



# Youth Confirmation Preparation:

*A Parent/Guardian Guide*

2024-2025



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# Confirmation is...

*a sacrament, or a sacramental rite, in which the candidates “express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop”.*

*(The Book of Common Prayer, hereafter BCP, p. 860)*



A sacrament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.” Episcopalians recognize seven sacramental rites: the two great ones being Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Individuals who were baptized at an early age are given the chance to make a mature, public affirmation of their faith, recommit themselves to the responsibilities of their baptism, and receive a laying-on of hands by a bishop at Confirmation (BCP, p. 412). Baptism precedes confirmation for youth; but as an adult, baptism, and confirmation can occur at the same time.

Before you receive the sacrament of Confirmation, it’s important, and required by church canons, that “confirmands” (someone seeking Confirmation) go through a preparation process. Preparation for confirmation allows candidates to discover the meaning of Christian commitment in their lives, and explore ways that their Christian commitment can be lived out. The candidates reaffirm their renunciation of evil, and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ. They reaffirm the promises made for them at their infant Baptism. Those present in the congregation also promise to do all in their power to support the candidates in their life in Christ.

The Episcopal Church’s theology of Confirmation has continued to evolve along with its understanding of Baptism. Confirmation is no longer seen as the completion of Christian initiation/membership, nor is Confirmation a prerequisite for receiving Holy Eucharist (or Communion). Baptism is now understood as full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s body the Church (BCP, p. 298).

Accordingly, Confirmation has been increasingly understood in terms of a mature, public reaffirmation of the Christian faith and the baptismal promises. Confirmation is not graduation from faith formation, but rather marks the beginning of mature participation in the mission and ministries of the church.

# Elements of the Process



## Group Learning and Church Service

Discovering and strengthening faith is best done in relationship. Throughout the Spring, confirmands will participate in the Alpha course with clergy, staff, and mentors to explore topics central to faith and life. The class will begin at 9am. When the class finishes, confirmands will enter the main chapel service for the second half of the service, which ends at 10:30am. Classes run **every Sunday in February through the first weekend of April**. The style of learning is active and participatory. See the schedule below.

The teaching team is: The Rev. Joseph A. Szczerba, Jr., Elliot VanHoy, Emily Given, The Rev. Sarah Dunn

## Mentorship

Selecting a mentor is an important part of the Confirmation process. This relationship is primarily nurtured through mentor participation in at least **3 Required Spring Course Meetings**. We also encourage independent meet-ups for discussion, service, and faith sharing. An ideal mentor is someone who takes an interest in the faith life of the confirmand and is willing to share their own faith stories. Because it is **required** that your mentor participate in the Spring Schedule, they will need to be **local**. The mentorship relationship works best when the confirmand selects the mentor, with parental support.



See the mentor information page 4 for more details.



## Family Support

Confirmation is truly a whole family endeavor. Parents are the #1 influence on their children's faith formation. How you talk about this experience matters. Rest assured, the church doesn't expect you to navigate this road alone. We are here. Make the most of this year together - attend church regularly, pray at meals, and talk about what is being learned in the sessions. Consider how you might add prayer, study, and service into your own schedule.



## Service

Being of service to the church and the wider community is the trait of a growing faith. Confirmands, families, and mentors will have opportunities to put their faith into action through service at the St. David's Fair and with other outreach partners. See page 5 for more details.



... and the movement of the Holy Spirit!



## Youth Ministry Engagement

Our youth Group meets every Wednesday from 7pm-8:30pm. We ask confirmands to check this out at least once in the fall and once in the spring. Youth Choir is another option for meaningful connection. Visit [stdavidchurch.org/music](http://stdavidchurch.org/music) for more details.

# Journeying with Your Confirmand

There is often a strong desire to get Confirmation "done". As parents, we may think it ensures that our children consider themselves "Christian". It is right to place a priority on it but what is more important is that Confirmation is integrated into the life of your child... and your family as a whole.

