

AREA LUTHERAN CLUSTER CONFIRMATION MINISTRY

2011-2012

- I. **OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** This confirmation ministry program supports, stresses, and attempts to activate the stated objectives of the **LUTHERAN CHURCH IN**, with regards to the Church's understanding of confirmation ministry as stated below:



"CONFIRMATION MINISTRY IS A PASTORAL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH WHICH HELPS THE BAPTIZED CHILD THROUGH WORD AND SACRAMENT TO IDENTIFY MORE DEEPLY WITH THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN ITS MISSION" Confirmation ministry is not an attempt by the Church to press our young people into some specified mold. Rather the Church hopes to provide an environment where the young person, in partnership with the Church and home, can begin to reflect upon the Christian Faith and develop a personal faith and spirituality that is healthy, biblically grounded, Christ centered, theologically informed, historically rooted, pastorally sensitive, ecumenically oriented and can serve as a resource for ongoing spiritual formation as they live out their Baptismal call to ministry.

II. **CLUSTER CONFIRMATION MODEL FOR MINISTRY:**

1. Attempts to include the talents and resources of youth, congregations, pastors, community, parents, and institutions of the Church.
2. For most congregations it is a three-level program corresponding in most cases to grades eight and nine and the summer between these grades. The advantage of this arrangement is that it enables the confirmand to cover a full 3-level confirmation ministry within a span of two years.
3. Is a cooperative venture including the following congregations:
Holy Comforter, Belmont Resurrection, Kings Mt. Holy Communion, Dallas
St. Paul's, Dallas Antioch, Dallas Redeemer, Gastonia
Philadelphia, Dallas Lutheran Chapel, Gastonia Grace, Bessemer City
4. All classes will be taught by the following pastors working in teams of two: **Pastors Mike Varn, George Rhyne, Jim DuMond, Sherrill Curtis, Hobby Outten, Libby Toler, Michael Comer, Gary Weant**, Youth & Family Ministry Director, **Pebbles Cloninger**, & Seminary student, M.Div. Candidate, **Ingrid Chenoweth**.
5. The teams will rotate so as to give each pastor and staff person personal contact with each confirmand during the year.
6. Provides a basic, foundational, intensive, monthly learning experience which can then be supplemented as deemed most appropriate by each local congregation.



III. **CURRICULUM:** The Bible, Luther's Small Catechism and selected materials from the updated Confirmation Ministry curriculum, **"Hear We Stand"**, developed jointly by *Augsburg Fortress* and the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The curriculum can be viewed by visiting the Here We stand website at www.herewestandconfirmation.org

OBJECTIVES

- * To deepen and broaden our understanding of the Christian Faith from an Evangelical (Lutheran) perspective through study of the Bible and *Luther's Small Catechism*.
- * To grow and develop in both personal and corporate faith in light of the Good News of the Gospel.
- * To make choices and decision which are informed by and reflect the Christian Faith.
- * To discover the concept of vocation as we grow in faith and life in response to our Baptism.
- * To develop caring and nurturing relationships with both peers and adults in the life of the Church.
- * To grow in our spiritual journey as a member of the Church, the body of Christ, and to deepen our understanding of ministry, discipleship and servanthood.

2011-2012 Confirmation Year

Overview of Worship: Students will gain a deeper appreciation of Christian Worship as they study the different parts of the service in the *Lutheran Book of Worship, With One Voice* and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnals and resources used across the Lutheran Church. Attention will be given to the significance of the Sermon, Confession of Sins, Forgiveness, the Liturgy, Scripture reading, The Gospel, The Sacraments, Hymns, the Church Year and the Creeds.

