



**St. Paul's**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

2022-2023  
Youth Ministry  
Handbook

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# Faith Formation Philosophy

Faith Formation at St. Paul's is built around passing on the faith to the next generation. We hope to equip, encourage and partner with parents and caregivers to share their faith with their children. Relationships are the cornerstone of faith formation. The children, youth and family ministry at St. Paul's creates opportunities for adults to be present in the lives of children and youth and to walk with them in their faith journey. From birth through 12th grade, we strive to have as many adults as possible in the lives of children and youth that support them, encourage them, share the Gospel with them and pray for and with them.

The ELCA is committed to a church wide call to discipleship, and that includes youth. We are focusing along with the ELCA on seven faith practices. Followers of Jesus are inspired to develop practices and patterns for living that characterize a life that is devoted to daily discipleship. Here are the seven common practices that have been identified as key to model and nurture.

**Pray:** Prayer is the way a disciple enjoys an intimate relationship with God.  
*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

**Study:** The regular study of the Bible and books that help to enliven its message is a key way the disciples practice loving and knowing God.  
*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).*

**Worship:** Worship is the practice of "stepping away" from the pattern and press of daily life to intentionally love God.  
*I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together (Psalm 34:1-3).*  
*Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

**Invite:** The experience of God's loving touch in one's life is a gift the maturing disciple feels compelled to share with others.  
*But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15).*

**Encourage:** Disciples are not born mature; in reality, many disciples never grow beyond the infancy stage of their relationship with Christ. Growth in faith happens as we are mentored and as we mentor and encourage others.  
*Little children, let us love, not in word of speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18).*

**Serve:** Practicing justice and doing acts of mercy and service put flesh on God's love.  
*For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).*

**Give:** In response to God's touch in our lives, we offer ourselves joyfully to others: our time, our talent and our financial treasures.  
*"...give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38).*

\*The seven faith practices, descriptions and Scripture references were taken from the ELCA's website.

The only way we can have youth that develop these practices is by working together. It is all of us—

staff, volunteers, families and congregations—partnering together to pass on the faith to our youth. We want our youth to know and take ownership of this congregation as well as the congregation taking ownership of them and their families. We want them to feel loved, supported, encouraged and part of this faith community. We want them to know the church here at St. Paul's, the church in Waverly and the church in the world. There are things that the community here can do that the larger church cannot do. This community of faith can know our youth in a way the larger church cannot – they can support and nurture our youth in ways the larger church cannot. It's not about being single minded or limiting our youth, but about nurturing and supporting them. The congregation will be invited in to the youth and family program here at St. Paul's. It will not be a separate identity, but an integral part of this faith community.

## Who attends confirmation?

Confirmation is part of the faith formation typically for our 7th & 8th grade students. It is not required and it is not a sacrament. But it is an intentional time for students to dig deeper into their faith, to explore the Bible, to learn about the catechism and Lutheran theology.

Confirmation concludes in the fall of the 9th grade year for students. There is a short time of instruction as well as the practice of writing a faith statement as the last expectation for confirmation.

## What does confirmation include?

Confirmation includes weekly large group teaching from Pastor Mark, lead pastor and Deb Bachman, director of faith formation. It also includes small group time led by adults from the congregation that are chosen by Pastor Mark and Deb. There are expectations of worship, service, fellowship and more. There is also a fall retreat at Ewalu Lutheran Bible Camp. Mentoring during Lent takes the place of the regular weekly large group and small group time.

Confirmation begins on August 24 and ends on May 3.

The following Wednesdays are when confirmation does NOT meet:

November 23 (Thanksgiving break)

December 21 & 28 (Christmas break)

February 22—April 5 (Lenten Mentoring weeks)

**Entering Confirmation Milestone:** Sunday, August 21 at 11 a.m. service

## Confirmation Expectations

There are a certain number of expectations for students in confirmation. There are many things that you simply can't learn by talking about or listening—you need to actually do them!

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend the weekly teaching and small group times on Wednesdays. If there are issues with attendance, parents will be contacted. The time frame for confirmation is from 5-7 p.m. each Wednesday night, unless noted on the schedule. Students are asked to be there promptly so we can begin and end on time. Lenten mentoring runs for 7 weeks

between February and April. If a student will be absent, please contact Deb Bachman before class each week.

