



Saint Matthew's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



The Confirmation Journey 2019-2020
A Guidebook for Parents & Confirmands

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Wilton, CT

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Confirmation is the beginning of a life-long journey of faith. These materials will help you chart the course for the first part of this journey.

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in *these* your *servants* the covenant you have made with *them* at *their* Baptism. Send *them* forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before *them*; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Dear Parents,

As eighth graders, your children will have the opportunity to participate in Confirmation this year. Confirmation has long been an important journey at St. Matt's, and this year will be no exception. We have put together a calendar that will lead your child through a year full of faith and fellowship. **We want for them to grow in their understanding of our faith, to feel comfortable being who they are, to know how much God loves them, and that they belong to us and to the whole church.**

The journey toward Confirmation is a commitment – one that you and your child would need to choose. So, please take a careful look at all the information included in this e-mail and talk with your child about whether or not this is the year to make this commitment.

At Confirmation, children who are becoming young adults, are invited to make a mature profession of faith. At this time, they choose to live their lives following the way of Jesus. They're confirming the vows that you and their Godparents made for them at baptism about how they will live in the world, namely that they will be part of a Christian community, repent when they've made mistakes, be fed at God's altar, love and serve their neighbors, and respect the dignity of every human being.

I'm really excited to share with you that this year Confirmation will be team taught. I'll oversee the program in partnership with our new Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries, Samantha Trolice. Jen Kepner and Sharon Pearson will be teaching with us and spending important time with your kids on this journey. Both Jen and Sharon bring experience to this work and both have meaningful relationships with many of our kids.

This year your children will learn about the faith, have access to good and faithful mentors, learn to serve as Lectors in worship on Sunday, and so much more. And all throughout the journey, I hope they will grow in the knowledge of how much God loves them and how much they are capable of. To do that well, it will be important that you and they commit to this journey and commit to being present as much as possible. We also hope that throughout the year, you will be at worship regularly. Our Confirmands should participate in the regular rhythm of the year, especially in special services around Christmas and Holy Week. And it's important that they participate in mission trips and projects as well.

I can't wait to tell you more about the year ahead and what Confirmation means on the night of our first class. **So, please note that you should plan to stay that evening - October 1st from 6pm-7:30pm - to spend some time with me.** And please mark your calendar because Confirmation will take place at St. Matt's this year on Sunday, May 31st during our regular 10:00am worship.

Lastly, I know that this season is particularly busy as you and your kids shift gears back into school, sports, and all that the fall brings. Among all the busy-ness, please find a time to talk with your 8th grader about Confirmation. If you and they choose to participate this year, it is our expectation that your child will make attending these classes and trips a priority.

Thank you for your careful consideration of all these materials. Thank you for being part of the St. Matt's community – we are grateful for the gift it is to be in community with you. And thank you for helping your child understand the seriousness of this decision. I look forward to spending the year with them and I know that the rest of our team does, too. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

What is Confirmation?

In order to understand the importance of Confirmation, we have to first consider the promises of Baptism. At our baptism, each one of us is named before God and the congregation. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and we are claimed by God as beloved forever. We also opt in to a Christian life and into Christian community at Baptism as we make the following promises:



The Baptismal Covenant

- Celebrant* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
People **I will, with God's help.**
- Celebrant* Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People **I will, with God's help.**
- Celebrant* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
People **I will, with God's help.**
- Celebrant* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
People **I will, with God's help.**
- Celebrant* Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
People **I will, with God's help.**

As Episcopalians, these are core promises. They lie at the very heart of who we are as a people and who we believe God calls us to be in the world. If there is a membership criteria, if there is a bottom line, this is it. When we make these promises, we commit to:

- 1) Being part of a Christian community. That's the only way we can continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the only way we can be part of the breaking of bread and the prayers. This promise includes coming to church regularly, forming relationships with the people in our community, and supporting the life of the whole church community with our time, talent, and treasure just like the apostles did. **This is the membership promise.**
- 2) Resisting evil, admitting when we've made a mistake, asking for forgiveness, and then trusting that the God who loves us also forgives us. This promise acknowledges that even though we want to do the right thing, we won't always get it right. And we all need a chance to start again, to let go of the mistakes, to know that we are still inherently good and beloved in the sight of God and our community. **This is the humble human promise.**

