

June, 2008

Dear St. Peter Parents of Entering 8th graders (2008-09),

Greetings in the name of the Lord! Thank you to those who participated in our recent parents' meetings. We heard many good comments that helped us fine-tune our Confirmation program at St. Peter. We're grateful to God for your partnership in our ministry.

This letter will share our plans for Junior Confirmation instruction beginning this fall, September 2008. This new program involves all 8th grade Confirmands, St. Peter Day and Public school students. We're also including other helpful materials and resources for you as you make your plans for your Confirmand and Confirmation weekend 2009.

In outline, parents and confirmands may **choose one of three learning experiences...**

A. On **Sunday mornings, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.** This learning session will be held in the gym, and will include pastors' presentations on the Catechism and small group discussion. This is our preferred track, because we'll combine both instruction time with fellowship and building relationships.

B. On **Monday evenings, 6:30 – 6:55 p.m.** This learning session will be held in the library before worship (7:00 p.m.). Pastors will share the same presentation as Sunday morning, but we will not have time for fellowship and relationship-building activities. Families will still be able to discuss the key application questions at home. This "make up" session may be used any time a family is out of town over the weekend, or if schedule conflicts come up at the last minute. Families may also need to and want to plan on Monday evenings to avoid conflict with sport games and practices.

C. **An at-home "family portfolio."** This "independent study" learning allows parents and Confirmands to explore the Catechism presentations and family discussion within their homes. Parents and confirmands will work through the same material and share two "portfolios" with pastors (one every 5 weeks). The content and dates for the portfolio correspond to the Sunday and Monday learning sessions. Family packets will be available on the Church Web site and on the Confirmation rack (outside the church office).

Note: At the end of each 10-week family portfolio, pastors may contact families for an in-home visit. This will help us "review" and share upcoming key dates and directions.

Of course, parents and confirmands **need choose only one learning experience**—A, B, or C. You are not asked, for example, to attend both Sunday and Monday sessions, or to attend Monday and complete the family portfolio. If you plan to attend Sunday morning and can't make it one weekend, you can have the same learning experience on Monday (and vice versa). If you're doing the family portfolio and wish to join in a Sunday or Monday learning experience, you are always welcome!

In addition, if your weekend schedule changes after the beginning of the new year, you are welcome to change your preferred track too. A family that cannot make Sunday morning classes in the fall may be able to make Sunday morning in winter/spring. When we begin a new "season," you are free to change your track for your Confirmand.

For all three learning experiences, we'll have two "seasons," fall and winter/spring, of 10 weeks each. An orientation session for both 10-week seasons will introduce the key themes, directions, and dates. The dates for the 10 weeks are listed on the 2008-2009 schedule. Please note all the scheduled "breaks"—no classes—during the year. We hope this helps with your vacation plans! If your Confirmand has special learning needs, we sincerely ask you to contact one of the pastors. We'll work with you and your Confirmand, but we need to hear from you to chart out the next steps. Please don't hesitate to call!

We're sending you the 2008-2009 schedule (green sheet). Again, note the key dates, including our first orientation session the weekend after Labor Day. The fall season has 10 class dates, and ends on November 16. The winter/spring season begins with an orientation and has 10 class dates (January 18 – March 29). Note that we have no class on the weekend of February 15, 2009.

As pastors, we've prayed about and discussed our key goals for Confirmation ministry. We're including a copy of the four objectives (green sheet) for your review and reflection. We value each one of these goals, and pray that you will join us in our ministry plan.

Also included in this mailing is a FAQs sheet and "Some Scenarios for St. Peter Families" sheet.

The FAQs (yellow sheet) are designed to answer common, big-picture questions. If you have questions about details, we invite you to contact Pastor Ken Wagener.

The "Some Scenarios" sheet (pink) may help our families to decide which track is best for their situation. In general, we ask you to select one track—for example, Sunday morning—and, as much as possible stay with your track. This will foster our fellowship and relationship-building over the course of our year together. You can, of course, use Monday as your "back-up" plan.

Please read through the scenarios, prayerfully consider which is best for you, and let us know your preference when you enroll your child in Confirmation.

Over the summer each family is asked to complete the Enrollment form (orange) and return it to the Church Office. Please also complete the Acolyte and Usher Service preference form. During the year your Confirmand will regularly acolyte or usher at the service of your choosing and on the weekend of your choosing. The Elders and Usher teams will work carefully with our Confirmands to involve them in all aspects of this vital ministry in our worship life.

On our Church Web site is a Power Point presentation outlining our Confirmation program. You will also find other key Confirmation resources to enrich your understanding of Confirmation in the Lutheran Church.

Thank you for your partnership in this vital ministry. May God richly bless our Confirmands!

In Christ the Lord!

Pastor Ken Wagener
Associate Pastor