



Dear Confirmation Candidate and Family,

Welcome to Confirmation 2022-2023! Thank you for entrusting us with your youth as they come upon this milestone in their walk of faith. It is a privilege to walk alongside them as they continue their journey of faith! At St. Pete First, our Confirmation program provides an opportunity for young people to explore the Christian faith alongside our youth in a fun, relevant, and engaging way. Our focus is on helping each young person learn about God's unconditional love and amazing grace through experience and conversation.

At the end of this journey, each youth will have the opportunity to profess their own faith in Jesus Christ and be confirmed as new members of St. Pete First. We believe Confirmation is not a destination, but more like a way station where youth have an opportunity to take personal ownership of the faith journey they have been traveling. While we hope all of our youth will make the decision to profess their faith and be confirmed, there is no pressure or requirement to do so.

St. Pete First welcomes you as you begin your preparation for Confirmation and continuation of your faith journey. Know that you will be remembered in prayers by our entire church community as you embark on this wonderful adventure in your faith journey.

Remember this is not just a transaction of information and knowledge but you are creating and becoming a part of a community that you nurture and that becomes a part of your life. You will share many spiritual experiences together that begin to grow and change your heart and in turn you will want to share with others. Knowledge alone does not make you a Christian; it is a change of heart alongside knowledge leading into a personal relationship with Christ.

Please read this over carefully and make sure that you understand what is expected of you and your family over the next few months. Prayerfully make a decision as a family for this commitment. If you have any questions call, KayLee Bennett at 727-894-4662 ext. 2131 or kbennett@fumcsp.org.

Peace in Christ,
KayLee Bennett
Director of Youth Ministries
Bringing the love of Christ to life in youth everyday

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This link will give you the vows and help answer all your questions.

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/beyond-baptism-what-confirmation-means-to-united-methodists>

Who Should Participate?

Confirmation is open to youth in 8th grade and above who are interested in exploring Christian faith in a fun and experimental way.

What happens if my child says they are not ready?

We intentionally set up the process so that this decision is made away from the group to minimize peer pressure. Sometimes a youth feels as though they have more unanswered questions. They often want some time to work through those questions as they continue to grow in their faith and relationship with God through Christ. We honor that journey. It is a holy journey. For some youth, it just takes longer. If at a later date, they decide to be confirmed, we do so with equal joy - and they do not need to repeat the confirmation class to be confirmed. This is not a pass/fail thing – it's a relationship thing! All we ask is that they (with the support of their family, Youth Director and Pastors) take this part of their faith journey very seriously.

What if my child is not baptized?

No worries! A meeting with the Pastor and Youth Director will be scheduled to talk about why you want to be baptized. You as a family can decide how you would like to receive your baptism.

Can my child be baptized and not join the local church?

The short answer is “there is really no such understanding in our denomination.” Since the Baptismal covenant is always a shared covenant between the person, God, AND THE CONGREGATION (who are committing to help you grow in grace and walk beside you in both the good times and not so good times), it is all one in the same movement for us.

What if my child is past the confirmation age?

We can do many things to address this and we strive to make the best decision for each individual case. Sometimes we simply ask them to plug into our youth group for a period of time. Sometimes they are ready to be confirmed as they come. Sometimes we invite them to be “helpers” with the existing confirmation class so they are exposed to all the teachings of confirmation. The ultimate decision of how best to proceed happens in consultation with our pastor and through prayerful discernment.

What Happens During Confirmation?

Rather than just talking at youth, our Confirmation Program strives to engage young people and their families in a variety of experiences that provide opportunities for learning, reflection, and conversation. Confirmation experiences include:

- Fun
- Learning and talking about Christian faith
- Going on an offsite weekend retreat
- WhereHouse Lock-In
- Service projects
- Observing other faith traditions
- A beach/pool party and baptisms (if not already baptized)

Confirmation Benefits and Outcomes

It is our goal that after being confirmed at St. Pete First, your youth will have:

- A stronger connection to other Christian youth and adults.
- An expanded world view plus compassion for others. A better understanding of their own values, beliefs and convictions. A faith deeply rooted in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.
- A desire to become an informed church member.
- After Confirmation you are now a full fledged member of St. Pete First and you are making a commitment to actively pursue your faith.

Program Expectations

As part of the Confirmation experience, each youth is expected to attend sessions in person. Schedule starts Sunday, September 11th through the end of the school year and will resume in the new school year. **Only Four (4) absences are allowed.** Attached is a tentative schedule.

