
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

Confirmation Parents
and Guides Handbook

2016-2017



CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE 2016-2017

September	6 or 7	7:15 – 8:15	Parent Orientation (6 th – 8 th)
September	14	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
September	21	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group(6 th home; 7-8 th here)
September	23-24	7 pm dropoff	6 th Grade Retreat Weekend – 4:00 p.m. pickup Saturday
September	28	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
October	5	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th home; 7-8 th here)
October	12	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
October	14-16	6:15 depart	7 th Grade Retreat Weekend – return 2:00 pm Sunday
October	19	MEA Break	No Confirmation
October	26	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
October	28-30	6:15 depart	8 th Grade retreat Weekend- return 2:00 pm Sunday
November	2	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th home; 7-8 th here)
November	9	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
November	16	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
November	23	7:00 – 9:00	Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Feast
Nov. 23 – Jan. 4			Advent/Christmas Break – no Confirmation
January	4	No class	No Confirmation
January	11	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
January	18	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th home; 7-8 th here)
January	25*	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th ; 6 th Gr Sm. Groups begin)
January	30	7:00 – 8:15	Mentor Training - Option 1 - Heritage Hall
February	1*	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
February	8	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
February	9	7:00 – 8:15	Mentor Training - Option 2 - Heritage Hall
February	13	7:00 – 8:15	Mentor Training - Option 3 - Heritage Hall
February	15	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
February	22	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Serve to the Max Event (6 th – 8 th)
March 1 – April 12			8 th Graders meet with mentors to work on Faith Project
March	17-19	6:00 depart	8th Gr. Urban Immersion Retreat – Return 11am Sunday
March 1 – April 12			Lent/ Easter Break -no class except each group attends 1 Lenten Service
April	19	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Groups (6 th – 8 th)
April	26	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th) – 8 th Gr. Class Photo
May	3	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
May	10	6:15 – 7:30	Worship and Small Group (6 th – 8 th)
May	17	6:15 – 7:30	Celebration Picnic, Worship and Small Groups (6-8th)
May	19	5:45 – 11:00	8 th Grade Finale Night & Confirmation Service Rehearsal
May	21	1:00 & 3:00	Confirmation Services for 8 th Graders

*** January 25 & February 1 evenings include Parents of 7th/8th Graders for Dating & Sexuality Curriculum lead by Pastor Dave and Andrea Fieldhouse Griner.**

Welcome!

Congratulations, you and your student are about to begin a three-year journey of discovery, faith and hope. Confirmation has been central to the Lutheran faith since it began with Martin Luther and his small catechism. For you as parents, this journey began when your child was baptized and you made promises to bring them to worship, provide for their instruction in the Christian faith, to teach them the Holy Scripture, and provide for them a Christian example. Confirmation is a continuation of these promises and the faith journey of your student. Our goal is to provide an enthusiastic, authentic, and faithful confirmation program that engages our student's hearts, minds, souls and actions. We look forward to partnering with you in this journey, learning together and providing a safe, nurturing place to explore God's promises and actions in our lives. The following handbook outlines a number of important aspects of confirmation. Please read it carefully, there are lots of wonderful opportunities and we don't want you to miss a one!

What is Confirmation?

1. The public promise that our students make at the end of confirmation to take responsibility for their faith and their relationship with God.
2. The public promise that our parents make at the end of confirmation to support and walk along side of our students in their developing relationship with God.
3. The public promise of the church community, family and friends to support and walk along side our students in their developing relationship with God
4. The public reminder of God's promise to always be with us, to always be calling out to us in every situation, and to always love us.

