



## WEST LINN LUTHERAN CHURCH

2014-2015

# Confirmation Guide

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AFFIRMATION OF  
BAPTISM

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## What is Confirmation?

*Confirmation is a human-made practice or "rite" in which a person publicly confirms (or "professes") his/her faith in Jesus.*

The Lutheran Church baptizes people at any age because we believe that God's Holy Spirit gives faith to all, even to infants. Confirmation is an opportunity for a person to learn about the Christian faith and tradition in order that they might stand up on their own and publicly affirm that faith. They are "confirming" the gift that they receive in Baptism.

### What If My Child Isn't Baptized

Confirmation itself is an exploration of God's gift of grace in baptism and will help you as a parent to discuss the opportunity for your youth to be baptized. You can make a decision together and arrange for baptism with our pastors.



### Does My Child Have To Be Confirmed?

While confirmation is not required in the Bible, it is an important part of our faith development as Lutheran Christians. This stepping stone brings a central focus to God's **grace**: a focus not on anything that we do to deserve God's love, but a focus on what God has done for the whole world through Jesus. The confirmation process creates opportunities for folks to engage with the truly revolutionary message of the Gospel. We want our youth to explore, wrestle, and struggle with their gift of baptism.

Youth are inundated with messages about Christianity in our culture, many of which have nothing to do with grace, love, or compassion. Confirmation is a wonderful way to give youth good information and experience about what it means to live the Christian life.

So, in short no your child doesn't have to be confirmed, but the opportunities afforded by such a process are great.

## What Steps Lead to a Person Getting Confirmed?

A person becomes confirmed by:

1. Committing (along with parents or guardians) to the confirmation process of WLLC.
2. Studying and learning about Scripture and a grace-based approach to Christian teaching with peers, teachers and members of the congregation. Making a public statement of faith.

## What is the Confirmation Process at WLLC?

The Sunday night youth gathering is at the heart of our youth ministry program. All youth in grades 6 through 12 meet on Sunday nights during the school year from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

We spend time together with games, music, snacks, services projects and prayer. We have small group break-out time to meet in various age levels for Bible study and sharing opportunities.

In addition, youth work on service projects, study at home, engage in conversation and discussion outside of church, sing songs, travel to camp, attend retreats, and participate in worship and the total life of the congregation.

In the fall of their freshman year of high school young people make a public statement of faith. The next day at worship they are blessed and confirmed by the congregation, friends, family, and we celebrate this stepping stone of faith! They now participate as confirmed members of the congregation.

## What does a Sunday night look like?

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### **4:30 - 4:45 All Youth Gathering**

- *Welcome, hang out, brief activity as a large group*

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### **4:45 - 6:15 Small Groups**

- *A time for study, discussions, spiritual explorations, service project preparations, fellowship, etc.*

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### **6:15 - 6:30 Snacks and Closing**

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THE  
CONFIRMATION  
PROCESS TAKES  
THREE YEARS  
TO COMPLETE.

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Students in grades 6-8 cover the entirety of the Bible using a wonderful graphic novel called *Manna and Mercy*, and explore the six parts of Luther's Small Catechism. Class format combines games, activities, group discussions, Bible study, and memory work to introduce students to the materials. This is to supplement what parents are already teaching at home. Middle school youth and their parents are engaged in this **confirmation process for THREE YEARS plus the fall of their freshman year.**

## Parents & Guardians: True Teachers

WLLC firmly believes that parents are the primary faith teachers. Our responsibility as the church is to support you as you raise your children. Faith is not taught so much as it is "caught", and this requires time and mindfulness for all involved.

We will encourage you as parents to engage your student in a lively discussion and prayer time soon after each session. This is an opportunity for you and your student to engage in discussion about faith and spirituality

Ultimately, over the course of 3 years, we will see your child(ren) for approximately 288 hours (and that's a liberal estimate). By comparison, the average American teen IN A SINGLE YEAR will spend more than 3000 hours watching television. As parents, you simply have more contact time with your child, and this means that you are in the best position to cultivate and explore questions of spirituality and faith with them. This can feel like an incredible responsibility – but you are not alone! We want to support you and the cohort of parents involved in this important undertaking.

In addition, church staff, teachers, volunteers, and even the pastors don't have all the answers for engaging your child in matters of faith. Young folks are discovering who they are, and often ask questions, or do things for which we are totally unprepared. However, that is the gift that young people bring to our community: they ask questions, and do things that force us to consider our assumptions and convictions. Young people can be incredible teachers.

