

Zion Lutheran Church
Shawano, WI
Confirmation Manual 2025-2026



“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” - Deuteronomy 6:6–7

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Dear Confirmands,

Welcome to your confirmation journey! This is an exciting time in your life as you deepen your relationship with God and explore the foundations of our Lutheran faith. We are thrilled to walk alongside you during this special season.

In this confirmation program, you will learn about the love and grace of God, discover the richness of the Bible, and gain a deeper understanding of our Lutheran beliefs. You will also have the opportunity to grow in fellowship with one another and learn what it means to live out your faith in the world.

We have planned a variety of lessons, discussions, service projects, and activities to make this time meaningful and fun. We want to encourage you to make the most of this experience by asking questions, sharing your thoughts, and engaging with your fellow confirmands.

Confirmation is a time of questions, learning, and reflection, but it is also a time to celebrate the love God has for each one of you. Our prayer is that through this experience, you will come to know God's presence in your life and feel the joy that comes from being part of Christ's church.

May God bless you on this journey of faith!

In Christ,

Pastor Scott Ludford, Senior Pastor

Kristin WhiteHorse, Youth & Family Director

Welcome to Confirmation at Zion Lutheran Church

We are excited about the coming year and hope you are, too.

Confirmation is...

A critical milestone in the lives of our youth as it helps them make the transition from home and family to community and culture in faith with the assurance of parents and the church, which is the body of Christ.

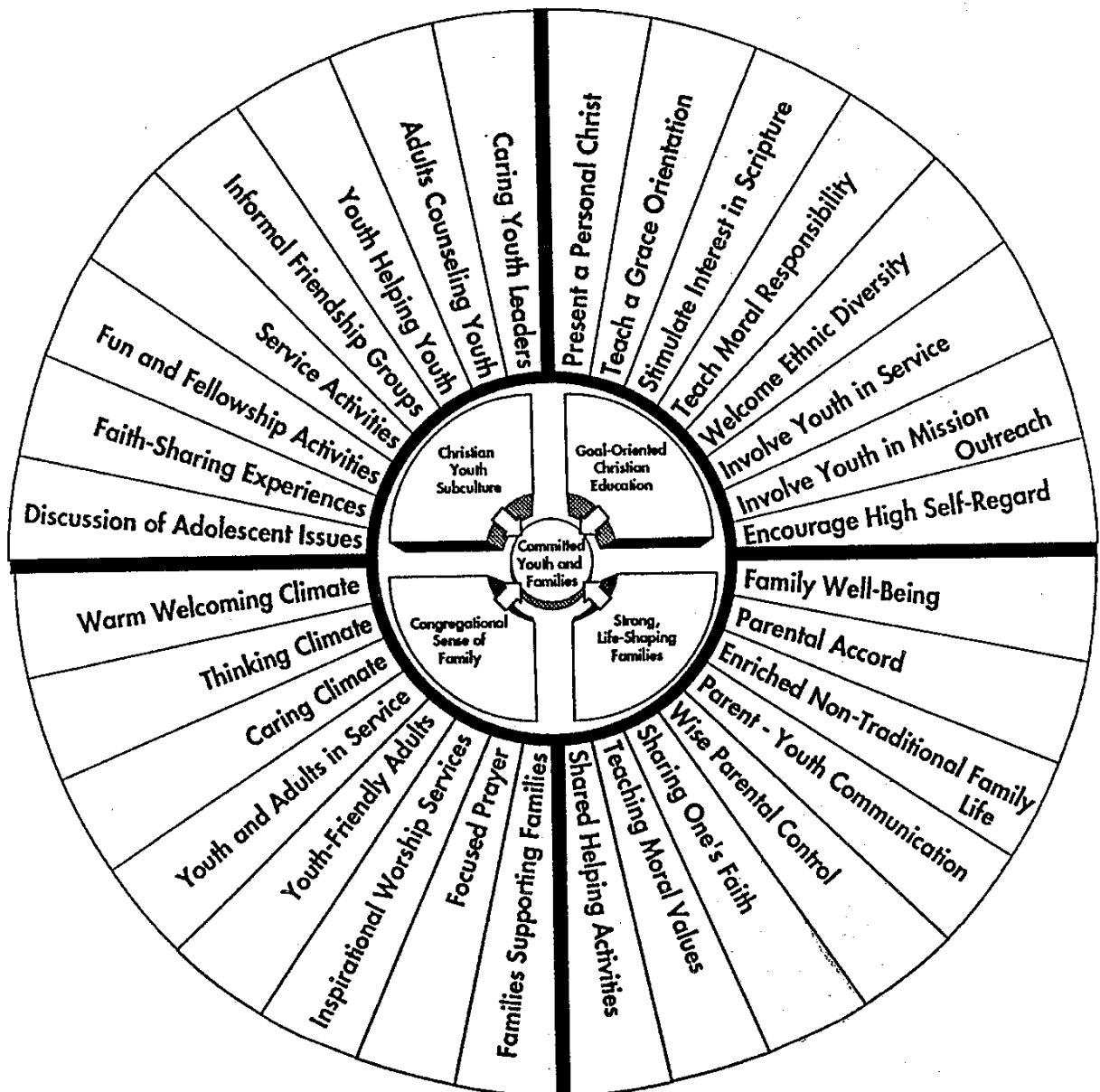
The confirmation ministry at Zion Lutheran is designed to provide an opportunity to learn the basics of the Christian faith as revealed in God's Word and interpreted in Luther's Small Catechism. Objectives of the program are:

