



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Confirmation Orientation 2020 – 2021

What is Confirmation?

While Confirmation has been around in Lutheran Churches for centuries, it is important for us to pause and explore the basic idea behind Confirmation before we begin our journey together. Whether you are beginning your first year of Confirmation instruction or completing your last, it is appropriate to think about the “what” and “why” of Confirmation ministry. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has said:

“Confirmation ministry is a pastoral and educational ministry of the church which helps baptized persons through Word and sacrament to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.”

This definition challenges us to broaden our understanding of Confirmation. This ministry is much more than just three years’ worth of classes. To “identify more deeply” and “participate more fully” suggests that, regardless of our age, what God wills for us and has begun in us has not been finished, nor will it be at the completion of the Confirmation program. By the grace of God, we continue – each and every day of our lives – to walk in the newness of Christ Jesus.

Confirmation intends to instruct each individual in how to live out their daily life while walking in the newness of Christ. It teaches us the promises that God has made to us and how we can depend on those promises during our lives. It seeks to make the Christian faith and trust in God not merely an abstract concept, but a personal reality based on the honest beliefs of each person. It encourages us to live out our baptismal identity as God’s children through active participation in the church and society.

Through an in-depth study of scripture, the Sacraments, and Luther’s catechism; and through experiences of worship and the Christian life, students will come to a deeper and more personal understanding of their faith. At the completion of the program students will be called upon to make a personal public confession of faith.

Confirmation is a journey of faith filled with new questions and answers, new discoveries, new relationships, new responsibilities, and new possibilities. Clearly Confirmation is intended to be a milestone, not a destination; it is not graduation! Rather, Confirmation is a tool that equips for the life-long process of living out Christian identity.

While none of us expected to be living in this time of social distancing, we feel we cannot safely meet the guidelines of meeting in person. As long as the current situation continues, we will meet virtually via Zoom until the time we can meet again in person.

Remember, the Lutheran Church’s educational ministry does not stop after Confirmation Sunday. The church will continue to help all members grow in the faith with the community of believers no matter what age!

*God’s richest blessings to you and your family as you grow in your Christian identity!
May your journey be directed by the grace and love of our Savior Jesus Christ!*

Confirmation Program Goals

1. To gain appreciation & understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments as means of encountering God in our lives.
2. To become fully aware of the promises God has made to you and to learn how to depend on these promises throughout your life, especially in times of need.
3. To grow in your awareness of the Lutheran understanding of the Christian faith.
4. To express willingness & ability to profess the Christian faith as your own.
5. To understand that the Church is the people of God, and as the Church, we are called to serve each other and all peoples in God's Kingdom.
6. To identify appropriate service opportunities in both the church & the community, and to accept the responsibility to fulfill that service and love the neighbor.
7. To develop a greater understanding of stewardship and the Christian's responsibility to care for and wisely manage God's creation.
8. To realize that Christian growth and understanding is a lifelong process.
9. To witness Christian growth in worship, education, and service.

Overview

1. Classes meet roughly every other week (see schedule). They will be on Sundays from 12:30pm – 1:30 pm. Students will meet online via Zoom. Meeting links will be emailed out prior to each class.
2. It's hard to imagine what could be more central to our Christian lives than worship. We ask that students worship on a regular basis and hope that this is already a practice for your family. Our worship services can be found on our website www.gslutheran.org/sermons. New worship services are posted every Sunday morning.
3. Christian education is an important aspect of the Christian life. Sunday School attendance it is strongly encouraged and you will receive extra points for attending. Sunday School will be meeting virtually on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Meeting links will be sent via email.
4. The Confirmation Retreats provide an opportunity for a weekend of Christian fellowship, recreation, and relationship building with the entire Confirmation group. The cost and location is yet to be determined. Once finalized, information will be sent out regarding these trips. While we are still hopeful we will be able to have an in person retreat; if we are not we will explore a virtual format. Example cost would be \$90 a person however, the church will supplement for each person attending to make to cost around \$50 a person.

Expectations for Youth and Parents/Guardians

1. Youth and their families are asked to make a firm commitment to worship together. Worship is essential to our identity as believers in Christ. As such, worship participation is crucial to the Confirmation experience (and beyond!). Please share a selfie of you and your family watching the service with the week's bulletin in view. Pictures can be texted or emailed to Ms. Cat at 256-679-4857 or youthministry@gslutheran.org. Each confirmand this year will be expected to complete 15 worship notes. These notes can be taken at any Good Shepherd service (including Advent, Lent, and any special worship services throughout the year). Worship notes can be found with this letter as well as online, and extras are located outside Cat's office. Once completed paper copies can be placed in the main outside mailbox at the church. While we *applaud your commitment to worshipping at other congregations while out of town, we cannot count these towards your worship attendance points.* Link for Online Worship notes: <https://bit.ly/GSLCWorshipNotes>
2. Youth and their families are asked to make a firm commitment for the student to attend all Confirmation classes.
3. Students will work on and present a yearly Confirmation Project. This project will either be accomplished individually or within a group. Details and advice for this project will be given by Cat or Pastor Paul.
4. As a part of a Christian community we expect that all students attend the Confirmation Retreat. During this retreat we will cover specific Confirmation lessons. Fall Retreat location will be the Ocoee Retreat Center in Ocoee, TN and cost will be sent out once finalized.

