

FAITH  
SEEKING  
UNDERSTANDING:  
a PROGRAM of CONFIRMATION

Class of 2012

Expectations, Program Notes, & Forms



HAWFIELDS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Build. Grow. Share.*

2115 South NC Highway 119, Mebane, NC 27302  
336-578-2811 x.223 (O) • 336-578-4418 (F)  
[seeking@hawfieldschurch.org](mailto:seeking@hawfieldschurch.org) • <http://www.hawfieldschurch.org/seeking>

## Confirmation Class of 2012

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank you! On behalf of the confirmands you will be serving, thank you for making this important commitment in the lives of our youth. At Baptism, we as a church made a promise to help raise these folks in the name of Christ and your participation in the Confirmation Program, in part, codifies that promise. This series of training sessions are designed to help acclimate you to some of the theological and philosophical foundations for doing confirmation and where we as a church may part company with the resources we are using.

Below is an outline of what will covered in each Session. Please review these and if there is a session (or sessions) that you know you cannot attend, please contact David for more information or for any possible paperwork you may need.

### SECTION ONE: WHY DO CONFIRMATION?

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.

Recite them to your children and talk about them

when you are at home  
and when you are away,  
when you lie down  
and when you rise

–Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Then little children were being brought to him  
in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray.

The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them;

but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me,

and do not stop them;

for it is to such as these

that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

–Matthew 19:13-15

Since the beginning, we have been told by none other than God to pass on the legacy of faith to our children. We have over the centuries created various ways of accomplishing this goal. For the Presbyterian Church, because we practice infant baptism, confirmation becomes the way in which help our youth grow not only in the knowledge of God but also of the church and how it's supposed

to work. In Baptism we profess that God has placed God's claim on the child. In Confirmation we help the child to accept this claim for themselves. While society at large has grown more Biblically illiterate and less loyal denominationally, churches have had to become again places of learning for those foundational pieces that form the present day church and the Presbyterian Church in particular.

## **SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES & EXPECTATIONS**

The objectives of the program have been set by the Ministry of Education Committee with the approval of the Session. They have been written on the foundation that meaningful relationships provide the best avenues for faith development. The Mentor's and parents'/caregivers' relationship with their confirmand is in partnership with the instruction they'll receive in class.

### **For Participants (Mentors and Confirmands):**

1. *Be able to express their personal faith statements of faith*

We will begin and end the process with written statements of faith. These are hopefully a way to see (1) what one thinks theologically and (2) how these thoughts evolve by the end of the course.

2. *Explore their faith journeys*

Knowing how we come into the ideas about faith we have can be a key to our growth and an insight into how God has worked in our lives.

3. *Be able to demonstrate knowledge of Biblical structure and content*

Participants will be able to have a working content outline of both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in addition to learning what things are NOT in the Bible.

4. *Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its polity*

This refers to how our church government works, the function of the Book of Order in the life of our church and some historical background on how the PC(USA) came to be.

5. *Participate in worship leadership*

Participants will have opportunities to lead in our worship services in various respects as a way to see how the pieces fit together. Opportunities include being liturgist, reading scriptures, helping choose music, helping with the sermon, and ushering.

6. *Connect their faith with some form of service*

Several opportunities for both short-term or long-term mission projects will be available to our participants.

This last objective is specific to the Confirmands:

7. *At the end of the experience, make an informed decision about joining the Church*

Our hope is that after all of the learning, Confirmands will choose to be confirmed and made full members of the Church of Jesus Christ and of Lakeside Presbyterian Church in particular. It is important to stress throughout the process that this is indeed their choice and not a matter of peer or adult pressure.

Taken individually, the objectives follow the basic outline of the program. In other words, we will be dealing with these items chronologically as the program progresses through Pentecost Weekend, May26-27, 2012. In addition to the objectives above, **Mentors have further expectations:**

8. *"They shall be members of the congregation with an expressed interest in helping the faith of youth grow."*

This is hoped to form part of the basis of their calling as a mentor. While the hope is that Mentors will receive a blessing for their participation in the program, the primary objective is provide as rich a learning environment for the confirmands as possible.

9. *"They will participate in the regularly scheduled activities of the confirmands."*

The regular attendance of the classes cannot be emphasized enough as a part of the learning of the confirmands. Our commitment is reflected in where we spend our time. It is important that as mentors commit to them in spirit, they also commit in terms of time. For all of the gifts they may offer over these coming weeks there is none more important than their time.