## As you enter this year together...

- Empower your confirmand in the mentor selection process. Listen to what they are looking for in a mentor and assist them in extending the invitation to that person themselves.
- Make faith something you talk about in your home. Share your understanding of God/Jesus/faith/church and ask to hear more about theirs.
- Worship together. If you already attend church regularly, wonderful. Keep coming! If you are less regular in your attendance, this is a great opportunity to reengage with being an active part of the worshipping community. Gathering together matters.
- Find ways to incorporate prayer into your family life. Easy ways include mealtime, bedtime, and before a sporting event or activity. Even a quick carpool line blessing can change the whole day!
- Nurture your own faith so your confirmand sees that a relationship with God is a life-long and life-wide journey.
- Talk about your doubts and questions. Forging an authentic faith expression is essential to a growing relationship with God.
- When doing normal daily check-ins, consider asking questions like, "Where do you see God in that?" or "How does that line up with your faith?" Holy conversations don't need to be big, heavy, or scary!
- Be sure everyone has their own Bible (*and read it*). There is a daily lectionary (set of readings) for the Episcopal Church that can be found at [www.dailyoffice2019.com](http://www.dailyoffice2019.com). (*Don't be confused by the title. It is current.*) Check your app store for other options for daily scripture reading.



# Selecting a Mentor

Each confirmand will select a non-parent adult mentor (*sometimes called a sponsor*) who is willing to support them throughout the Confirmation process. Primarily, the Mentor will be responsible for participating in **3 of the Spring course meetings** at St. David's. The intention is to provide a space for the confirmand to share their experiences and foster a relationship with another person of faith.

This year we will be using the Alpha program for our Spring course. Perhaps your mentor will have heard of Alpha or even hopefully participated in it previously. Alpha is an engaging and conversational curriculum that groups students at tables to watch videos and discuss. During these meetings, Mentors will act as "table hosts," helping to facilitate discussion and encourage conversation.

We would also encourage mentors to participate with your family and confirmand in some of our "pre-course" fall events, as well as opportunities for service.

## An ideal mentor is someone who...

- will encourage your confirmand to express their faith openly.
- listens and recognizes that they are still growing in the faith, rather than an "I have all the answers" kind of adult.
- worships at St. David's Church or another local faith community.
- is interested in establishing a meaningful relationship with the confirmand that could extend beyond confirmation preparation.
- is committed to praying for their confirmand and all who are part of the Confirmation process.
- is willing to submit the necessary background checks and complete the safeguarding online video series.
- is able to attend the Confirmation Service June 8th at 10am.

If you would like assistance with selecting a mentor, please contact Elliot VanHoy - [evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org](mailto:evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org).

For information on how to fill out clearances, please visit [www.stdavidschurch.org/get-involved](http://www.stdavidschurch.org/get-involved).

For questions, please contact [clearances@stdavidschurch.org](mailto:clearances@stdavidschurch.org).



# Additional Requirements/Opportunities



Along with regular attendance for the program sessions and developing a consistent confirmand-mentor relationship, please plan to:

- Attend and participate in the recommended “pre-confirmation” fall events such as Fair Volunteering and the Christmas Pageant, as well as encouraged family events like Advent Wreath Making, the All Parish Breakfast, and the Christmas Tree Burn.
- Participating in one Youth Group event in the Fall and Spring.
- Participation in one Sunday at St. John’s Soup Kitchen. Youth and Families at St. David’s serve at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Norristown on the first Sunday of every month from 7am-9:30am. This is a time to prepare hot meals for houseless folks in our community. The dates available are: 9/1; 10/6; 11/3; 12/1; 2/2; 3/2; 4/6; 5/4; 6/1. We would strongly encourage this as a confirmand/mentor joint activity. Please email Elliot with the date you select!
- Consider signing your student up for our summer trip. This is a phenomenal way to cap off their confirmation experience and makes a great confirmation gift!