- 3) Living in the world in such a way that we make Jesus known to others. This is the part where we learn (and practice!) to live and act like people who believe in and have been transformed by the story of Jesus. To do this, we have to already know the good news of Jesus – we have to come to church and be changed by his story. And we have to understand that we won't always get it right. Because being a Christian in the world isn't an easy task. And proclaiming this good news and Jesus as Lord with our words and actions isn't easy all the time, either. **This is the personal responsibility promise.** It reminds us that it isn't someone else's job to be Jesus' hands and feet – it's yours. The task belongs to all of us – in all we do.
- a. The good news of Jesus is that God has made a way for all people to know peace, to know joy, and to live in harmony. The good news of Jesus is that God has already won the victory over death – that this mortal life is not all there is. And the good news of Jesus is that all people are beloved of God – everyone. No exceptions.
- 4) **This is the love promise.** This part of the good news is so important, it gets its own promise. This highlights for us that we are intended to love and serve ALL of our neighbors. And you might ask who our neighbor is. The short answer is: **everyone.** Time and time again, Jesus makes it clear to his followers that we are responsible for all the people around us, and that our health and well-being is tied up in theirs. In the Episcopal Church, we believe that everyone is our neighbor and that we are called to serve and love all of God's people no matter who they are, where they come from, what color their skin is, how much money they make, what language they learned first, how they get to us, or who they love (or any other arbitrary boundary you can think of...). Everyone belongs. Everyone matters.
- 5) **This is the world promise.** This promise drives home the point again (just in case you missed it!) that even people who aren't Christians are our neighbors. Even those who are as different from us as possible are worthy of justice and deserve to live a peaceful life. And we are called not just to believe that – but to build a world where all people experience justice and peace. A world where everyone is valued just as they are, a world where we treasure and cherish the dignity of every human being.

At Confirmation, we ask young people to make a “**mature confession of faith**”. What that means is that they get to choose now, for themselves, if this is the way they want to live their lives. Do they want to make these promises the central way in which they will live out their faith? Does this feel authentic to them? Do they want to follow the Way of Jesus? Do they believe in the Way of Love?

As a Confirmand kneels before the Bishop to receive a blessing and the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is this covenant that they are confirming. It's this way of life that they are choosing. And it's really important that they understand the choice and that the choice be theirs to make.

2019-2020 Confirmation Calendar

September

Sunday, September 29th – First Confirmation Event: Chapel on the Green

Kids should plan to stay after church. Families can come help make sandwiches at 11:30, we'll leave for New Haven at 12:45pm. This is our first service opportunity of the year and it's an amazing experience. You can read about it here: <http://chapelonthegreen.weebly.com/about.html>. We'll need a few families to chaperone and to order pizza for lunch before we go. Kids will be back in the St. Matt's parking lot a little after 4pm (the whole experience wraps in New Haven around 3:30pm!).

**We will need:

2 families to sign up to order pizza

3 families who are willing to load up their cars and drive

2 families to grocery shop for sandwich making supplies

Can you help? Sign up by e-mailing Rev. Marissa: marissa@stmatthewswilton.org

October

Tuesday, October 1st – 6pm-7:30pm; First Confirmation Class.

Parents: please plan to stay and meet with Rev. Marissa to talk about the Confirmation journey.

Tuesday, October 22nd – 6pm-7:30pm; Confirmation Class

November

Sunday, November 3rd – Please plan to come to our 10am worship service: Confirmands will sign the Confirmation Book during worship and commit to the journey of this year together. Followed by lunch with Mentors. 11:30-1:00pm.

Tuesday, November 19th – Confirmation Class

December

Tuesday, December 10th – 6:00-7:30pm; Confirmation Class

January

Saturday, January 4th – 4:15-5:00pm; Trip to Our Lady of Fatima

Friday, January 24th – 5:45-9pm; Trip to Temple B'nai Chaim (dinner included!)

Trip to visit a Muslim Worshipping Community, date TBD

February

Tuesday, February 4th – 6:00-7:30pm; Confirmation Class

Sunday, February 23rd – 6:00-8:00pm; Confirmand + Mentor Dinner

Wednesday, February 26th – Attend Ash Wednesday services

March

Tuesday, March 3rd – 6:00-7:30pm Confirmation Class

Sunday, March 8th – Chapel on the Green Trip (See September schedule)

Sunday, March 22nd - 11:30-1:00pm Confirmation Class POSSIBLE? Snow date/extra time/save the date!

