

Confirmation Expectations and Schedule

What is Confirmation? Confirmation is (in most cases) a part of the follow-through on the promises parents and congregation make in response to God's promises in Holy Baptism. If you were baptized as an infant, your parents promised along with the congregation to instruct you in the faith. Confirmation class is a part of the Congregation's keeping of their promise to love you and support you in the Christian faith. If you were baptized as an older child, this is a way for you to keep the promises you yourself made. If you have not been baptized, Confirmation classes can serve as an introduction to the Christian life and an invitation to Baptism.

At Saint John, Confirmation is a three-year course of learning the foundations of the Christian Faith, with one year each focusing on the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Lutheran teaching/living. This 2026-2027 academic year, we will be engaging with the ongoing relationship between God and God's people by studying the New Testament and its recurring themes, important figures, and application to life today. Students in 6th-8th grades normally participate in Confirmation, culminating with an Affirmation of Faith in May for those who have completed their third year of classes.

As a new experience this year, the three ELCA congregations in Council Bluffs will be working cooperatively for Wednesday evening Confirmation classes. Pastor Cara Knutson from Emanuel Lutheran Church, Pastor Doug Rothgeb from Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and Pastor Luke Kuenzli from Saint John Lutheran Church will rotate in teaching and leading service or fellowship events with students from all three congregations.

Expectations for Parents: Please commit to getting your child to classes and other Confirmation events as regularly as possible, on time, and in proper attire (no offensive language or images, torso and upper legs covered). Note any special clothing instructions made for our scheduled Fellowship and Service events. Please set reminders on your phone or calendars about when your child is signed up to assist with worship or when we have anything outside of our normal Wednesday evening schedule from 6:30-7:30pm. Your part of the baptismal life of your children includes (but is not limited to!) ensuring that they participate in this opportunity to grow in faith, live in community, and learn to love God and God's people.

Parents and other caregivers are always welcome to attend classes, service projects, and fellowship events, and may occasionally be asked to help with specific activities.

Expectations for Confirmation Students: You are expected to attend Wednesday evening Confirmation classes unless otherwise arranged in conversation with Pastor Luke. Attendance is only the first step, however. When called upon, please engage in conversation on the topic at hand, and feel free to ask questions *related to the topic*. Similarly, Saturday or Sunday worship with the community of faith is an essential part of your spiritual learning and growth. Please attend regularly!

Phones and other devices will be kept in pockets or purses unless being used for a class-related activity. Devices in use during class for other purposes will be held by an adult leader until class is over.

Respectful behavior and language is expected. Please follow teacher/mentor instructions, be attentive to lessons, questions, answers, and presentations, and refrain from any put-downs. *Each put-down will be countered with an apology and two lift-ups* (words of encouragement, compliments relating to character, personality, or aptitude).

Embody Our Congregation's Mission

*"We are followers of Christ who seek to
Hear the Word,
Live the Word,
and Share the Word."*

Confirmation Students will seek to embody the mission of our congregation, putting the words we say in our worship service into thoughtful action.

HEARING the Word comes with regular attendance in Confirmation class, at worship, and in conversations with other Christians. Hearing is more than taking in the spoken word, however – it is also listening to understand. To help you contemplate the words you're hearing, we have "sermon notes" for all students to complete.

Sermon Notes: Each student will complete *10 Sermon Notes* from September-May. These forms are found on the information table in the Welcome Center or online. Sermon notes provide a framework for practicing how to hear or notice the details in the worship service that might otherwise be overlooked. Engaging in worship takes attention and practice. Please place worship notes in the "Completed" folder next to where you found the blank forms.

LIVING the Word comes from taking what we *hear* in worship and study and applying it to our own lives. This means we might have to get outside of our "comfort zones" from time to time, so we have provided some opportunities for you.

Worship Leadership: All Confirmation students will participate in the worship life of our congregation. The traditional role is as Acolyte, which consists of lighting and snuffing the candles, collecting the offering plates from the Ushers, and collecting the empty Communion cups. Additional worship leadership roles could be Lector (reading one or more lessons), Assisting Minister (leading a portion of the liturgy or prayers), Musician (providing special music), Usher (assisting people with seating, collecting the Offering, dismissing by row for Communion, stepping in as Acolytes if needed), or Audio/Visual System assistant (training required beforehand). Each Confirmation student will complete ***10 or more*** Worship Leadership roles. *Training/refreshers class will be held at 8:30 on Sept 6 and 9:30 on Sept 13, 30, and 27. All Confirmation students should attend one of these before helping lead worship.*

Final Confirmation Project: In the past, all students have been asked to complete a Lenten project. This year, I am shifting the expectation. Only our 3rd-year students preparing to be confirmed will be asked to complete a "Final Confirmation Project" that ties together their learning about the Old Testament, New Testament, and Lutheran faith (the Small Catechism) with their lived experience of relationship with God and neighbor.

