

9/13/17

To: 7th & 8th Graders and H. S. Students who have not confirmed their faith and Parents,

This is your official invitation to participate in the Confirmation Class of First Presbyterian Church! We are excited to be a part of this important part of your faith journey. We are using a year-long curriculum called “re:form.”

THERE IS A LOT THAT WE NEED TO TELL YOU, SO PLEASE READ THIS LETTER CAREFULLY.

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the time set aside for youth to 1) explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and 2) learn how that commitment can be expressed through active membership in the Church. This year’s class make-up will include current seventh and eighth graders, as well as other students in high school who have not had an opportunity to confirm their faith.

During Confirmation youth are given the opportunity to study the basics of the Christian life and faith, with emphasis on Bible Study and prayer and discussion of issues / questions of faith, culminating in a written statement of faith. Basic aspects of our Presbyterian denomination, history, and theology will also be explored. Youth who complete the program still reserve the right to choose whether or not they feel ready to be confirmed. Those who decide they are ready will make a public profession of faith and declare their intention to be an active member of the church during the worship service on May 20. Youth who have not yet been baptized may be baptized during this service. Confirmation is an opportunity for youth to examine their faith within a community of peers and adults, all of whom are on a journey of faith together.

What is the format of the class?

The Confirmation Journey lasts 30 sessions and begins **Sunday, September 24** at 9:30 AM. For those who can attend, we will have an **informational meeting Sunday, September 17 at 9:30 AM** in the fellowship hall. This meeting will be for *parents and students* and will last until 10:45 AM. For the duration of Confirmation, we ask that students be in the classroom Sundays, 9:30 AM **sharp!** We will meet from September 24, 2017 until Sunday, May 20, 2018. (We will take a few Sundays off...a more detailed schedule is included in this mailing.) This year’s class will be examined by the Session and invited to profess their faith in Jesus Christ during Sunday morning worship on **Sunday, May 20, 2018**. Please put this special date on your calendar! Also, while you have your calendar out, mark **November 10-12, 2017** down for an overnight retreat at Camp Grier sponsored by the Presbytery of Western North Carolina (Friday evening through Sunday afternoon)!

Class members are expected to attend worship at First Presbyterian after each class. Toward the end of the Confirmation journey, those who choose to be confirmed will write a statement expressing their faith in their own words. They will also make a Commitment to Ministry that will mark them as an active member of Christ’s Church.

What is My Commitment to the Program?

This program can only work with the commitment of the participants. There are many demands and pressures on our time with school, sports, and other extracurriculars. We would ask, however, that if you choose to participate in this program for those 30 sessions, you make it a priority among the other demands on your time. This means we expect participants to attend the class sessions, worship, and other class activities. The more you are there, the more you will receive from the experience. Classes marked with an * on the schedule are considered "Mandatory Classes" and will need to be made up. Contact one of the pastors for instructions on making up the class. We ask that students not miss more than two (2) classes in the fall and three (3) classes in the winter/spring.

What is the Church's Commitment?

First Presbyterian Church is committed to providing for the education and nurture of young people seeking to confirm and express their faith in Jesus Christ. That is why the Confirmation Class is offered to youth. We take our commitment seriously and hope you will, too.

If for some reason you decide you are not ready to take part in Confirmation this year, you will have an opportunity to participate in another Confirmation program in the future.

What do I need to do before the class begins?

We ask *parents* to do three things before you come to class on Sunday, September 24.

Carve out some time before Sept. 24 and discuss with your child the question; "What does it mean to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ?" You do not need to write down your answers or come to any sort of agreement. We just want you to discuss what you think it means to say "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior," and give some thought to why such a profession is important.

If your child was baptized as an infant, sometime before our first meeting relive that day for him/her. If you have photos or a video that would be great! If not, tell your youth things like: what he/she wore, who came, who was the minister, where the church was, what was the weather like, did he/she cry or not. If your child has yet to be baptized, then tell him/her about your own experience of baptism (a potential intergenerational research project!).

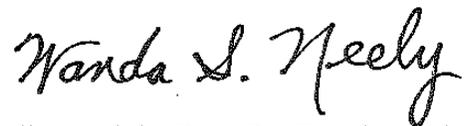
Finally, think about how you might answer the following questions, then share them with your child:

1. Do you remember when/if you made your first public profession of faith in Jesus Christ? What was that like? How old were you? What were the circumstances? What do you remember? Was it meaningful or not?
2. Can you recall a time or experience that you have had when you realized that your faith was really important to you; when the words "Jesus Christ is my Savior" took on a real meaning? What was that like? What do you remember most?

The goal for this exercise is to begin a faith conversation with your child and model for our youth what we want them to do; namely, to be able to say something of how their faith is important to them. You do NOT need to have a carefully crafted conversion story or testimony – just be honest and heartfelt.

Again, we are so excited about being a part of this significant process. We look forward to our Confirmation journey together. Call us with any questions or concerns. While we take this process very seriously, we also want to be gracious and flexible to make this the best experience it can be for all involved!

Grace and Peace,



The Rev. Adam C. Bowling and the Rev. Dr. Wanda Neely