When there is regular confirmation class, there will be pizza offered for \$1 a slice each week. Students do not need to sign up, but will need to bring money each week. There is an option for parents to pay up front and each week, we will keep track of this account for each student. This will not be offered during Lenten mentoring as there will be meals offered for a free will offering each week.

**Worship:** Worship is central to faith development. Students and families are encouraged to be in worship every week if possible. From August 21, 2022 until end of August 2023, there are over 60 worship opportunities at St. Paul's. Each student is expected to complete 15 Worship Notes each year. Worship note forms can be found on the table outside of the sanctuary. There is a basket to return the forms in the same location.

Our 9:00 a.m. service will continue to be livestreamed. Because we want worship notes to also include students and families to be part of the St. Paul's community, we will ask that at least 8 of the worship notes be in person at St. Paul's. We will keep the online worship notes, which can be found on our website. But 8 will need to be in person and on the paper copies.

**Service:** Part of what we encourage all members of St. Paul's to make part of their life is service. We are asking the same of our confirmation students. We are asking that students participate in 15 hours of service during the confirmation year. This will be outside of our large group activities scheduled. There will be a short form to document these 15 hours. These do not have to be done at St. Paul's, but there will be a number of options available at St. Paul's. These opportunities will be promoted during confirmation and in the weekly emails.

One opportunity that is available is for students to help with Saints Alive, our after school program. Students helping with Saints Alive would be offered transportation from the middle school to St. Paul's. Students will need to commit to a semester at a time. There is a form available to sign up for this opportunity. Each week will count for 1.5 hours of service time.

**Lenten Mentoring:** Each student is asked to pick a mentor during our Lenten season. We will not meet in our normal weekly time, but instead students will be asked to attend worship and have a discussion with their mentors. There are 7 weeks of mentoring. Students are expected to attend at least 5 of those weeks with their mentors. There is a form to fill out each time and those forms also count towards their worship notes for the year. 8th graders will have the same mentor as their previous year. More details will be given out in January of 2023.

## Confirmation Retreat

Retreats are a time for students to get to know each other on a deeper level as well as experiencing another place where the church is present. St. Paul's is blessed to work with Ewalu Bible Camp for our retreat this year. There will be an optional Dirty Feet Retreat in the spring offered as well.

The fall retreat will be November 19-20 at Ewalu. We will leave around noon on Saturday and return around noon on Sunday. The cost is \$35 per student and scholarships will be available. Drivers will be needed and perhaps chaperones as well. We will do registration for this event later in the fall just in case things change in the next few weeks or so.

# 9th Grade Confirmation

Our 9th grade students will meet in the fall to prepare for the Affirmation of Baptism Milestone. There will be a meeting to kick off the fall and hand out information to those planning on affirming their baptism (being confirmed) this fall. It will outline all the expectations and dates/deadlines for the 9th grade year.

Informational meeting for 9th grade (parents and students) will be Sun., Aug. 28 at 12 p.m. in the parish hall (gym).

Other dates to mark on your calendar now:

Sun., Oct. 23—Dinner, Faith Statement Presentations, Rehearsal and Photos (evening)

Sun., Oct. 30—Affirmation of Baptism Milestone at 11 a.m. worship service

# High School Ministry

Historically at St. Paul's, there has been a drop off in participation after a student completes their confirmation experience. To be sure, high schoolers are busier than ever. We understand that but we also believe keeping our high schoolers together will help them spiritually. High school ministry is open to all students in grades 9-12 and their friends.

We will be continuing to have a weekly youth group. We will meet on Wednesday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m. This will be a time of fellowship, group building and devotion. We will begin on Wed., Aug. 24 and meet every Wednesday through May 10 with the following exceptions:

November 24 (Thanksgiving break)

December 21 & 28 (Christmas break)

March 15 (Spring break)

\*\*Our times will adjust slightly during Advent and Lent to accommodate worship on Wednesday evenings as well.

We also understand that some students want to go deeper. There will be opportunities for more in depth Bible studies for students. There will be monthly options, bi-weekly options and weekly options. That sign up process will happen in the first few weeks of the school year and will be available for students to sign up for throughout the school year.

There will also be special events outside of youth group and Bible studies. There will be a retreat at Ewalu on November 4-5 (Friday night through Saturday night), a ski trip and more to be announced later.

