



Dear Parents and Students,

Faith Church is holding a confirmation class this Fall/Winter for all students 8th grade and above who want to explore being confirmed in the United Methodist Church. This is a time for students to be introduced to the core beliefs, practices, and expectations of a Christian, a United Methodist, and a member in the church; what it means to be a life-long follower of Jesus and how to practice that faith. This happens through a combination of fellowship, study, and small group mentoring. After completing confirmation, students have the opportunity, but not the obligation, to declare their faith publicly and join Faith Church as a fully participating adult member.

Our church holds confirmation 8th grade because at that point, students' brains have developed the ability to see two sides of an argument. Life starts becoming less black and white, and shades of grey come into focus. For their spiritual life, it allows them to start learning what it means to separate their own faith from that of their parents, pastors, and friends. Many students start wondering more about the *why* and less about the *what*. Why is it important to know what the Bible says, why should I go to church, why should I follow Jesus, why does this matter to me at all? Does a religion that started over 2,000 years ago really have anything to do with my life today and how do I even do that? Confirmation is a time that lets us explore all of that together; I hope you will join us!

Below are some of the important dates and expectations of participants, as well as some FAQs. If there is anything that isn't covered below, please feel free to reach out to me at leslie@faithunited.org or 626-340-5638. To register for confirmation please go to https://faithonline.ccbchurch.com/forms_main.php. I'm excited to see your student at confirmation this fall!

Important information

Dates and Times:

Confirmation will be held on Sundays from noon to 2:00 p.m. from September 17th to February 4th. There will also be a Friday to Sunday retreat January 19-21.

Dates to remember:

September 17: First Class and introduction to confirmation

November 26: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

December 24, 31: Christmas Break (no class)

January 19-21: Confirmation Retreat, location TBD

February 11: Confirmation Sunday

Expectations of confirmation students:

Confirmation is meant to be fun and accessible to students. However, like any formal class, there are certain expectations. In order to complete this class, students must:

1. **Commit to being physically present.** In order to learn, you have to actually show up! I understand that students and families have a myriad of options and activities, but confirmation needs to be a priority for the duration of the class. Students are expected to attend church and confirmation every week, and be present at the weekend retreat in January. Students are granted 2 absent days and I will work with any families that have legitimate conflicts.
2. **Commit to being fully engaged.** When you are fully engaged, classes are more fun and each participant will gain more from our time together. This includes leaving phones in pockets, completing any assigned homework, and participating with a good attitude.
3. **Commit to serving at least once a month** during confirmation. An expectation for any church member is to serve in the church. We will talk about this more during confirmation, but it will be an expectation that each student serves in some way during worship at least once a month. This can be as a scripture reader, in the worship band/choir, as an acolyte, communion server, worship assistant, in the tech booth, or another option that we work out together.

Expectations of confirmation parents:

1. **Commit to bringing your student.** Many of you push your students out of bed M-F to get to school, and I need that same help on Sundays! In my experience, getting out of bed is the hardest part for students: once they are here, they are glad they came.
2. **Commit to providing lunch at least twice.** Please be willing to sign up to provide 2 lunches for the group over the course of the class. We will have a sign-up on the first class date, at which time we will know the total number of participants. This does not need to be fancy! Pizza, PB&J, or a pot of spaghetti are all totally welcome options.
3. **Commit to praying for and engaging with your student.** Studies continue to show that the most important spiritual influence in a child's life is their parents. This means the most important teacher during confirmation is YOU! Your students need you to talk with them about what they are learning, how they view faith, and how they might be struggling. They need to hear you talk about your own faith journey and why it matters.

FAQ's

Q: What is the purpose of Confirmation? Why should I, or my student, be interested in making the commitment to attend this class instead of just attending Sunday School and Sunday service?

A: Sunday School and Sunday morning services are important and integral to the spiritual life of a Christian. Confirmation goes a little beyond this in a few ways. First, confirmation is a little bit like Christianity/Theology 101. We will talk about the history of the Bible, the Church, our denomination, and certain practices of the church like communion and baptism. Instead of just providing the information, we will also discover *why* this information is important to us today. Second, it also allows us to go a little bit broader. Faithful followers of Jesus exist across all church denominations and traditions. During this time, we will be able to explore the ways in

which we as United Methodists intersect and the ways we respectfully disagree with our brothers and sisters in other denominations and traditions. Finally, this time allows students to dig deeper into what it means for them to be followers of Jesus in their lives. What that looks like and how to make their faith their own.

Q: How much does this cost?

A: Great question! Confirmation costs \$100, which covers the cost of materials and the weekend retreat. Scholarships are available on a financial need basis. Please contact me for more information.

Q: Can parents participate in the class?

A: I love that parents want to be involved and highly encourage that you have at-home discussions with your student about what they are learning! However, this time is for students to bond with each other and engage honestly, both of which can be harder when parents are involved. As such, parents are welcome to sit in on the teaching time, but will be asked to excuse themselves from lunch and discussion.

Q: Who is teaching the classes?

A: Confirmation will primarily be taught by the Youth Pastor, Leslie Anneliz Moreno and Lead Pastor, Rev. Elizabeth Ingram Schindler. Other adult leaders will participate by facilitating discussions and may be asked to teach occasionally. For most of the class sessions, we will be using the curriculum "Colaborate: Methodist Confirmation" by Sparkhouse Publishers.

Q: I promise we will commit to showing up, but what if we need to miss a class for a good reason?

A: Life is busy; I totally get that! If you need to miss a class for whatever reason, please just let me know as far in advance as possible. I will ask that your student still perform any homework that is assigned for that week so they don't totally miss out. Students are granted 2 absences; beyond that we will discuss any make-up work that might be needed if they still want to complete the class. Because of the nature of the retreat and the amount of material we will be covering, that weekend is mandatory.

Q: Is confirmation fun?

A: YES! Being a Christian is not stuffy or boring and neither is Confirmation. We will play games, the homework is creative, and the lessons are meant to be interactive. Students will also be assigned to a small group with a mentor and those outside times are often what students credit as being their favorite part of confirmation.

Q: Homework?? What does that mean?

A: Each student will be given a workbook that goes along with our lessons. This is primarily meant to help each student engage with the lesson in a personal way and relate it back to their life. Sometimes we will have time to complete these activities in class, sometimes they will be assigned to finish them at home. Completing homework assignments will be on an honor system; while we may invite students to share what they discovered, I will not collect

homework or force anyone to share. Students shouldn't expect more than a page or two of activities per week and all of them are meant to be creative and engaging.

Q: What are small groups and how much time do they take?

A: At the beginning of confirmation each student will be assigned to a small group with an adult leader from the congregation. Small group leaders will attend lunch with the students, stay for most of the sessions, and will commit to meeting with their small groups once a month outside of church, usually for an hour or two. Times and locations will be agreed upon within the groups themselves. These meetings are meant to allow students to bond together, provide another adult to speak into their lives, and to allow them to talk about faith outside the walls of the church building. Every mentor will be approved by Faith Church, complete a background check, and have their own expectations and commitments for confirmation.

Q: At the end of confirmation, is a student automatically a member of the church?

A: No. The goal of confirmation is to lead students to a deeper, more personal faith, not to boost membership numbers. After successfully completing confirmation, a student has the option, but not obligation, to join Faith Church. Our hope is that every student will want to become a member, but sometimes a student will decide to only make a declaration of faith or that they are not yet ready to become a member and we will support them in their discernment.

Q: What if you didn't answer my question?

A: Contact me! My email is leslie@faithunited.org and my phone/text is 626-340-5638. I would be happy to discuss any questions you might still have.