

**Confirmation 2023 – 2024**  
**Sundays at 10:45AM (Fellowship Hall)**

**I. What is Confirmation?**

Confirmation provides our youth with an opportunity to deepen and develop their own faith through three years of biblical and theological exploration. It is a time to ask questions. It is a time to grow relationship with God and one another. It is a time to challenge what we find in Scripture, in our Lutheran confessions, and in our lives so we can confidently affirm this faith into which we have been baptized.

A baptism that calls us:

To live among God's faithful people,  
To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper,  
To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
To serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
And to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

In our baptism there are layers of folks who make promises to us: **our parents, sponsors, and our congregation (speaking on behalf of the larger church)**. The confirmation curriculum makes room for confirmands to engage on each of these levels, giving each disciple a chance to invest in the faith formation of our youth.

**Parents:** It is expected that you know what the student is learning in confirmation. My prayer is for conversations about faith to happen at the dinner table. Invite **sponsors** to join these conversations. When adults normalize sharing their faith, children and youth become more apt to follow.

**Congregation:** Lay leaders (mentors) support the confirmation program through facilitating small group discussions and aiding the rostered staff in teaching. Other members of the congregation will be involved with the program as instructors of different choice sessions.

**Larger Church:** A cornerstone of the program is hands on learning about various missions of the larger church, both domestic and international. Faith instills in us heart for service and serving alongside each other deepens our relationships.

**II. Confirmation Program at Bethlehem:**

Here at Bethlehem, Middle School Ministry is focused on education and service with the hope that one can clearly articulate their faith upon finishing the program in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Children in the Confirmation program will learn the basics of scripture, confessions, service, and Christian fellowship over the course of three years, with each year having a different focus.

This year will consist of four units aimed to teach about Worship, the 10 Commandments, the Creeds, and the Lord's Prayer. At the beginning of each unit, we will meet as small and large groups for a unit introduction (these days are listed below). **Attendance on these introduction-days is mandatory, and an unexcused absence will compromise your child's standing in the program.**

Each unit will have a Choice Board that gives students options on how to engage the subject. Some of these opportunities are individual, some with friends or family, some within the congregation, and some within the larger community. On the calendar, you will see some Sundays labeled "choice" – these are days when we will be offering in-church confirmation

choices (for example, learning how to bake communion bread), but your child could also pick choices that happen at home on their own time.

With this, we have gotten rid of the previous “requirements” needed for the program – i.e. sermon reports, worship assistance, and service/outreach reports – as they are now built into each unit’s Choice Boards. Hopefully this allows students to engage with the material in a way that is impactful to their faith, learning style, and comfort. This will also respect the busy schedules of our families today. More introduction to these Choice Boards will happen Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>.

The cost for this year’s program is \$40 (cash, online, or check, payable to BLC, memo line “Confirmation”). If finances are a barrier, please be in touch with Pastor Paisley. All new students will receive a drawstring bag, Small Catechism, and The GuideBook study Bible (if they did not yet receive one at their Advanced Stepping Stone). If needed, replacement materials are available for returning students.

### **III. Retreats & Lock-in:**

- **6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Jumpstart Retreat:** Fall 2023 (exact date coming end of Aug.)
- **4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat:** Early 2024
- **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat:** Spring 2024

### **IV. 8th Grade Capstone:**

#### **Choice Board:**

Final year confirmation students will also complete the Capstone Choice Board. Students will be given this board on October 8<sup>th</sup> and will have the entire year to complete one activity/assignment section. This, too, will take the place of previously required faith testimonies and service projects, as they will be built into the board. Capstone Choice Boards *must* be complete by May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

#### **Youth Group Sundays**

Several times through the year, capstone students are specifically invited to join Youth Group to ease their transition into our high school programming. The first of these Youth Group Sunday opportunities will be Toys for Tots Sunday (December 3, 6-8pm).

#### **Metro Chicago Synod Youth Gathering: October 20 (7pm) – October 22 (12 pm)**

For the first time ever there will be a Youth Gathering for those 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students throughout the Metro Chicago Synod. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet youth from other churches in our area, especially in advance of National Youth Gathering in July 2024! This event will be at Tinley Park Convention Center, and students must register by Sept 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **National Youth Gathering: July 15 – 20 (Gathering begins July 16)**

Every three(ish) years there is a National Youth Gathering open to all students in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> in fall 2023. This will be the first Gathering since before COVID and we are so excited for it! NYG will be in New Orleans this summer and we hope to bring a group from Bethlehem. Keep an eye out for more information!

**V. Forms** – Please complete prior to September 10, 2023.

**Registration:** <https://forms.gle/UVycMuVojMxcVqjCA>

**Medical Release:** Attached to email

**VI. Calendar – Mark these dates NOW!**

**\* All entering students must attend ONE orientation meeting with at least one parent or guardian, or they will not be able to begin the program in Fall 2023.**

**\* Because we have drastically reduced the number of meeting times for confirmation, unit introductions have mandatory attendance. Missing a unit introduction will compromise your child’s standing in the program.**

**Orientation (in person) - Sunday, Sept 3** (11am, Fellowship Hall)

**Orientation (virtual) - Wednesday, Sept. 13** (7pm, zoom)

<b>Sept.</b>	<b>10</b>	(10:45, Fellowship Hall) – Rally Day: Fellowship and Fair
	<b>17</b>	Confirmation Begins!
	<b>24</b>	Large Group Sunday
<b>Oct.</b>	<b>1</b>	Large Group Sunday
	<b>8</b>	Large Group Sunday
	<b>15</b>	<b>Unit One Introduction (Large Group)</b>
	<b>22</b>	Choice
	<b>29</b>	Choice
<b>Nov.</b>	<b>5</b>	Choice
	<b>12</b>	Visit to local churches
	<b>19</b>	OFF
	<b>26</b>	OFF
<b>Dec.</b>	<b>3</b>	All Church Opportunity
	<b>10</b>	Advent Lessons and Carols
	<b>17</b>	Service Project & Christmas Party
	<b>24</b>	OFF (Christmas Eve)
	<b>31</b>	OFF (New Year’s Eve)
<b>Jan.</b>	<b>7</b>	OFF
	<b>14</b>	Large Group Sunday
	<b>21</b>	<b>Unit Two Introduction (Large Group)</b>
	<b>28</b>	Choice
<b>Feb.</b>	<b>4</b>	Choice
	<b>11</b>	Choice
	<b>18</b>	<b>Unit Three Introduction (Large Group)</b>
	<b>25</b>	Choice
<b>Mar.</b>	<b>3</b>	Choice

- 10 Choice
- 24 Churchwide Activity (Easter Egg Hunt)
  
- April** 7 **Unit Four Introduction (Large Group)**
- 14 Choice
- 21 Choice
- 28 Choice
  
- May** 5 End of Year Large Group
- 12: **Confirmation Sunday!** (9:30am)