



TRIM LINE

# far from GOD

## Senior strengthens faith while battling mental health

**T**he spring season sparked a time of mindfulness for **Caroline Holland**, 12. She was finally in a good place with her mental health and felt like herself again. Then COVID-19 hit and everything started to get canceled.

Panic rose. Anxiety crept in with impeding thoughts. Then she relapsed.

"I felt myself start to be like, 'What's going on? This isn't my plan.' The second I [relapsed], I started sobbing," Holland said. "I called my friends [saying,] 'I don't know what I did and I don't know why I did it.'"

Holland's struggle with mental health began at an early age, as she suffered from depression, self-harm, anxiety, and body dysmorphia. During challenging times such as these, people often cling to their faith to find comfort and guidance. Holland's involvement with Christianity has been a major aspect of her life ever since she was a child and baptized at five years old. Her faith began to falter, though, as Holland's struggles grew.

"I just kind of lost myself. I was so far from God at that point. I did all the steps in my head of what I needed to do [and] be, but I was like, 'God's not here. He's not helping me. I'm alone. I'm gonna to fix it without him,'" Holland said. "That's where my head was at all of ninth and tenth grade. Throughout that time, I was [an] FCA leader, I went to church, I talked in a small group. It

blows my mind [how] I was putting on a front."

Despite the benefit it would bring, seeking help with her struggles was an almost impossible task for Holland.

"I'm a perfectionist. I didn't want to admit anything was wrong [or] appear weak," Holland said. "I struggled with self-harm during ninth grade. I [had] panic attacks any

**"I WILL FOREVER PREACH ACCEPTING HELP. IF I HAD DONE IT (EARLIER), IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER."**

time I would try to [do something]."

During freshman year, Holland met **Skye Slater**, 12. They clicked instantly, and explored their appreciation of faith as Holland opened up about her struggles.

"It's always hard and scary 'cause you don't know how to help, [or] know how bad things are," Slater said. "I could tell she was really busy and stressed all the time, but she is very good at being presentable."

Junior year arrived and Holland's anxiety grew worse. Panic attacks and sobbing fits became familiar foes.

"I was so embarrassed. I talked to mentors at my church and they were like, 'Are you

okay?' I was like, 'Yeah, my relationship has never been better with God.' I was hiding, honestly. I was ashamed of what I thought God would say," Holland said.

Spring 2020 came and, again, Holland convinced herself she was fine. After relapsing with self harm, Holland was able to find solace in her new church, her friends, and especially her brother, **Nicholas Holland**, grad.

"Caroline and I had always been close, [but] for the longest time I didn't know about any of her mental health struggles. I felt like I let her down in a way. But it also brought us more together [since] I [had] been through some similar things," Nicholas said.

Soon Caroline made the decision to be baptized again. This time it would be her choice, opening her up to a healthier chapter.

"Since that point, I have been more intentional about my faith. [It brought] me closer to God. I still [struggle.] You build a reputation and you don't want to tell people," Holland said. "I think that's something Christians are not very open about—you're never done with the battle. I will forever preach accepting help. If I had done it [earlier], it would have been so much better."

**Story by Mary-Michael O'Hara Designer Henry Jackson**

Customer is allowed to have objects outside of the margin.

TRIM LINE

## INSIDE OUR BIBLES



### ROBERT SILCOX

Returning FCA member, **Robert Silcox**, 12, shares his favorite passage. "My favorite verse is definitely Luke 9:24 because it focuses on how we need to put others before ourselves," Silcox said; photo by s. browne



### KELLI RICHARDSON

Longtime FCA member, **Kelli Richardson**, 11, voices her favorite Bible verse. "One verse that I think about every day is Romans 5:8 because it really captures how much God truly cares about us," Richardson said; photo by s. brown