

# St. John's Confirmation Program Introduction:

## September 13, 2020

### I. Changes

Coronavirus has forced us to consider some changes in how we have done confirmation. The biggest change is that all of the confirmation students will be meeting in one class this year. (We plan on meeting in social hall where we can better physically distance and we will continue to follow church guidelines for mask wearing, cleaning, etc.)

We plan on offering an online option this year for students who don't feel comfortable or are unable to come to the church. Having only one class will mean we only have to do one stream instead of three, it will require a third fewer teachers, give us a decent sized class even if some of the students choose to learn from home, and hopefully it will help build greater fellowship with the confirmation students.

Because we will have a larger class, we are looking to have a rotation of parents who will take turns sitting in the back of the class and helping as needed.

We also plan to have different teachers for each section of material. Parents, if you are willing to teach/team-teach a series of lessons, please let me know.

### II. On-Line

We will have a reoccurring Zoom meeting each Sunday at 8:30a for those who are unable to come to the church. We are also looking into the practicality of recording the classes to be viewed later.

There are also links on the church website to Sermon Note and Service Point forms that can be filled out on line. As well as a spreadsheet where students/parents can view progress. (<https://stjohnwilliston.org/activities/confirmation.html>)

Because we are trying to do more things on-line, I am working to create a confirmation student email data base. If you have not already done so, please email [pastorobrien@stjohnwilliston.org](mailto:pastorobrien@stjohnwilliston.org) with the best address to use for confirmation related communications. You can add more than one address, so if students would like to receive communications directly, they can message me as well.

### III. Class times, special dates, and special circumstances

a. Confirmation is from 8:30 to 9:30 every Sunday morning.

- b. There will be NO confirmation classes...
  - 1. December 20 (IF you are participating in the Christmas Program).
  - 2. December 27 Christmas Break
  - 3. January 3 New Year's Break
  - 4. April 4 Easter Breakfast.
- c. In case of bad weather, church policy states we cancel at Level 3. For anything less, please use your best judgment on whether or not you should travel.
- d. Should there be a virus resurgence and we need to close the church again, we will notify the class by email.
- e. May 23, 2021 is the last day of Confirmation class.

#### **IV. What we will study this year**

We are in "Year A" that means we will be studying Martin Luther and the Reformation, the sacraments, what it means to live a life of faith, and the Lord's Prayer.

#### **V. Expectations**

##### a. of Students

- 1. In class (live or virtual) – be on time, participate in class activities/discussion, complete assignments (Sermon Notes and Service Points), ask questions and learn.
- 2. Bring your Bible, book(s), paper and something to write with every week.
- 3. Outside of class –come to church (watch/participate on-line), participate in youth activities, and search for ways to live your faith. (This last one is very important in a time when gathering is limited.)

##### b. of Parents

- 1. In class –bring your child to class on time/help them get online to attend class.
- 2. Attend AT LEAST the next three weeks of parent classes.
- 3. Encourage your child to participate in youth group activities and help them find ways to live their faith.
- 4. Outside of class –talk to your child about what they have been learning, talk about faith stories, encourage their commitment to growing in faith, bring them to church and youth group activities.

#### **VI. Sermon Notes and Service Points**

##### a. Sermon Notes

The purpose of confirmation is to teach the basics of Lutheran/Christian belief and help students become responsible, active church members. But becoming a

responsible, active church member is not something that can happen only in the classroom. Therefore, as part of confirmation, each year students are required to turn in notes on 7 different sermons. The goal is to lead them to a more mature participation and involvement in the worship service. "Sermon Note" forms are available on-line or in the Sunday school class room. **All 7 must be turned in to Pastor O'Brien no later than the end of confirmation.**

- This may sound overwhelming, but consider that confirmation spans 9 months. That's about (actually less than) one per month.
- You may use any schedule you wish. That is to say, you can do one a month for seven months, you can do them all within the first seven weeks, or you can do them all in the last seven weeks. (I would, however, discourage the last option. It results in lots of stress.) The choice is yours as long as you have turned in seven before confirmation Sunday.
- Some students prefer to fill out the form while they sit in church. Others jot down notes and fill out the form later, and others listen attentively to the sermon and fill out the form after a discussion with friends and family. Again, the choice is yours as long as you have turned in seven before confirmation Sunday.
- Occasionally students will attend another church with friends or while on vacation. Yes, you may turn in "Sermon Notes" from a church other than St. John, but please include a bulletin from that church. I would prefer not *all* your "Sermon Notes" be from another church, but again, the choice is yours as long as you have turned in seven before confirmation Sunday.

b. Service Points

Another part of this year's Confirmation class is service points. Again, another aspect of Christian life that expands beyond the classroom. Basically, this is how it works. You earn one point for each hour of community or church work you perform. It must be something you DO NOT get paid for and it must be service to someone outside of your own family. **You must do 10 hours before the end of confirmation. Turn these forms in to Pastor O'Brien as well.**

- This may sound overwhelming, but consider that confirmation spans over 35 weeks. That's about one hour of service or volunteering every three and a half weeks.
- There are several opportunities for service here at the church, but you need to take the initiative. Volunteering to be on the projector/soundboard rotation, helping with church clean-up/weed pulling, etc. would count toward service points.
- At various times during the year the youth group or various groups of the church have done service oriented activities. (Hopefully we will be able to do

these things again in the future.) In the past money has been raised for outside organizations with a dinner or breakfast. People have worked at the food pantry. People have served during the Easter Breakfast. We hope there will be more opportunities through youth group this year. Any of these activities would count toward service points.

- Many times your school or your neighborhood or your parent's workplace will sponsor service activities. Your participation in any of these will count toward service points.
  - My one request is that you don't do 10 hours all in one place. (i.e. 10 hours at Vacation Bible School.) Strive for some variety in your service.
- c. If you have any questions about "Sermon Notes" or "Service Points", please contact Pastor O'Brien

## **VII. Church Council**

Students are required to attend one Church Council meeting and fill out a short note/reflection form. Church Council meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00. In confirmation, not only do we learn about faith and service, but also the business side of the church in which you will be confirming your faith.

## **VIII. Discipline matters**

First I talk to the student, then parents, then church council, then removal from program.

## **IX. Attendance**

- a. If students are going to be in the program, they must attend the classes. 90% attendance is required for confirmation. That translates to no more than four absences for sickness, family travel, school activities, etc. The student is responsible for making up missed classes.
- b. If more than four classes are missed, the student and parent must meet with the pastor/teacher to discuss remaining in the program.

## **X. Confirmation Weekend – May 22 or 23, 2021**

## **XI. Questions**

# Get information/reminders about St. John youth group activities on your phone or by email

Pick a way to receive messages for St. John Youth:

- A Text the message @32g677 to the number 81010.
- If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @32g677 to (419) 679-4578.



- B Don't have a mobile phone? Prefer email instead?

Go to [rmd.at/32g677](http://rmd.at/32g677) on a desktop computer (or any web-browser) to sign up for email notifications.

\*you might be asked to download the Remind app, but that is not necessary to receive messages



If neither of those work, send an email to [pastorobrien@stjohnwilliston.org](mailto:pastorobrien@stjohnwilliston.org) and he can sign you up.