

Confirmation

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:6, ESV)

This Sunday, three of our young men will be confirmed during our combined worship service at 10:00am in the sanctuary. A time of reception and celebration will follow in the fellowship hall. Each of these confirmands were baptized at a young age and have gone through a series of classes over the last two years to prepare them for this special day. I hope you will be present to support them as they take this important step in their faith journey.

What is confirmation and how does it relate to baptism?

Confirmation is "the act by which persons who were baptized as infants or young children (or, because of other special circumstances, could not make the baptismal vows themselves) make their first public statement of their declaration or profession of faith. In this sense **they confirm their faith**. Confirmation is performed in preparation for reception into full membership in The United Methodist Church." (*A Dictionary for United Methodists, Alan K. Waltz, Copyright 1991, Abingdon Press*)

To me, confirmation is that step **when a young person claims the Christian faith for themselves and takes responsibility for their own faith journey**. Whereas baptism is both the recognition of God's grace at work and the entry ramp to the Christian faith in the life of a person, confirmation focuses more on the person's response to that grace by making a commitment to follow Christ and participate regularly in the life of the faith community.

As we prepare for Sunday, I would like everyone to please review the following statement that we will share together. I will ask the congregation this question, followed by the response in bold.

Q: Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?

A: With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

I pray that these will not be just words we say, but a covenant promise that we will live into as we welcome new members into our community of faith. Special thanks to all of you who have already been modeling the community of love and forgiveness to bring them to this point.

Lenten Blessings,

Pastor David Rittgers