The Three Cores of Confirmation

1. **Worship** – Almost every Wednesday during the school year we meet together for worship that is specifically designed for our students. Music is chosen with students in mind, preaching is designed to match the confirmation lessons and designed to be received at a students' level, use of audiovisuals make for a fast-paced and interactive worship experience. Worship leadership is shared between staff, high school students, lay adults, and confirmation students themselves. Ben Richter (Director of Sr. High Youth) leads our worship band .
2. **Small Groups** – Almost every Wednesday during the school year, immediately following worship, confirmation students gather together with a small group of their peers, guided by a caring adult. Our adult guides “travel” with their group for all three years to build a strong guide/group relationship. The small group has three main aspects. **First:** relationship and community building – research demonstrates that youth need significant adult relationships other than their parents to succeed in life - our small groups help foster a faithful relationship between guide and student and between students themselves. **Second:** each small group session follows a lesson and curriculum which is tied to the worship service. Guides are not Biblical experts, but faithful adults who are there to help guide, ask questions, and provide a faithful example of a Christian life. **Third:** small groups provide a place for prayer. Building a relationship with God and Jesus is central to confirmation; prayer is our weekly communication to God about our lives, the lives of others and the world. Each small group will close by praying together out loud.
3. **Service** – Jesus' life can be defined as a life of service, self-giving love, and sacrifice. As followers of Jesus we are called to be servants also. We are the hands, feet, and voice of Christ in the world; therefore, each small group will be asked to complete at least one

service project together during the year. Chris Anderson (Director of Community Outreach) will be a resource to help plan and will be available to talk with small group guides who would like suggestions for their small group service projects. We will also collect offering each week during large group worship. In late February, we will use our offering proceeds to support local ministries through our **Serve to the Max Event** by purchasing supplies and then assembling a variety of care packages for programs like WECan, People Serving People, and Global Health Ministries.

What We Hope

Our goal for our students is that the end of confirmation is simply the beginning of their adult relationship and journey with God. We hope that God and Jesus Christ become real partners and friends for them as they make significant decisions during their life. We hope that students learn to pray and talk with God. We hope that students learn to listen for and respond to God's voice, God's call, and God's direction. We hope that students will learn to seek out places where others are striving to listen for God's voice and join together with them in community. We hope that students will develop friendships and relationships that live out compassion, forgiveness, love, respect, care and concern. We hope that students will learn to be servants to the world - offering their time and their possessions to make the world a better place in the name of Jesus. We hope that students will discover that a life time of following Jesus is an abundant, rich and rewarding adventure, that isn't always easy, but is graceful and fulfilling.

Curriculum

Our curriculum will focus on biblical knowledge, a Lutheran perspective on being a follower of Jesus, service to neighbor, and relationship building between guides and students, all striving to create opportunities for discussion and application of faith in daily living. Students will receive their own curriculum binder - which along with their Bible - they are to bring with them every week. The 6th Grade curriculum has been created by Andrea Fieldhouse (Director of Family and Youth Ministry) and focuses on our identity as Lutheran Christians. It will include a blend of parent/youth nights, large group worship, home time, and finally the creation of small groups. The 7th and 8th graders this year will be using a curriculum created by Pastor Dave which focuses on applying faith to real life questions and becoming more familiar with Biblical teachings.

Retreats

When you registered for confirmation, you registered and paid for the retreats. Retreats are an important component of the confirmation experience. Each retreat will focus on relationship building between students and their guides, faith experiences in wisdom and understanding, free time to relax and enjoy being a kid, and worship experiences. Led by our staff and guests these are times you don't want to miss! Detailed lists will be available before each retreat, however, students will need to provide at least a sleeping bag, pillow, changes of clothes for outdoor activities, toiletries, a Bible, flashlight and a positive attitude.

6th Grade Retreat: September 23-24 at Camp Ihduhapi in Loretto, MN. Maps and directions will be provided. Parents are requested to drop off their youth at Camp by 7 p.m. on Friday evening and pick them up at 4:00 pm on Saturday afternoon at the Camp.

7th Grade Retreat: October 14-16 at Luther Park in Danbury, WI. Arrive at church at 5:45pm to board the buses (eat before you come!). The buses will return Sunday by 2:00 pm.