As part of the Final Confirmation Project, each Confirmand should conduct two Faith Interviews about faith with other people. One should be a family member or friend, and the other should be a member of Saint John Lutheran Church to whom you are not related. An interview guide is prepared for your use.

Another piece of this project will be for each Confirmand, with Parent, Mentor, and (if needed) Pastor to develop a brief Faith Statement consisting of 3-5 sentences. This should explain what you believe about the relationship between God, people, and the world we live in. Choose a Confirmation verse that helps you to remember what that relationship means to you.

This project will (tentatively) be presented to the full Confirmation class on April 22, and should incorporate the spoken word; an ordinary, everyday object or substance; and relay God's promises to those hearing and seeing the presentation.

SHARING the Word comes after we have both heard God's Word and practiced it in our inner life, when we begin to express our faith in outward ways. To assist in taking your faith from a personal space into the community, you will complete service projects in and around Saint John, Council Bluffs, or elsewhere. This year, there are built-in monthly service projects during class time. Additional assistance with special meals and family events at church is greatly appreciated!

Service Projects: This is a time to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. Because we have 5 built-in service opportunities as well as our traditional events to assist with, each student is asked to complete 10 service projects. This can be a combination of Confirmation class service projects, helping at church functions, and projects with family or in the community. *There will no longer be a response survey to complete*, but I do need a pastor, mentor or parent to sign off on a completed project – an email or text indicating what you did will suffice!

Mentors: Sharing requires someone to share with! Each student will be assigned to a mentor group. Mentors are already-Confirmed members of the congregation who seek to help you grow in faith; support you in prayer; and be another trusted person to whom you can turn when needed. **This year, there is not a mentor week in the rotation.** Instead, mentors are invited to work alongside you with service projects and share in fellowship events. Discussion during or after those projects will be encouraged with discussion guides.

Additional Information

Summer Camp: A week of Summer Camp is highly encouraged for all confirmation students at least once during your three years. Saint John automatically pays \$150 per camper towards the cost of attending. Other scholarships are available from the camp and from Saint John. Saint John usually attends Carol Joy Holling Camp for its proximity, but other Lutheran camps also offer Middle School programming that would be similar. Assistance forms can be found on the various camp websites. You are welcome to attend camp more than one summer.

Make-up for Missed Classes: If you miss a Wednesday evening Service Project, you can complete one on your own to go toward your ten projects. A missed Fellowship Event does not need to be made up, but you will be missed! For Classes, the curriculum can be found online at Luther House of Study's Confirmation page. <https://lutherhouseofstudy.org/confirmation/>

Click the "Bible Year" tab and scroll down to the appropriate lesson/s as scheduled. Print and fill out the "Student Sheet" or answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper or Word/Google doc as you watch the class module. *Note: there are two module tabs for each topic – one for desktop and one for mobile. If you are viewing on a PC/mac, use the "desktop" button; with a tablet or smart phone, use the "mobile" button.*

You can turn this in at the Completed Sermon Note bin, or email a digital copy to Pastor Luke. Completing this will count as attendance for the missed class.

Weekly reminder: I will send out once/week reminder via email and text on Tuesday of each week. Please ensure that you provide a working email address and mobile number to receive these notifications. Your contact information will only be used for church communication, and I will not share it with anyone aside from Saint John staff.

CONFIRMATION 2026 -2027

Basic Information:

Weekly Gathering meets most Wednesdays from 6:30 - 7:30 pm.

---Classes will be held at Saint John (633 Willow Avenue)

---Fellowship Events will be based at Emanuel (2444 North Broadway)

---Service Events will be based at Our Savior's (600 Bluff Street)

Weekly Worship Times: Saturday, 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Sunday, 8:30 - 9:30 am

Sunday, 11 am -12 Noon

Contact Information:

Pastor Luke Kuenzli: 712-527-0164 (cell)

Email: revluke@saintjohnelca.org

Church office: 712-323-7173 or info@saintjohnelca.org

Confirmation Checklist:

Each Year:

_____ 10 Worship Notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
_____ 10 Worship Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
_____ 10 Service Projects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Final Confirmation Project *including all of the following*

2 Faith Interviews:

Family/Friend

Saint John Member

Faith Statement

Confirmation Verse

Old Testament tie-in

New Testament tie-in

Small Catechism tie-in

Lived experience of faith

Spoken Word

Ordinary object

God's promise