Confirmation Handbook

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Shoreview, MN

2026-2027

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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. We also learn 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, their small group leaders, and our awesome God. These times in small groups create intentional space for relationships and help confirmands 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 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?

- 2026-2027 Year: The Bible—New Testament
- 2027-2028 Year: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer, The Creeds, and The Ten Commandments
- 2028-2029 Year: The Bible—Old Testament

WHEN AND HOW DO WE MEET?

We meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8pm mid-September and we finish each year in mid-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 large group, small group, and family engagement.

- **Lesson Evenings—6:30pm-8pm onsite—all Confirmands are to bring a caring adult.**
  - These evenings will be large group lesson focused. They 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. ***As such we are asking for a caring adult to join each confirmand who can be one more system of support throughout the month.***

- **Small Group Time Meetings—6:30pm-8pm onsite in small groups**
  - These evenings will be small group focused. 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 have fellowship and group bonding activities.

- **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.
  - For this week we will have clear directions and simple projects to do. They are not intended to be a burden, or a challenge added to your plate but a way for you to intentionally apply the monthly topic to your daily life

- **Presentation of Project Weeks—6:30-8:00pm onsite and in small groups.**
  - These evenings youth will meet in their small groups to present their projects, have check ins, and spend time in onsite service projects.

CONFIRMATION CALENDAR—2026-2027
The Bible—The New Testament

SEPTEMBER
FOCUS: The Bible: Who wrote it? Why are there so many translations? And other important questions
16 Orientation—For PARENTS and YOUTH
23 Lesson—Youth & Parents
30 Small Group Time

OCTOBER
FOCUS: The Christmas Story: God Incarnate
7 Lesson—Youth & Parents
9-10 Fall Retreat at Gustavus
14 Small Group Time
21 Individual Project Week/9th Graders: Confirmation Service Prep/
25 Confirmation Sunday
28 Presentation of Projects

NOVEMBER
FOCUS: Life of Jesus
4 Lesson—Youth & Parents
11 Small Group Time
18 Presentation of Projects
25 Pies For Praise & Thanksgiving Eve Worship

DECEMBER
FOCUS: Mary the Mother of Jesus and other Women of the New Testament
2 Lesson—Youth & Parents
9 Small Group Time
16 Christmas Party
23 & 30 No Confirmation—Merry Christmas/ Happy New Year

JANUARY
FOCUS: The 12 Apostles and other Men of the New Testament
6 Lesson—Youth & Parents
13 Small Group Time
20 Individual Project Week
27 Presentation of Projects

FEBRUARY
FOCUS: The Good Friday/Easter Story
3 Lesson—Youth & Parents
10 Ash Wednesday Worship and Small Groups
17 Worship, Member Panel & Mentors
24 Worship, Member Panel & Mentors

MARCH
FOCUS: Member Panels & Mentors
3 Worship, Member Panel & Mentors
10 Spring Break – Potential Youth Trip
17 Worship, Member Panel & Mentors
24 Holy Week – No Confirmation
31 Game Night

APRIL
FOCUS: Acts and the Epistles
7 Lesson—Youth & Parents Lesson
14 Small Group Time
21 Individual Project Week
23-24 Spring Retreat—Mark your Calendars!
28 Presentation of Projects

MAY
FOCUS: Apocalyptic Teachings
5 Lesson—Youth & Parents Lesson
12 Small Group Time
19 End of the Year Party

*Please note that all dates were chosen carefully after conferring with known and accessible 2026-2027 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

Retreats are a part of Shepherd's Confirmation Programming because it is one of the best ways for us to build relationships within small groups and also across our full Confirmation group. These are intended to be times of fun, food, fellowship, games, worship, and learning.

Fall Retreat: October 9-10 we will host our Fall Retreat at Gustavus Adolphus College leaving Shepherd at 5:30pm Friday evening and returning at 8:30pm Saturday evening. Our Fall Retreat will have learning time as a confirmation group and alongside our high school youth. We will also have time to use the pool and gym, as well as stop at Minnesota's Largest Candy Store!

Spring Retreat: We will host our Spring Retreat in April. We will have some fun offsite activities, service projects, and fun onsite activities for an overnight here at Shepherd.

SERMON NOTES

Each youth will be expected to fill out a minimum of 15 throughout each year of Confirmation during a worship service at Shepherd. These Sermon notes are intended to deepen worship life and community engagement at Shepherd to lean into our first Confirmation objective. You can find them on the welcome desk and turn them there as well.

CONFIRMATION MENTORS DURING LENT

During the church season of Lent (February 17—March 17) we will be gathering after Wednesday worship for congregation member panels to hear about how our community lives their faith out beyond the walls of our church. Then Confirmands will meet one on one with their Lenten Confirmation Mentors. Youth are responsible for assisting in choosing their mentor prior to Lent. A would be a good mentor could be:

- An adult who is 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 the whole season of Lent.
- 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 better.

More information will be passed out leading up to Lent.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration forms are web-based and can be found online at: https://www.shepherdshoreview.org/kids-confirmation.html We would ask that this form be turned in by September 9th. This form will allow our Small Group leaders and Shepherd Staff to be fully prepared for your youth to participate in our Confirmation events.

Shepherd does not have any Confirmation fees. At Baptism your congregation makes promises to support and pray for you in your new life in Christ. Our Confirmation program is a mission of Shepherd and so we are stepping into that call by supporting the full financial cost of the programming. If you wish to make a donation on behalf of the Confirmation programming, you are welcome to do so anytime.

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 was due this summer.

Rite of Confirmation—Confirmation Sunday is 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 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.

9th GRADE CALENDAR—

SEPTEMBER

16 Orientation—For PARENTS and YOUTH
23 8th/9th Graders Joining ReFuel (High School Youth Group) for kick off
30 Small Group Time joined by one of your caring adults working on stoles

OCTOBER

7 8th/ 9th Graders Joining ReFuel
9-10 Fall Retreat at Gustavus
14 Small Group Time joined by one of your caring adult working on stoles
21 Confirmation Service Prep & Pictures – Caring Adult is needed.
25 Confirmation Sunday at the 10am service.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It takes a village to raise a child! That is also key in our Confirmation ministry here at Shepherd. We do ask that parents engage and invest time in the faith learning of your child/ren as we acknowledge you are the main faith educators, and we are simply here to support you. With that, 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
- Confirmation Mentor to another youth
- Retreat chaperone
- Sunday mornings serving in worship
- Participate on a committee or ministry team at Shepherd
- Other ways you can think of that speak to your own gifts and interests.

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, a writing utensil with you to each session.
4. We value respecting 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 and peers.
   - 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 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)
   - Illegal substances
   - 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:
   - Communicate with 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.

* PLEASE NOTE: 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.

Church Main Phone Number: 651.483.5419

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Contact info to come soon.