10. *"They shall have a background check as well as training in our abuse policy."*

The background check is confidential and for the express purpose of making sure staff is aware of any arrests or convictions on a mentor's record that may be pertinent to their service as an mentor. The abuse policy is a document Hawfields Presbyterian has adopted both for the protection of our children and youth as well as for our adult volunteers.

11. *"They should be at least two years out of high school."*

Experience matters. One of the reasons we are working with 9th Graders and older is because they are better able to handle some of the concepts we'll be covering while still young enough for this process to be formative. A mentor's experience as an adult is an important piece to their learning and to the life of faith.

12. *"They shall be accessible and available."*

While the classroom is the structured piece to this program, the relationship a mentor develops with the confirmand is not structured per se. They may meet as often outside of class as possible. You are, in fact, encouraged to have contact with your confirmand beyond the classroom setting. It may be in the form of a weekly prayer or journaling together, for examples. In any case, questions don't always happen on a schedule, so while they should set good boundaries about when, where and how their confirmand can contact them, mentors should be as open as possible to meeting them where they are; these opportunities with our youth only come once.

13. *"They are NOT expected to 'know' everything but are expected to be WILLING to explore the questions that the confirmands will have about faith."*

Mentors are expected to help them find "answers" but not necessarily have them. There are questions we'll be exploring that have persisted for *hundreds* of years. It's not likely we'll solve them over the course of our Confirmation Class (though with God, anything's possible!).

### **Hawfield's Abuse Policy (a Note for Mentors)**

What's perhaps most important about our policy is its simple but direct advice on recognizing abuse and avoiding it. Our policy requires more than one set of eyes for reporting and for participating.

When a youth reports that they have been a victim of abuse there are many things to consider. First, please recognize that you are not a trained investigator. Don't try to handle this situation by yourself. If a child reports abuse to you, your express obligation is to report it. Your chain for reporting is to alert staff and then to follow up with staff to see that the reporting has been done to the proper agency (usually child protective services and the police). As a mentor, you are a volunteer youth worker and by extension a *mandatory* reporter. That being said, also remember that your relationship

with your confirmand is based on trust, so be clear with your confirmand what you are doing with what they tell you. Outside of abuse or threats to harm themselves or others, keep your confirmand's confidence absolutely. If you have a question about some situation, ask staff.

While you are participating in the program, you may take time to meet with your confirmand in person outside of class. Please do so! But also be mindful of protecting yourself and your confirmand by meeting in public places (like parks, a restaurant, or the library). There are many places that can serve well for having private conversation while remaining in view of others.

At its simplest, the policy is basically no one gets to be alone with a youth out of view of others.

### **Section Three: Mentor As Calling**

You may not consider yourself to be called of God to this task. The truth is...you are. Each of you has been considered for this task not only by staff, but also by the confirmands themselves as well as other Elders of the church (people ordained for the leadership of our congregation). Above all, prayer for your selection has been going on for weeks. You have been carefully chosen and, therefore, called. This is to say that your being here is of a greater intention than your own.

Because you are called, God has promised to be your first and best resource. This means that, in order to be an effective Mentor, you must seek not only God's will but also God's strength for your task. As you help shape the mind of the present and future Church, having God's guidance is critical. So take time to be in a habit of prayer (if you aren't already!), praying for your confirmand at least once a week and praying WITH your confirmand at least once a week. Even if you don't spend but a minute or two spend this time praying!

As issues or topics come up, be honest about where you are with them, even if you feel like you disagree with the denomination's position on something. This is important learning for our youth that our documents, even the Bible, are living words with which we grow and struggle as well as take comfort and instruction. Make no mistake about this: your staff will have to go back and find answers because not all questions can be anticipated. This process will grow as we grow.

Take some time to consider why you agreed to be a part of this process. What motivated you? What kind of place do you think the Church is for your confirmand? What kind of future with God do you hope for your confirmand? What do you hope happens for you in this process?

Lastly, you may notice in this document that a lot of ownership language has been used ("YOUR confirmand..."). This is intentional. As a Mentor you are an intimate, spiritual friend for the youth in your care. As you move through this process use these as your watchwords: invite, inquire, instill.

