

Dear 8th grade student parents,

I hope that this letter finds you well. My intent in writing is to inform you about the confirmation program here at Floris United Methodist Church. I hope that you find this informative as well as an exciting introduction to a huge milestone in your child's faith journey.

Confirmation is a program for students in grade 8 that wish to be confirmed in the United Methodist Church. The program is designed to study the beliefs of the United Methodist Church as well as to dive deep into what it means to live a Christian life. The program begins with a **kickoff retreat** from Saturday **January 13** to Sunday afternoon **January 14**. Following the retreat, there will be eight weeks of **Weekly Small Group Meetings**, a wrap-up retreat from **April 20-22**, and the program ends with the **Confirmation service** on **April 29**. Upon completion, it is an incredible opportunity for these students to stand before the congregation and proclaim their faith and their commitment to Floris. Below you will find the requirements and the calendar for confirmation

Requirements of Confirmation

Confirmation Retreats (2):

A kick-off retreat will be held **January 13-14** at Floris UMC as well as a second retreat **April 20-22 at Summit Lake Retreat Center, Emmitsburg, MD**. Each student is expected to attend both retreats in their entirety. The cost of both retreats is **\$200**. Scholarships are available for those who have need.

Weekly Small Group Meetings (8)

Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate in the group's discussions. Students may miss **only one** of the eight small group sessions without make-up. Beyond the one absence, students **must** makeup the missed meeting with a small group leader. If you see problems within your student's schedule, please contact the leadership ASAP.

Meetings with Mentors (10):

In order to personalize the experience, we expect students to meet with their mentor ten times during the program. In choosing a mentor, seek someone who is a Christian and a member of Floris United Methodist Church. Mentors need to be

members of the church because they will share vows of commitment to watch over the student in the life of the church. If you cannot find a mentor for your student, the Student Ministries staff will assist you upon your request.

Paired Service Project:

Each student and mentor will be required to complete a personal service project by **April 15**. A list of service opportunities will be made available at the beginning of the calendar year; however, students and mentors can devise their own project and have it approved by Student Ministries staff. The project must take at least three hours of consecutive service time.

Interviews:

Each confirmand will be required to complete an interview with a Floris UMC staff member. These interviews will be conducted near the end of the program during the second retreat in April. Interviews serve as a time for students to reflect on their experience and also to validate their decision to be confirmed.

Confirmation Rehearsal:

On **April 28**, students, mentors and parents are **required** to attend rehearsal. Confirmation rehearsal ensures that students can enjoy the meaning of the day, rather than focusing on the logistics. Rehearsal times will be released in early March.

Confirmation Services:

If at the end of the program, your student decides that getting confirmed is their intention, we offer three services. Confirmation takes place at the **9:15 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.** worship services on **Sunday, April 29**. In order to accommodate all of the students and keep service times to a reasonable length, we ask that parents be flexible in their desired service of confirmation.

All students must be baptized before being confirmed. This can occur during the Confirmation service itself or during a service prior to confirmation. The United Methodist Church recognizes only one baptism. If your child has been baptized, they will not be rebaptized, but will be invited to remember their baptism as part of the Confirmation ceremony.

We recognize that the calendar for confirmation can appear rigorous. However, these are requirements for confirmation, and if your child is not able to meet them, they may not be able to be confirmed. This program is designed to be intensive. Our hope is that students would continue their other church commitments during this period. This program is not a substitute for Sunday worship. When deciding (as a family) whether or not your child will complete this program, please look at the following calendar:

Confirmation Calendar 2018

Parent Meeting 2017	November 19,
Mentor and Small Group Leader Training	January 7, 2018
Retreat I	January 13-14, 2018
Small Groups Begin	January 20, 2018
Small Groups End	March 18, 2018
Retreat II	April 20-22, 2018
Service Projects Completed	April 15, 2018
Confirmation Rehearsal	April 28, 2018
Confirmation Services	April 29, 2018

Please be sure to go to florismc.org/confirmation as soon as possible to register.
Registration will end on December 30. If you have questions prior to the November parent meeting, please contact the Student Ministries office.

Bill Gray
Director of Grow Ministries
Floris United Methodist Church