- To present each youth with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the claims of God, permitting the confirmand opportunity to affirm a personal faith in the Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior;
- To present the basic teachings of the Christian faith, in accordance with Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions;
- To help each confirmand to relate Christian faith to everyday living through discussion, living in, and struggling with the issues of life;
- To develop a covenant stance toward Christian worship, prayer, study of the Word, the Sacraments, stewardship, fellowship and heritage;
- To provide access to Christian adults who, through mentoring – model faith through teaching, acquaintance, and personal relationships.



Diagram of Priorities For Zion Lutheran Church's Youth and Family Ministry

The church is in partnership with parents in teaching the faith to their children. This diagram lists our priorities in accomplishing this task. As we plan for this year's confirmation education, electives, extra activities and service opportunities for your student we use this diagram as an outline to challenge our faith community to do the best that we can in God's name!



This model of youth and family ministry comes from: **Four Imperatives: Youth and Family Ministry**, Merton P. Strommen, Ph.D.; Augsburg Youth and Family Institute, Minneapolis, MN; 1991. P. 15

FAITH MENTORING

What is the purpose of Faith Mentoring?

Many faith based communities have discovered that a positive and powerful dynamic is present when youth and adults join in meaningful conversation about and ask questions of the Christian faith. In fact, research consistently shows that faith has a better chance of taking root in the lives of young people when they are connected in significant ways to faithful adults who “do business” with the faith in their own lives.

During a confirmand’s confirmation experience at *Zion Lutheran Church*, they will have multiple opportunities to participate in cross-generational discussions in natural and meaningful ways with significant adults in our congregation. The premise of this approach is that faith happens when people of faith talk together, and faith is deepened when the partners in the conversation approach it as fellow baptized members of the body of Christ who bring significant gifts to the table for mutual edification and for ministry in the world.

During a confirmand’s confirmation experience we hope to:

- Expand each young person’s circle of trusted adults in the congregation. In the Search Institute* report recently published, only 29% of youth felt that adults in the church cared for them.
- Enable each young person to see and learn how another adult (besides their parents or guardians) lives out their Christian faith.
- Offer each young person a personalized learning opportunity to make sense of their own Christian faith. In the same Search Institute report, more than 60% of the youth surveyed said they wanted to know how to learn to love life more, recognize right from wrong and gain a sense of life’s purpose.
- Gain broader adult participation in a young person’s learning process. One significant component in the success of the Southern Baptists (Search Institute report) is the highest level of adults involved in the learning programs of their youth, in contrast to the relatively low levels of adults involved in Lutheran churches.

**Search Institute is an independent, non-profit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application. Search Institute conducts research and evaluation, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance. The Institute collaborates with others to promote long-term organizational and cultural change that supports the healthy development of all children and adolescents.*

How Will the Faith Mentoring Program Work?