High school students are also invited to help out with Saints Alive if they are free and available on Wednesdays after school. Talk to Deb if interested in this possibility.

**High School Graduation Milestone:** Sunday, May 21

# Fundraising

Much of our programming is in our budget, but there are special things that happen that require us to fundraise. Our fundraising money goes mostly towards our summer trips. Our hope is to offer a

summer trip each summer for our high school students and something for our middle school students. With that, we ask that every student in grades 7-12 participate in our fundraisers each year. We know that everyone is busy and we want to respect that our youth program is not the only group that you will help with fundraising. With all of that in mind, we will be doing three fundraisers per school year, each year. Our hope is that having a set number of fundraisers will encourage people to give to these events generously without being asked in other ways throughout the year. There is a form we ask each family fill out. Each student is asked to participate in one fundraiser with their parent. We do know that it may require families to serve at more than one fundraiser, but students only need to be at one. If everyone pitches in, it will make it easier for each person.

The events for this year are:

Sun., Nov. 6—All Saints Brunch (morning)

Sun., Feb. 19—Mardi Gras Dinner (evening)

Sun., April 9—Easter Breakfast (morning)

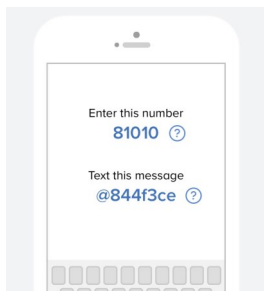
## Communication

Communication is key to keeping parents up to date with what is happening. A weekly email will be sent of what is happening each week, topics for confirmation, discussions questions and activities to talk about at home, reminders of what was sent home from events, any announcements, upcoming activities or deadlines, and other information. Email addresses will not be shared and used for communication purposes only.

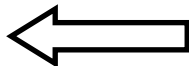
If you do not currently receive the weekly e-news, go to <https://www.stpaulswaverly.org/newsletter-sign-up/> to sign up for both the youth ministry (this includes information for 7-12 grade) newsletter as well as the church announcements and other lists (there is a separate email for children's ministry—grades 6 and younger).

We also have a Facebook group (St. Paul's Faith Formation) that has a post almost everyday (or that's the hope!). You can ask to join that and keep up to date there as well. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/664153864578795>

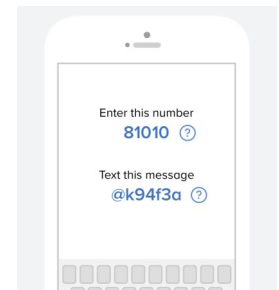
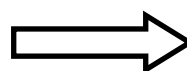
Texting is another way to pass along quick and vital information. There is a texting group for just confirmation families (parents and students are encouraged to sign up). There is a separate group for high school parents and youth. The photos below show the way to join the group. This will be used to send reminders of deadlines and other vital information.



To join the confirmation group, use the information to the left.



To join the high school group, use the information to the right.



# **Inclement Weather**

On Wednesdays, the policy remains that if school lets out or is cancelled due to weather, there will be no programming for children or youth. We will post it on KWWL, the website, Facebook, emails will be sent as well as a text to those subscribed to the texting list.

# **Behavior Covenant**

Youth programming at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School strives to be a place where Christian values are practiced, and students have a positive and rewarding experience of God, faith and community. We believe following guidelines will help provide these experiences. By signing below, you and your student understand the expectations made clear by St. Paul's Youth Ministry.

- I promise to treat other students in a way that models the behavior of Jesus.
- I will speak about others in kind and caring ways.
- I will act in respectful and helpful ways toward other students, leaders and helpers.
- I will take good care of church and school property.
- I will be on time.
- I will not go to places in the church where there is no adult supervision.
- I will follow all directions that are given to me from staff and volunteers.

I understand that if I do not follow this covenant, my actions may exclude me from programming.

If the covenant is broken, there is a three step process we will take:

1. Conversation with the student when it happens (or as soon as possible following the incident). Parents will be notified.
2. If it happens a second time, parents will be asked to come in with their student to have a conversation with the Director of Faith Formation and/or the Lead Pastor.
3. If it happens a third time, a meeting with the Director of Faith Formation and Lead Pastor will be held to talk about the next steps with the student and their behavior.



