

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. Compared to previous years, this year's confirmation experience will be a little different due to our new church protocols. The program begins with a **kickoff retreat** – please keep the weekend of **January 8-10** open (more details on what this will look like to come). Following the retreat, ten weeks of **weekly small group meetings** will begin on **January 17** (please note that there will NOT be small groups on Superbowl Sunday, February 7) a **wrap-up retreat** from **March 19-21** (again, please keep the whole weekend open), **rehearsal** on **April 10**, and the program ends with **Confirmation Services** on **April 11**. 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)

With the introduction of Covid-19 into our world, we have had to modify numerous plans including the confirmation retreats. At this time, we ask that you hold the weekends of January 8-10 and March 19-21 completely open for your student as we may need more time than in previous years to space out the lessons to meet the church protocol requirements. We will provide as much information as earliest as possible including a safety plan. Each student is expected to attend both retreats in their entirety. Registration costs cover both retreats – at this time we will not be asking for a full registration in advance as it is unclear on what these retreats will entail – more details on registration cost to follow. Scholarships will still be available for those who have need.

Weekly Small Group Meetings (10)

Beginning **January 17**, students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate in small group discussions – at this time these meetings will be via Zoom. Students will be placed in one of three different small groups (Sundays: 11 a.m., 3pm, 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. Again, we suggest that many of these meetings be made via Zoom or if in person, both mentor and mentee **MUST** wear masks and be spaced 6 feet apart.

Paired Service Project

This is another area that needs to be addressed as we get closer to January. It is possible that we will be able to provide a list of safe service projects at Floris in order to meet this requirement – more details to come.

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 10**, 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. Again, as we get closer we will know the nature of the service and rehearsal and will share the information pertaining to these events.

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 **on Sunday, April 11**. 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. Again, more details on what the service will look like will be forthcoming.

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 2020-2021

Parent Meeting	November 15, 2020
Mentor and Small Group Leader Training	Dec 6 or 9, 2020
Retreat I	January 8-10, 2021
Small Groups Begin	January 17, 2021
Small Groups End	March 14, 2021
Retreat II	March 19-21, 2021
Service Projects Completed	TBD
Confirmation Rehearsal	April 10, 2021
Confirmation Services	April 11, 2021

We are looking forward to seeing you on November 15 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.

Below is a link to the information page with all the registration information for the meeting – the Zoom link will be sent out once you have registered.

<https://www.florismc.org/connect/students/confirmation/>

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