



Confirmation
at
St. Paul-Reformation

2015-16
Handbook, Contact Information,
and Calendar



INTRODUCTION

INVITATION

St. Paul-Reformation invites seventh, eighth, and ninth graders to participate in a three-year confirmation ministry of catechesis, community life, and service in preparation for the rite of the Affirmation of Baptism at the conclusion of the third year of study. The confirmation years are years of identity formation. Through reflection on the Holy Scriptures, the Christian Tradition, and Luther's *Small Catechism*, students explore and reflect upon their Lutheran-Christian identity. In response to all the gifts that have been given to them on the day of their baptism and through this community of worship, they are invited to affirm their faith at the conclusion of this ministry training.

BACKGROUND

In the liturgy for Holy Baptism in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (pp. 227-231), the pastor lays both hands on the person baptized and calls upon God to pour out the Holy Spirit: "...the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence." These words, and the actions that accompany them, are repeated in the Affirmation of Baptism and reflect the extension of the gifts of baptism into the life of a young adult.

Properly speaking, nothing can be added to Baptism. A life of growth and maturation in the faith flows from the sacramental waters in which the one baptized is joined forever to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Confirmation is a pastoral and educational ministry of the Church that helps the baptized person identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission as the Body of Christ.

When a young person has not been baptized, Confirmation instruction can constitute preparation for Holy Baptism. The Affirmation of Baptism is something that can - and does - happen repeatedly throughout the life of an individual, calling them to return again to the waters of new birth within the community of faith. Affirming one's baptism is a response to what God has already done. Readiness for this affirmation, therefore, is a mutual decision of three groups of people:

- The confirmand
- The parents of the confirmand
- The Pastor

When all three groups agree that a person is ready to make affirmation, the candidate is prepared to affirm their promises.

LEADERSHIP

The pastor(s) of St. Paul-Reformation, staff leaders, and lay catechists bring gifts to this ministry. Special guests may also be included throughout the year, depending on their gifts, the topic, or the activity.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Lutherans have long understood that the primary place for catechesis is in the home. For this reason, the ministry of Confirmation is a *partnership* between parents and the Church, not one or the other. Taking the tasks of worship, prayer, and service seriously are the primary responsibility of the family, and – because Confirmation is a covenantal relationship – it is expected that parents will take these responsibilities seriously, reinforcing their children’s learning and formation in the home.

Just like the greater Church community, the Confirmation program at St. Paul-Reformation depends on the participation of all its members. During the year, we will need assistance from parents in encouraging youth to participate in all aspects of this ministry. Please make yourself available (and willing!) to offer help where it is needed.



CONTENT AND EXPECTATIONS

CURRICULUM

St. Paul-Reformation uses the curriculum of Augsburg Fortress titled *Here We Stand*. This curriculum, coupled with the Holy Scriptures (The *Lutheran Study Bible*) and Luther’s *Small Catechism* form the basis for instruction.

Three years of instruction are divided as follows:

- Year One, Term One: Old Testament
- Year One, Term Two: New Testament

- Year Two, Term One: Old Testament
- Year Two, Term Two: New Testament

- Year Three, Terms One and Two: Lutheran Year/Small Catechism

“HERE WE STAND” LOGIN PORTAL INFORMATION

SPR uses the curriculum of Augsburg Fortress (the Publishing House of the ELCA) entitled “Here We Stand.” This curriculum is online, and both parents and students have access to the online portal:

www.stpaulref.herewestandconfirmation.org

Each family is linked up with an account that allows you to check the schedule, see assignments and work, and receive special announcements from the Confirmation leaders. It is important that you regulate the settings on your e-mail so that communications from St. Paul-Reformation’s “Here We Stand” portal do not go into your spam folder. A copy of this handbook can be found on the “Here We Stand” portal for you to download if you need to.

LOGIN INFORMATION TO “HERE WE STAND:”

Your username is: **your e-mail address**

Your password is: **your phone number in the parish directory (no dashes)**

You can change your password in “User Settings” in the “Here We Stand” portal.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

The Sunday celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the primary instructional period for students in Confirmation. Students and their families are encouraged to develop and maintain the discipline of weekly worship attendance. To encourage this discipline, Confirmands are asked to complete 20 “Worship Reflections” from September through May. Worship Reflections can be picked up and dropped in the basket in the narthex.

FIELD LEARNING AND SERVICE

Part of our baptismal call as people of God is to serve those in need as well as to broaden our understanding of neighbors from other religious traditions and cultures. To develop compassionate hearts that are open to God’s call and aware of the broad Christian tradition, all Confirmation Students will participate in the following required field learning events:

- **Sept. 25th, Friday, 6:30 p.m.** Shabbat Service at Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul (Jonathan Eisenthal, *docent*).
- **Jan. 24, Sunday, 9:00 a.m.** Gather at St. Paul-Ref. to travel to St. George Greek Orthodox Church on Summit Avenue for the Sunday Morning Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. (Fr. Richard Andrews, *parish priest*).
- **February 15th (President’s Day)**, Interfaith Youth Day of Service (9 a.m.-4:00 p.m.) at Augsburg College. This event is an opportunity for 7th-12th grade students from all religious and cultural backgrounds to deepen

their connection to their own tradition's teachings on service and justice, to learn about the teachings of other traditions, and to inspire inter-religious respect through workshops and service projects. Transportation to and from service sites and lunch is provided.

