

Confirmation 2017 Explanation and Details

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation typically takes place during a student's 8th grade year, but anyone older than 8th grade who has not been confirmed is welcome to participate. It is a significant time in a person's faith development as it is the time that he/she claims ownership in his/her faith journey. During the confirmation process, participants learn about the Christian faith as well as the principles of the United Methodist Church. At the end of the process, they may publicly claim their faith in front of the church. This public proclamation does not signify that the youth have learned all of the answers to their faith questions, but rather that they know they have a church home where they can continue to ask questions and search for answers. They claim a sense of belonging to the church community, and the church promises to continue to nurture them in their spiritual growth.

Friends in Faith (FIF)

Each Confirmand will have a Friend in Faith who is an adult member of Oak Grove UMC. Friends in Faith walk through the Confirmation process beside the Confirmand, attending the Sunday morning teaching sessions, outside socials, a Church Council meeting, and serve together in a mission project. The FIF will be a huge support and a valuable resource for supporting his/her Confirmand. Our prayer is that the FIF will be a life-long mentor and friend, enjoying life time successes and challenges together. The FIF may not be a parent, a parent of another Confirmand, or church staff member.

Parent Responsibilities

Even though Confirmation is designed to help teenagers take more of an adult role in the practice of their faith, parents are an essential part of the Confirmation process. Your help is needed in getting your Confirmand to ALL sessions on time, and your positive encouragement will make all the difference in the attitude of your child. We also encourage you to talk about your own faith with your child during the weeks of confirmation and beyond. In addition, there are occasions when we need parent participation and ask that you are ready and willing to help.

Your teenager may need your help in thinking through a list of names of adult church members from which the Confirmand can choose three nominees for his/her Friend in Faith. Please do not recruit your Confirmand's FIF since the Confirmation Leadership Team reserves the right to pull together a balanced team of Friend in Faiths. We will work with the Confirmand and parents on other names if none of the three nominees are able to serve or if you do not have anyone in mind. We will work to find the right match of an FIF for your child.

It is of utmost importance that you honor your child's final decision to be or not to be confirmed at the end of the Confirmation process. We will covenant with you to follow up with each Confirmand who decides not to be confirmed so that we may continue the conversations of faith begun in Confirmation. If the Confirmand's answer is "no", we hope he/she will still be present for the final event to support the other Confirmands and to enjoy the day. Confirmands who complete the classes and events will not have to repeat the entire process in order to be confirmed at a future date. You are asked to pray for your teenager and for the Confirmation Leaders that this experience will be a significant and positive event in the life of each Confirmand. Please pray that God will draw them near, allowing them to feel God's presence, love, grace and mercy in meaningful ways.

Baptism

Confirmands will be invited into discussions of baptism with the pastors and FIF. Baptism will be an important topic for discussion at home as well. Those who have not been baptized will be asked to decide if they are ready to be baptized. This is the first step, followed by Confirmation (making a public affirmation of faith, and joining the church). Because baptism initiates us into Christ's whole Church and not only into a denomination, United Methodists recognize all Christian baptisms and look upon baptism as something that should unite, rather than divide, Christians.

Decision Time

Starting on March 1, 2017, each Confirmand will be asked to meet with pastors to make a decision about whether he/she is ready to join the church. This is a decision for the Confirmand to make - the role of the adults is to support the Confirmand, and to honor the Confirmand's decision in every way. Decision time is one of the most important events of the entire process when the Confirmand will articulate his/her decision to the Friend in Faith and minister.

Meeting Times and Calendar of Events

We will meet primarily on Sunday mornings from 9:35 - 10:45 a.m. in the Youth Hall. We also ask that each Confirmand and their FIF go to one Church Council meeting (4th Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.) and that they participate in one mission project together (ideas: C4C Food Pantry, Hagar's House, etc.)

Attendance and Make-Up Work

By signing the commitment to participate that will be presented at the January Confirmation Kick-Off Luncheon, **Confirmands are expected to attend ALL sessions and events on the calendar unless there is an unforeseen family emergency. Confirmands MUST participate in the Confirmation Retreat on Friday, January 13-Sunday, January 15, 2017 at Camp Glisson in order to be adequately prepared for being confirmed. In other words, this retreat is non-negotiable, due to the inability to reproduce the experience.**

Costs:

(We want ALL teenagers to experience Confirmation. Please let us know if the cost below is a concern; scholarships are available.)

A fee of \$175 is needed to help cover the costs of the Confirmation Retreat, Confirmation Team Building Activity for Confirmands & Friends in Faith, Confirmation Reception, and other materials and supplies.

Confirmation Leadership Team

Please feel free to contact any member of the Confirmation Leadership Team.

Rev. Susan Allen Grady, Associate Pastor (sallengrady@ogumc.org or 404-636-7558 x 212)

Andy Webb, Youth Director (awebb@ogumc.org or 770-827-7336)

Shara Sanders, Youth Programs Coordinator (ssanders@ogumc.org or 404-375-0619)

Diane O'Steen, Youth Administrative Assistant (dosteen@ogumc.org or 404-931-9121)