

Confirmation parents,

During this time of confirmation, it is our hope and goal to help foster a personal faith within each of the young people that are a part of the confirmation program. The aim of Middletown United Methodist Church is to build a community that invites, welcomes and accepts all people for the purpose of being transformed into deeply committed Christians.

As parents of these young people, you are on the ground floor of the faith formation of your young person. I know you have given them a strong foundation already, and now you have another opportunity to encourage personal faith building. Even though it may seem like they are not listening to you (middle school seems to have the effect), they are most definitely watching. The way that you interact with other, how you set your priorities and the way that you put away dishes are all ways they learn how to live and make sense of this world. With this there are a couple of things that your church family is asking of you during this confirmation program.

First, keep your young person in prayer. Even on those days where you may doubt if he/she is even your child, pray for them. Pray that God may use you in a very special. You are the perfect parent and partner for this journey with your child. As with anything seeking to be faith-filled, we must bathe everything that we do in prayer. Parenting is a gift that God offers us, and cannot be done with out a divine nudge here and there.

Second, make sure that this is a priority. I know that there are things jockey for position in your hectic schedule and then there are emergencies that come up too, but whole heartedly try and be at the class meetings on time each week. We are going to begin our classes promptly so that we can end at the posted times.

Third, we ask that you find a way to plug in and lend a helping hand with the program. We need your help to make this program all that it can be. This includes bringing snack, driving for events, chaperoning at the retreat and cathedral trips, and also to be at the meetings and help facilitate discussion when need be.

This year we are having a few adult sessions that are going to run concurrently with the student classes. These sessions will cover a variety of topics and give you an opportunity to connect with the curriculum and with one another.

Thanks you all for all the work you have done to get your young people to this point, and the support you offer this program. You are a wonderful part of our church family. Keep on loving your kids.

Be God's

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris".

Chris Bishop

Chris@lifeforceyouth.com

Confirmation students,

I am excited that you are going to be a part of our confirmation class in the coming year. It is my hope that you will find this journey as a way to grow in your faith. I hope that this program will enable you to connect with God and others in a very exciting way. The aim of Middletown United Methodist Church is to build a community that invites, welcomes and accepts all people for the purpose of being transformed into deeply committed Christians. I pray that you open yourselves up to the transformation that God has in store for you through your confirmation class.

There are a number of expectations that you will be asked to fulfill. These things are not to be mean and to make you jump through hoops. Rather they are our way of encouraging you to sample many different areas of the church and the places you can connect, grow and become fully apart of.

First, you must be at all of the classes, trips and events. A great deal of this class is based on discussion and experience. You are an important part of the class and you have insight that is uniquely yours. This is valuable to share with the group, and we will miss out if you are not able to be with us.

Second, you are to participate in the larger church community. This means that you should check out youth group, definitely go to Sunday School with Mr. Wilson, play in the orchestra, join the youth choir, worship lead run the sound or video for worship and special youth events. Begin finding your place **now** so that it isn't such a strain when classes begin.

Thirdly, you are to be in study and reflection on your own. Get a good Bible, if you don't have one ask your sponsor to go with you and get one that you can understand. Also, get a devotional that you like or that connects with you. Pastor Susan and I can help you and your sponsor find a good devotional if you need help. Do something for some your quiet time (just you and God) every day. During this time it would be great to begin memorizing the books of the New Testament. You will have to write them down (from memory) at the time of your interviews. Fill out the daily activities sheet for each week.

Fourth, you are to complete at least 15 hours of community service. Claiming the Christian faith isn't just about thinking all the right things, but it is also about service.

How are you going to be the hands and feet of God. There are plenty of opportunities existing around the church. You can also start something new like a liturgical dance team or band to play at youth worship with your time if you would like to do that. Use your time to serve the congregation and see what a difference it can make if we all do our part. This is your church and service is a way to own it and make changes that you want to happen within the congregation. If you have a question about what counts as service please ask me or Pastor Susan.

Finally, you have to write a creed and make stole and a banner. These are all things that will be proclamations of your faith to others. They will tell about who you are as a child of God.

At the end of the program you will be presenting these things. You will read your creed at the banquet and you will show your banner to the congregation on Confirmation Sunday. We will put your stole on you when you are confirmed. We will also be doing an interview with each of you. This is nothing stress out about. It is about you and how your faith has grown through the program. There is also an exam that has been prepared for you to take during this interview time as well. However, if you miss one or less classes then you do not have to take the test. Again this stresses that you be present during the class sessions and fill out the worksheets that are given to you.

I know that this letter is long, and I thank you for hanging in there. You are going to be great. I know that this seems like a lot of work right now, but you will get it done. You have come this far in your walk with God and I know you will make it through this next leg. You will get out of this class what you put into it. Remember be open to what God is trying to do through you and I bet you will be transformed.

Be God's

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris".

Chris Bishop

Chris@lifeforceyouth.com

Confirmation sponsors,

You make up the critical part of our confirmation team trinity. Your work with confirmands and parents allows a fresh perspective and new insight that would not otherwise be there. You are truly living out the call to make disciples in a very real way. The aim of Middletown United Methodist Church is to build a community that invites, welcomes and accepts all people for the purpose of being transformed into deeply committed Christians. As a sponsor you are on the front lines of helping bring this vision into reality with our young people.

The job that you have as a sponsor is, at its core, a simple one. As a sponsor you are called to be real with your confirmand. If you are real about who you are with the students and model for them what it is to be a person of faith, then they may connect to their faith in a deeper way. With this opportunity you also have some responsibilities to guide your time with your young person.

First, be in prayer for your confirmand and for the class. Our starting point for all that we do should be prayer. Pray that God will guide your time with them. God works through this program in so many wonderful ways and keeping it bathed in prayer will get us off on the right foot every time.

Second, spend some time with your student. Make some time to go to a sporting event, hang out or go for some ice cream (we all scream for it), just be there as a friend and someone who is willing to really listen to what is going on in their lives. Invest in this young person. A wonderful way to connect with them is to make sure that they have a bible that they can read easily. Also, find a devotion that they can do daily. There are many different flavors of devotionals out there. Find one that resonates with your student. If you need help, please let me or Pastor Susan know.

Third, help your confirmand with class requirements. The youth have a lot on their plate. They have to write their creed, make their banner and stole, memorize the books of the New Testament, be at all of the classes and go to other things around the church. Help them manage their time so everything isn't crammed into the last two weeks. Offer to drive them to class and youth group. Be their partner in this journey of faith.

Finally, get plugged in to the confirmation program. Please make every effort to be at all of the classes that sponsors are asked to attend. Also, sign up for a time when you can just come to class and be with your confirmand or help lead small group discussion. We are always in need of help. Come to the National Cathedral and be a chaperone on the retreat. We want you to be an active part of this program.

Thank you for the way that you offer up your time, talents and yourselves to serve these young people. More than anything we (the pastoral staff) say in the classes the students will remember and take home the things that they learn from you. If you have any questions please feel free to let me know. Thanks for doing what you do, for loving God and loving our kids.

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