# CLASS SCHEDULE 2010-11

version 8/24/11

## Sunday, September 18

9:45am .....Class  
PRELIMINARIES

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Come ready to talk about things you've always wondered about God
- Get an overview for the course
- Group building

## Sunday, September 25

9:45am .....Class  
GETTING TO KNOW YOU II

Activities/Assignment(s):

- More group building
- Talk to your parents/caregivers about why they had you baptized (if they did)

## Sunday, October 2

9:45am .....Class  
FAITH STORIES

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Come having talked to your parents/caregivers about whether or not you were baptized and why (or why not)
- Attend Baptism(s) and reflect with class (when scheduled)
- How did you get here (on your faith journey, that is)?
- "God is..." activity
- Initial Faith Statement are due next class

## Sunday, October 9

9:45am .....Class  
INITIAL FAITH STATEMENTS

Activities/Assignment(s):

- We'll review them together
- Attend Contemporary Worship tonight

## Sunday, October 16

9:45am .....Class  
"THE PILLARS", PART ONE

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Brief overview of Reformed Theology
- "Pillars" handout:
  - The Bible is authoritative
  - God is sovereign
  - All have sinned
  - Grace is free
  - Our response should be gratitude
  - Reformed, always reforming
- Review the list of concepts for next class

## Sunday, October 23

9:45am .....Class  
"THE PILLARS", PART TWO

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Brief overview of Reformed Theology
- "Pillars" handout:
  - The Bible is authoritative
  - God is sovereign
  - All have sinned
  - Grace is free
  - Our response should be gratitude
  - Reformed, always reforming
- Read one of the Psalms for next class

## Sunday, October 30

9:45am .....Class  
BIBLE CONTENT WORKSHOP I:  
EXPLORING THE TANAK

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Overview of Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)
- Manuscript issues
- Writing styles
- Psalms Project
- Read the letter of 1 John (Yes, the whole thing)

## Sunday, November 6

9:45am .....Class  
BIBLE CONTENT WORKSHOP II:

GOOD NEWS, LETTERS & SOMEBODY NAMED "SAUL" OR "PAUL" OR SOMETHING

Activities/Assignment(s):

- Overview of Koine Greek Scriptures (New Testament)
- Lettering issues
- Writing styles
- Epistle Project

## Sunday, November 13

9:45am .....Class  
BIBLE TRIVIA: I DIDN'T KNOW THAT WAS IN THERE! (OR NOT!)

Various bits of knowledge and factoids.

- Bible Trivia Game
- Readings in *Can We Talk?* Chapter One for next class; pay attention to the key question; each chapter has one or more

## Sunday, November 20

9:45am .....Class  
CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

While thinking about God as Creator we'll explore the question: "What am I doing here?"

- Review *Can We Talk?*, Chapter One
- Complete the *Gifts Inventory* for next class
- Read selections from Galatians & 1 Corinthians

## Sunday, November 27

9:45am .....Class  
GIFTS INVENTORY

Part of knowing who God created us to be is having healthy self-awareness of our gifts (yes, we all have them).

- Review passages from Galatians & 1 Corinthians
- Holy Spirit 101
- Review inventories
- Readings in Chapter Two of *Can We Talk?* for next class

## Sunday, December 4

9:45am .....Class  
WHO IS JESUS?

Activities/Assignments:

- Review *Can We Talk?* Chapter Two
- A little history on Christology
- Find images of Jesus for next class

## Sunday, December 11

9:45am .....Class  
"FACES" OF JESUS

Jesus puts the question to us: "Who do YOU say that I am?"

- Hear from various folks about their image of Jesus
- Review passages from Exodus, Matthew & Luke
- Read from *He Was One of Us*
- Readings in *Can We Talk?* Chapter Three for next class

## Sunday, December 18

9:45am .....Class  
SIN & RECONCILIATION

Activities/Assignments:

- Review Chapter Three in *Can We Talk?*
- Defining "sin"
- What is forgiveness?

## Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day, No Class!

## Sunday, January 1-2, 2012

Confirmation Retreat

(location and times TBA)

9:45am .....Class  
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

We will engage this classical, Reformed, theological question: If God is good, & God is all powerful, then what's "evil" doing here?

- Read Chapter Four of *Can We Talk?* for next Sunday
- Handout 3 on the Holy Spirit for next class

## Sunday, January 8

9:45am .....Class  
THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE BIBLE

Chapter Four deals with a LOT of issues so we will break it down into two sessions. In this we will look further into the role of Holy Spirit in the life of Faith.

- Review Chapter Four in *Can We Talk?*
- Holy Spirit 102
- Prayer for Illumination: Inspiration & Interpretation

## Sunday, January 15

9:45am .....Class  
ADVENT IN REVIEW

We break away from the regular schedule to think about the season and how it fits into the life of the church.

