

Confirmation Handbook 2008-2009



**St. Luke Lutheran
Church and School
330 Hannahstown Road
Cabot, PA 16023
(724) 352-2777**

Dear Students (and Parents):

Your confirmation journey is about to begin or continue for another year. As your instructors, we want this to be a time to explore your faith, grow in God's love, and evaluate your commitment to living a Christian life.

Your Confirmation Day is the time when you personally and publicly affirm the baptismal vows made for you when you were baptized. Your Confirmation Day marks a milestone on your journey; however, it is not the end of the journey. It is not a graduation, but rather it is a commitment we make each and every day to walk with Christ and live out our faith. Confirmation does not mean that your faith has reached full maturity. Rather, all Christians need to continue growing spiritually so that we can continue to *confirm* and work out that faith which God has worked in our lives by what we say . . . by what we do . . . and by how we live.

We pray that the time we spend together will be exciting and productive as we share together the Good News of Jesus Christ . . . that although we are sinners, we are His and are loved by Him with an everlasting love - no strings attached!

To get the most out of our time together, please work diligently at completing the assignments as well as attending *and participating* in all the required classes and retreats.

We pray your parent(s) will not only help and encourage you in your confirmation studies but also make worshipping regularly and attending the Sunday morning education hour as a family, a priority. These are very important ingredients in experiencing the larger fellowship of God's family and continuing to grow in your journey of faith.

May you experience God's richest blessings on this journey!

Cyndi Alviani, DCE and Program Administrator
Barry Keurulainen, Senior Pastor
Jason Hoerth, Associate Pastor
Crystal Yeager, 6th grade instructor
Mike Bartos, 7th grade instructor

What St. Luke intends to offer...

A Confirmation Program that provides:

- the foundations of Christian Faith through study of God's Word, and the study of Lutheran doctrine as presented in Luther's Small Catechism.
- encouragement for regular worship, prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship, and servanthood.
- A faith mentor for your son/daughter who can be a source of spiritual support to your child.
- training and support for those of you who desire to have a significant impact in the lives of your children; the next generation of church leaders.

St. Luke Lutheran's Confirmation Program seeks to engage our youth the study of God's word, regular worship, active prayer, selfless service, and Christian fellowship—for LIFE!

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

By God's Grace and with YOUR help!

We can't do it for you! We'd love to do it with you!

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Parental Involvement and Support

When the Lord gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, He also had Moses pass on this message to His people: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

You are the primary catalyst in your child's faith development. The Search Institute's landmark report, *Youth in Protestant Churches*, shows a parent's positive influence on a child's faith development is above all other influences!

Concordia Ann Arbor Professor and DCE, Ben Freudenburg writes this in his book *The Family Friendly Church*, "I believe God's vision for faith formation is simply this:

Parents are the primary Christian educators in the church, and the family is the God-ordained institution for building faith in young people and for passing faith on from one generation to the next.

This vision is our vision at St. Luke Lutheran Church and School. You are your child's primary Christian Educator. In other words, you are your child's primary Confirmation instructor! We are here to support you in that role!

Key things you can do to encourage and assist your child:

- Bring them to church, Sunday School, and Confirmation class;
- Assist them with their class work, including memory;
- Assist them with their Family in Faith Journal;
- Ask about the things they are learning...involve the whole family in these discussions;
- Pray for your child's mentor and that significant Christian relationship;
- Pray for your child's continued spiritual growth in Christ Jesus.

2. Faithful Attendance

Regular attendance is expected for Sunday worship, Sunday School, and all class sessions. With regard to worship and Bible Class attendance, it is important to note that we as parents have a responsibility to model this for our children. Assembling together as the Body of Christ is crucial as the writer to the Hebrews states, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

If a student is sick or unable to attend class, a phone call should be made or a note should be sent with the excuse to the next class session. If you have sports, dance, music, etc. at the same time as scheduled Confirmation sessions, please talk to your coach/teacher and work out a schedule. Most will be understanding and supportive of you attending Confirmation instruction. Please note that any missed work will need to be made up.

If the public school is not in session or is canceled because of bad weather, then classes are automatically canceled for confirmation as well. Cancellations made during the day on Thursday, will be posted on the St. Luke website or on the KDKA list of closings (www.kdka.com).

3. Sermon Notes

A minimum of two (2) sermon notes must be handed in each month. Extra may be assigned at the teacher's discretion. Generally we expect students to complete 16 sermon notes each year. This is easily accomplished. Extra forms are in the back of the transept. Also, if you missed a service, there are always CDs available.

