**FUMC/TINNEY CHAPEL CONFIRMATION FALL 2019**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?**
Confirmation refers to the decision a person makes to respond to God's grace with intentional commitment, publicly reaffirming his or her baptismal vows before the congregation. (If your child has not been baptized, they will make this decision before Confirmation Sunday.) Most confirmands are youth between the ages of 7th and 12th grades who have been nurtured in the church since their baptism as an infant or young child. During confirmation class, confirmands learn about the meaning of Christian faith; the history and teachings and The United Methodist Church; and an explanation of the baptismal and membership vows they will be professing.

In the early church, baptism, the laying on of hands, and Holy Communion were unified into a single ritual moment but over time, the three actions were separated from each other. In Christendom (from the 4th century to the modern period when the church occupied a central place in Western culture), baptism of infants was assumed. Laying on of hands as a confirming sign was left for later, partially because only the bishop could confirm and he might not be available until sometime later. Gradually, first communion happened at a different time.

In the current ritual in our hymnal and book of worship, these separated actions have been reunified in "Services of the Baptismal Covenant." Confirmation is both a strengthening sign enacted by the church and a profession of faith by the person. It is a response of faith to the gracious covenant into which God baptizes us.

**WHY SHOULD MY CHILD BE CONFIRMED?**

Confirmation is a critical milestone in your child’s faith journey. United Methodists use the word *confirmation* as reference to the class or preparatory time before the ritual of confirmation which is described this way in *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism*.

“When persons who were baptized as infants are ready to profess their Christian faith, they participate in the service, which United Methodism now calls Confirmation. This occasion is not an entrance into Church membership, for this was accomplished through baptism. It is the first public affirmation of the grace of God in one's baptism and the acknowledgment of one's acceptance of that grace by faith. This moment includes all the elements of conversion-repentance of sin, surrender and death of self, trust in the saving grace of God, new life in Christ, and becoming an instrument of God's purpose in the world. The profession of Christian faith, to be celebrated in the midst of the worshiping congregation, should include the voicing of baptismal vows as a witness to faith and the opportunity to give testimony to personal Christian experience.”

Two things should be noted here: one, confirmation is not becoming a member of the church ... baptism already celebrated that! Two, confirmation is a person's first public affirmation of the faith of the church as being his or her own faith. In other words, the confirmand is taking responsibility for living as a member of the body of Christ and for fulfilling God's purposes. *By Water and the Spirit* illuminates this further:

“An infant who is baptized cannot make a personal profession of faith as a part of the sacrament. Therefore, as the young person is nurtured and matures so as to be able to respond to God's grace, conscious faith and intentional commitment are necessary. Such a person must come to claim the faith of the Church proclaimed in baptism as her or his own faith. Deliberate preparation for this event focuses on the young person's self-understanding and appropriation of Christian doctrines, spiritual disciplines, and life of discipleship. It is a special time for experiencing divine grace and for consciously embracing one's Christian vocation.”

So, confirmation preparation aims at leading youth and others to embrace their vocation-the calling of God to live and witness to the reign of God announced in Jesus Christ.

**WHAT WILL MY CHILD LEARN?**

We will use the UMC Credo Confirmation curriculum which focuses on:

1. KNOW YOUR STORY... Encounter the faith narrative from creation to Christianity.

2. CONFIRM YOUR FAITH... Embrace the essential beliefs and practices of The United Methodist Church.

3. LIVE YOUR COMMITMENT ... Embody the confirmation vows and embark on the Christian discipleship journey.

These modules will include looking at:

* Understanding our faith heritage: Jewish, Catholic, Episcopal and Methodist
* Practicing the Christian faith, including: worship, prayer, the Bible, Christian ethics and outreach into the world
* Learning the basic beliefs of the Christian faith, including: God: creation, sin, salvation we have in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit
* Participating in authentic Christian fellowship and community through group experiences
* Experiencing intentional spiritual formation through all aspects of the program
* Preparing to responsibly answer Jesus' call to discipleship

**WHO MAKES THE DECISION IF MY CHILD IS CONFIRMED?**

Confirmation is about intentional commitment and during the confirmation process, your CHILD is asked to consciously embrace the Christian faith and vocation as one's own and to accept the responsibilities of Christian discipleship.

**PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:**

Students are required to attend all 6 sessions and participate actively in the community service projects. If they have to miss a class for an emergency, we’ll consider make-up options.

**WHAT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY as the PARENT or GUARDIAN?**

You are your child’s best role model in their Christian walk so be a good role model! Encourage your child’s participation, assure they attend ALL the required meetings and events, pray for the process so they gain the most spiritual growth possible, and be intentional in YOUR discipleship so you’re setting an example. You will also be asked to SERVE during the process: attend a meeting, cook/serve a meal, chaperone/plan a social event/retreat, help with worship experiences, write cards to the confirmands, support their MISSION work, etc.

**MINISTRY SAFE TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL ...**

We are a Ministry Safe denomination which means all adults who serve children in any way, must have background checks and Ministry Safe training. There is no cost to you and the training is brief, and very informative. Please call the office as you can and get the process started ... we will receive an email once your background check is complete and then we’ll send you a link for Ministry Safe.

For information contact …

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