## Sunday, January 22

9:45am .....Class  
THE HOLY SPIRIT & OTHER RELIGIONS

We finish Chapter Four with a frank discussion about other religions and the nature of "truth."

- Review Chapter Four in *Can We Talk?*
- Other Religion Highlights
- Memorize the "pillars" for Theology Workshop

## Sunday, January 29

9:45am .....Class  
THEOLOGY WORKSHOP, PART ONE

In light of what we have seen in other faiths and thought, what is distinctive about Presbyterian beliefs?

- Review of the "pillars"
- Reformed Theology as a frame of mind

## Sunday, February 5

9:45am .....Class  
THEOLOGY WORKSHOP, PART TWO

In light of what we have seen in other faiths and thought, what is distinctive about Presbyterian beliefs?

- Review of the "pillars"
- Talk about which pillar really speaks to you
- Readings in *Can We Talk?* Chapter Five for next class

## Sunday, February 12

9:45am .....Class  
THE LIFE OF GRATITUDE, PART ONE

How are we to live under the Grace of a Sovereign God?

- Review Chapter Five in *Can We Talk?*
- The "called out ones"; who or what is "church"?
- The name "Presbyterian" means...

## Sunday, February 19

9:45am .....Class  
THE LIFE OF GRATITUDE, PART TWO:  
POLITY WORKSHOP

We will look at the structure of our church government & think about our part in it.

- Levels of Government
- Hey, that looks like the U.S. Government!
- So What? What's that got to do with me?
- Our Constitution in brief (we'll get into them deeper later)
- Readings in *Can We Talk?* Chapter Six for next class
- Introduction of Exam Review Document

## Wednesday, February 22

7:00pm.....Worship (SC)  
ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

## Sunday, February 29

9:45am .....Class (SC)  
THE SACRAMENTS

There are only two sacraments in our theology. They not only hold promise but they also help us remember.

- Review Chapter Six in *Can We Talk?*
- Grace, the Church & Sacraments
- Review of Exam
- Memorize the Lord's Prayer
- Choose a Service Project!

## Sunday, March 4

9:45am .....Class  
THE LORD'S PRAYER

This is a regular part of our liturgy Sunday mornings. But what does it mean?

- Review Chapter Six in *Can We Talk?*
- Taking the Prayer for a Walk
- Prayer as Practice
- Meet with your Mentor to sustain praying together for at least 15 minutes starting this week
- Read Chapter Seven in *Can We Talk?* for next class
- Begin work on Final Faith Statements

## Sunday, March 11

### Daylight Savings Time!

9:45am .....Class  
PRAYING & LIVING: ARE THE 10  
COMMANDMENTS FOR REAL?

How do we get connected with God & the idea that God wants us to live a certain way?

- Review Chapter Seven in *Can We Talk?*
- Share experiences from prayer exercise
- Walk through the 10 Commandments
- What would be your "rule of life"?

6:00pm .....(TBA)  
STATED SESSION MEETING

We will attend at least a portion of the meeting and talk about our observations in the next class.

## Sunday, March 18

9:45am .....Class  
WHAT DID YOU THINK?

The Session is the governing body of our church.

- Be sure to talk about why you think the Session is important to the life of our church (or not)
- Take time to learn about your family history (from parents/caregivers, grandparents, other relatives and friends, etc.) for next class

## Sunday, March 25

9:45am .....Class  
THE CONSTITUTION: OUR DENOMINATION'S  
RULE OF LIFE, I

In a way, you could think of the two parts of our constitution as our collective rule of life, apart from the Bible.

- Overview of the Book of Confessions
- Focus on the Barmen Declaration
- Read the Brief Statement of Faith
- Memorize the Apostle's Creed

## Sunday, April 1

### Palm/Passion Sunday

9:45am .....Class  
THE CONSTITUTION: OUR DENOMINATION'S  
RULE OF LIFE

In a way, you could think of the two parts of our constitution as our collective rule of life, apart from the Bible.

- Talk about the Brief Statement of Faith
- "Test" on the Apostle's Creed

## Thursday, April 5

7:00pm .....Worship (SC)  
MAUDY THURSDAY

## Friday, April 6

12:00pm .....Worship (TBA)  
GOOD FRIDAY

## Saturday, April 7

6:00pm .....Worship (FH)  
GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

## Sunday, April 8

NO CLASSES in Church School  
HAPPY EASTER

## Sunday, April 15

9:45am .....Class  
TOUR OF THE CHURCH

How to get where; where to find what; and other places you may not know.

