

Dear 8th grade student parents,

I hope that this letter finds you well. My intent in writing is to inform you about the confirmation program here at Floris United Methodist Church. I hope that you find this informative as well as an exciting introduction to a huge milestone in your child's faith journey.

Confirmation is a program for students in grade 8 that wish to be confirmed in the United Methodist Church. The program is designed to study the beliefs of the United Methodist Church as well as to dive deep into what it means to live a Christian life. The program begins with a **kickoff retreat** on Saturday **January 11**. Following the retreat, ten weeks of **weekly small group meetings** will begin on **January 12** (please note that there will NOT be small groups on Superbowl Sunday, February 2) a **wrap-up retreat** from **March 27-29**, **rehearsal** on **April 18**, and the program ends with **Confirmation services** on **April 19**. Upon completion, it is an incredible opportunity for these students to stand before the congregation and proclaim their faith and their commitment to Floris. Below you will find the requirements and the calendar for confirmation

Requirements of Confirmation

Confirmation Retreats (2)

A kick-off retreat will be held on **January 11** at Floris UMC as well as a second retreat **March 27-29** at **Summit Lake Retreat Center, Emmitsburg, MD**. Each student is expected to attend both retreats in their entirety. Registration costs cover both retreats. Scholarships are available for those who have need.

Weekly Small Group Meetings (10)

Beginning **January 12**, students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate in small group discussions. Students will be placed in one of three different small groups (9:15 a.m., 11 a.m., or 6:30 p.m.) and we request that families commit to the same time each week. Students may miss **only one** of the eight small group sessions without make-up. Beyond the one absence, students **must** make up the missed meeting with a small group leader. If you see problems within your student's schedule, please contact Student Ministries staff ASAP.

Meetings with Mentors (10)

In order to personalize the experience, we expect students to meet with their mentor ten times during the program. In choosing a mentor, seek someone who is a Christian and a member of Floris United Methodist Church. Mentors need to be members of the church because they will share vows of commitment to watch over the student in the life of the church. We will send some tips for choosing mentors via subsequent email.

Paired Service Project

Each student and mentor will be required to complete a personal service project by **April 5**. A list of service opportunities will be made available at the beginning of the calendar year;

however, students and mentors can devise their own project and have it approved by Student Ministries staff. The project must take at least three hours of consecutive service time.

Interviews

Each confirmand will be required to complete an interview with a Floris UMC staff member. These interviews will be conducted near the end of the program during the second retreat in April. Interviews serve as a time for students to reflect on their experience and also to validate their decision to be confirmed.

Confirmation Rehearsal

On **April 18**, students, mentors and parents are **required** to attend rehearsal. Confirmation rehearsal ensures that students can enjoy the meaning of the day, rather than focusing on the logistics. Rehearsal times will be released in early March.

Confirmation Services

If at the end of the program, your student decides that getting confirmed is their intention, we offer three services. Confirmation takes place at the **9:15 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.** worship services **on Sunday, April 19**. In order to accommodate all of the students and keep service times to a reasonable length, we ask that parents be flexible in their desired service of confirmation. You will be provided an opportunity to reserve your student's Confirmation service during the first week of April and will be on a first come, first serve basis.

All students must be baptized before being confirmed. This can occur during the Confirmation service itself or during a service prior to confirmation. The United Methodist Church recognizes only one baptism. If your child has been baptized, they will not be rebaptized, but will be invited to remember their baptism as part of the Confirmation ceremony.

We recognize that the calendar for confirmation can appear rigorous. However, these are requirements for confirmation, and if your child is not able to meet them, they may not be able to be confirmed. This program is designed to be intensive. Our hope is that students would continue their other church commitments during this period. This program is not a substitute for Sunday worship. When deciding (as a family) whether or not your child will complete this program, please look at the following calendar:

Confirmation Calendar 2019-2020

Parent Meeting	November 10, 2018
Mentor and Small Group Leader Training	Dec 1 or 15, 2019
Retreat I	January 11, 2020
Small Groups Begin	January 12, 2020
Small Groups End	March 15, 2020
Retreat II	April 27-29, 2020
Service Projects Completed	April 5, 2020

Confirmation Rehearsal
Confirmation Services

April 18, 2020
April 19, 2020

We are looking forward to seeing you on November 10 at the parent orientation that will detail your role, your student's role, and your student's mentor's roles in Confirmation. If you have questions prior to the November parent meeting, please contact the Student Ministries office.

Bill Gray
Director of Grow Ministries
Floris United Methodist Church