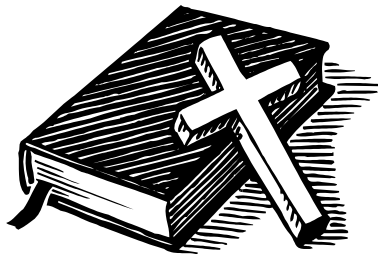


***A Journey of Faith***

***Head to the Heart***

***Confirmation Ministry***



**St. John's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
Bennington, NE**

Parent ~ Student Handbook

2009-2010



*St. John's Lutheran Church*  
*322 North Molley Street*  
*Bennington, NE 68007*  
*402-238-2483*

August 26, 2009

Welcome to Head to the Heart/Confirmation!

I would like to take a moment to welcome you and your families to the Head to the Heart Ministry (Confirmation) at St. John's Lutheran Church. I speak for the Church Staff, Small Group Guides, and the Youth Ministry Board in saying we are all excited to have you in our Head to the Heart (H2H) system. We hope that your study and experiences this year are a blessing to you and your families as you grow in your Christian faith.

Confirmation is a time in the Lutheran Church for studying and learning about the teachings of the Lutheran Church. Through the Holy Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism, we will explore such things as the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments, and both the Old and New Testaments.

As we head into our fourth year of the Head to the Heart ministry, we are hoping that Confirmation has been/will be a wonderful change for you and your family. We hope your experience here at church and your time together at home has/will become more focused on our Lord. Our hope is that we can continue to build a strong relationship with Jesus Christ, and how we build that relationship helps us with our life challenges currently and in the future.

Our prayers are with each of you and your family in this exciting year of ministry together as we all grow in love and faith!

IM4U,

Sharee Maki, Director of Youth Ministry

## **Head to the Heart Confirmation 2009-2010 Staffing**

Mary Carol Junker: Sixth Grade Teacher  
Angie Menard: Sixth Grade Assistant Teacher  
Di Loptin: Substitute

Sharee Maki: Confirmation Ministry Coordinator  
Seventh and Eight Grade Teacher  
Parental Support

Eileen Baker Confirmation Ministry Support Manager  
Small Group Guide Advisor (Adult Support)  
Memory Work and Attendance Records

### Small Group Guides

Seventh Grade: Shelly Christensen  
Allison Junker  
Caryn Stichler  
Kelly Witt

Eighth Grade: Deb Depperman  
Carol DiMauro  
Kris Melvin  
Mike Melvin  
Brad Renter  
Tricia Schneider

Substitutes: Heather Goertz  
Kelsey Schneider  
Mark Carl

**Youth Ministry Board:** Eileen Baker, Deb Depperman, Tonya Eurek, Allison Junker, Di Loptin, Sharee Maki, Angie Menard, Shaina Menard, Nick Pinegar

## **What is Head to the Heart Ministry and How does it Work?**

The Head to the Heart Confirmation Ministry is an approach to continue one's baptismal promise. This ministry works when we help keep this promise and nurture one's faith:

- at home, by loving and committed parents who are the primary faith mentors for their families;
- at church, by a loving and committed group of laity and pastor who help strengthen the faith nurtured at home by parents.

In the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, both parents and sponsors made a promise to raise their children in the Christian faith. Through our actions and words, parents teach their children what it means to be a Christian living in today's world. This is why we at St. John's feel that we are a resource for parents and youth to continue to grow and build on this foundation.

### **Head to Heart Confirmation System and WOW?**

The Head to Heart Confirmation Ministry is a three-year system beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and guided by Faith Inkubators curriculum. This ministry starts with studying the Old and New Testament in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are taught together on a curriculum rotation to cover the Small Catechism teachings along with relating it to one's life. In the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade and after completing the required work and final exam, students are invited to be confirmed.

WOW (Wednesday of Wonders) is the process of making Wednesday Night a night of faith for all ages. Confirmation class, along with other ministries, will take place during WOW nights. The times for WOW are:

- 6:30-7:45 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Classes
- 6:30-8:15 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Classes
- 6:30-7:30 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Classes (Sept-Oct)
- 7:30-9:00 Sr. High Youth Group (BYG)

## **Requirements and Ins and Outs of H2H Confirmation**

Faithful attendance, willing participation in worship, and Wednesday night events are the basic requirements of the Head to the Heart Confirmation system.

The following requirements are established by the Youth Ministry Board as an important part in guiding the students' faith journey.

### **WORSHIP**

It is essential that students and parents understand that worship is at the very heart of their lives as Christians. Worship helps us to connect with other Christians of faith for praise, to hear God's Word, share in the Lord's Supper, and be renewed so that as we are sent into the world, we can serve to our fullest.

Attendance at worship is taken by the registration worship forms enclosed in the Sunday bulletin. **Students will need to make sure they write their name and check the Confirmation Student box on the registration card,** then place them in the offering plate as it is passed. This enables us to keep track of your attendance. All confirmands are required to attend at least 25 worship services per year.

We understand that you may be out of town occasionally, and worship attendance at another church is accepted as long as you bring back a bulletin from the service that you attended. This will be accepted as long as it is turned in within two weeks from the date attended.