Ultimately, we expect that you will be an active part of the confirmation process, because without you, TV will drown out God's persistent call for justice and compassion in the world. Your willingness to listen and to encourage engagement makes all the difference!



## Our Partnership with Your Family

### What you can expect from us

- You can count on WLLC leaders to present the biblical narrative in ways that are engaging, honest, relevant, and engaging.
- You can count on us to **keep you informed** of your child's progress and behavior in the group, as well as if your child voices anything that causes us concern.
- You can count on us to **support YOU** as the PARENT! If you make a decision that your child doesn't agree with (and you will!), if we hear about it (and we might!), you can trust that we will support your decision as what is in your child's best interest.
- You can count on us to be there for you! If you ever have questions or concerns about your child's instruction, faith development, or anything else, please contact us so that we can **work together with you** for the best for your child.
- **We will provide clear scheduling and calendars**, and we will do everything in our power to let you know what's going on well in advance of when it actually happens. Attached to this sheet there is a rough calendar. Updates and current calendars will always be available at [www.wllc.org](http://www.wllc.org) under the "Grow" tab.



## Our Partnership with Your Family

### What we expect from you

- We expect that your student will attend each **weekly youth/confirmation activity** scheduled on Sundays, 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.
- We expect that you will have your child in **weekly worship**, as well as encouraging and aiding him or her in **participating in worship** as a Sunday Servant (lector, usher, greeter, assisting minister).
- We expect that you will be **asking your child about class**, what they are wondering about, as well as learning.
- We expect that you will help your child **be prepared** for class. Some of their work will require them to ask you, or an important adult in their life a question or two.
- We expect that you will **support what we are doing** in the faith formation process.
- We expect that if you have questions, comments, or concerns, you would **contact us directly so we can have a discussion**.
- We expect that you will **check the "Grow" tab at [wllc.org](http://wllc.org)** for updates on calendars as well as opportunities to work with your student in their faith formation.

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WLLC has a special  
Pre-Confirmation  
One Night/One Day  
Retreat designed  
for the  
9th Grade Student.

## Putting It Together: All Things Confirmation

### Confirmation Camp

**What is Confirmation Camp?** Camp is a chance for youth to explore faith and spirituality out of the context of life at home and school.

Every summer confirmation students travel down to rural Cheshire, Oregon (approximately 40 minutes outside of Eugene) to Camp Lutherwood Oregon for an opportunity for dedicated study and fun. Lutherwood provides interesting and dynamic programming (swimming, rock climbing, canoeing, games, hiking, campfires, community building and much more). Youth are expected to attend camp three times.

Registration information about camp will go out to families approximately three months before we intend to go as a confirmation class. We typically go for one week in July. For more information about Camp Lutherwood visit [www.lutherwoodoregon.com](http://www.lutherwoodoregon.com)

### Confirmation Retreats

**What is a retreat?** A retreat is a time to “get away” from our usual activities of life to focus on coming into greater compassion for the world through biblical study, reflection, and community. WLLC has a special pre-confirmation day retreat designed for the 9th grade students in our Confirmation program, typically in the fall.

**What is the retreat format?** Each year, a “brand new” retreat experience is planned, so there is no one set format. Often, but not always, these are overnight experiences. Settings – such as ocean, forest, mountain – have been chosen for the opportunity they provide for students to get fresh reflections on their relationship with God. The purpose of the retreat is to stir their spiritual imagination and give them time to begin to write their faith statement.

**Why do we do confirmation retreats and camp?** There are several great reasons for offsite learning. First of all, some material is simply better covered through an extended period of time and through experiences. For example, it is one thing to talk about being part of the Body of Christ; it is another thing entirely to give students opportunities to depend upon each other and work together.

Secondly, the retreats and camp offer a unique time for students to build relationships with others not in their group, as well as having a more casual experience with their pastors and other adults such as parents or church staff.

Understanding the challenging economic times, we attempt to offer the retreats for as little cost as possible, and there is financial assistance available for both camp and retreats if that is an issue for your family.

**What we expect from you**

1. Parents need to insure that their student(s) attend the ENTIRE retreat, or the entire week of confirmation camp.
2. We recognize that parents are the ones primarily responsible for the Christian Education of their children. Therefore, as part of the program, we may ask parents to participate in the retreat in a variety of different roles, such as small group leaders, chaperones, drivers or cooks.

