



*Affirming Baptism  
&  
Making Disciples*

Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Grades 6-9  
2021-2022

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# Introduction

Over the past 18 months so much in our world has changed. The pandemic has forced us to live differently, and it has been so very hard for everyone. Yet, with all the changes, there are two things that have remained constant – our calling to be disciples of Jesus, and the embrace of a loving God who renews and restores us.



That is what our baptism is about – living out our calling, while being empowered by God’s promises of grace. Long ago, at the baptism of your child, you entered into a covenant that is built on the calling and the promise. And in return you promised to share your faith, nurture discipleship, and connect your child with the community of God’s people.

The confirmation program at Our Savior’s seeks to assist you in your ongoing faithfulness to your promises. We can’t take your place – you are the parent! We can, however, support your work and join you in this journey.

Our Savior’s confirmation ministry focusses on creating disciples. That has not changed. How we do that this year will be different. For while we are eager to create disciples, we are also eager to follow God’s call to care for our neighbors, and these days, that means carrying out our ministry in a way that protects others, especially those who are most vulnerable.

So, in a sense, our program itself becomes an exercise in living out our baptism! We are, therefore, excited to have you join us in our journey of faithful living as we not only learn about discipleship, but as we live it out in our gathering, exploring, learning, and growing in faith!

## *Before we begin...*

*Please note that our Confirmation program takes very seriously our need to be together as the body of Christ, but also to be safe and to protect one another.*

We know this is a difficult time, and we are grateful for your patience, understanding, and cooperation as we work together for the sake of God's people!

Our Savior's has a "Reopening Team" comprised of several health, education, and business representatives. The team has considered the current status of Covid, and with the support of the Congregation Council, has put in place several safety protocols to ensure the safety of our kids – and of the community as a whole:

1. As the year begins, masks are required of all persons inside the building.
2. We will work to reduce the number of kids in a space, and will practice appropriate distancing.
3. Certain parts of our program have been eliminated or redesigned.
4. We may need to take further steps as the year unfolds in response to changing conditions.

If you have questions or concerns about our safety protocols, please contact Pastor Jon! And thank you for the part you play in protecting others!

# General Program Expectations

## WORSHIP PARTICIPATION

Worship is essential to our lives as disciples of Jesus. We take the time to bring praise and thank the God who gives us everything, while we receive the blessings of a good and gracious God through Word and Sacrament, given in the midst of the gathered Body of Christ. Can't beat it...and you can't get it anywhere else! Moreover, even secular experts list "worshiping together" as one way families can remain strong and connected.

During Covid worship has been different – VERY different! We have had virtual worship, driveway communions, Zoom worship services, worship at the Lion's Shelter, and a return to "in-building" worship. Yet, even in the building we are not yet back to normal. Masks, distancing, and a lack of "congregating" have made it all so different. Yet, Jesus has remained with us, the gospel has been preached, and the Sacrament celebrated. We are still the Body of Christ gathered together!

In that light, as challenging as it is, we encourage you to find ways to worship together. If not in the building, then worship virtually, using our weekly videos ([www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos)). And we ask 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders to complete "worship notes" as an aid to help them dive a bit more deeply into their worship experience. "Worship notes" are available in the building outside of the pastors' offices. Or, on the web site – go to the confirmation ministry page ([www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/confirmation-2](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/confirmation-2)). The form is at the bottom of the page – you can fill it out and submit it right there.

## SMALL GROUPS

Alongside the learning in class, 7-9<sup>th</sup> graders usually meet in “small groups.” During the 2021-2022 year, with the pandemic, small groups may not be able to function as they normally have. A decision on small groups will be made in consultation with parents as we assess the value and risk of this portion of our program.

If small groups proceed, confirmands will each be assigned to a small group, with an adult group guide to journey with them. Groups will be a part of “core course” learning, but will also meet several times during the year for fun and service projects. When small group time is scheduled the group may meet that Wednesday, or some other time during the week. **Small group time is important time and is expected of all confirmands.**

If small groups do not meet, 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders will be expected to participate in the “Outdoor gatherings.”

## OUTDOOR GATHERINGS

In response to the need for time to connect during the pandemic, we introduced the “outdoor gatherings” last year. They were a hit! We invite confirmands to gather at the fire pit across from the parking lot, in the prayer labyrinth lot. Bring a chair, a football, and whatever else...we will provide some goodies (hot dogs, s’mores, etc.), and a fire for the fire pit. A time to connect and relax, even as we continue to walk (and sometimes struggle) through a difficult time.

Outdoor Gatherings (weather permitting) meet from 6-7 PM:

7<sup>th</sup> grade – September 29, October 27, May 18

8<sup>th</sup> grade – September 22, October 20, May 4

Wendy Kane facilitates the Outdoor Gatherings. See Wendy for more information.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Bummer! We love the After School Program, but with Covid flying around, we just can't do it...yet. Perhaps as conditions change (and improve?) we will be able to resume After School. But for now, for the safety of our kids, After School will not happen. We hope (and pray) that next year will be different.

