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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

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In the certainty of our faith we are able to face these uncertain times with confidence. The teachings of our faith, the Catechism, is foundational to help believers understand what they believe and gain access to the gifts of their baptism that are so desperately needed in these challenging days; especially the gifts of joy, peace, and patience. These gifts of the Holy Spirit, granted in baptism, is what enables us to have certainty. This year we will spend time learning about the sure and certain promises our Savior Jesus Christ as well as a little Lutheran church history. However, because our condition and abilities to gather remain uncertain, and because we want to be attentive as possible to the health and wellbeing of all involved, our Confirmation program will take on a different form than in the past. At least for the beginning of the year we will be utilizing distance learning techniques for our larger gatherings. Because nothing truly replaces in person contact for relationship building, we will also seek opportunities to gather together in person where it is possible, prudent, and pastoral to do so.

Orientation will be held via Zoom on Wednesday September 16th at 6:00pm. This meeting will be recorded and posted on our website for 1 week for those unable to attend. To ensure we have your correct email address, please email Patrice@firstlutheran-barron.org.

Our first Large Group session will be held on Wednesday September 23rd at 6:00pm.

LETTER TO PARENTS

Confirmation is about finding one's own voice of faith to express doubts and fears as well as affirmations and certainties. It is an opportunity to explore faith and learn why we do what we do as Christians and believe what we believe as Lutherans. It is summed up: "What do you believe and why?" Culminating with Affirmation Worship where each Confirmand stands before God, their parents, and the congregation and claims boldly "this is my faith, and my faith alone."

No program can have such an impact on any person's life without the support of their parents. We are convinced that *parents can make the largest impact in their children's faith formation*. Basically, we have your children for about 2 hours a week, you have them the other 168 hours of the week. When parents are involved with the life of the church and talk about faith at home, their children will come to understand their own faith better and what it means to truly trust in God. As Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray." That is the entire point of Confirmation! These three years are about intentional faith formation. Confirmation is about learning what it means to be an active member of a faith community. And it is

about claiming the faith which your children were raised in as their own. This will only be successful with your help and support. For this reason, we want to encourage parents to be engaged in the Confirmation program along with your children.

There are a few specific needs we have from parents to make our Confirmation program possible.

- 1) The first is to spend time every Wednesday evening discussing what was presented at Confirmation that evening. And then take the conversation deeper by connecting that evening's topic to your life as a family. Spending just 5 minutes doing this will help you grow closer to God and closer as a family as you share your faith with your child and hear them express theirs as well.
- 2) We need your help to make this program work!
 - a. **Provide \$20 for materials:** This will help to cover program materials, student journals, and SWYG snacks.
 - b. **Assist with special events** such as SWYG Service Projects, Pizza Party, Lenten Meals, and End of Year Gathering.
 - c. **Volunteer as a small group leader, mentor, prayer partner or chaperone a special event!**
- 3) Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, we need you to pray for your children. Or better yet, pray *with* your children!

LETTER TO STUDENTS

Confirmation is about claiming your own faith and owning what you believe. It is about affirming your baptism and the promises of Christ Jesus in your life. At the end of these three years, you will stand before the congregation and make these baptismal promises:

- 1) to live among God's faithful people,
- 2) to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper,
- 3) to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
- 4) to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
- 5) to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

We believe that these things are what Christians do as a joyful response to the Good News that Jesus died and rose again for our salvation.

These three years of Confirmation are about spending intentional time learning the basic, core, and fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith by asking a lot of questions and seeing how we live out our baptismal promises. Confirmation is not the end of religious instruction but the beginning of an adult life of faith in the Church. Experience has proven that little challenge results in little growth. Therefore, we approach Confirmation with a level of seriousness. Confirmation is a program of spiritual discipline (prayer, devotion, serving, worship, etc.). Below are the expectations of Confirmation which will help keep us on track and challenged to grow. They are designed to assist you in growing as a disciple so that by the end of the program you are able to confidently claim this faith as your own.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SCHEDULE

- We meet EVERY WEDNESDAY unless there is no school.
- Confirmation events are canceled if school is canceled or dismissed early due to weather.

LARGE GROUP

- 6:00-6:30pm or so each week via Zoom, led primarily by Pastor Ron providing necessary announcements and weekly faith instruction.
- We will email weekly reminders to students with the link and password.
- We will meet every Wednesday except the second week, each month.

SMALL GROUP

- Small groups will meet weekly.
- The day and time when each group meets will vary based upon availability of students and leaders.
- Small groups may meet in person when/where appropriate as long as they take proper precautions, erring on the side of health and safety.
- Meetings will last on average 30-45 minutes but will vary by week and group.