1. Actively participate in church life. Attending a minimum of one (1) worship service a month; attend class and one (1) Sunday/Wednesday night youth program a month.
2. **Work through "The Levels."**
3. Devotions at home.
4. Attend the Confirmation retreat.
5. Meet with KayLee at least once throughout Confirmation
6. Write a letter to the Pastor's and to KayLee Bennett expressing your desire to be confirmed or if you are questioning.
7. Attend 3 out of 4 of the "Faith Visits."
8. Choose a personal service project for the church or community

Session Attendance

Session dates are provided below so that families can make the necessary calendar arrangements now. If a youth misses a session, they will be expected to make up that session before they can be confirmed. NOTE: Because this is a very experiential program, any youth who misses 4 **or more** sessions (regardless of reason) will need to postpone their Confirmation and enroll in the next year's program. Each session missed is due the next week.

Church Involvement

Youth can help in church at 8:00am and 9:30am services by ushering, reading scripture, giving the prayer, greeting in the services etc...

Curriculum: *The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith & The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way.*
By Phil Tallon, Published by Seedbed

Like a tattoo, the fundamental truths of the faith are supposed to be permanently etched into us. However, a lifetime of learning, loving, and living the scriptures requires that at some point, we really begin to understand where they come from and what they mean.

The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith is a visual introduction to the core beliefs of the Christian faith. While it assumes no background knowledge of the scriptures or church teachings, this study is stocked with rich explanation and engaging videos that bring catechesis to life for people of all ages, backgrounds, and stops along their spiritual journey. Like all books, it is possible to read this one alone, but it is designed specifically to be studied in community—to lead small and large groups through the big ideas of the faith. The memory verses, catechism, text, and videos in each lesson work together seamlessly to provide a clear, compelling introduction to Christian belief.

In working through this study, you'll be binding the truth about God on your head, hands, and house through scripture memorization and by learning the answers to important questions about God. Obeying Jesus takes a lifetime of learning. As you enter this study, let God's grace shape and change you. This is what it means to be a disciple.

Service Project

Service opportunities are a weekly ongoing important part of the formation of young Christians. The idea here is to experience what it means to be part of the church or community. Find a personal service opportunity that piques your personal interest (something you could really get into) in your church or community to serve and carry that out.

- Personal service project idea due by Sunday, October 9th in written form.
- Personal service project completed and ready to hand in on Sunday, February 12. Please present in a creative form. Video or art board with pictures and written essay. Does not need to be long!

Faith Visits

As we explore our history and heritage, our class will visit our church and other churches of faith: a Jewish synagogue, Catholic Church, etc... Please attend as many as you can, make up work will be due the Sunday after the visit.

The Retreat

The Retreat is always a main focus of the program where a great deal of community building happens and a big chunk of the lessons happen in the beginning of the program. The retreat is an overnighter on Friday, September 30.

Lock-In

The Lock-In is Saturday, February 3 in The WhereHouse. Parents provide breakfast Sunday morning and we all attend the 9:30am service. Confirmands will serve communion.

Letter to Pastors & Youth Director

This is a serious letter that will be written in class, addressed to the Pastors and one to KayLee Bennett, indicating your desire and intent to be confirmed in the Christian faith. It should exhibit your best effort to identify yourself as one ready to accept the challenges of being a member of the church and pursuing your faith.

The following questions should be answered, in order of appearance here, in the body of your letter.

1. Why do you feel you are ready to be confirmed?
2. How did you feel during times of service?
3. What was the theme of your Confirmation Retreat? Please write a few words on what was the most meaningful part of the retreat for you.
4. At this point in your life, how do you feel God is calling you with the gifts He has given you?
5. What ministries in your church are you interested in pursuing in the future?

Group 145

“One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” Psalm 145:4

Please know that life groups and classes throughout the church will be adopting each confirmand and lifting them up in prayer, sending them notes, looking them up in church to say hello, and giving encouragement in some way. Using Psalm 145:4 as our base to lift each confirmand up and make them more a part of the faith community.

Parents/Guardians Expectations

1. Be willing to support your youth in all the above. Pay attention to dates and RSVP's.
2. Let your youth freely choose to be confirmed!!!
3. Collect encouragement letters for your youth from family and friends and turn in by Sunday, September 18.
4. EMAIL KAREN WILBER FOR MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! Turn in all signed agreements and paper work before the first class!!!
5. Agreements are signed by youth and parents. **Only four (4) absences are allowed.**

Encouragement Letters

Please collect at least 10 letters, notes or cards from family and friends, hand written or typed, and turn them in by the end of the school year. There is an instruction letter attached and one that will be emailed to you that you can forward to family and friends.

Signed Agreements

Please prayerfully consider this commitment. It is a commitment. Parents and youth, please read together and fill out agreements if you have decided to participate and hand in by September.

Paper Work

Parent and youth, please fill out Consent/Medical Authorization, Electronic and Conduct Code of Covenant forms and hand in by September with agreements. These must be notarized every year.

Confirmation Class Starts

Sunday, September 11, 10:45am-Noon in The WhereHouse. This is our main meeting time. Please be on time, awake, fed and watered! No earbuds or sleeping!!!