Sixth, Seventh & Eighth Graders

These confirmands will be asked to have a mentor during the Lenten Season. The mentor will meet with them either before or after the service and sit with their student (and Family) during the service. There will be a question/discussion sheets to follow each worship service throughout the Lenten Season. These sheets will focus on getting the mentors and confirmand to know each other better and a certain aspect of faith and life issues. An orientation session for mentors and youth will be held prior to Ash Wednesday.

Ninth Graders

The ninth graders will be asked to have a mentor during the fall prior to their confirmation day. The mentors will be an integral part of their “Saints and Servants” class by attending the four weekly Sunday sessions and one Saturday morning session with their confirmand. Mentors will be involved in helping their student to prepare devotions, a snack, and a faith statement.

What Characteristics Should a Mentor Have?

Faith mentors will play an important role in the growth of a young person’s faith. Therefore they should be chosen with great care. Characteristics important for faith mentors to have are:

- **Love God and enjoy being with young people**
- **Able to accept youth where they are and let them progress at their own speed**
- **Accessible, open and willing to take the time to listen**
- **Mature and trustworthy**
- **Faithful in their own Christian life**

My experience of using faith mentors in the confirmation program is that they become people that change a confirmand’s life positively and are never forgotten. I once performed a wedding where the bride asked her confirmation mentor to be the individual to read the lessons at her wedding. This mentor had become an adult role-model for her. The mentor will be gifted by the trust and respect of their student. They will receive a joy and privilege few others receive. It is truly an honor to participate in another person’s growth in faith.

NO SPECIAL TRAINING OR BACKGROUND IS REQUIRED! Each faith mentor however, will be asked to attend a short brief orientation session.

THE PROGRAM

Confirmation at Zion Lutheran is a program that begins in the fall of sixth grade. Although Christian education continues throughout our lives, our “*Confirmation Ministry*” concludes with the Affirmation of Baptism Rite in the fall of their ninth grade year. Confirmation at Zion Lutheran offers the following components:

Instruction

- Wednesdays: There are the fall, Lenten and spring terms for Wednesday classes. The fall and spring term – Wednesday classes are from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Over a three year program a student is required to take three Wednesday core courses: *Living the Old Testament, The Life of Jesus and The New Testament; Luther and the Catechism.*
- Sundays: Bible Study classes meet from 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Starting September 21 and ends May 11. The Sunday school experience will complement and complete your confirmation education.

Worship

Worship is essential to the faith and growth of all Christians. Our program encourages attendance and understanding of worship in three ways.

- **Worship attendance:** Regular weekly worship is expected and available each Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday morning at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.
- **Worship during Lent:** During the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday through Easter,) confirmands are expected to attend mid-week Lenten worship, with services at 6:00 p.m. Sermon notes are not required for these worship services, but students will be expected to meet with their mentors. We will not have Wednesday classes during this season but will meet as mentor groups after service.
- **Worship Participants:** During the years the student is enrolled in the confirmation program, they will be scheduled on a regular basis to acolyte or serve in other areas of worship services. We seek to incorporate them into worship using their individual gifts and being considerate of their comfort level. This is an opportunity for the student to be involved in worship leadership and to gain a better understanding of our worship service.

Service

Service is a thankful response to all that God has given us and done for us. It is an integral part of the Christian life. At least **one** service project must be completed each year, with a minimum of eight hours of service each year. The hours may be done in the course of several small projects if the student desires. When the service project is completed, the adult in charge of that project must sign a note indicating that a particular activity was completed. Some kinds of projects available are listed below, but others may be used with the approval of the pastor:

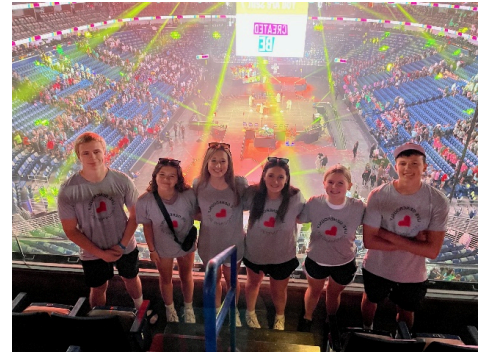
- Vacation Bible school helper
- Church grounds clean-up or yard work
- Help in the church office
- Work with a group to help with house or yard work for someone in need
- Visit a shut-in or someone in an extended care facility
- Assist with Sam 25, serve at Shawano Community Dinner, or likewise charitable act
- Provide special music for worship
- Assist at church dinners (I.e. Wednesday Community Dinners)



