



## Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Dear Parents and Guardians of Confirmation-Age Youth,

It's hard to believe that summer is winding down and that it's time to start thinking about our 2017-2018 year of confirmation study! I'm sending this letter to all families who have a young person of confirmation age. For those who are returning for a second year – welcome back! For those who haven't started yet, we are shifting back this year to a three year program that will encompass youth in grades 6-8. The Rite of Confirmation will happen in 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, but students should participate in all three years.

**VERY IMPORTANT** Regardless if this is your first or second year, **contact the church office as soon as possible, to let us know whether or not you will be starting confirmation with us (you may indicate that on the enclosed form and put it in the provided envelope to mail back).** A lot of planning and preparing has to be done for each student, and it's very helpful if we hear from you in advance.

It is a privilege to be with you and your student(s) and to explore faith and the Bible together. **We will have a meeting in Mid-September to officially start class; however, please take a minute to respond to me about when the best class day and time would be for your family. You may mark it on the sheet, or e-mail me (twilson@peaceinsouthhaven.org).** This year, we will be talking about the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. Each student should bring the following things to class each week:

- Your favorite Bible (please let me know if you need a Bible!)
- A positive attitude and readiness to learn
- The binder that I will provide for your student or that I have already provided if you are returning.

Included with this letter is a guide to the basics of confirmation. I will have a tentative schedule as soon as I have heard back from you about a preferred date/time. We will talk about all of this in more detail in September.

Peace,

*Pastor Travis Wilson*

# 2017-18 Confirmation Guide

Pastor Travis Wilson

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Haven, MI

## **What is confirmation?**

Lutherans view confirmation not as a sacrament, but as a way to help people become adult disciples, or members, of the church. It includes a period of study, followed by a special rite during a worship service in which the person publicly affirms their faith in Jesus Christ. This is also called an “affirmation of baptism,” since they are now taking upon themselves the faith and call into which they were baptized. The church responds to this affirmation with prayer, and considers the person to be an adult member of the church with full rights and responsibilities.

Lutherans provide confirmation instruction for youth in their teen years, because we consider this the age when they’re ready to make their own affirmation of their baptism. (Of course, there is nothing mandatory or “magical” about the age. Some people are confirmed in their 20’s, 30’s, and even older yet!). So, if a young person is not ready to take the step of confirmation, I would very much respect that decision. Everyone in 6th grade or up is welcome to take part in confirmation instruction.

## **How will the program work?**

Our confirmation instruction is divided over three years beginning this year. The material alternates each year between the Bible, the Small Catechism, and Lutheran Life or Special Topics. Each student will have the chance to learn it all. This year will be our Bible Year and we’ll start with an overview of the Bible and the formation of the Canon in September at our first class session.

## **When and where are the teaching events?**

There are three kinds of regular teaching events:

- Worship
- Confirmation teaching events
- A community service component

*All* of these activities are important and integral to the year, so please try to plan on being there for *as many of them as you can!* The location of the events will be at church unless otherwise specified. If you are in need of transportation, please be in contact with me and we will try to arrange something to help out. Each event will include some “large group” time where we are all learning together, and some “small group” time where discuss how our faith and lives intersect. If there will be a snack or meal, we ask confirmation students and parents/guardians to take turns providing the snack at our teaching sessions.

### **What else will we be doing?**

Throughout the year, we try to add additional activities that are educational, service oriented, or just for fun. I would encourage you to take part in some of those extra activities that we might offer throughout the year.

### **What is expected of confirmation students?**

Here is what I'll be expecting from each of our students by the end of the year:

- Have a desire to publicly affirm your faith in Jesus Christ, receive the church's prayer, and become actively involved as a disciple in the faith community of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Focus on growing as a disciple of Jesus. At our first meeting, we will talk about the parts of our congregational mission statement – Reflecting God's light through love and service – and our vision statements – The Father's love...our love. Christ's life...our light. The Spirit's work...our hands – that will be the framework for a balanced year of Christian growth.
- Come to all the teaching events, and let me know ahead of time if you can't be there for some reason.
- Serve as an acolyte, lector (reader), or other helper in worship- we'll come up with a schedule in September.
- Be a regular attender at worship and other church events, as often as possible.

My hope is that these expectations will not be scary, hard or too demanding; but that they will challenge each student to grow a bit. If you're concerned that something is too much for your student's situation, please talk with me and we'll negotiate something that we can all live with.

### **What is expected of parents/guardians?**

- Give priority to the students' participation in confirmation! Work with them on helping to memorize the books of the Bible using the Bible Raps, help them to be at confirmation events and retreats, and supervise them as they learn and grow this year.
- Be involved as an adult leader according to your own style – as a small group leader, overnight retreat monitor, or provider of crafts, snack/lunch/dinner, games, or other activities.
- Pray for our confirmation students, teachers, and other adult leaders.
- Talk with your students about the topics they've been learning about.
- Encourage your student to fill our 10 Sermon Notes sheets.

### **How else can I show my love and support on Confirmation Sunday?**

For parents of students who are affirming their faith at the end of the second year, I suggest a project that can be very meaningful at Confirmation Sunday time: an "Agapé Book" (*agapé* is the New Testament word for love). This is a gift that will help them to remember your love, prayers, and support for them as they start their life as a Christian adult. The book is totally your option and your design, but I strongly encourage you to think about how you can make this a special way to support your young person.

The book can be a binder, scrapbook, or some other format. It can include letters, cards, or special memories or thoughts from your time with them. Ask other church members, Sunday School teachers, family members, and anyone else who is important in your student's faith life to contribute something to

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the book too. I will be glad to write a letter if you let me know you're working on a book. Be creative – there's no wrong way to put the book together.

Since this project is not a requirement for confirmation, we will not present the books to the youth as a group on Confirmation Sunday. Instead, I suggest you give it to them on that day or shortly afterward. Whatever you decide about the Agapé Book, please keep it a secret, so it will be a surprise to the youth at the end of their confirmation instruction.

**What if I have questions or concerns?**

Please plan to come to the first September class! There will be time to meet everybody involved, ask any questions, and address any worries. If you can't make it to this meeting, or if you need to talk with me ahead of time, please contact me at the church at 637-4104 or by e-mail at [twilson@peaceinsouthhaven.org](mailto:twilson@peaceinsouthhaven.org).