



September 25, 2023

Dear 8th grade student parents,

I hope that this letter finds you well. I am writing to inform you about the confirmation program here at Floris United Methodist Church and to invite you to the upcoming parent information meeting on **Sunday, November 5**. 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 and older designed to study the beliefs of the United Methodist Church as well as a deep dive into what it means to live a Christian life. The program begins with a **kickoff one day retreat** on Saturday **January 6**. Following the retreat, ten weeks of **weekly small group meetings** will begin on **January 14** (please note that there will NOT be small groups on Superbowl Sunday, Palm Sunday, or Easter Sunday). There is a **wrap-up retreat** from **April 12-14**, and the program ends with **Confirmation Services** on **April 21**. Upon completion, it is an incredible opportunity for these students to stand before the congregation to proclaim their faith and their commitment to Floris UMC. Below you will find the requirements and the calendar for confirmation.

Requirements of Confirmation

Confirmation Retreats (2)

Each student is expected to attend both retreats in their entirety. The Kickoff Retreat will be one full day of events held at the church while the ending retreat will be an overnight trip to SkyCroft Retreat Center in Middletown, MD. Registration costs of \$250 will cover both retreats. Scholarships are available.

Weekly Small Group Meetings (10)

Beginning January 14, students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate in small group discussions on Sundays 9:00 a.m. OR 5:30 p.m. We request that families commit to the same time each week. Students may miss only one of the ten small group sessions without make-up. Beyond the one absence, students must make up the missed meeting with a small group leader or mentor.

Meetings with Mentors (10)

To personalize the experience, students will meet with their mentor ten times during the program. In choosing a mentor, seek someone who is an active Christian or an active member of Floris UMC. Mentors 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.

Service Project

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 to validate their decision to be confirmed.

Confirmation Rehearsal

On April 20, students, mentors, and parents are required to attend rehearsal (time TBD). Confirmation rehearsal ensures that students can enjoy the meaning of the day, rather than focusing on the logistics.

Confirmation Services

If, at the end of the program, your student decides that getting confirmed is their intention, we offer two services. Confirmation takes place on Sunday, April 21. To accommodate all the students and keep service times to a reasonable length, we ask that parents be flexible in their desired service of confirmation.

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 year. 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 your child will complete this program, please look at the following calendar:

Confirmation Calendar 2023-2024

Parent Meeting	November 5, 2023
Mentor and Small Group Leader Training	Dec (dates TBD)
Retreat I	January 6, 2024
Small Groups Begin	January 14, 2024
Small Groups End	April 07, 2024
Retreat II	April 12-14, 2024
Service Projects Completed	by April 1, 2024
Confirmation Rehearsal	April 20, 2024
Confirmation Services	April 21, 2024

We are looking forward to seeing you on **November 5 at 12:30 p.m.** in the Wesley Room 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.

Kara Stuebing
Director of Student Ministries
Floris United Methodist Church
kstuebing@florisumc.org
(703)-793-0026 x126