

**A Word to Parents**  
**Confirmation Program 2011-2012**  
**Lord of Life, Bismarck, ND**

The confirmation program at Lord of Life is based on three essentials: content, commitment and community. It is a three-year program in which students study the scriptures and the catechism, participate in an intentional small group ministry, and offer service to the larger church and community.

It is important for students to have supportive parents and adults walk with them through the three years of instruction. Therefore, students will be asked to work with parents, small group leaders, and a mentor through experiences of the confirmation program. Parents are encouraged to participate with their children in worship, learning, and service as the opportunities arise.

**Foundations**

The confirmation program is rooted in God's Word. More specifically, it is taught and organized with the Lutheran understanding of justification by grace through faith as its basis. This principle of justification is most clearly stated in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (2:8). Every effort is made in the confirmation program to help students understand the gift of God's grace and to respond to it with a faith commitment of their own. This principle of God's gracious dealing with us and our response to God in faith runs through the three essentials of the program:

**Content:** Students will spend time in confirmation classes which are led by the pastors, youth director, and their small group leaders. These classes will include instruction in the Bible, Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Ten Commandments, Sacraments, and Martin Luther Reformer of the church..

**Community:** Every student will be assigned to a small group of 3-5 students, led by an adult facilitator. These small groups are meant to be intentional communities in which students learn to share their lives, discuss their faith, and witness to others. Small groups spend their time in instruction, prayer, and service.

**Commitment:** Students prepare for the rite of confirmation by carefully reflecting on their own commitments to God and the church. An important part of this reflection involves writing a faith paper in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and discussing it with council members. Mentors will assist the student in preparing their faith paper. When the students are confirmed in the fall of their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, their commitments to God and the church become public promises.

## An Affirmation of Baptism

In the Lutheran church, the rite of confirmation is understood to be an affirmation of baptism. In this rite, confirmands affirm the promises that God has already made to them in their baptisms. An important part of this affirmation is making a public commitment to live in the covenant of baptism as a chosen and called child of God.

In the Lutheran church, living in the covenant of one's baptism means several things. In particular, the pastor will ask the confirmands to make five promises on the day of their confirmation. These promises are found in the service for the Affirmation of Baptism and are quoted below.

*Pastor: You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism:*

- *to live among God's faithful people,*
- *to hear his Word and share in his supper,*
- *to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,*
- *to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,*
- *and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?*

As students make these commitments, it is our understanding that confirmation is not the end of a stage of growth. It is the beginning of yet another chapter in the faith life of young adults. We discourage parents and students from looking at confirmation as a "graduation" or "completion" of Christian instruction. Rather, we anticipate that following the rite of confirmation, young people will participate even more fully and more intentionally in the life of the church and in their own spiritual development. Toward this end, the pastors, adult leaders, and congregation will commit to support confirmands with our prayers, encouragement, and friendship.