

# Confirmation Handbook



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

**2020-2021**

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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 6<sup>th</sup> grade year. They will have three full years of learning and mentoring. In the fall of their 9<sup>th</sup> 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 DO 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?

- 2020-2021 Year: Old and New Testament (The Bible)
- 2021-2022 Year: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer, The Creeds, and The Ten Commandments
- 2022-2023 Year: Christian Living and The Life of Jesus

## CONFIRMATION IN A TIME OF COVID

This year we are all about focusing on safety and flexibility within how and where we meet, as well as, the kinds of activities our faith formation takes on. Our Confirmation Objectives have not changes just how we approach them.

September through December we will be working in a hybrid model with some events online and some events on-site while outside and social distancing. Once the cold weather hits we will have either guidelines on how we can safely meet inside or we will move to an all online version. This will depend greatly on the state of the pandemic, as well as, guidance from the State and our Governing Board.

January through May calendar will be available in December.

All of our meeting times currently scheduled can be adapted to online or in person if changes need to take place. We will be sure to keep all parents, youth, and volunteers informed of any changes immediately.

All in person meetings are currently scheduled for outside using social distancing. This means:

- Six feet distance between people need to be maintained.
- If there is any reason for entering the building or coming closer than six feet (i.e. restroom usage, walking past another individual, etc.) masks are required.
- Masks are not required when outside and maintaining six feet or more distance between individuals.
- Physical contact with others outside of family units, on-site is prohibited.
- Singing on-site is prohibited.
- Food is only permitted when it is purchased as individually prepackaged items.

You will note changes to our Registration forms due to COVID. If you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out and ask.

## WHEN AND HOW DO WE MEET?

We meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30/8pm beginning in September and we finish each year in the middle of May. At the beginning of each week Confirmation, families will receive an email with reminders and information for Wednesday as well as announcements for upcoming events.

We will be focusing our lessons in a four-week rotation model that provides for in person, virtual, large group, small group, and family engagement.

- **Lesson Evenings—6:30pm-7:30pm via Zoom in the fall and we will adapt as needed.**
  - These evenings will be large group lesson focused and for the time being virtual. They will average one hour long beginning at 6:30pm. These evenings will be led by the pastoral staff with the support of small group leaders and they will give the foundation for the rest of the month.
- **Small Group Time Meetings—6:30pm-8:00pm on-site and social distancing in small groups**
  - These evenings will be small group focused and for the time being outside. The guided conversations will be focused on the same topic as the previous week's lesson, designed by the pastoral staff and led by small group leaders. These weeks will also consist of safe on-site small group service projects.
- **Individual Project Weeks—This week will not have a designated meeting time and youth will be on their own to create a project based on the month's lesson focus. They can recruit parents, friends, family members, church staff, small group leaders, mentors, etc. to assist them.**
  - Our youth are creative and amazing people. This week is designed to help them connect what they are learning with things important to them in daily life. Projects can include, but are not limited to: journaling, taking pictures, creating a movie, writing a poem, drawing, woodwork, making a collage, writing a letter, interviewing an adult or friend, and so much more!
  - Some examples for the month on Creation:
    - One could spend time outside and take pictures of spaces they feel close to God in
    - One could write a letter to God asking questions about creation
    - One could do a daily journal that week on what they notice in creation or hope for change in creation
    - One could look up how other faiths view creation and write a one page report
    - One could read a book they find in the library on creation bring it to the project presentation week and talk about what they read
    - One could write a poem about how they feel when they are out in creation or how we treat creation makes them feel
    - One could interview an adult about what they learned/know about creation and record it or write about it.
- **Presentation of Project Weeks—6:30-8:00pm either on-site or virtual depending on the weather.**
  - These evenings youth will meet in their small groups to present their projects, have check ins, and spend time in fellowship.

# CONFIRMATION CALENDAR—2020—2021

## The Bible—Old and New Testaments

### SEPTEMBER

**FOCUS: The Bible: Who wrote it? Why are there so many translations? And other important questions...**

- 16 Orientation—For PARENTS and YOUTH via Zoom
- 23 Lesson—Large group via zoom
- 30 Small Group Time—Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd

### OCTOBER

**FOCUS: Creation**

- 7 Lesson—Large group via zoom
- 14 Small Group Time—Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd
- 21 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Graders: Confirmation Service Prep/6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders: Individual Project Week
- 25 Confirmation Sunday**
- 28 Presentation of Projects—Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd

### NOVEMBER

**FOCUS: Pentateuch: Moses, the Law, and the Israelite people**

- 4 Lesson—Large group via zoom
- 11 Small Group Time—Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd
- 18 Individual Project Week
- 25 Presentation of Projects—Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd

### DECEMBER

**FOCUS: Women of the Old Testament: Eve, Sarah, Rahab, Deborah, Ruth, and more!**

- 2 Lesson—Large group via zoom
- 9 Small Group Time: —Onsite/Social Distance Outside @Shepherd
- 16 Christmas Party/Individual Project Week:...Turn your projects in virtually before January 6.
- 23 No Confirmation—Merry Christmas
- 30 No Confirmation—Happy New Year

**\*\*Please note that all dates were chosen carefully after conferring with known and accessible 2020-2021 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

At this time, retreats are suspended due to COVID-19. Our hope is that things will change and we will be able to host our spring retreat. Once we have information around this you will all be informed.

## REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration looks a little different this year. Forms are available now and are accompanied by a COVID-19 release form as requested by our insurance company. We would ask that these forms, both be turned in by September 20<sup>th</sup>. These forms will allow our Small Group leaders and Shepherd Staff to have your youth participate in our Confirmation events.

The yearly registration fee covers the costs of retreats. As retreats are currently suspended due to COVID-19 there is no registration cost for Confirmation this year. Should we be able to host a spring retreat there may be a small retreat fee at that time. Note that scholarships will be available if we are able to host a retreat and scholarships are needed.

## CONFIRMATION MENTORS

At this time, Confirmation Mentors are on hold until it is safe to be meeting one on one with others. We are hoping that Confirmation Mentors will begin in December for Advent. When that happens, 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 when it becomes safe for mentors to begin meeting.

## FOR THOSE BEING CONFIRMED THIS FALL

**Statement of Faith**—In the final year of Confirmation, each confirmand is asked to complete a Statement of Faith. Directions have been sent out and The Statement of Faith assignment is due October 1.

**Rite of Confirmation**—Confirmation Sunday held on the last Sunday of October each fall. 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. Information will be provided on stoles soon. The Wednesday prior to Confirmation Sunday each confirmand will be present for a worship rehearsal and group pictures.

## 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
- Confirmation Mentor to another youth
- Retreat chaperone
- Sunday mornings serving in worship
- Other ways you can think of!

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

## 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 the property of 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 from your leader 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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, food is only permitted when it is purchased as individually prepackaged items. No orange, red, or purple beverages are allowed in the building at Shepherd. No wrappers can be left in the rooms we use due to preschool peanut allergies.

## **Shepherd Staff Contact Info:**

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

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