The Apostles' Creed: The three articles of the Creed are explored and expanded upon, helping students understand the basic Biblical and theological doctrines that constitute the basis of the Christian faith. Themes explored will include: Creation, The Fall, Sin Evil, Redemption, Christology (the person and work of Christ), Salvation, Forgiveness, Eternal Life, Resurrection, Sanctification, Discipleship and the life and work of the Church. (*Key elements will be drawn from relevant Old and New Testament texts as well as selected portions of Luther's Small and Large Catechism.*)

Introduction to Luther & The Reformation: Featured will be a summary of the historical events leading up to and following the Protestant Reformation. The historical significance and impact of the Lutheran Church on both the Church catholic and society in general will also be examined along with central issues of Lutheran theology as applied to contemporary life. Also included will be a brief survey of the major doctrines of the Christian Faith as understood from an Evangelical (Lutheran) Catholic perspective. Examples: Grace, Law & Gospel, The Word of God, means of Grace, Salvation, Sanctification, Discipleship, Ethics, etc. (*Special attention will also be given to appropriate Old and New Testament texts and themes which provide the biblical and theological basis for these truths. Material will also be drawn for Luther's Small and Large Catechism as well as the Lutheran Confessions contained in The Book of Concord.*)

The year will also include a Service Project at Heritage Oaks and a field trip to the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

2012-2013 Confirmation Year

Luther & The Rediscovery of God's Grace: Martin Luther's rediscovery of God's grace revealed most clearly in *Jesus Christ, God's Living Word*, is the biblical basis for the Good News of the Gospel and the central truth around which the life and mission of Christ's Church are focused.

The Ten Commandments: The course presents the commandments as guidelines for expressing our gratitude to God and in living together as a community of God's people. Students will be challenged to apply the commandments to the many dilemmas relevant to both our personal and corporate lives.

The Lord's Prayer: This unit will include a sustained study of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer as well as Luther's understanding of prayer. The cultivation of a healthy prayer life and spirituality will also be explored as well as their relevance and importance for our personal spiritual pilgrimage in the total ministry and mission of Christ's Church.

Baptism: This unit explores the theological meaning of Baptism and encourages students to respond to the means of grace. Emphasis will be given to the concepts of Grace, Forgiveness, Salvation, our new identity as Saints (forgiven sinners), the presence of the Risen Christ and the significance of this sacrament for our lives today and in the mission of Christ's Church.

Holy Communion: This course explores the theological meaning of Holy Communion and encourages students to respond to the means of grace. Emphasis will be given to the concepts of Grace, Forgiveness, Salvation, our new identity as Saints (forgiven sinners), the presence of the Risen Christ and the significance of this sacrament for our lives today and in the mission of Christ's Church.



IV.

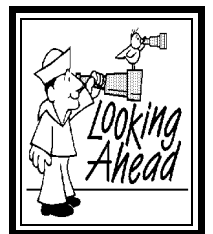
SCHEDULE: DATES AND LOCATIONS

September 17, 2011 St. Paul's, Dallas	Theme: Worship & Planning for Worship at Heritage Oaks , Coordinators: Pastors Varn, Weant Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Sept. 7, 2011
October 8, 2011 Holy Comforter, Belmont	Theme: The Basics of Worship & How Lutherans Worship Coordinators Pastor Weant, I. Chenoweth Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Sept. 28, 2011
November 5, 2011 Redeemer, Gastonia	Theme: Worship & Service Project at Heritage Oaks , Coordinators: Pastors DuMond, Outten Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Oct. 20, 2011
December 10, 2011 Lutheran Chapel, Gastonia	Theme: The Apostles' Creed (Introduction & 1st. Article) , Coordinators: Pastors Rhyne, Comer Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Nov. 30, 2011
January 14, 2012 Antioch, Dallas	Theme: The Apostles' Creed (2nd. Article) , Coordinators: Pastor Toler, Pebbles Cloninger Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Jan. 4, 2012
February 11, 2012 Philadelphia, Dallas	Theme: The Apostles' Creed (3rd. Article) , Coordinators: Pastors Varn, Weant Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Feb. 1, 2012
March 10, 2012 Resurrection, Kings Mt.	Theme: The History & Significance of The Reformation , Coordinators: Pastor Comer, I. Chenoweth Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, Feb. 29, 2012
April 21, 2012 LTSS, Columbia, S.C.	Theme: Field Trip to Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) , Coordinators: All leaders Pastor's Planning: 8:30 AM, April 18, 2012

Each congregation is encouraged to schedule an appropriate way to honor those being Confirmed and their Families.

V. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Sessions will be held on Saturday from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. with a twenty minute mid morning break. Each session will consist of a brief devotion, a plenary session, rotational learning stations, & congregational groups.
- Each confirmand should bring a study book, pencil, paper and the *New Revised Standard Translation* of the Bible for each Saturday session. The host congregation will provide the beverage and refreshments (fruit, chips, cookies, pastries, etc.) for the morning break.
- Each confirmand is expected to read and prepare any assigned materials.
- Because of the importance, volume and intensity of the materials covered each month, it is **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL** that all sessions be attended. In the event of emergencies or sickness two sessions may be missed provided all work that is missed is promptly completed. If three sessions are missed, a congregation may review the situation and the confirmand's spiritual growth to determine whether to make up missed sessions or to consider delaying confirmation for another year to allow for the completion of the confirmation process. The guiding concern in such situation will be what is in the best interest of the confirmand's spiritual formation and nurture.
- The *New Revised Standard Version* will be the translation used in our Confirmation studies and should be brought to each class.



VI. **RETREATS:** Each congregation is encouraged to schedule their own individual retreats and special learning opportunities to reinforce the monthly Confirmation Cluster Ministry.

VII. Individual congregations are also encouraged to consider the use of **PERSONAL JOURNALS, SERVICE PROJECTS** and **MENTORS** as ways of integrating the cognitive learning of our Saturday Cluster Sessions with the wider ministries of the local congregation and the Church.

VIII. **CAMPFIRMATION 2012:** Is scheduled for **June 17-23, 2012** at *Lutheridge* and is **REQUIRED** for **ALL** confirmands who have completed the first year of confirmation. Cost will be approximately \$400.00 for meals and lodging at *Lutheridge* plus additional spending money.



(Philadelphia covers half of the cost for each confirmand. There is also scholarship help available when the cost of *Campfirmation* is a financial obstacle.) *Campfirmation* involves a week of intensive study in the summer at either *Lutheridge*, between the two years of regular confirmation study. The *Campfirmation* week includes 24 hours of concentrated confirmation instruction. The participants spend their remaining hours involved in the camping program under the guidance of the qualified staff. The topics of study include: The Life of Christ, His miracles and parables, the 2nd. Article of the Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, the Church Year, personal prayer, and our call to Ministry. Creative teaching techniques are employed using interest centers, skits and dramas, audio-visuals, art work, individual and group work, a service project, and a variety of work sheets which involve the students in "learning by doing."

IX. **INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL, INTELLECTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:** As a way of supporting and strengthening our *Area Lutheran Confirmation Cluster Ministry*, we strongly encourage congregations to incorporate the following components in the hope of enhancing the quality of spiritual formation and faith development. These elements are premised on the conviction that the most effective spiritual nurture requires a healthy balance of both intellectual and experiential learning within a network of wholesome, stable and caring relationships. Therefore, we are encouraging congregations to seriously consider incorporating a mentoring and servanthood component as described below.



X. **A Mentor Program and Periodic Review Sessions:** In this program, each confirmand is assigned to a respected, active, Christian in the congregation who agrees to serve as a sponsor, confidant, friend and role model to the young person. They are encouraged to meet and work together periodically to discuss and share in the various ministries both in the Church and the wider community. Periodic review sessions will review the material studied during the previous Saturday session and help prepare for the upcoming Saturday Cluster Session.

XI. **Twenty-five (25) hours of pre-approved Supervised Ministry per year and a Personal Journal:** Over the span of the entire



Confirmation Ministry, each confirmand is encouraged to participate in a total of fifty (50) hours of pre-approved, supervised Ministry. Ideally, the hours of ministry should span the various aspects of ministry in both the Church and wider community. This ministry could include but is not limited to acolyting, ushering, choir projects, CROP WALK, serving on committees, service projects, etc. This model also includes keeping a personal journal to facilitate theological reflection and to help integrate class learning and dialogue with the confirmand's parents, pastor and mentor.



XII. **Participate with family in Worship and Sunday School at least once a month.**