What's so great about After School? Kids! Kids in our midst, bringing their energy and enthusiasm as we build relationships around conversation, games, dinner, and yes, even some homework!

So as we grieve not having "After School" again this year, we eagerly await next year – and all that the kids bring to us!

## **Learning for Grade 6**

6<sup>th</sup> graders meet Wednesdays from 6-7 PM, beginning September 15. Over the course of the year they survey the Biblical stories, from creation in Genesis to the creation of the church community in Acts. Along the way they hear of God's call to be disciples, the revelation of God's love through Jesus, and the power God gives us to be faithful. Students are asked to bring their Bibles weekly. If a student doesn't have a Bible, we can help with that!

Classes are taught by Corey Sjoquist, who brings a wealth of experience in teaching this class, an energy to the classroom, and a deep love for God's people. He is a great example of discipleship in action. In this class students learn the stories and reflect on what they mean for us today, building a foundation for the next years in confirmation, and for a lifetime to come.

## Learning for Grades 7-8

Grades 7-8 include a variety of learning experiences, including classroom and out of classroom activities. Course work for grades 7-8 consists of nine core sessions, and two individual electives. Core classes will be held by grade; electives will be limited to twelve students from either grade.

- **Core courses cover foundational aspects of our life of faith.** Core courses meet nine times, and attendance is expected of all students and guides.
- **Each student takes two electives** – one from each of two categories. *There is a limit of 12 in each elective course.*
- **Class sessions run from 6-7 PM on Wednesday evenings.**
- **The Food Pantry Scavenger Hunt** is September 15. We go out into the community to gather donations for the food pantry – can your small group get the biggest haul?
- **Christmas caroling** is on December 15. We leave at 6 PM, then return to church for a carol sing. Be dressed for the weather. Get ready for Christmas, and do it right!

# CORE COURSES

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Schedule

**Apostles' Creed** – September 22, October 6, December 1.

**Prayer & The Lord's Prayer** – January 5, February 2, April 20.

**Servant Leadership** – November 3, May 4

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Schedule

**Apostles' Creed** – September 29, October 13, December 8.

**Prayer & The Lord's Prayer** – January 12, February 9, April 27.

**Servant Leadership** – November 10, May 11

# ELECTIVE COURSES

*[www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/confirmation-2/](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/confirmation-2/)*

CATEGORY ONE

BIBLE STUFF

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**Ho-Ho-Ho! Merry Christmas!**

**December 22**

So, you know the story, right? Well, let's take a look – a deep look at the Christmas story and how it speaks to us today.

**Psalms – Writing Your Own**

**February 23**

The Psalms are prayers or hymns lifted up to God. We will explore the psalms, and then learn about writing our own psalm.

**Where's the Miracle?**

**November 17**

Covid – yuck! So, what's God doing about this? Is there a miracle anywhere? Is God at work...or just asleep at the switch?

**The End Times...or Just Another Day? May 18**

Read the news – lots of tragedies and bad things going on. Is the end of time approaching or just life in the fast lane? Let's see what the Bible tells us – you might be surprised!

**Tarnished Disciples January 19**

Some of God's best servants were, shall we say, a bit less than perfect! Anyone you know?

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**CATEGORY TWO EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH**

**Taking Care of Me May 18**

God entrusts us with lots of stuff – including ourselves! Learn about ways to have a healthy you, taking care of your physical self, and being a good steward of God's gifts.

**Using Art to Express Faith January 19  
or February 23**

Art can be a powerful way to speak – so how can art be used to express our faith – to others, and to our ourselves? A simple art project is included. *This course will be offered twice – sign up for one or the other.*

**Christian Symbols May 18**

We use lots of symbols in church. We will learn a bit about symbols, and then venture into the sanctuary to look at the symbols used in our own church building.

**I Want to Tell You a Story January 26**

We all have a story to tell, of our life and our faith. But some people have a special story, a deep and riveting story of how God has been a part of their life. Come and hear a story of a real person who has discovered God's presence and God's calling to them.

# Learning for Grade 9

*9<sup>th</sup> grade confirmands use a different schedule than the 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders.* The 9<sup>th</sup> grade year focuses on discipleship, and includes a number of interactive experiences designed to develop and strengthen discipleship in the confirmand.

Unless otherwise noted classes are Wednesday evenings from 7-8 PM. Some learning will take place in activities outside of class, either with the small group, or confirmands working on their own.

