

August 23, 2011

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

The days are growing shorter and the calendar is bursting with scheduled events, and now that the school year is underway, it is time to turn our attention to a new year of confirmation class. Confirmation is part of our middle school ministry and is meant to prepare our middle school students to answer for themselves the questions that were answered by their parents and godparents at the time of their baptism. It is meant to give them a basic structure and vocabulary to speak their faith with honesty and boldness. It is a place to begin to struggle with questions that last a lifetime. This is a challenging assignment, but with the assignment comes the privilege to watch young minds and hearts awoken to the tasks of a lifetime.

This year confirmation classes will meet on Sunday afternoons from **12:30-2:30 p.m.** Generally these classes will meet once a month, but please note the exact dates and times on the schedule provided. Our **first class meeting** will be held on **September 18. At this first class a light lunch will be served for students and parents at 12:30 p.m. Following lunch, parents will meet together for a brief meeting and the students will gather for their first confirmation class.** This is an extremely important event and we hope that all will be able to join us. During each regular class meeting we will share a meal together, review the material from the previous class meeting, and learn through a variety of hands on experiences. Progress and assimilation of material is expected. No child will be asked to do more than they are capable.

During each class and fellowship time we will abide by the simple expectations outlined in our Youth Code of Conduct (see enclosed sheet). We intend to have fun and enjoy each other's company, as well as learn. Everyone, including the teachers, is a learner. We will show courtesy and respect to all as befits a community of Christians.

Confirmation is more than just eight Sunday afternoon sessions. **Students are expected to attend Sunday School**, where a working knowledge of the Scriptures will be covered. Sunday School meets from 9:45 -10:45 each Sunday with rare and announced exceptions. **Attendance at worship is also expected.** In addition to simply attending, students are expected to participate in worship by serving as acolytes, crucifers, and nursery helpers on a scheduled basis. While Sunday School and worship attendance will not be a burden to those who regularly attend, it will be hard for others to take on so much new routine. We understand and are ready to talk about how to make this work. Nevertheless, it is not possible to set expectations lower and assume that what we are doing is serious business. Confirmation is not a rite of passage at Holy Trinity, it is a school for disciples.

Parents have asked for some guidelines to help them in monitoring their children's attendance and participation. In this light we have established a system to show parents and students what we consider to be the minimum amount of participation in this program to make it meaningful in your life. You will find our **Pentecost Point System** attached to this letter. This is not meant to be a legalistic system, but rather a guideline for you and your child. Obviously, we encourage and applaud all who will go above and beyond these expectations.

This year we have two very special opportunities for faith building. Holy Trinity's Middle School Retreat at **Mar-Lu-Ridge Retreat Center** in Jefferson, Maryland will be held from the evening of **November 18** through dinner on **November 19**. The other is **Shekinah** the synod-wide middle school retreat held March 16-18, 2012. **We will be recruiting adult chaperones for both events.** It is strongly encouraged that active confirmands attend both of these events. Information on **Shekinah** will be provided as it becomes available through the synod. Information on the Mar-Lu-Ridge Retreat, as well as, our calendar of classes and activities will be available at our orientation meeting on September 18.

Enclosed in this letter you should find:

- Expectations
- Youth Code of Conduct
- Pentecost Point System explanation
- Sunday School/Registration Form
- Middle School Confirmation Calendar

We look forward to seeing all Confirmation students and their parents on Sunday, **September 18 at 12:30 p.m.**

In Christ,

Rev. Thomas A. Prinz  
Pastor

Nancy Fox  
Director of Children's & Music Ministries

Leesa Bell  
Associate Director of Children's & Music Ministries