

Confirmation Handbook



**Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Shoreview, MN**

2018-2019

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Welcome

Confirmation at Shepherd of the Hills is a ministry designed for 6th-9th graders, though is open to all. It is a springboard of sorts into, what we hope, is a lifelong journey down the path that God lays before each person. Confirmation is a time for Christ Followers to learn about God and their faith in large group settings by worshiping God through song, drama and experiential teachings. As well as through small groups, which meet regularly to talk, pray, serve, and play. Small groups give the students an opportunity to create open and honest relationships with their peers and their small group leaders. These times in small groups create intentional space for relationships and help them to establish a connection to the community in a deeper way.

Here at Shepherd we have a 3.25-year ministry. Youth generally begin in the fall of their 6th grade year. They will have three full years of learning and mentoring. In the fall of their 9th grade year they will participate in the Affirmation of Baptism service on the last Sunday in October, this is their Rite of Confirmation Service.

Shepherd's Confirmation Objectives:

When you have completed your time in Confirmation, we hope you:

- Know how deeply you are loved by God and that you have an important place in this community!
- Have an understanding of Scripture (the Bible) and know some ways it can be used in your life.
- Know how to live out your faith in the world in word (able to talk about your faith) and deed (service).

Because all of these things are living into the promises made for you at your Baptism that you will be Affirming at your Rite of Confirmation.

What is Confirmation?

Outside of church walls, "confirmation" is a run-of-the-mill word typically associated with the idea of verification—we can choose to receive "confirmation" when a package we have shipped reaches its destination, for example. Inside church walls, however, the word "confirmation" is used quite differently, and often to mean slightly different things. So what does it mean, anyway?

What We Mean When We Talk About Confirmation?

Most often, "confirmation" is used to describe the entire three-year educational program which serves to prepare students for the Affirmation of Baptism service and the life of discipleship that follows. During this time, a student is said to be *in* or *going to* confirmation. The Latin word *confirmare*, the earliest ancestor of "confirmation," literally means "to strengthen." Paired with the word "faith," this produces an appropriate definition of "confirmation" as used in this way—it is a time *to strengthen faith*.

"Confirmation" is also used to describe the special worship service that concludes this time of faith-strengthening. Therefore, a student looks forward to *being* confirmed *at* their confirmation service. Liturgically speaking, this is called an *Affirmation of Baptism*, a rite of passage which reminds both individuals and the assembly of the covenant made at our baptism—both God's promise to us and our call to live out those promises.

Martin Luther, however, reminds us that the Christian life is one of *daily* dying and rising with Christ in the waters of baptism. In this sense "confirmation" is something that *never stops happening*. It all begins with the sacrament of baptism, in which we are washed with water, marked with the cross of Christ, and filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a public celebration. It is *confirmed* in the Affirmation of Baptism service, in which we say "Yes!" to our baptism. And it *continues* in the daily renewal of our commitment to the baptismal life.

In other words, confirmation is not an end, but a beginning. During the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy, candidates are asked to "profess faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church."

Additionally—and perhaps more importantly—candidates are asked:

"Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

To live among God's faithful people,

To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

To serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?"

This question from the heart of the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy paints a rather vivid picture of a life of faith, and as such it serves as the foundation of the confirmation program at Shepherd.

What do we study in Confirmation?

- 2018-2019 Year: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer, The Creeds, and The Ten Commandments
- 2019-2020 Year: Christian Living and The Life of Jesus
- 2020-2021 Year: Old and New Testament (The Bible)

When do we meet?

We meet weekly on Wednesday evenings beginning in September and we finish each year in the middle of May.

Regular Confirmation evenings we will meet in the Sanctuary for Worship 615 at 6:15pm followed by gathering in the Lower Level Assembly from 6:45-8pm each Wednesday night. Please, refer to the calendar for any alternative meeting times and places for special events.

