



BIG GOD
BIG QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Confirmation and Confirmation class?

Confirmation is a learning opportunity and important step in one's faith journey where a small group of students is exposed to some of the key teachings of the Christian Faith, the history of the universal church and our local church, the life and work of Jesus, and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Confirmation class helps young people explore their faith journey, learn how to articulate what they believe and prepare them for a relationship with God that serves them into adulthood.

How are confirmation and baptism connected?

In our Presbyterian tradition, we baptize infants, children, youth, and adults. We baptize infants because we accept God's promise to love us from the very beginning of our lives. Since infants cannot profess their faith, confirmation is the time when youth can claim their faith and say what they believe. If your son or daughter has not been baptized, he or she will be invited to be baptized on the Confirmation Sunday.

Who is eligible for confirmation?

At First Presbyterian Church of Athens, confirmation class is typically held during 9th grade. Older youth who have not been confirmed are also invited to participate.

Who is teaching the class?

The Director of Youth Ministries will be the primary facilitator with our Pastors and other Lay Teachers leading special sessions.

When and where will we meet?

Confirmation will meet during the Sunday School time (9:45-10:45am) in The PIT. Please review the calendar for specific dates, as we do not meet every week due to school schedules and holidays.

Do I have to come to every class meeting?

Consistent attendance is expected of all Confirmands in the class. We understand that family schedules, sickness, and other issues may cause you to miss occasionally, but encourage you to make this a priority. You will have make up work assigned for those classes missed.

What will we do in the class?

We will have fun, play games, pray, read scripture, ask questions, use art & writing to express our journey, eat together, share our faith stories, write an individual and group statement of faith, and many other things.

Is there a curriculum?

For 2018-2019, we will be using the newly released PC(USA) confirmation curriculum.

Big God Big Questions: Confirmation for a Growing Faith prepares youth to understand and answer four key Confirmation questions:

1. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?
2. Who is your Lord and Savior?
3. Will you be Christ's faithful disciple obeying his word and showing his love?
4. Will you devote yourself to the church's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

Will there be work outside of class time?

Yes. This curriculum includes a Home/Mentor Guide that will offer parents and mentors clear ways to continue the conversations at home. Youth will also be provided a Big Journal to reflect, record questions and take notes in preparation for writing their personal faith statements.

Will there be activities outside of the "regular" class schedule?

Yes. There is a mandatory Opening Day Retreat on Saturday, September 22nd. This retreat is key to building a strong sense of community with each class, a feeling of trust and acceptance that will help us to ask and answer hard questions about our faith. And a closing retreat February 22-24. Confirmands are also asked to participate in Youth Sunday on February 3rd.

What is a confirmation mentor?

A confirmation mentor is an adult member of the church who commits to join with their matched youth for the year of confirmation and hopefully beyond. Mentors provide confirmands with another caring adult who is not their parents, to share their faith and their questions about their faith. But in the process, both the adults and kids will grow in their faith.

Mentor relationships help build the entire church into a stronger community, an extended family.

How do I choose my mentor?

During the Opening Retreat, youth will create a list of characteristics and give specific names of people (if known) they'd like to have as a mentor. The Director of Youth Ministries will make final matches and contact mentors to invite them to serve in this special role. Mentors will be revealed at Session 3!

What role do parents play?

The most important role that parents can play is to support their children in this faith journey – to encourage and ask questions, to share about their own faith journey, and to make sure confirmands attend class and complete assignments. The Home/Mentor Guide includes overviews of each session, with suggestions for continuing the conversation through different scripture and activities.

Does it cost anything to be in Confirmation class?

Yes. This year we have put all of the costs into a blanket fee to be paid at the beginning of the school year. \$75 will cover the cost for all confirmation curriculum and activities, the Opening Retreat and Closing Retreat, and a personalized Bible.

What happens when the classes end?

At the end of the class, the youth are asked to consider making a public profession of faith in Christ Jesus and join the church as an active member.

Do I have to join the church at the end of the class?

No. This is a personal decision that you make, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Not everyone who participates in Confirmation joins the church, although the majority of people do choose to join.

What happens if I choose to join the church?

Confirmands are presented to Session, and given the opportunity to share their written faith statements. Then the Confirmands appear before the congregation during Sunday worship to publicly declare their faith in Christ Jesus and be presented as new members of the church.

When will the class be presented to the congregation?

Confirmation Sunday will be Sunday, March 24th, after meeting the Session the day before.

What does it mean to make a public profession of faith in Christ Jesus?

As Presbyterians, we ask our members, youth and adult, to make a public profession of faith by answering three basic questions of faith:

1. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?
2. Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?
3. Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

What does it mean to be a church member?

"To be a church member is to express one's faith in Jesus Christ and the desire to be his disciple, to share his love, and to serve him as a part of the church as the body of Christ."

(Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers by Donald McKim)

As Presbyterians, we ask our members to make a covenant with the congregation by answering this question:

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service, and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?