The following worship services and Education are offered on Sundays:  
8:30am (Traditional), 9:45am Education Hour, 11:00am (Contemporary)

### **Worship Notes and Worship Attendance**

Worship notes are a tool for youth and parents to look deeper into your worship experience. You can find the worship notes and drop rack at the back of the Sanctuary. The following are the required worship notes by class: 6<sup>th</sup> grade=10, 7<sup>th</sup> grade=15, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade=20

## **Participation in Worship**

Each youth in the Confirmation System is required to participate in the worship service at least 5 times per year, by *acolyting 3 times, greeting once and ushering once*. As an Acolyte, the student is responsible for serving on their scheduled date and time to assist the pastor. If the student absolutely cannot attend, they are responsible for securing a substitute. The student needs to call the church office to inform them of the substitution. Acolyte schedules will be sent home and are posted on the bulletin boards. We will also schedule you to greet and usher sometime during the month of February and/or for Lenten services.

If you would like to participate in the service by other means such as lector, cantor, etc. talk to Sharee about these other options.

## **Lent**

During the Lenten Season we will postpone our Wednesday night events to allow you and your families to attend services. Attendance is required to the Lenten services. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade small groups and 6<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation class will be asked to help in the Lenten Soup Suppers. A schedule will be given for your small group as the time draws near.

## **Retreat/Recharge**

Retreats and Recharges are an excellent tool for fellowship, education, and renewal. *One retreat per year is required of all 6<sup>th</sup> graders* and are optional for 7&8<sup>th</sup> graders. There are many opportunities each year for retreats; one that I will organize transportation to (a Fall Recharge at Okoboji) and several that you can do on your own. If you as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader choose to opt out of going to a retreat we require a term paper. You can get more details from Sharee. Drivers and Sponsors are always needed for activities and some retreats.

## **Service—6<sup>th</sup> grade**

Service opportunities are a way for us to place our faith in action. We encourage students to seek out ways to plug into the church and the community with a servant heart. Large group servant activities take place on Wednesday nights, scheduled dates, and during Lenten Soup Suppers. We also want you to go and serve as small groups or individually. This year 6<sup>th</sup>

graders will be required to perform a minimum of 8 hours of service (required large group/small group projects do not count toward your individual hours) within the community, church or its programs. Opportunities include Kingdom Quest, serving at dinners, etc. We encourage you to take it a step further and find a ministry that your family can plug into together. If you need help with service ideas, contact Sharee.

### **Service—7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

In 2007 we began to include a great addition to our confirmation program as we have partnered with Christ For the City International. This organization runs a short-term mission opportunity call “Urban Plunge”. Urban Plunge is a weekend retreat where our focus is to “find out where God is working and join Him there.” We will travel to about 9 different ministries in North and South Omaha to help us discover what our purpose and passion is.

In the past, we required that youth attend a retreat and complete eight hours of service work within the community or church. With this great ministry, we have changed our retreat and service hour requirements as listed below:

7<sup>th</sup> grade: Attend the Urban Plunge retreat

8<sup>th</sup> grade: Participate in a group service project; project and date TBD

NOTE: If you are unable to attend the Urban Plunge in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, you will be required to join the 8<sup>th</sup> graders for their project, and make up the Urban Plunge in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Please make every effort to attend in 7<sup>th</sup> grade as it is great to experience with your classmates and because the date the following year may not work, leaving you with only the following option:

If you do not complete an Urban Plunge in either grade, you will, in addition to the group project, need to complete 16 hours of service within the community or church and complete a 4 page paper on a faith based ministry you would like to serve in that serves the world’s needs.

**The cost for The Urban Plunge will be \$45 per person** (this will include food and housing). We will also need 2 to 3 adults on each retreat.

Note: Actual cost of an Urban Plunge weekend is \$75/person + a \$200 group deposit. The youth budget will make up the difference to make the experience more affordable, but anyone needing full scholarship just needs to let Sharee know. (Of course, you’re welcome to pay the full amount should you like to help us stretch our budget!)

## **Memory Work**

Memory work requirements are to help the students in learning Luther's Small Catechism. This memory work is only for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes and comes straight out of the Small Catechism. We will furnish a Small Catechism to each youth, with the expectation that they bring them with them each Wednesday. Should they be lost or destroyed, the replacement cost for the youth is \$3.

The first chance to complete the memory work will take place on Wednesday nights. The Memory work will coincide with the teaching of the night. Any "make up" memory work will need to be taken care of before class starts with help from one of our Confirmation managers.

## **The Faith 5**

The Head to the Heart ministry approach places high importance on faith within the family. Faith Inkubators gives the suggestion of practicing the Faith 5: 1) Share the highs and lows of each person's day. 2) Read and highlight a verse of scripture in your Bible. 3) Talk about how the verse relates to you. 4) Pray for your highs and lows, for your family, your church, the world. 5) Bless one another. What more rewarding way to spend 5 minutes could there be? Find more suggestions for family devotion time at [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com).

