

CONFIRMATION/COMMISSIONING PROCESS OUTLINE

Confirmation/Commissioning is a course/process that is offered to 7th graders and above who have not had the opportunity to go through this process either here or at another church. It is an opportunity to learn more about the basics of the Reformed Christian faith, explore what they truly believe for themselves about God, Christ, and the Church, and to publicly profess this before the congregation as they become full members of Cherokee Presbyterian Church. This is an important step for them to make on their faith journey; to confirm what they believe, and to be commissioned to the world beyond our doors.

The process consists of a retreat, 14 classes, a session meeting, meetings with a mentor, writing a Statement of Faith, and then finally Confirmation/Commissioning during worship, which will be followed by celebratory cake and punch:

1. The retreat is a Presbytery wide retreat held at Camp Fellowship which is planned and put on by Kevin Cartee, Director of the camp, and a host of youth pastors from the Presbytery. The cost is usually \$95 and is paid in part by the youth family and in part by our congregation.
2. One of the most important aspects of the Con/Com process is the use of mentoring. Each youth will be matched up with a member of the congregation who will meet with them ten to twelve times. These meetings will be scheduled according to individual schedules and can take place in whatever setting you decide together. The mentors will receive Talk Sheets to help guide them in their meetings to cover specific material, though our primary hope is that the Confirmands will be able to establish a personal relationship with another adult who is able and willing to share their faith with them.
3. Classes are taught by Liz with lesson plans that she has designed. The core of this “curriculum” is the Bible and the Westminster Confession of Faith. We basically explore the essential beliefs of a faithful Christian. There will be up to 14 classes.
4. The Statement of Faith will be written toward the middle of the confirmation process. The purpose of the Statement is primarily so that our youth can learn to put their faith into words to make it easier to share the Word with others. The Youth Pastor will review and then work with them personally to address any issues. After any changes or edits have been made, the final Statement of Faith will be forwarded to the Session with enough time for Session to discuss prior to commissioning Sunday. The Youth Pastor will provide any clarifying comments and/or concerns to the Session for consideration.
5. Confirmation Students will meet with the Session toward the end of the process, leading up to the main event, in order to examine them for membership. Statements of Faith will have been shared with Session prior to this so that it can give Session a sense of who our youth are and inform some of the questions they might ask.

My philosophy behind this process stems from a book that I read which uses the illustration that we are adding tinder to the fire that is starting inside of each and every one of our youth. It is the job of not only the minister and youth leader, but of the parents, the congregation, and the youth themselves to tend their flame for God, so that when the time is right, God will set them afire, just as he did the burning bush! They are flammable, and we hope confirmation/commissioning can be another step for them to be dangerous with the Word in this world!

Submitted by Rev. Liz Cely. Modified then approved by Session of Cherokee Presbyterian Church on September 22, 2014.