



The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

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Welcome to the confirmation program for 2017–2018!

I'm excited about working with you this year and growing together! Before I get to what I hope for this coming year, I just want to let you know a little about my philosophy of confirmation.

First of all, I see confirmation as an opportunity for youth to take on their own faith lives—to figure out what they believe and why they believe it in relation to the witness of our traditional faith and to wrap their own language around their faith. So, while there will definitely be information that I will convey in classes, I hope that the times we get together will be times of questioning, exploration, honesty and personal growth.

Because I hope this, I absolutely need this to be a safe place. And, I need your help in making it a safe place. To do this, I will need three adults to volunteer each meeting to help out with classes (and I'll have sign-up sheets at the orientation—see below); I will need parents/guardians/a responsible older sibling to come in to pick up the confirmands after class; and I expect that all participants in confirmation meetings will be kind and respectful to one another. I hope that you can understand why I think this is absolutely essential and confirmation cannot happen without the creation of this safe space.

Secondly, I see confirmation as the building of relationships. Relationships with God, relationships with peers, relationships with the pastor, relationships with adults in the church community, and relationships with younger children. I understand relationships to be a two way street. You will expect things of me as the pastor and of us as the church and we will expect things of you. All of these expectations will be managed within the context of relationship. *This means that when an expectation isn't doable for some reason, we will be in conversation about that.* If you can't make a class or a family night, you need to let me know. If there is a problem with an expectation I lay out below, talk to me. We can work through it. If I am not meeting some expectation that you have, please let me know! *Relationships are built on communication, trust, love, and grace.* I hope that I will always extend these things to you and I ask that you do the same for me and the congregation.

So, with that, here's the basic program:

On September 11th and 18th at 7pm in the "Upper-room" youth room, there will be orientation sessions. I expect that you will be able to make one of these nights – either one that you would like. At the orientation, I will talk more in-depth about the coming program year and why we're doing what we're doing; there will be lots of opportunity to ask questions; we'll talk about and sign a covenant together; you'll have a chance to meet other parents and participants; and parents/guardians will sign up to volunteer for one night of class as an adult assistant.

Over the weekend of September 22–24th, we will be having our confirmation retreat at Ma-He-Tu. This is a time of fun, spiritual growth, and relationship building. The expectation is that confirmands will get to this retreat at least once during the three years that they are in confirmation.

Starting in October, we will begin our class schedule. This year, all classes will meet on Monday nights at 7:00pm until 8:15pm.

In order to work around holidays with this schedule, the 2017–2018 program year will be as printed below. There are only six class meeting times, three family nights, and two special gatherings (more information on these dates will be forthcoming). I expect that you will make these a priority and that you will be there. Again, as I said earlier, if you have to miss, please contact me and we'll figure out what is best for everyone.

6th grade:

October 2
November 6
December 4
January 8
April 9
May 7

7th grade:

October 16
November 13
December 11
January 22
April 16
May 14

8th grade:

October 23
November 20
December 18
January 29
April 23
May 21

Family nights:

October 30
April 30
June 4

Special Gatherings

February 13 *This is Tuesday
March 31 *This is Saturday

You may notice that confirmation classes will not be meeting during Lent. The expectation is that students will attend three Wednesday evenings during Lent for the meal, Communiversity (a class of their choice), and Holden Evening prayer. On each of these nights, they will have a pre-scripted interview that they will need to do with an adult member

of the congregation who they are not related to and they will have some questions to answer about the communiversity class that they attend.

Speaking of worship, confirmands are expected to attend a service on Sunday (or Wednesday) of their choice. Please consider how to make this a priority. At minimum, I will be expecting **10 sermon response forms** over the course of the entire year from each of the youth; but, I would love to see everyone more often than that in services. It is expected that **each confirmand in 7th and 8th grade will be an acolyte** at services as needed. I will be looking for volunteers who might also be willing to help out in leadership in other ways; such as readers, ushers, communion assistants, and musicians, especially at the 9:30am service.

Finally, for those of you in **8th grade, there will be a project to complete** and present to the council before you can complete your Confirmation. More information about that project will be given to you in the Spring. Your Confirmation service will be held on Reformation Sunday, October 31st, 2018, on Reformation Day! A pretty awesome day to be confirmed on!

I believe this is all you need for now. I hope that you will attend one of the orientation sessions for more information and to address any questions or concerns that you have. I'm excited to work with you this year and I am praying that this year of confirmation would be a blessing to you. See you soon!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Lena Warren". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lena Warren
Pastor