### SERVICE PROJECTS

The last "pillar", the life of gratitude, is made real in our acts of service. How do (or will) your service project affect your faith?

## Sunday, April 22

9:45am .....Class  
FAITH IN CONTEXT

We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us.

- Review observations from family history discoveries
- Who is most influential in your faith presently?
- Glance through the Book of Order for next class (you can get it online or there are copies in the church Library)

## Sunday, April 29

9:45am .....Class  
THE CONSTITUTION: OUR  
DENOMINATION'S RULE OF LIFE. II

In a way, you could think of the two parts of our constitution as our collective rule of life, apart from the Bible.

- Review the Book of Order and how it is organized
- Take a look at the real pieces of our church government (who's on our Session; who's in leadership in our Presbytery, etc.)

## Sunday, May 6

9:45am .....Class  
VISITING OTHER PASTURES

We will visit another congregation in the PC(USA) today as well as one in another denomination. Lunch and big discussion afterward!

## Sunday, May 13

9:45am .....Class  
LAST THINGS

Anything left over to still be talked about or answered

- Turn in and share Final Faith Statements

### REVIEW & SESSION EXAM OVERVIEW

Don't panic! This is designed to help you put together with the work you've done!

- Prepare for Session Meeting
- Evaluate Service Projects

7:00pm .....Session (Library)  
EXAMINATION BY SESSION

This is NOT a punitive exercise! This is a chance for the Session to get to

know you and for you to share what you have learned! It's also the time when you either affirm you want to be a member of the church or not.

Saturday, May 26,  
6:00pm .....(FH)

or Sunday, May 27

Day of Pentecost

11:00am .....(SC)

CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION

Those who have indicated their intent will be confirmed in the context of worship. Those needing it will be baptized. Congratulations! You're done!

Intentionally left blank.

FAITH  
SEEKING  
UNDERSTANDING:  
a PROGRAM of CONFIRMATION

## INITIAL FAITH STATEMENTS

The Church throughout its entire history has sought to communicate what we believe for several reasons. First, they wanted to show they weren't like everyone else. Second, there were lots of people saying things about God, Jesus and the Church that some thought were wrong and they wanted to set the record straight. In some cases, people within the Church got into a fight and the winners got to write the faith statement. For our class, we just want to know what you think.

In our time together, you're going to write two statements: this one and then your final statement that you'll submit to the Session before your exam. The questions below are intended as a guide to help you organize your thoughts. If you want to say more or less, do so! For now, let go of the idea of having right or wrong answers. Write what you really think, even if it's "I don't know." Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

What do you believe about God?

What do you believe about Jesus?

What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?

What do you believe about the Church?

Intentionally left blank.



# COVENANT OF PARTICIPATION

version 8/24/11

## Confirmation Class of 2012

### *Confirmand Statement of Intent*

As a member of the Confirmation Class of 2012, I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to participating as fully as a possible in the work and schedule of the confirmation class held from September 18, 2011 to May 27, 2012. I understand this to mean showing up for class on time, prepared with the work I've been assigned and making an effort to talk regularly with my Confirmation Mentor and my Parents/Caregivers about the class content. I understand that I am expected to ask questions that matter to me and I am willing to challenge answers I do not understand and answers with which I do and do not agree.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### *Parent/Caregiver Statement of Intent*

By encouraging \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the Confirmation Class of 2012, I (we), as parent(s)/caregiver(s), commit to participating as fully as a possible in the work and schedule of the confirmation class held from September 18, 2011 to May 27, 2012. I understand this to mean helping my confirmand showing up for class on time, prepared with the work they've been assigned and making an effort to talk regularly with my Confirmand about the class content. I understand that I am expected to ask questions of my Confirmand and of the program leadership that matter to me and I am willing to challenge answers I do not understand and answers with which I do and do not agree. I will respect the confidentiality of the mentor's relationship with my youth. And I will spend a lot of time listening to and praying with them.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### *Mentor Statement of Intent*

As a Mentor for \_\_\_\_\_ of the Confirmation Class of 2012, I commit to participating as fully as a possible in the work and schedule of the confirmation class held from September 18, 2011 to May 27, 2012. I understand this to mean showing up for class on time, prepared with the work I've been assigned and making an effort to talk regularly with my Confirmand about the class content. I understand that I am expected to ask questions that matter to me and I am willing to challenge answers I do not understand and answers with which I do and do not agree. And I will spend a lot of time listening to and praying with my Confirmand.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_