4. Memory Work

Peter encourages all Christians in 1 Peter 3:15 to *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."* Memorizing scripture and its meaning is one of those ways to always be prepared to state what you believe and why. Scripture also serves to comfort and strengthen us in times of trouble. These reasons are why memory work is a part of St. Luke's confirmation program.

We encourage memory work to be recited to a parent at home to encourage family participation in the learning process. Perhaps memory work can serve as a "verse of the week" for the entire family, or family devotions may revolve around the part of the catechism that is being memorized.

5. Acolyte Program

Once trained by the Elders, students will be asked to serve as acolyte on a rotating basis. A schedule is printed and distributed quarterly. If the student cannot serve on the day they are scheduled, they must make arrangements for a replacement.

Please dress appropriately. Dress pants or skirts with dress shoes are preferred! Beat up old sneakers or flip-flop sandals are not acceptable.

6. Service Projects

Jesus says in the gospel of Matthew that "... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve .." And James 2:26 cautions us that "...faith without works is dead." As Christians, we are to walk in the ways of Christ and follow his example. One of the ways to follow Him is to show His love through acts of service. Therefore, service projects are a relatively new, but very important part of St. Luke's confirmation program.

There are plenty of service opportunities around the church, your school, or your community. We will offer some that can be done with the Jr. High Youth Group or with your family. You may also choose to do one on your own. If you have a service project idea to do on your own or with your family, it must be a minimum of two hours of service and **MUST** be approved by your instructor.

You only need three (3) different experiences a year, one (1) of them should be a family service experience. When you have finished a project, fill out a report form, answering all questions thoroughly.

If you are looking for specific projects or need help finding projects in the church, you may contact the following people:

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| Sunday School | Mary Jean Montag, SS Superintendent, 724-352-9235 |
| Day School | Mark Wilt, Principal, 724-352-2777 |
| Buildings and Grounds | Joe Klein, Trustee, 724-943-3329 |

7. Confirmation Retreats

We will attempt to have two retreats each year—one in the fall and one in the spring. Confirmation Retreats are a mandatory part of the curriculum. Please make attendance a priority. If your child is not able to attend a retreat, make-up work may have to be done in place of retreat attendance.

Other Important Information

Curriculum

Each new confirmation student will be provided with a Thompson Chain Reference Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, and their specific textbook. Students will be assessed a materials fee to cover the cost these and other study materials. The materials fee for this year is \$20 per student. Please make checks out to St. Luke Lutheran and put "Confirmation fee" on the memo line. The 6th graders will focus on a Bible overview, the 7th graders and 8th graders will focus on the Six Chief Parts of the Catechism (the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Absolution, the Lord's Supper). Students must remember to bring their Bible, Catechism, Textbook, notebook and pencil to class.

Discipline Policy

Order in the classroom is of utmost importance. If students cannot control themselves in the classroom, then learning is disrupted for everyone. If necessary, teachers may seek the help of the parents in enforcing proper discipline in class.

One of the things we will insist on is that students will not be allowed to mock, insult, or pick on one another. The other major area of concern is that students will not be allowed to disrupt the class with their behavior.

If students are acting contrary to the conduct expected by the teacher, they will be given a warning. If they still deliberately persist in disruptive conduct they'll be asked to leave the class. They will then have to make arrangements with their teacher to make up the class time they missed. In addition, they must be accompanied by one parent for the next class.

Each teacher will establish their own policy in dealing with assignments that are not completed at the time they are due.

Confirmation Fellowship Times

Confirmation Fellowship Times are fun events for all grades 6th-8th. These events will include opportunities for the students to be together in various group-building, relationship strengthening activities, as well as a time of focus on scripture and the catechism. Attendance is strongly encouraged and some will be service project options of which students should take advantage. This important fellowship and group building time is an important part of St. Luke's total confirmation program. Parent chaperones, drivers and refreshment makers are greatly appreciated. Please see Cyndi Alviani, DCE, if you are willing to help.

Teacher Contact Information:

If you need to contact a teacher you may reach them through the Church office, or email.

- ❖ Church office: 724-352-2777

- ❖ Cyndi Alviani, DCE and Program Administrator
calviani@stlukecabot.org 724-584-8831 (cell)

- ❖ Barry Keurulainen, Senior Pastor
bkeurula@stlukecabot.org

- ❖ Jason Hoerth, Associate Pastor
jhoerth@stlukecabot.org

- ❖ Crystal Yeager, 6th grade instructor
Cyea42@yahoo.com 724-355-9142 (cell)

- ❖ Mike Bartos, 7th grade instructor
Bartos@connecttime.net 724-352-0676 (home)