5. As we explore what it means to be Christian, intensive experiences are helpful. Good Shepherd believes that weeklong trips give students the opportunity to experience the Christian life and community in a way that an hour long class cannot. We hope to have fundraisers to help offset the cost for these events. More details will be sent closer to those dates. For this reason each student should attend one or all of the following during their three year program:
 - a. Summer Mission Trip. 2021 trip is TBD. Details will be sent once finalized.
 - b. A week of camp at Lutheridge in Arden, NC or Lutheranch in Tallapoosa, GA. This option is individually scheduled (assistance in planning is available.) Talk to Cat if you are interested.
 - c. Affirm, June 13 - 18, 2021, University of West Alabama. Affirm is an event of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA that nurtures faith, equips youth leaders for today and tomorrow, and trains youth in discipleship skills.
6. At baptism parents and sponsors make promises to their child. Parental participation in the Confirmation program is a part of living according to those promises. We ask that you keep the promises you made to your child by engaging them in conversations about their Confirmation lessons and projects. This is a vital component of Confirmation learning for your child and takes only a few minutes.
7. As a part of our Christian vocation, we are called to work and serve in the world. Each student is expected to participate in the lending of their gifts and talents in service to the church and the world. The following acts of service are encouraged
 - a. Serve in worship. Confirmands are encouraged to serve in in any capacity. Since we are currently not having in person worship we have several opportunities to help with our virtual worship services. Opportunities include lesson reader, Prayers of Intercession or Lord's Prayer reader, singing or playing an instrument, or assisting our Media Coordinator to gather various graphics for the worship service. We are also open to new ideas to help keep our worship services new and interesting. Please let Cat know if you are interested in helping with any of these.
 - b. Pending regulations on December 20th, students will go Christmas caroling at a local senior residence care facility.
8. Monthly participation in the Middle School youth group is encouraged. This provides an opportunity for fun and fellowship, as the youth are able to build important relationships with each other. The youth group will meet one Sunday afternoon a month (not on a Confirmation Sunday).
9. We hope for our Confirmation students to attend the All Georgia Youth Gathering, February 26-28, 2021. The opportunity to gather with other Lutherans from other congregations is relevant to our understanding of the church. All Georgia will be held at Camp Grace in Roberta, GA cost is around \$125 a person. Good Shepherd will provide some funds to help offset the cost to make it affordable for each person/family.

We want to thank you for your continued support of our Confirmation program even though this is not how we planned to be starting the Confirmation program this year. This whole plan requires flexibility as to our reality living in and through a pandemic. We will begin with all virtual activities with the hope of returning to in person meetings.

Confirmation Covenant
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
2020-2021

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

1. I will regularly attend Confirmation class. If I cannot attend a class, I will inform Cat so I can receive any missed lessons.
2. I will attend Confirmation events and be an active participant in the group.
3. I will complete all work assigned, including tests and projects.
4. I will participate in worship regularly and complete the recommended number of worship notes this program year.
5. I will attend both Confirmation Retreats.
6. I will attend the All Georgia Youth Gathering
7. During my three years in the Confirmation program I will attend at least one of the following events:
 - a. Summer Mission Trip. 2021 trip is TBD. Details will be sent once finalized.
 - b. 1 week of summer camp at Lutheridge in Arden,NC, or Lutheranch in Tallapoosa, GA. This option is individually scheduled (assistance in planning is available. Talk to Cat if you are interested.)
 - c. Affirm, June 13 – 18, 2021, University of West Alabama. About Affirm: Affirm nurtures faith, equips youth leaders for today and tomorrow, and trains youth in discipleship skills. (Talk to Cat if you are interested in attending)

Student Signature: _____

Student Name: _____

I will support my child and live out the promises I made to them at their Baptism by encouraging, assisting, and discussing their participation in the Confirmation program. I will engage in conversations regarding their lessons, ensure they are in attendance at classes, worship and important events, and I will share my faith in a way that encourages them to gain a deeper understanding of God and their relationship to God.

Parent Signature(s): _____

Parent Name(s): _____

Email: _____

Contact Number: _____

While none of us expected to be living in this time of social distancing, we feel we cannot safely meet the guidelines of meeting in person. As long as the current situation continues, we will meet virtually via Zoom until the time we can meet again in person. We appreciate your flexibility and support of this program as we navigate how to continue during the times of a pandemic.