9<sup>th</sup> graders' learning includes a variety of discipleship experiences:

**September** – The spiritual gifts God has given you, and how you can use them to make a difference.

**October** – How does Jesus make a difference in the midst of all the “monsters” we experience in life?

**November** – Learning to appreciate what other generations share with us, and giving thanks for their presence.

**December** – Celebrating the gift of family amidst the traditions of the season.

**January/February** – Learning to be good stewards of our financial resources as we manage our money well.

See the schedule on page 15 for more details on discipleship training for 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Parents should note that they will be asked to join the class in early December, and again twice in January/February.

# The Cost of Confirmation

Confirmation has a cost! Staff time investment is significant, and we use a variety of resources to make things happen, all of which have a cost. 9<sup>th</sup> graders also have a cost of \$15 for corsages, boutonnieres, and a class picture. In general, however, Our Savior's offers our confirmation ministry without charging participants as part of our ministry to the community around us!

So, how do we make it work? Through our regular offerings and gifts that support the ministry of this congregation, we make this discipleship ministry a reality. ***Your support of this congregation's regular ministries is an important part of making a difference in the lives of your children, children around us, and those who will enter this ministry in years to come.***

Finally, don't forget to pray for us! Confirmation is an exciting, exhilarating ministry, but it is also sometimes daunting and even a bit tiring. Pray for leaders, group guides, and for kids too!

## Things You Need to Know

- We have worked hard to craft an engaging ministry that raises up disciples. We cannot, however, do it without parents. See page 13 for more on parent's role in this ministry.
- We want to be in person, and we will as long as we can without putting kids at greater risk. For the moment that means masks are required. We will continue to monitor the conditions and adjust as needed. Please be patient with us, and remember that we are called to be caring for one another (see 1 Corinthians 8).

- When West Salem schools have a snow day (or no school due to other reasons), or school dismisses early, confirmation will also be canceled that day. When in doubt, call the office!
- We know that electronics, including phones, are a big part of kids' lives, but not in class! Best to leave them home, but if they are here phones and other devices are to be turned off while class is in session. Devices not turned off will be "relocated" until class is ended.
- We expect confirmands to act as children of God. Discipline is not generally an issue, but if it is we will work with parents. Some things will not be tolerated:
  - Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are not allowed at all.
  - If your child bullies or endangers other students, he/she will be removed.
  - Behavior disrespectful toward adults, or that is destructive of property, is not acceptable.
- If issues arise during the year please come and speak with us – we want what is best for all our confirmands, and we need your participation to make that happen!

## **Stuff for Parents**

1. Show interest in your child's faith development and especially in their work toward affirming their baptism.
2. As pastoral staff, guides, and others in the confirmation ministry, we solicit and treasure your prayers and your insights. We are a team together.
3. Be a good example – you as parents have the greatest impact on the faith and life of your children. Believe it or not, they learn from you!

4. Worship with your child – they need it – and so do you. Studies show that families that worship together have a greater closeness, and work better together especially as kids get older.
5. Pray together as a family – it may be awkward at first, but you will grow into it!



## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Calendar

Date	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
September 15	Scavenger hunt	for food pantry
September 22	Core class	Outdoor gathering
September 29	Outdoor gathering	Core class
October 6	Core class	Small groups
October 13	Small groups	Core class
October 20	Core class	Outdoor gathering
October 27	Outdoor gathering	Core class
November 3	Core class	Small groups
November 10	Small groups	Core class
November 17	Electives	
November 24	<i>Thanksgiving Eve worship – 7 PM</i>	
December 1	Core class	Small groups
December 8	Small groups	Core class
December 15	Christmas Caroling in the Neighborhood	
December 22	Electives	
December 29	<i>Christmas Break</i>	

January 5	Core class	Small groups
January 12	Small groups	Core class
January 19	Electives	
January 26	Electives	
February 2	Core class	Small groups
February 9	Small groups	Core class
February 16	Electives	
February 23	Electives	
Mar 1-Apr 13	<i>Lent and Holy Week</i>	
April 20	Core class	Small groups
April 27	Small groups	Core class
May 4	Class	Outdoor gathering
May 11	Outdoor gathering	Small groups
May 18	Electives	

## 9<sup>TH</sup> Grade Calendar

**September 22**  
**September 29**

Getting to know the real you  
Small Groups

**October 6**  
**October 13**  
**October 20**  
**October 27**

You, Monsters, and Jesus  
Special Presentation  
Small groups  
Halloween party for younger kids (6-7 PM)

**November 3**  
**November 17**

Appreciating the gift of generations  
Small Groups

<b>December 1</b>	Celebrating Families
<b>December 15</b>	Christmas Caroling
<b>January 5 or 12</b>	Stewardship-A – <i>parents join us</i>
<b>January 26</b>	Small Groups
<b>February 2 or 9</b>	Stewardship-B – <i>parents join us</i>
<b>February 19</b>	Small Groups
<b>March 1-8-15-22</b>	Working on confirmation banners
<b>April 20</b>	What’s in a Commitment Anyway?
<b>May 4</b>	Taking the Next Steps