

## Youth Sunday Talk – Doug Bain

I am Douglas James Bain and I have been going to this church since 1999 (with a break from 2001 – 2003 when my dad was transferred to Rhode Island.) Right now I am in my last year at Kempsville High School. I am counting down the days to graduation which happens to be 55 days! After high school I will attend Old Dominion University where I will be pursuing a degree in either civil engineering or engineering technology.

Before I started going to Emmanuel, my family was attending Eastern Shore Chapel. I despised going to church and I would try to come up with some reason why I couldn't go. My parents always called my bluff and I ended up going. In 1999 we decided to try a church a little closer to home. Our first pick just happened to be Emmanuel. All I remember from that first day is that we got a bag of cookies for being newcomers. From then on I knew I would like it here.

After a few months I decided to get involved in some activities. I tried the children's choir, but soon decided that wasn't for me. Then my mom mentioned acolyting. As a ten year old, I had no idea what that was but it sounded interesting. So my mom introduced me to Mr. Watson who told me all about it. When he was done, I signed up right then and there. I thought it would be the coolest thing to be able to hold the torches and be a part of the service. So I did that for a while along with Sunday School. I waited until I was old enough to join Rite 13 so I could do all the fun things I saw and heard the older kids do – like the trip to New York, the J2A pilgrimage, all the different EYC events, lock-ins and just having fun with your friends from church. But now having gone through the program, I see that it wasn't all about having fun. It was more about learning about yourself and growing spiritually. This really happened to me when I got "happened". Happening is a place where you can be yourself and no one will judge you. There is no prejudice. You can truly love your neighbor as yourself. I thought it was the most amazing thing I have ever experienced. I knew that I had to go back next time and be part of the Happening staff so I can give the new "happeners" the same experience that I had. Since I have been happened I try not to judge people before I know them. I give everyone the same respect and hopefully they will do the same.

Now I have been going to this church for almost 7 years and it feels like family. When I was bitten by the [copperhead] snake, I had people coming up that I really didn't know asking how I was doing. Sending me get well cards. That really meant a lot to me. When my grandmother passed away, again people that I really didn't know came to me and asked how I was handling the loss. If I needed support, I knew it was there for me.

When I start attending ODU, I will still try to make an effort to come every Sunday and be a part of this church. I don't want to lose that sense of belonging that I have at Emmanuel.