

CONFIRMATION 2021

Welcome to Confirmation! We are really excited about the opportunity to provide a time of spiritual growth and transition from being a child in the church to being confirmed member at First Methodist Church of Mansfield. We thank you for taking the time to review the following information and familiarizing yourself with how our confirmation program will be structured this year. Please let us know if you have any questions!

Class Sessions

Our confirmation class sessions will take place on Sunday afternoons and will run from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. As opposed to previous years, in order to better ensure the safety of everyone involved, we are asking families to feed their students lunch prior to dropping them off in the Sanctuary. The format of our regular sessions will be as follows.

1:00 p.m.- Large Group Gathering Time

We begin our time together in the Sanctuary for a time of games, worship with music, and a message that introduces the theme for the weekly session. These services are completely geared towards the students and provide a space for them to learn more about their faith journey.

2:00 p.m.- Small Group Time

We believe most of the spiritual growth happens in our small groups. Our mentors will lead the students through a curriculum that is relevant to the message the students just heard during large group.

3:00 p.m.- Session Ends

We would like parents to pick up their students the first week in their classrooms. This gives you an opportunity to meet the mentors and ask any questions you may have for them. After the first week, you can pick up your Confirmand in the atrium below the student center near the parking lot between the Mission Center and A&E Building.

Final Retreat and Service

On April 16th and 17th, all of our confirmation students and mentors will be having a final retreat at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center in Glen Rose. This overnight retreat is a special time of celebration and bonding we provide for our students each year, and we strongly encourage all students and mentors to participate. We will finish our final teaching sessions and spend some time sharing with our students what we believe their next steps should be as they continue to transition into our Student Ministries program. This is a great opportunity for this group of students to come together as a class,

celebrate all they have done together in confirmation, and prepare for the important commitment they will be making in their life.

On Sunday, April 18th, we will be having our Confirmation Commitment Service at 3:00 pm in our Sanctuary. That is the moment of commitment and completion of this important milestone in the students' lives. This is the date to share with your families and friends to come and celebrate with your students as they take this step in their faith walk.

Volunteer Opportunities

We have several volunteer opportunities available for parents to help support our program. On the student registration form is a section for parents to fill out to let us know how you might be available to serve. We believe that your presence and service is a wonderful testimony to your students of your support for them as they come to this important decision in their faith, and we greatly appreciate your help in making this program a success. It simply is not possible without you!

Expectations

Our Senior Pastor, Rev. David Alexander, reminds us regularly that confirmation is one of the most important things that we do in the life of our church. We approach the task of training and equipping students to make the decision to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and full members of our church very seriously. At the same time, we want to make sure that confirmation is a fun and memorable experience. But it is important that our students are aware of how important we believe this program is to each of them. Because of this, we do have certain expectations that we want each student to know.

Be purposeful- Decide what you want to achieve during this time before we start.

Be involved- Participate in all activities in the appropriate way! **Try not to miss more than 2 sessions!**

Be respectful- Show respect for your leaders, mentors, and peers at all times!

Just in case we didn't cover everything, here are a few frequently asked questions.

What is the registration fee for Confirmation and what does it cover?

The registration fee for this year's confirmation class is \$140. This fee covers all the expenses for the materials that we use during confirmation including the student workbook and a Bible. Furthermore, this fee includes all meals that will be served to the students and mentors on Sunday afternoons as well as the cost of the final retreat to Glen Lake. So in short, it covers everything.

Are there scholarships available?

Absolutely! For all of our ministries, scholarships are available. We are very grateful to our church family for giving us the ability to provide scholarship funds for our students. To apply for a scholarship or to make a donation to our scholarship fund, please contact Andrew Hudson (andrewh@fmcm.org).

What if my child is not able to attend all of the sessions?

Each session of confirmation is filled with information that we believe is very important for each student to be exposed to as they work through our confirmation program. We are aware that all of the families in our church are busy, but we want to really encourage you to make this a high priority for your family and your child. Our expectation is that students do not miss more than 2 sessions of the confirmation program. If your child has to miss a session, we appreciate parents taking the time to inform the mentor team that is working with your student.

What about baptisms? Does my child need to be baptized in order to join the church? What if they were baptized as an infant?

In the sacrament of baptism, we celebrate God's grace, which calls us into relationship with God. In the United Methodist tradition, all individuals are baptized before taking the vows of membership. Our church participates in the practice of infant baptism, but we will also baptize at any time in a person's life. We honor baptisms that may have occurred under another denomination or in another church. We do not recommend being "re-baptized." If your child has already been baptized, they are ready to confirm their faith and take the vows of membership. If they have not, your child has the option to be baptized anytime between now and the confirmation service, or we will provide a time in the service for students to be baptized and we typically have 15-20 students baptized at that time. Your child has the option to be baptized in order to be confirmed. In the United Methodist church, we also celebrate baptism in several different ways. If you would like to have your child baptized by immersion, we will offer a time as a part of the retreat at Glen Lake. All baptisms during the service will be by sprinkling.

What kind of COVID-19 safety protocols are you putting in place?

- We are asking families to feed their student lunch prior to dropoff.
- Worship will be taking place in the Sanctuary instead of The Loft to ensure all participants can safely social distance.
- While inside the building, all participants will be asked to wear a mask or face covering.
- When weather permits, small groups will be encouraged to meet outside.
- Family will drop off and pick up students at Glen Lake Camp for Confirmation Retreat.

Additional questions? If you have additional questions about confirmation, please contact Andrew Hudson.