Throughout the year, there will be some special events as a part of our confirmation curriculum:

- We will have three Wednesday night Small Group Fellowship Nights, where our small groups do something together that is purely fun. This is to get to know each other better and have fun with one another.
- We will have three Wednesday night Service Project Evenings where we will be joined by the REFUEL high school youth and go out to serve within the community we live.
- We will have two Wednesday evening large group events with the REFUEL high school youth with a speaker on current event topics.

****Please note that all dates were chosen carefully after conferring with known and accessible 2017-2018 school calendars, as well as, the overarching Shepherd calendar. We know that some of our dates overlap with other events, and apologize upfront for this. With this number of calendars, it unfortunately, cannot always be avoided.**

Retreats

There are two annual Confirmation retreats which the youth are required to attend as a part of their rounded confirmation experience. The cost of the retreats are built into the registration fee:

- Our fall retreat will be hosted at Gustavus Adolphus College, October 12-13, 2018.
- Our spring retreat will be a service project orientated retreat lock-in onsite at Shepherd, April 5-6, 2019.

**Missing, arriving late, leaving early, or leaving for portions of retreats will result in make-up work.

Registration and Fees

Registration forms are available now and are due into the church no later than September 12th. This form will allow our Small Group leaders and Shepherd Staff to have your youth participate in Fellowship and Service Nights, as well as, Retreats.

The yearly registration fee covers costs of retreats, supplies for the confirmation year, and curriculum needs. Middle and high school youth events not affiliated with confirmation may require additional fees. If the registration fee is difficult for your family to pay, please, talk to Pastor Renee or Sister Tashina as soon as possible. We will not let finances stand in the way of your youth's Confirmation involvement.

Shepherd Suppers

Wednesday nights from September 19th through May 22nd Shepherd will be providing suppers from 5:30 p.m.—6:15 p.m. These suppers are intended to be for your family to spend time together and with your church family before Worship, Confirmation, REFUEL, Bible Study, and Choir practice. The meals are a free will offering with a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$15 per family. Menus will be posted throughout the church and in our weekly E-News at the beginning of each month.

Advent and Lenten Mentors

During Advent (November 28—December 19) and Lent (March 13—April 10) Wednesday nights look a little differently. For the four weeks of Advent and the six weeks of Lent each Confirmand will have an individual mentor they will meet with in place of their small group. After Advent and Lenten Wednesday worship services Confirmands will gather with their mentors in the Lower Level Assembly for a brief large group teaching time on the theme of the week. Then they will have time to go and find a space in the church to have time with your mentor. All material will be given out to you and your mentor each Wednesday evening.

Youth are responsible for assisting in choosing their mentor. Who would be a good mentor:

- An adult who not related to you or your immediate family.
- A person who is a member of our congregation.
- Someone who can meet with you on Wednesday evenings during for the whole season of Advent or Lent (We would prefer new mentors at each season).
- Someone who is not your current confirmation small group leader.
- Someone who you might know and want to get to know better.
- Someone who you might not know very well but would like to get to know them better.

More information will be passed out/emailed at Orientation.

Shepherd's Confirmation Requirements

The goal of these requirements is to build Christian habits in the confirmands that will continue with them after Confirmation and throughout their lives.

Attendance:

Weekly attendance is required for all confirmation students. If a student misses more than 2 weeks in a row Pastor Renee or Sister Tashina will have a conversation with them and their parents. In order to make Confirmation the best experience it can be it is important that our youth attend weekly classes and retreats.

****Please, remember that in order for hours or sermon notes to be recorded you must fill out the appropriate form and turn them in, there are no exceptions.**

Sermon Notes: 15 each year

Sermon notes are a simple way that each confirmand are able to engage deeper into the sermon during worship. They are located next to the Welcome Center and on our website to be downloaded. Please, put them in the box outside Pastor Renee's office. She actually reads each one of them!

Worship Service Hours: 15 each year

Worship service hours are a simple way that each confirmand will be involved in the worship life of Shepherd.

Ways in which they can earn worship service hours:

- Projectionist
- Greeter
- Usher
- KIDZone (Sunday School) Helper
- Lay Reader
- Communion Assistant
- Acolyte
- Music involvement

There is a short form to fill out with the dates that you served in worship, it can be found near the Welcome Center or on our website for download. Please, turn into your Small Group Leaders on Wednesday Night. *Note that some worship service volunteer roles require training.