**What if my child cannot attend camp or a retreat?** Because this is part of the Confirmation process, we urge parents to make it a priority for your child. Nonetheless, we understand that there may be times when a child simply cannot attend due to illness or mitigating circumstances. Please keep the pastor or staff informed of your situation.

## Study: Manna and Mercy

This year Confirmation students will engage with *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe*



### What is it?

**Manna and Mercy is a 100-page hand-printed paraphrase of the Bible**, from Genesis to Revelation -- a graphic novel of sorts, written with imagination, clarity, humor, and cartoons. Built around the twin themes of

food sharing and forgiveness, it helps us to look at scripture with new eyes and rediscover how God's Word is a means of life and grace rather than destruction and death.

### What should I expect?

Every week or two your child will have a project or discussion time with you they must complete before the next week's class. This will include a chapter of reading and a single sheet of questions to respond to. The sheet includes a question that must be asked of an adult. A complete schedule of the assignments and due dates is attached to this document.

### What materials do youth need?

- The church will provide a copy of *Manna and Mercy*. Parents are encouraged to purchase their own copy and study along (copies are only nine dollars and can be purchased at [www.mannaandmercy.org](http://www.mannaandmercy.org)). There may be a parent study group offered during the 4:30 pm-6:30 pm Sunday session; watch your email for news on this option.
- Make sure that each 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm session your youth brings:
  - A three-ring binder, a pencil, a highlighter,
  - and a copy of an NRSV Bible,
  - and their copy of *Manna and Mercy*.

### How should my youth turn this work in?

All the work is available for the youth to do on paper or online. Visit [www.wllc.org/middle-school-confirmation.html](http://www.wllc.org/middle-school-confirmation.html) for more information on how to do work online. Paper copies of the following week's assignment will be available on Sundays at 4:30 pm-6:30 pm.

## **Service**

Serving is a powerful way to learn about how and why we do what we do as Christians. Confirmands have approximately one **service project** a month. Details will be provided closer to these projects. Servant projects are arranged by Jordan Beck. You can call him at 503-313-0853 for more information. Participation in servant projects is an expectation for confirmation.

We encourage families and sponsors to try and be part of at least one service project with their student. It is a great learning lesson, and kids also need to see their parents and other role models serving, too.

## **Day Camp Service**

Each summer confirmands are expected to be a volunteer counselor at Day Camp, a one-week program which provides a safe, fun, summer space for elementary school students to learn about faith and spirituality. Middle school youth are trained to serve as group guides, and they work in leadership teams with high school youth and adults.

## **Good Friday & Christmas Worship**

Every year the youth help produce two liturgies: one of West Linn's four Christmas services, as well as the Good Friday Liturgy during Holy Week (the week before Easter). Confirmands assist with the creation and presentation of these services, which can include drama, music, readings, serving Holy Communion, and ushering.

## **Confirmation Banquet**

Grades 6-8 will be asked, along with their parents, to help setup, serve and cleanup the confirmation banquet for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and their families. Typically, this happens on the first Saturday in November

## Faith Statements

**Confirmation** at WLLC is a milestone marked by a public expression of faith by the students, and a public blessing of the students by the congregation. Typically this all takes place on the weekend of **All Saints Sunday** (the first weekend in November).

Central to being Lutheran is the idea that there is no “spiritual ladder” to climb. We are all works in progress! All are sinners AND saints at the same time. Youth are involved in a process of composing a **faith statement** as a way to learn more about who they are in the world and who Christ is in the world - not to satisfy a requirement of the church, nor to make people happy or say the words they think are the right words to say. Because of this we sometimes call this process **faith statement/questions** to reflect that we don’t have all the answers, but will continue to learn and grow as we get older.

**Sponsors** In the second half of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, youth are invited to ask an adult to be their sponsor. Parents/guardians and the pastor/staff can help in this decision. Sponsors and students enter into a covenant relationship. Sponsors make a commitment to participate in a certain number of activities and sessions with the students with the goal of building a Christian friendship and having meaningful faith conversations. All of this will help the student prepare to publicly express his or her faith.

**Confirmation Banquet** This event will take place the Saturday night before the Confirmation Sunday. At this time youth will read their faith statements/questions to family, friends, and representatives of the congregation. Parents are asked to help with the financial cost of this dinner and are responsible for the selection of the meal and invitations to personal friends and family.

**Robes** are worn on during the confirmation worship service. You will need to be fitted for the appropriate sized robe 2 weeks before the Confirmation Day.

**Reception** Typically a cake reception in honor of the students follows the worship service. Family and the congregation are invited.