I have spent in this sanctuary. Each experience here has strengthened my faith and brought me closer to the Lord. God works in very simple ways, only asking us to believe in God, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to spread God’s love throughout the world.

The Gospel says, “Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.” I want to continue to abide in God and I plan to bear the fruits of my faith by attending college at Drury University and further pursuing my baseball career.

Jesus commands us to abide in the vine of the Lord just as the disciples did during his lifetime. Through God, ordinary people such as fishermen, tax
collectors, and farmers became immortal by their service to Jesus and God’s word, all by abiding in God as the fruit abides in the vine.

We as members of God’s kingdom are just ordinary people to the rest of the world but in God’s eyes, each one of us is special and brings something unique to God’s kingdom. When we abide in God and spread God’s love to our neighbors, we become immortal in heaven.

These days we often forget to love each other. Even though we may not agree with what the next person believes, it is crucial that we put aside these differences and come together to help those who are experiencing real problems in this world, not artificially created struggles.

If we abide in God, God’s love will always win in the end.