Volunteers at St. John’s Soup Kitchen



Youth and family Cookout 2024



# Confirmation 2024-2025

## Pre-Confirmation Events:

Sunday, September 29	Fair-mily Moving Day	10:30am-1pm	Fairgrounds
Saturday, October 6	Fair Volunteer Opportunity	2-Hour Slots	Fairgrounds
Sunday, November 24	St. DYG Friendsgiving	4pm-6pm	Undercroft
Sunday, December 1	Advent Wreath Making	10:30am-11:30am	Allen Hall
TBA	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	TBA	Chapel
Sunday, December 22	Christmas Pageant	5pm	Chapel
Sunday, January 7	Epiphany Tree Burn	6pm-8:30pm	Fairgrounds

## Confirmation Course Schedule:

Sunday, January 26	Introduction Parent's Meeting*	9:15am-9:45am	Harrison Room
Friday, January 31	Confirmation Kickoff*	5:30pm-7:30pm	All Campus
Sunday, February 2	Life: Is This It?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, February 9	Jesus: Who Is He?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, February 16	Cross: Why Did Jesus Die?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, February 23	Faith: How Can I Have Faith?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, March 9	Prayer: Why and How Do I Pray?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, March 16	Bible: Why And How Do I Read It?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, March 23	Spirit: Who Is The Holy Spirit?	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, March 30	Evil: How Do I Resist Evil? New	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Sunday, April 6	Life: Making the Most Now	9am-10:30am	Harrison Room
Saturday, April 26	Confirmation Overnight*	Begins 7pm	All Campus
Sunday, June 8	Confirmands Meet With Bishop*	9am	Church
Sunday June 8	Confirmation Service/Reception*	10am	Chapel

## Additional Requirements

- Mentor Participation in at least 3 Sunday morning classes
- At least 1 Visit to St. John's Soup Kitchen
- At least 1 Youth Group or Youth Group event

Asterisk(\*) indicates a required event  
 Participation 75% of classes and events  
 Please contact Elliot VanHoy if you are unable  
 to attend any of these events:  
[evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org](mailto:evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org) or 610-688-7947



# Contact Information

## Teaching Team

**Elliot VanHoy**  
Confirmation Coordinator/  
Director of Youth Ministry  
evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org  
610.688.7947 x220

**The Rev. Emily Given**  
egiven@stdavidschurch.org  
610.688.7947 x218

**The Rev. Thomas Szczerba, Jr.**  
Associate Rector  
tszczerba@stdavidschurch.org  
610.688.7947 x303

**The Rev. Sarah Dunn**  
Associate Rector  
sdunn@stdavidschurch.org  
610.688.7947 x302

**Church Address:**  
763 South Valley Forge Road  
Wayne, PA 19087

[stdavidschurch.org](http://stdavidschurch.org)





# St. DYG 2024-2025 Event Schedule

**Weekly MS and HS Youth Group:  
Wednesdays 7pm-8:30pm  
(beginning Sept 4th)**

## Group Events

**Sun Sept. 8- Kickoff Picnic**

**Sun Dec. 15- Christmas Party**

**Sun Sept. 29- Fair-mily Moving Day**

**Sun Jan. 5- Epiphany Tree Burn**

**Sun Oct. 20- Linvilla Orchards**

**Sun Feb. 9- Super Bowl Party**

**Wed Oct. 30- Halloween Party**

**Sun Mar. 2- Shrove Pancake  
Breakfast/Fundraiser**

**Sun Nov. 24- Friendsgiving**

**Sun May 18th- End of Year Cookout**

**St. John's Soup Kitchen Dates: 9/1; 10/6; 11/3;  
12/1; 2/2; 3/2; 4/6; 5/4; 6/1**

Please contact Elliot VanHoy [evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org](mailto:evanhoy@stdavidschurch.org)  
to be placed on the mailing list for RSVP, time, and location  
information.

*Strengthen, O Lord, your servants with your Holy Spirit;  
empower them for your service; sustain them all the days of their lives. Amen.*

*BCP, page 418*



St. David's  
Episcopal Church  
— EST. 1715 —

[stdavidchurch.org/life-events/confirmation/](http://stdavidchurch.org/life-events/confirmation/)