8th Grade Retreat: October 28-30 at Luther Park in Danbury, WI. Arrive at church at 5:45pm to board the buses (eat before you come!). The buses will return Sunday by 2:00 pm

8th Grade Spring “Urban Immersion” Retreat: March 17 - 19, 2017 at the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches Site in Minneapolis. An annual favorite 8th grade event, the weekend is a comprehensive experience which includes a poverty simulation, education about poverty in Minneapolis, and hands on community service opportunities. Students will need to bring clothes that are appropriate for work. Students will dine at a soup kitchen in Minneapolis one evening and spend some free time at the World Market in Minneapolis under the supervision of their guides and other adults. We have room for the first 48 students who register (24 boys/24 girls - due to housing constraints at the Retreat facility).

8th Grade Confirmation “Finale” Night: Preparing to Launch!

Friday, May 19th at Mount Calvary - 5:45 pm to 10:30 pm. This mandatory evening for our 8th graders includes rehearsal for the confirmation service itself, time for each confirmand to create his/her stole for the confirmation service, and the last small group opportunity before their group is confirmed. More details will be communicated as this important evening approaches.

Worship Notes

Worship is an important part of our Confirmation experience and our expectation is that our students participate regularly in weekend worship with their families. We ask each student to complete at least ten worship/sermon notes during the year based on a Saturday or Sunday worship service. Sermon note forms will be available in the Narthex and when each one is completed it can be dropped in the basket in the Narthex reserved for completed sermon notes.

8th Grade Mentoring and Faith Projects

All 8th grade students will meet **4 times** during the season of Lent with an adult mentor of their choice. This can be on a Wednesday night or at any time mutually agreed upon by parents, youth, and their mentor. If you are the parent of an 8th grader, begin to talk with your student this fall about who they would like to ask to be their mentor for confirmation. The mentor can be a family friend, a neighbor, a relative, or an influential coach/teacher. They can have a significant faith background or be someone who is willing to enter into conversations about faith with your student. We provide the four-meeting curriculum and you decide as a family whom you would like to choose to mentor your student. Mentors will be required to attend one orientation session in January or February (see 2016-2017 Confirmation Schedule for dates & times). If your confirmand is struggling to choose a mentor, our Faith Formation staff is happy to assist you by identifying a caring adult from our congregation. Each 8th grader is required to create a confirmation faith project which is based on these mentoring conversations. We invite creativity!

Attendance

All of the confirmation activities from small groups to worship to retreats are all designed to engage our students and their developing ability to think faithfully, spiritually, and prayerfully. It is our goal that students will *want* to attend our program. All evenings in confirmation are important. Retreats are an integral part of confirmation - not options. We believe that full participation in confirmation is something that will impact the entire life of a student more so than sports or other extra-curricular activities.

We do take attendance at all confirmation events. It is our opportunity to be sure students are being cared for, and when students are infrequent or not in attendance, our guides will contact parents to determine the reason for the being absent. However, there is no penalty for missing an evening or a retreat. Students will be confirmed at the discretion of the Pastors of Mount Calvary. So, if your child is tired, worn out, or simply needs a break on a Wednesday night, please allow them the opportunity to do what is most important and best for them. However, we will tell you that we believe that confirmation is one of the most significant developmental activities for your child. We will work hard to make every activity meaningful, enjoyable, and faith-filled. Our hope is that you choose for your student to take advantage of each and every opportunity.

Parental Involvement

The good news from research is that parents are still the number one influence in the life of their child! The other good news is that if faith, worship, and following Jesus are important to you, it will likely be important to your child. Here are four ways you can support and encourage your student in the confirmation program:

1. Worship at least twice a month with your student on Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday
2. Pray daily for your student, their life, and their faith development
3. Pray weekly for and support your student's small group leader and the Mount Calvary staff
4. Get involved in your own faith development activity. Children often grow to the levels of faith of their most significant adult mentors.

Friends

Students and families are welcome to invite friends to attend confirmation, even if they are not enrolled. Friends are welcome to join us for the large group worship experience, but **not** the small group sessions. Friends who would like to consider joining confirmation should have their parents contact Brenda Lund (Faith Formation Assistant) to begin the registration process and to set up an orientation meeting with Andrea (6th grade) or Pastor Dave (7th & 8th grade).