Fellowship

Fellowship is fun, enriching, supporting, growing, and getting to know other Christians. Our program encourages this by:

- A retreat at one of our church camps, an in-house church retreat, or a retreat at an offsite location.
- An ongoing calendar of events through our youth program. Look for these activities in the *monthly newsletters*, *Youth Newsletters*, or on the *Church website* (shawanozion.org/youth).
- Mentoring is incorporated into the Lenten season. Each youth will be asked to select a mentor who will meet with them either before or after Lenten services and sit with them and /or their families during the Lenten worship services.



Affirming Your Baptism

In the fall of ninth grade, students have the opportunity to publicly confess their faith. The confessions and promises of this day are important and are to be reclaimed each day of our lives. This “Affirmation of Baptism,” or *confirmation day*, as many call it, is held in October on Reformation Sunday. In preparation for that event, the following will take place:

Saints and Servants Sessions: Four sessions will be held on Sunday evenings. The sessions will include snacks, devotions and faith development. These sessions will focus on using our faith in becoming active members in the community and the world. Field trips and /or guest speakers may be featured.

Mentoring is part of this program. Each child is asked to select a mentor. One on one time is built into each session for the mentor and student to share something about themselves to each other and grow in faith.

2025-2026 Class Overviews for 6th, 7th & 8th Grade Confirmands

During a student's three year confirmation experience they will receive three main topics of study. Throughout their three year experience they will have also been exposed to Lutheran Theology and Doctrine. This year we are in the "New Testament" cycle.

Lives of Old Testament People:	Gain familiarity with the scriptures, understand the relationship between God and God's people, and understand the covenant promise of trust in God.
New Testament of Christ:	We begin the year with an introduction to the Four Gospels and then will examine Jesus' birth and early life; his ministry; and then an introduction of the books in the N.T.
Martin Luther:	This unit will cover such themes as the Ten Commandments, The Apostle's Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion.

Sunday Bible Study – As middle school students you will further develop your understanding of Scripture and how it applies to your life that will be a different learning style than your mid-week study.

Throughout the year our classroom learning includes discovery of Bible knowledge that will be interpreted through the lenses of church history and the student's world of everyday living. The ultimate goal is for each student to feel comfortable about talking about their faith with others.

Specific Information and Requirements for 6th, 7th, & 8th Grade Confirmation

New Testament: We are in the second year of a three-year confirmation cycle. Please turn to the calendar on page 14 to see what your student will be studying this year. You will be able to track your student and ask questions during the course of their studies by these sheets.

Lent – No confirmation classes will be held during Lent. However, students are required to attend midweek Lenten services and meet with mentors.

The **Lenten season** services begin on February 18 (Ash Wednesday) with worship services held each Wednesday at 6 p.m. **Attendance is mandatory.** Holy week dates for 2026 are Sunday, March 29 (Palm Sunday); Thursday, April 2 (Maundy Thursday); Friday, April 3 (Good Friday); and Sunday, April 5 (Easter).

Sunday Bible School: Held every Sunday from 9:15 – 10:15 am. ***Attendance is required.***

Retreats/Gatherings: Sixth – eighth grade – participation at Crossways Imago Dei Village Bible Camp is in the early spring or fall. A highlight every year is the Synod's Middle School Youth Gathering that takes place in February. More details to follow.

Summer Activities: We highly recommend attendance at Crossways Imago Dei Village Bible Camp in Clintonville, WI at least once during your confirmation years. As always, financial assistance is available, so please talk with Pastor Ludford or Youth and Family Director, Kristin WhiteHorse.

Service: Eight hours are required each year. Forms for recording service hours should be completed and turned into the pastor to receive credit.

Electives: Two electives required for a student's three year confirmation experience.

Class Attendance

There are twenty-three classes this year, not including Lent when students are **required to attend**.

Every student should bring to class:

- Their Bible
- The provided binder
- Something to write with
- Highlighters



NINTH GRADE SAINTS AND SERVANTS CLASS

Sunday Class

Schedule

- Sunday - September 21, 28; October 5 & 12.
- Time of class: 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Snack/Devotional/Social

- Snack and Devotional to be ready to eat at 5:00
- Pastor Ludford will provide the first snack/devotional.