## **Completion of Requirements**

The Head to the Heart Confirmation Ministry has many facets allowing us to get the most out of our experiences. Memory work, attendance, sermon notes, service and fellowship events, and worship participation are all benefits to you and your family. These requirements need to be completed in a timely manner within the confirmation year. This means that all requirements for the 2009-10 confirmation year will need to be completed no later than May 4, 2010.

Not completing the appropriate requirements in a timely manner will mean that you may not be confirmed in the Fall of your ninth grade year.

## **Absences**

Each Student is allowed to miss 3 Wednesday night events during the year. Please let your small group guide know if you will be gone. Large group servant projects are required by all and will not be excused. If a student

misses Wednesday night events, make up work will need to be completed. If a student is absent more than three nights they will need to meet with Sharee in regards to their attendance and make up work. If the student fails to meet with Sharee after 3 absences, she/he will need to make up the current confirmation year.

### **Electronics and Food**

No cell phone or electronics are allowed during Confirmation events. No food or drink allowed during Confirmation events, including supper, candy, pop, etc.

### **Discipline Policy**

Any Student who causes a disturbance in Confirmation will be warned once. If the student continues to disrupt the other students and the event a second time, parents will need to attend class with the student. If any disruption continues, the Pastor and Youth Director will talk with the student and parents and together will decide how confirmation should continue for the student.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are the key to a productive confirmation ministry and to their family's faith lives. Parents will play the most important role in teaching the youth and helping them grow in their faith. We can't reiterate this enough. There will be time throughout the year that we will require parent(s) help in events, service, and fellowship. Also, we want you to take some ownership of the ministry and share with Sharee thoughts and events that you would like to help establish for the Jr. High youth.

### **Jr. High Youth Group**

The Jr. Youth Ministry is mostly involved in the Head to the Heart Confirmation Ministry system. Occasionally, events are designed and planned just for the Jr. High Youth. Watch the bulletin board for the permission slips and times.

### **Cost of Confirmation**

Here at St. John's we try to keep our cost to a minimum for the families; however, each year there is a confirmation fee for each student that is involved in the confirmation program. **This year's confirmation fee is**

**set at \$15 per student**, half of what it was last year! This fee will include any Bible tabs, binders, curriculum and treats we provide throughout the year. Besides the confirmation fee of \$15, there may be other expenses that students incur, which may include the \$45 for the Urban Plunge experience, Recharge retreats, cost for fellowship events that the small groups choose, or expenses for optional retreats the youth attend. Here at St. John's we want every youth to have the opportunity to participate in all our events, so if financial aid is needed, be sure to talk to Sharee.

### **Cancellations**

If the Bennington Public Schools cancel classes or let out early for bad weather, confirmation will not be held. If you live in an outlying area where weather has made the roads dangerous, please call the church office so we are aware of your inability to attend.

### **Communications**

Information from us will be sent via mail or email or may be sent home with your child on Wednesday evenings.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of the Confirmation staff or Youth Ministry Board members with any questions, concerns, ideas or suggestions you may have. You may also contact me at any time:  
Sharee Maki, 238-2483 or 707-6833, [shareesjlc@live.com](mailto:shareesjlc@live.com).

## **Head to Heart Confirmation 2009-2010 Covenant Form**

St. John's Lutheran Church takes the Head to the Heart Confirmation Ministry very seriously. Therefore, all of the standards, requirements, and commitments written in the Confirmation Handbook will be enforced as the basis of the program.

A covenant is a mutual agreement and a binding contract. It involves promises and commitments on both sides. A successful program at St. John's Lutheran Church requires the support and cooperation of students, parents or guardians, Small Group Guides, Managers, Directors, and Church Staff. We all need to work together.

There are several important responsibilities to your side of the covenant. The requirements have been established by the Youth Ministry Board to make this a spiritually successful program.

Confirmation is elective. Our faith does not depend on it, nor is it the only measurement of one's spiritual growth. Confirmation is however, a significant opportunity to learn about our faith. When you and your student sign this covenant, you make an elective commitment to follow the requirements and commitment of this system as stated in the Handbook. It is very important for you to be knowledgeable about everything that is in the Handbook! For some families, this may not be the time to take on these commitments and responsibilities. If that is the case for you, then please wait.

Not abiding by the covenant will result in the student and parents meeting with the Pastor or Sharee to discuss learning and spiritual growth alternatives.

In signing this covenant, you as a parent/guardian agree to read and discuss the Confirmation Handbook with your student. You also agree to read and discuss the confirmation ministry by meeting the requirements and addressing directly with the Confirmation Staff and Board any questions or concerns about the program that you or your student might have during the course of the year. Communication is the key to the success of this system for your student.

*(Continued on other side)*

Please sign below:

I/we understand the requirements, commitments, and support needed in order to make this a spiritually successful year for my/our student.

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*Parent's or guardian's signature*

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*Parent's or guardian's signature*

I understand the requirements and commitments expected of me in order to make the confirmation ministry a spiritual success for me this year.

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*Student's signature*

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*Grade*

We understand the efforts and responsibilities required of us as Guides, Confirmation Leader, and Staff.

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*Guide/leader's signature*

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO SIGN AND RETURN FOR OUR RECORDS. THIS HANDBOOK COPY IS YOURS TO KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS. THANK YOU!**