Program Fee

The program fee for this Confirmation ministry is FREE! It is supported by The WhereHouse Youth Ministry of St. Pete First United Methodist Church. The program fee covers, curriculum, materials, supplies, t-shirt, individual Bibles, retreat, travel expenses and some food.

Confirmation Class Teachers

Karen Wilber 727-641-1110 karen.wilber@gmail.com
Beth Abernethy 727-525-4869 bethannbell@yahoo.com
KayLee Bennett 727-894-4661 kbennett@fumcsp.org
Pastor Bob Martin 727-894-4661 bmarting@fumcsp.org
Pastor Margaret Rountree 727-894-4661 mrountree@fumcsp.org

MAKEUP WORK:

PLEASE EMAIL KAREN WILBER, For your makeup assignments when a class is missed.

CONFIRMATION YOUTH CANDIDATE'S AGREEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

Please read over fully with parent/guardian!

I acknowledge, with faith, that this time of Confirmation is a gift from God entrusted to the Church. Confirmation allows me to embrace the fullness of God's Spirit initially given at baptism, fully initiating me into the United Methodist Church. I recognize that, to fully appreciate, integrate, and receive the grace that comes with the reception of Confirmation, adequate preparation is necessary. I further acknowledge that the Sacrament of Confirmation will be administered only to those who have been properly instructed, actively involved in the church program, and who freely choose to be confirmed.

I have been informed of the requirements expected of me as a candidate for Confirmation. I have agreed to these requirements and will commit my time and my energy, to the fulfillment of these expectations and myself. With the same degree of Christian maturity that Confirmation offered through St. Pete First, I will fulfill each of the requirements set forth by my Church. I will actively engage in this process of preparation with a prayerful spirit of reverence toward other peer- candidates, adult supervisors, and the program itself.

I know that I am free, at any time, to remove myself from this process if I do not feel ready and willing to be confirmed. I further agree that any breach of this agreement, failure to fulfill the program's requirement, blatant disrespect for another, or disregard for the process, will result in my removal from the Confirmation Class of 2022-2023. Failure to complete the Confirmation program will render me unwilling to be confirmed.



Signature of Youth Candidate _____

Date _____

Have you been baptized? Yes _____ **No** _____

Baptized as an infant or older? _____

In what church were you baptized? _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT OF EXPECTATION

Please read over fully!

I acknowledge, in faith, that this time of Confirmation is a gift from God entrusted to the Church. I further acknowledge that Confirmation allows you the fullness of God's Spirit initially given at Baptism, fully initiating one into the United Methodist Church.

At my child's baptism, I agreed, with faith in God's assistance, "to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith." As my youth begins preparing to celebrate the journey of their Christian faith, I recognize my continued "responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith," with the help of the church community at St. Pete First. It is my desire to remain faithful to my responsibilities by being intimately involved in my youth's process of preparation offered by St. Pete First.

I have been informed of the requirements expected of me as a parent/guardian and of my Confirmation Candidate. I have agreed to these requirements and will commit my time and my energy, to the fulfillment of these expectations. I further agree to pray for my youth, for other candidates, and for the success of the program. Moreover, I will encourage my child to freely and willingly engage in this process of preparation offered through St. Pete First. I agree to do all in my power to assist my youth in fulfilling the requirements and expectations set forth by the United Methodist Church.

I recognize that my youth must freely and willingly choose to accept for herself/himself the grace that comes from being confirmed, and such a decision must be made prayerfully and without force. I recognize that, at any time, my youth may remove themselves from the process of confirmation if they do not feel ready or willing to be confirmed. I further recognize that if the agreement made by my candidate is broken, may result in their removal from the Confirmation Class of 2022-2023. Failure to complete the Confirmation program will render them unable to be confirmed. And that is OK! Being confirmed does NOT make you saved. A personal relationship with Christ does.



Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date _____

Are you member of St. Pete First? Yes _____ No _____

Has your candidate been baptized? Yes _____ No _____

As an infant or older? _____

In what church were they baptized? _____



Dear Friends and Family,

2022

_____ is going through Confirmation this year at St. Pete First United Methodist Church. Confirmation is a special time where the youth of our church are given the chance to learn about the church and what it means to be a believer in God and connected into a community of believers.

As a part of this special time they will have a retreat. It is at the retreat there will be a time for them to go and be alone with God. Our Director of Youth Ministries has asked that we ask friends and family members who are special to our child to write letters to them that they will read during this time. The letters should be a reminder of why they are special to you, what God-given qualities you see in them, and what your prayers for their future in their faith journey may be.

We hope that you will help make this an extra special time. Please have all letters to the Director of Youth Ministries before Sunday, September 18th. The letters can be hand-written or emailed. Thank you so much for participation and love and support for our child. This is a surprise, so mum's the word!

Blessings,

**PLEASE SEND/EMAIL LETTERS TO: Parent of Confirmand,
before Sunday, September 18th**

The WhereHouse Youth Ministry of St. Pete First | Bringing the love of Christ to life in youth everyday