Devotions

- Each mentor / student group will be responsible for devotions
 - A few minutes in length
 - Mentors may help students prepare and focus, ***but youth will lead!***
 - Every student needs to participate

Class Time

- Instruction and group sharing will focus on using our faith in becoming active members in the community and the world.
- One-on-one time is built into each session for mentor and student to share with each other and grow in faith.
- A heavy emphasis will be placed on the mentor's and student's relationship.
- Clean-up will follow class time for those who prepared the snack.

Schedule toward "Affirming Baptismal Service"

- Confirmation rehearsal immediately following the second worship service on **Sunday, October 19**, with pizza at Luigi's immediately following rehearsal. (confirmands, mentors, parents, and siblings are invited)
- Affirmation of Baptism - **Sunday, October 26, 2025** at the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Be at church by 9:30 a.m. for a group and individual picture as well as a reception in your honor!

What Characteristics Should a Mentor Have?

Faith mentors will play an important role in the growth of a young person's faith. Therefore they should be chosen with great care. Characteristics important for faith mentors to have are:

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- **Accessible, open and willing to take the time to listen**
- **Mature and trustworthy**
- **Faithful in their own Christian life**

NO SPECIAL TRAINING OR BACKGROUND IS REQUIRED! Each faith mentor however, will be asked to attend a short brief orientation session.

Calendar of Classes and Parent's Night In

As we continue to grow the Youth & Family ministry here at Zion Lutheran this year we would like to have parents take turns sitting in on a class. Please look at the dates below and take one evening that will work for you.

Our experience has shown that having parents a part of our classes has greatly added to the learning process. Many parents who have been regular attendees have stated that they have learned more in one class than all their years in confirmation. Consider how fortunate it is to watch your student with their peers, grow in Biblical knowledge and faith!

These dates are all Wednesday evenings with regular class time from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. ***We look forward to your presence in the classroom!***

September 17	Family Meeting
September 24	Acolyte Instruction and Orientation to the Sanctuary
October 1	Quilt Taping and Gospel Overview
October 8	The Birth of Jesus
October 15	The Baptism of Jesus
October 22	The Teachings of Jesus
October 29	Halloween Party
November 5	The Miracles of Jesus
November 12	The Hard Sayings of Jesus
November 19	The Last Commandment
November 26	No Class (THANKSGIVING)
December 3	The Passion
December 10	The Resurrection
December 17	Holiday party
December 25	No Class
January 1	No Class
January 7	The New Testament Overview
January 14	The Holy Spirit Comes
January 21	Peter and the Early Church
January 28	The Damascus Road
February 4	The Journeys of Paul
February 11	The Letters of Paul
February 18	Ash Wednesday
February 25	Lent Service
March 4 - March 25	Lent Service
April 1	Holy Week (Thursday and Friday Service)
April 8	The Letter to the Hebrews
April 15	The Universal Letters
April 22	The Revelation to John
April 29	The Bible and My Life
May 6	End of the Year Ice Cream Party!

If at any time the Shawano School District should close for weather, we will cancel confirmation that evening.



A Baptismal Promise for Confirmation

When you as the parent or guardian of your child brought them forward to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, you might have made a promise that was similar to this:

Pastor: "In Christian love you have presented your child for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully bring your child to the services of God's house, and teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten commandments. As your child grows in years, you should place in their hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for their instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of their Baptism and in communion with the Church, they may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ."

"Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?"

We commend you on fulfilling these obligations, but at the same time we believe as Martin Luther once said, ***"Baptism is a once in a lifetime experience that takes a lifetime to complete."*** Therefore, we encourage you as a parent or guardian to continue to be involved in the life-long process of growth and learning. Take some time to think about the ways you intend to stay involved in this process, especially during the time we know as Confirmation. How will you remain connected to the church?

We intend to remain connected to the church and involved in the Confirmation process by:

Signed _____

Service Hours

Name: _____

Project Name: _____

Date: _____

Hours Served: _____

Project Description:

What I learned from this service project is...

.....
.....

Service Hours

Name: _____

Project Name: _____

Date: _____

Hours Served: _____

Project Description:

What I learned from this service project is...