Community Service Hours: 15 each year

These hours will be served outside the walls of Shepherd. We feel it is important to connect our faith with action in the world. There are a number of ways to fulfill this requirement and we will be offering a few group opportunities throughout the year, as well. If you have a question as to whether or not something qualifies, ask Pastor Renee or Sister Tashina. There is a short form to fill out with the dates that you served in worship, it can be found near the Welcome Center or on our website for download. Please, turn into your Small Group Leaders on Wednesday Night.

Parental Involvement

It takes a village to raise a child! That is also key in our Confirmation ministry here at Shepherd. We require that our parents be involved in some aspect of the Confirmation program or in the life of Shepherd. Here are some examples of ways you can be involved during your youth's time in confirmation:

- Confirmation Small Group Leader
- Confirmation Small Group Leader Sub
- Fellowship night chaperone or host
- Service night chaperone or planner
- Retreat chaperone
- Wednesday night meal set up/serve/clean up
- Sunday mornings serving in worship
- Other ways you can think of!

If you have questions, please, reach out to Pastor Renee or Sister Tashina.

For Those Being Confirmed This Fall

Statement of Faith

In the spring of one's final year in Confirmation (generally 8th Grade but could be other depending on one's individual Confirmation path), each confirmand is asked to complete a Statement of Faith. This Statement is a personal testimony of their personal faith in Jesus Christ. It is written at the end of the Confirmation experience as a summary of how each confirmand has grown in their faith and discipleship. The Statement of Faith assignment will be presented in January and are due at the end of May.

Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation Sunday is normally held on the last Sunday of October each fall at the 10:00 a.m. service. The Rite of Confirmation is when you stand in front of the congregation and make a public profession of your faith, and state that you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism. Your parents/immediate family, Godparents, mentors and a pastoral staff will pray over you that you will be empowered to live out your faith in everyday life.

Those being confirmed will be making stoles to wear during worship. They will be made during our Fall Retreat. The Wednesday prior to Confirmation Sunday each confirmand will be present for a worship rehearsal and group pictures.

Expectations

In order to make Confirmation the best experience it can be, we agree to follow these guidelines:

1. We value LOVE: Love transmits to caring, supporting, respecting others. This includes other youth, adults and staff.
2. We value punctuality: Be where you are supposed to be ... and on time
3. We value coming to class prepared: Please bring your Bibles and something to write with to each class
4. We value respect other people and property:
 - Do not distract others during times of prayer, worship and teaching—Keep your hands to yourself!
 - Making fun of others, bullying, and unkind or destructive behaviors are unacceptable
 - Listen to and respect leaders at all times
 - Damage done to property at the church, in rental vans, on retreats or anywhere we go will be paid for and restored by those responsible
5. We value safety, modestly and little to no distractions during Confirmation, at worship, or other activities at church. Therefore, refrain from using the following items in class or worship:
 - Cell phones/Electronic devices (unless directed to do so by an adult leader)
 - Food/Drinks*
 - Offensive clothing (Follow school guidelines)
 - Chemicals/Drugs/Tobacco
 - Weapons
6. We value bringing friends to check out Shepherd of the Hills, Confirmation, or any part of the congregation. That is how churches grow but most importantly how people come to connect with Jesus! Thus, we expect you to:
 - Ask permission to our teacher before the day they come or before the class begins.
 - Introduce them to the class when asked to
 - Make sure your friend understands the purpose of Confirmation, and the respect and seriousness needed to be present.

*We understand that treats are often brought to class. Please clean up after class, and remember beverages need to be in sealable containers. No orange, red, or purple beverages are allowed at Shepherd. No wrappers can be left in the rooms we use due to preschool peanut allergies. If any are found, we risk the Cup of Devine Goodness (big bowl of candy often found at Confirmatino) being taken away from class time.

Shepherd Staff Contact Info:

Do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

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