Guide Background Checks

To ensure the safety of our children and adults, each year we require all of our volunteers who guide and lead our confirmation program to complete a basic background check. The form is found on our website and is kept confidential.

Code of Confirmation Conduct

With over 300 kids, 50 adults, and every inch of space being used on Wednesday nights, there is bound to be a little friction from time to time during confirmation. Because of this we have

expectations for our confirmation students about how to treat each other and the building during confirmation. If everyone follows this code of conduct, we will have a great year.

Code of Confirmation Conduct:

1. Confirmation students always respect themselves, each other, their small group leader, pastors, and all adults in charge. They will not insult each other, put each other down, make rude gestures, or physically harass each other. Every confirmation student has the right to learn and grow in their faith.
2. Confirmation students always respect and care for Mount Calvary's building and grounds. This is God's house -- pick-up after yourselves and others.
3. Confirmation students understand that to make Confirmation a good experience, they will participate fully in all activities
4. Confirmation students follow directions the first time and do their best to complete the work assigned.
5. Confirmation students will come prepared and on time. They will remember their Bibles, curriculum binders, and pens/pencils each week.
6. Confirmation students understand that one of our goals is to build community - taking care of each other and ourselves. As a result, non-prescription substances (alcohol, drugs, tobacco products) are not used in the building or on the church grounds or at retreat sites or anywhere else!
7. Confirmation students will turn off & put away all electronic devices during worship and small group.
8. Confirmation students will commit themselves to growing spiritually in their faith.
9. Confirmation students will not leave the building without an adult during confirmation.
10. Confirmation students will work hard at having fun! (dancing, singing, etc.)

Discipline Policy

As a community of faith, Mount Calvary is intended to be a very gracious and welcoming place. Part of that is our expectation that youth and adults will be respectful and appropriate with each other. The following is how we will address issues if they arise. First instance – A guide brings the issue to the awareness of Pastor Dave. Pastor Dave will speak with the student (and/or the group if necessary). Second instance – Pastor Dave will speak with the student and/or the group if necessary, **and** parents will receive a phone call and may be asked for a meeting with Pastor Dave, the student, and the guide to discuss and create a plan for improved behavior. Third instance – If a third instance arises, the student will no longer participate in the group confirmation program .

Cost

For program year 2016-2017, the confirmation registration fee is \$155. This annual fee covers the costs of all retreats, on/off-site events, and transportation. In addition, it supports our special events and professional musicians. Scholarships are available - please contact Pastor Dave or Brenda Lund for more information.

Bad Weather

Weather cancellations will be posted on the Mount Calvary website. If school is cancelled due to bad weather, there will be no confirmation. Parents should use their own judgment about driving to confirmation in bad weather.

Web Site

Please check our web-site for information before you contact our staff. The schedule, handbook, and other important information can be found at www.mountcalvary.org.

E-mail Reminders

E-mails will be sent out on an as-needed basis with updated information, upcoming sessions, and other information. We hope this will be an additional way to communicate with parents during the year. It is your responsibility to make sure we are made aware of any changes to your email address.

Contact Information

Below you will find a list of the staff and their responsibilities in regards to the confirmation ministry. Please feel free to contact us at any time:

Brenda Lund – Initial contact for Confirmation, registration, payments, retreat info, data updates
brenda.lund@mountcalvary.org - 952.474.8893, ext. 118

Pastor Dave Olson – 7th and 8th Grade Confirmation, curriculum, guide support, student needs
pastor.dave@mountcalvary.org - 952.474.8893 ext. 120

Andrea Fieldhouse – 6th Grade Confirmation, mentoring
andrea.fieldhouse@mountcalvary.org – 952.474.8893 ext. 125

Ben Richter – youth worship, youth special events
ben.richter@mountcalvary.org – 952.474.8893 ext.101

Chris Anderson – volunteer and service opportunities
Chris.anderson@mountcalvary.org – 952.474.8893 ext. 102

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
301 County Road 19
Excelsior, MN 55331
Office: 952.474.8893 Fax: 952.474.0121
www.mountcalvary.org