SWYG

Second Wednesday Youth Group is exactly that. The second week of every month we will gather meet following school at FLC, snacks provided. Then from 3:45 until 5:00pm we will break up into small groups for fellowship, games, and group activities that focus on building relationships with one another and with God.

COMMUNICATION

- Our primary means of communication will be via the email address you have provided us on your child's liability forms.
- We will also contact students directly via their school email addresses or another if provided.

ABSENCES

Confirmation is a program that requires a high level of commitment that is also run with a high degree of grace. It is expected that all students attend AND participate in every event. But also understanding that life circumstances happen, if a student needs to miss an event please contact Pastor Ron to see what will be missed and if makeup work is needed. We are reminded in the grace of this approach that what is "fair" is not always what is "equal." Our goal is not for perfect attendance and busy work. Our goal is to form disciples and grow in faith. Just as each student is beginning their journey on different levels and advance at different paces, so too are the challenges different for each student to grow in their relationship and love for the Lord.

Please let Patrice or Pastor Ron know if your child will be absent. For in person events, if your child does not arrive and we did not hear from you prior, the child's identified emergency contact will be notified.

EXPECTATIONS

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship is our weekly gathering to celebrate all that our Lord has done for us, receive needed encouragement for the week, and be inspired by His Holy Word. It is expected that all members of First Lutheran Church attend worship on a regular basis, therefore it is also expected that Confirmands attend worship regularly as well. In addition to gathering for worship, Confirmands are also asked to serve in many different roles of our Worship Ministries (acolyte, usher/greeter, communion assistant, reader, multi-media, sound, video, etc.)

Attend 18 regular Sunday morning worship services and turn in 18 Worship reflections by end of April.

- Sermon notes are available on our website to submit electronically or download to print off at home.

Volunteer to assist with a worship service 2 times by end of April.

- Serve as reader, greeter (Welcome to worship video), or special music.

Evening Lenten Worship service:

- Attend worship services
- Serve one meal with your family
- Assist with worship by serving as reader, greeter, sound, or acolyte (more information will be coming in January)
- This expectation is written in hopes that we are able to gather again by this point in time.

PRAYER WARRIORS

- A Prayer Warrior is a member of FLC who is committed to pray for their Confirmand throughout the year. Because gathering is difficult these days, we are not requiring them to meet with their students this year, just to simply pray for them in their regular prayer life.

JOURNALS

- Each student will complete the Catechism Encounter and the Questions to Ponder sections of their Journal each week. Journal assignments are to be turned in to their small group leader.

LUTHER PARK: Recharge Retreat Weekend

Confirmands will be attending the Recharge weekend at Luther Park in October. The congregation supports this opportunity by paying 50% of the cost. Families are asked to contribute the remaining portion. Adult chaperones are needed. Please talk to Patrice if you care to chaperone. Scholarships are available if needed, please see Pastor Ron. Registration forms will be sent out when they are made available.

CHRIST JAM: Area Synod Youth Gathering

Christ Jam is our Northwest Synod Middle School Youth Gathering. Held in February, this daylong event is filled with worship, music, workshops and games. Please talk to Pastor Ron or Patrice if you care to drive and chaperone. Scholarships are available if needed, please see Pastor Ron.

LUTHER PARK SUMMER BIBLE CAMP

Confirmants are encouraged to attend Bible camp during the summer of their 6th or 7th Grade year. But they can certainly attend all three years! Our congregation will pay \$200 toward this cost for the first year a student attends camp. Other fundraising opportunities are also available to help defray the remainder of the cost of any year a student attends camp.

SUMMER MISSION TRIP

Our middle school youth will be traveling to Duluth, Mn July 25-30 to serve alongside local non-profits such as Boys and Girls Club, elderly care facilities and local food pantry. We get out into the community in the evenings to enjoy the local sights and end the week by preparing and serving a cook-out for the community. We have been traveling to Duluth for several years now and always find the experience to be rewarding and filled with memories that last a lifetime. The cost of the trip is \$350 per youth. Fundraising opportunities will be provided. Please see Patrice for more information.

HOMETOWN MISSION

Our own "Hometown Mission" is currently TBD.

8th GRADE CAPSTONE

8th Grade Capstone is where we put it all together and prepare our 8th Graders to affirm their faith. During this time 8th Graders will complete two primary tasks: Faith Statements and Faith Testimonies. The details will be sent in the spring. Dates for Capstone Retreat and Affirmation Sunday are TBD.