- **April 15-16: Urban Plunge at Augsburg College:** Overnight at Bethany Lutheran Church, Minneapolis; all day Saturday at Augsburg College. Friday at 7:00 p.m., concludes on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. Meals are included.

ACOLYTES

Because learning the liturgy of the Church is the chief school of Christian formation, all Confirmation students are asked to serve as acolytes and to be present as scheduled. Training is provided, and *helping* in the Christian liturgy helps one to *understand* it. All entering seventh grade students will participate in Acolyte Training early in the year, facilitated by Sharon Starla Lee.

EXPECTATIONS

The primary requirement for participation in the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism is a living faith in Jesus Christ. This faith includes a grateful reception of Christ's love through the fellowship and mission of the Church and expresses itself in a positive attitude about the Christian life. Of Course, St. Paul-Reformation cannot in a coercive manner "require" this faith, commanding it to happen through requirements. At the same time, we expect that those who wish to affirm their baptism do so out of the experience of faith, and not because parents or family see it as a necessary obligation.

Participation in all of the above formative activities is a firm requirement. Special exceptions can be made for illness and other extenuating circumstances. **The foundational requirements are attendance at both the Sunday morning liturgy and Sunday morning class instruction.** In the service of Holy Baptism, parents and sponsors promise to bring a child to worship. Regular reception of the Holy Eucharist strengthens readiness for the affirmation of faith. Disregard for this promise will necessitate a pastoral conversation with parents and the confirmand about their readiness and desire for Confirmation.

Confirmation leaders and the Pastor will handle make-up work for Confirmation. Since it is impossible to repeat the community formation component of these learning events, please note that excused absences are the exception and not the rule. If an absence, late arrival, or early dismissal is necessary, please let your confirmation leader know ahead of time. Conferences may be requested either by the Confirmands/parents, or by one or more of the instructors. The purpose of these conferences is to increase the level of understanding, cooperation, and participation in the Confirmation ministry on the part of the student and their family.

If a family is unable to attend weekly instruction/Eucharist, alternative arrangements and a "Learning Covenant" will be made with the Confirmation instructors before the year begins, which we are more than happy to do in recognition that not all families are the same nor is it possible to always be present.

Last, it is expected that all students will treat one another and instructors with grace, compassion, and kindness that conforms to our Christian understandings of respect and dignity.

FAITH STATEMENT

Early after the new year, ninth grade students will begin to think about writing a faith statement. The ninth grade leader will work with the students to help develop this, and it will serve as the basis for discussion with the Pastor in the Ninth Grade Conference.

NINTH GRADE CONFERENCE WITH THE PASTOR

All ninth graders and their parents will schedule a meeting with the pastor in the few weeks before the Affirmation of Baptism to discuss their learning, faith, and ongoing growth in the Christian tradition. The Pastor will contact families to set this up in the spring. Ninth graders will be expected – at this meeting – to demonstrate familiarity with the promises made in baptism:

- To say the Apostles' Creed;
- To say the ten commandments;
- To demonstrate a basic familiarity with Lutheran understandings of baptism and the Holy Eucharist;
- To articulate their own faith in a faith statement, to be written in the spring; this will serve as the basis of this discussion.
- To have chosen a confirmation verse from the Holy Scriptures and to articulate why this particular verse spoke to them.

PARENTAL VOLUNTEERS

St. Paul-Reformation has a small program of Confirmation, and for that reason, it is important that all families involved volunteer in some capacity to help make it work. Please be willing to "step up" to help when asked.

FINALLY...WHO IS THAT GUY THAT IS WINKING AT ME?

The cartoon version of Martin Luther illustrates the playfulness of the man who began the Lutheran Reformation of the Church (1517). Martin Luther was a German monk who wanted to see the Church reform, not split into numerous denominations, least of which one named after himself. Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* as a means to help educate the ability of the Church on the basic precepts of our Christian faith. He

organized the catechism into the main parts of the Christian Faith: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments.

CONFIRMATION LEADERS

St. Paul-Reformation has four Confirmation leaders:

Grades Seven and Eight:

Jeanne Heer, 7-8 Co-Leader (heerj@juno.com); 763-954-1552

Pam Peyton, 7-8 Co-Leader (pam_peyton@yahoo.com); 651-487-5067

Grade Nine (Lutheran Year):

Pr. Andrés Albertsen (albertsenandres@hotmail.com); 651-216-5147

Pr. Patrick Shebeck (pastorpatrick@stpaulref.org); 651-224-3371 x12



ST. PAUL-REFORMATION
LUTHERAN CHURCH

AMERICA'S FIRST WELCOMING LUTHERAN CONGREGATION