****

**First Lutheran Church**

120 - 5th Avenue NW 🞄 Minot, ND 58703

Phone (701) 852-4853 🞄 FAX (701) 852-6527

*A Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

January 4, 2021

Dear Confirmation Families,

Happy New Year! As we return to our rhythms and routines after Christmas, it’s time to enter a new theme and focus in faith formation and Confirmation as well. This winter we will spend 5 weeks on an Epiphany theme, “Look & See,” reflecting on how God reveals divine power and presence in our world, and how we might be able to perceive God’s work in our daily lives.

These five weekly sessions will begin on Wednesday, January 13th and finish on February 10th. February 17th is Ash Wednesday and will mark the beginning of Lent, a new focus of our study, and perhaps an adjustment in format as well.

We are grateful to all who took a few minutes to respond to our survey last month—thank you. Your input largely shaped our decision making for how to deliver Confirmation material to our youth, and what kind of expectations are reasonable for their engagement.

The clear preference for format was to continue with video reflections and google form lessons. We know this is not ideal for everyone, but we will carry on this format for these coming 5 weeks. We will try to communicate announcements, details, etc. consistently through e-mail and Remind (the Confirmation Remind group is @gerjets if you haven’t joined yet and would like to). Additionally, all resources, lessons, etc. will be available each week for you to access at www.flcminot.com/confirmation. Bookmark that site and you will always be in the loop!

Expectations for participation in congregational life will be similar to the first part of the year, with a change in worship credits because we realize this was difficult for many (and you let us know in the survey!). We ask that students and parents track these as you complete them. A tracking form will be made available to assist you in doing that. Here are our expectations for January-May:

* Regular engagement with the weekly lesson and form submission
* 6 worship notes—through completion of the 2021 worship note Google or paper form
* 1 service credit—opportunities will include tying a fleece blanket for baptisms, helping with Valentines or Easter cards to send to our elderly or homebound members, participating in the various Give Some drives hosted by our social ministry committee, and probably more. We’ll communicate these as they come up.
* 1 worship credit *if you did not complete one in the fall.* If you did a worship credit already in this academic year, you are finished. If not, sign up to do a Scripture reading, keep an eye out for when we begin serving Communion “normally” again and sign up to help with that, submit pictures/videos for worship projects that come up (like the Gratitude Video shown on Thanksgiving Eve). The links to the Sign Up Genius will now also be found right on the Confirmation page. We’ll also communicate about other opportunities as they arise.

One final mission for our Confirmation students this month: We want to get your Bibles back in your hands! One of the lasting benefits of Confirmation is that you finish with a colorful Bible that is marked up, notated, underlined, etc., which makes it a helpful resource to refer back to throughout your life-long faith journey. However, it’s difficult for you to do this when we have your Bibles locked up at church! Therefore, we are asking that you stop by the church building to pick up your Bible so that you will have it as you complete the weekly lessons. In addition to your Bible, there will also be a bag for each student which will have a few helpful and fun items for the coming weeks.

The Bibles and bags will be set up right outside the main office in the Parish Center, beginning Tuesday, January 12th. (If we can get them ready earlier we’ll let you know!) The doors are open from about 9-3 Monday-Thursday, 9-12 on Fridays and about 8:30-11 on Sundays. If those hours are difficult (which is understandable), simply call or e-mail for the door code and you can stop anytime at all that is convenient for you. Just come to Door 12 on the SW corner of the Parish Center, input the code on the keypad and push enter, which will unlock the door for you. The door code changes monthly.

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or just want to connect, please feel free to give any of us a call (office: 852-4853) or send an e-mail. We are grateful for your patience and understanding as we navigate these uncertain times. Despite the challenges, we are delighted to partner with you in raising a new generation of disciples of Jesus Christ!

Peace be with you!

Pastor Brandy Pastor Ellery Melissa, Director of Faith Formation