**Kearney First UMC – Confirmation Informational Gathering (08.13.23)**

**Theology of Confirmation in the United Methodist Church**

***What is Confirmation*** *: The act by which persons who were baptized as infants or young children make their first public statement of their declaration or profession of faith. Confirmation is so closely related to baptism.*

**Confirmation in a nutshell**

1. **Public/Personal Profession of Faith**: Confirmation is viewed as a critical moment in a person's faith journey where they take ownership of their beliefs and reaffirm the promises made on their behalf by their parents or guardians during baptism. It marks the point where individuals personally declare their commitment to follow Christ and live a Christian life.
2. **Holy Spirit Empowerment**: In the United Methodist tradition, confirmation is often associated with the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is believed that through confirmation, individuals receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide them in their Christian walk.
3. **Preparation and Education**: Prior to confirmation, participants usually undergo a period of preparation, which may include confirmation classes, discussions, and reflection on their faith and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. This educational component aims to help them deepen their understanding of Christianity and its principles.
4. **Parental and Church Support**: The involvement of parents and the broader church community is considered essential in nurturing the faith of those going through confirmation. Parents are encouraged to continue supporting and encouraging their children in their spiritual growth.
5. **Church Membership**: While confirmation is not a graduation, it is often seen as a step towards full membership in the church. After confirmation, individuals are typically welcomed as official members of the congregation, allowing them to participate fully in the life and ministries of the church.
6. **Commitment to Discipleship**: The emphasis on confirmation as a foundational time for young Christians to become mature Christ followers highlights the importance of discipleship. It encourages them to live out their faith actively, not just as a one-time event but as a lifelong commitment to grow spiritually and serve others.
7. **Pastoral Guidance**: The role of pastors or church leaders is crucial in guiding young believers through the confirmation process. They provide support, mentorship, and pastoral care to help individuals navigate their faith journey effectively.
8. **Inclusive Invitation**: The note about informing the pastor if children are not baptized indicates that the United Methodist Church extends an inclusive invitation to all individuals, regardless of their baptismal status, to participate in confirmation if they desire to publicly profess their faith.

**Expectations for Parents**

As parents, your involvement in your children's faith journey doesn't end when they attend church or join confirmation class. It's crucial to engage with them throughout the process and beyond. Here are some ways you can support and nurture their spiritual growth:

1. Continuous Dialogue: Regularly talk with your youth after each event or gathering. Ask them about their experiences, what they learned, and encourage open discussions about their thoughts on God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the Church.
2. Active Participation: Attend at least **two confirmation classes** with your youth during the confirmation year. This shows your commitment to their spiritual development and allows you to share in the learning experience.
3. Family Devotions: Read the Bible together and pray with your youth. Seek God's grace together as they go through the confirmation class.
4. Worship Together: Attend worship services with your youth. Experiencing corporate worship as a family can deepen their understanding of faith and foster a sense of belonging to the church community.
5. Mentorship Support: Help your youth establish a faith partner relationship with mentors. Encourage them to connect with wise and mature believers who can guide and inspire them on their faith journey.
6. Lead by Example: Serve in worship services, demonstrating Christian discipleship, leadership, and ministry. Your active involvement sets a powerful example for your youth to follow.
7. Engage in Community Service: Participate in community service alongside your youth. By doing so, you instill the value of giving back to others and living out Christian love in practical ways.
8. Support Youth Ministries: Be present and involved in youth ministry activities, such as fundraisers, retreats, church camps, and other events. Your support and encouragement make a significant difference in their participation.

Remember, your role as a parent is to model the Christian life through your actions and choices. Share your own faith journey with your youth, discussing how your beliefs impact your decisions and values.

By actively engaging with your children in these ways, you create a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters their spiritual growth, helps them solidify their faith, and prepares them to be mature followers of Christ.

**For Confirmands**

1. Class Participation: Confirmands are expected to actively participate in the Wednesday Night classes from 5:30-6:30. We understand that sometimes unforeseen circumstances may arise, so each student is allowed up to two (2) absences. In case of absence, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on missed work by coordinating with their leader or parent. If a student knows in advance that they will miss a class, we kindly request them or their parents to inform one of the pastors beforehand.
2. Worship Attendance: We encourage both the students and their parents to attend worship services regularly. Starting from September, this includes any Sunday morning service and special services such as Christmas Eve or Ash Wednesday. As part of their confirmation journey, students are required to complete twenty (20) worksheets related to the worship services. These worksheets should be worked on together with parents and kept in the students' notebook for submission to the pastors by April 3, 2024.
3. Youth Group Participation: We highly encourage students to actively engage in the Youth Groups, which meet every Wednesday evening and Sunday night during the 2023-2024 confirmation year.
4. Mentor-Mentee Time: Each student will have the opportunity to meet with their mentor on a monthly basis. During these meetings, they will explore various spiritual practices and ways to actively participate in the church community. The specific time and place for these meetings will be discussed and arranged between the mentor and mentee.
5. Service Hours: As part of their commitment to the church and the community, students should plan on serving a minimum of ten (10) hours in service. This can be done through church-related projects or community initiatives. If participating in community projects, students need a note from the leader or sponsor verifying their involvement. Students are responsible for logging their own service hours and submitting them along with their worship worksheets. For more options to fulfill service hours, please reach out to Lyz Garwood, who can provide information about upcoming church events.
6. Confirmation Retreats: Attendance at the confirmation camp is strongly encrouraged and Fall retreat will be on October 6-8, 2023 and Spring retreat it will be held on April 19-21, 2024.
7. Inclusivity and Support: We want every student to have a fulfilling confirmation experience, and **we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind**. If any student requires alternative options or accommodations during the confirmation class, please do not hesitate to contact the pastors or Lyz Garwood. We are here to help and support each individual's faith journey.

We look forward to a meaningful and transformative confirmation experience for all our confirmands!

**2023-2024 Confirmation Lesson Schedule**

**2023**

9/13 Lesson 1 What is confirmation class? Journey Together

10/4 Lesson 2 Knowing God

**10/6-8 Fall Retreat**

10/18 Lesson 3 Jesus is Our Lord

11/1 Lesson 4 Holy Spirit

11/15 Lesson 5 Who is John Wesley?

12/6 Lesson 6 About the United Methodist Church 1

12/20 Lesson 7 About the United Methodist Church 2

**2024**

1/ 17 Lesson 8 Prayer

1/31 Lesson 9 Worship

2/7 Lesson 10 Scripture

2/21 Lesson 11 Service

3/6 Lesson 12 Hard Questions

3/18-21 Spring break

3/31 Easter

4/3 Lesson 13 Other religions

**4/19-21 Conformation Camp Sacraments: Holy Communion and Baptism**

4/19 KPS no school (Professional Dev day)

5/5 Confirmation Sunday