April

Confirmands Attend and actively participate in Holy Week Services. We'll make specific invitations to participate in worship as the time gets closer!

Palm Sunday (4/5): 8am and 10am

Monday-Wednesday: 7pm Holy Eucharist

Thursday: 7pm Liturgy for Maundy Thursday

Friday: Good Friday Liturgy at Noon; Stations of the Cross at 7pm

Easter Sunday (4/12): 8am and 10am

Tuesday, April 21st – Make up or Snow Day Class if needed!

May

Tuesday, May 12th – 6:00-8:00; Confirmation Class & Bonfire

Saturday, May 30th – 6:00-7:30pm; Special Evening with Confirmands, Mentors, & Families.

Sunday, May 31st – Confirmation at St. Matt's at 10am

Confirmands will need to be here a little after 9am to meet with the Bishops

This service will last some time and we will have a celebration of our Confirmands afterwards – so please don't expect to leave St. Matt's until at least 11:45am!

** There may be other events that crop up between now and May that offer more opportunities for fellowship, fun, and service. So, please keep an eye on your e-mail!

The Importance and Role of Mentors

Confirmation is a rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a Bishop. It is required of those to be confirmed that they have been baptized, are sufficiently instructed in the Christian Faith, are penitent for their sins, and are ready to affirm their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. —The Book of Common Prayer, p. 860

The Importance of Community

Jesus has called us as Christians not to be isolated but to be in community, calling us out into the world in mission. We are members dependent on one another to be the Body of Christ, upheld by the basic principles of the Baptismal Covenant. As expressed in *The Book of Common Prayer*, this Covenant maintains that individuals and institutions are called by God to adopt certain fundamental disciplines and dispositions in order to embrace fully their basic identities. As embodiments of the Christian faith, Episcopal churches are created to be communities that honor, celebrate, and worship God as the center of life. They are created to be models of God's love and grace. They are created to serve God in Christ in all persons. They are created to "strive for justice and peace among all people and [to] respect the dignity of every human being." These principles are the basis on which Christian identity and vocation exist.

*"When two or three
are gathered together
in my name."
— Matthew 18:20*

What is the Role of a Confirmation Mentor at St. Matthew's?

A mentor is not one who knows all the answers, or one who can cite vast numbers of scripture references from memory. A mentor is one who has a genuine faith and who is involved in trying to grow in that faith from day to day. A mentor is one who is willing to share his or her journey of faith with another person – in the case of St. Matthew's, a young person discerning whether they will be confirmed in the Spring of 2020.

A mentor is a partner in the confirmation process at St. Matthew's. Mentors are encouraged to meet regularly with their confirmands (monthly if possible in addition to the times we have scheduled to gather together) to continue conversations on topics that have been covered during the confirmation meetings, questions the confirmand has about living a life of faith that may include talking about God, Jesus, the Bible, and ethical and social issues. While the confirmand may be looking up to their mentor as an example, it is just as important for him or her to experience the fact that the mentor is still growing in their faith, too.

Besides meeting regularly with their confirmand, we expect mentors to be regular in attendance at worship and include the confirmand in their prayers. The mentoring process deepens confirmation preparation and will hopefully strengthen the faith of both the mentor and the confirmand. It provides an opportunity for invaluable one-on-one time with a young person, serving as a companion to help them examine and explore their faith at this point in their journey, wherever they might be. And as the confirmand begins to imagine taking their place in the adult community at St. Matthew's, it is important for them to have another adult they trust to whom they are not related. This strengthens the confirmand's place in the community and it strengthens the life of the whole place.

Choosing a Mentor

At one of the first Confirmation classes, Confirmands will be invited to turn in a list of 3 adults at St. Matthew's. As has always been our custom, we will work hard to make sure that one of those three adults becomes the Confirmand's mentor. It is VERY important that parents and Confirmands do not approach mentors themselves. It has long been our custom that the Confirmation teachers assign mentors based on requests and a mutual matching system so that everyone has a mentor they feel they can relate to and both Confirmands and mentors have the ability to say yes.

Parents: Please talk with your kids now about adults in the congregation they know and might be comfortable enough with to share this special journey of faith.

Logistics & Details

For someone who is taking the Confirmation Journey this year, here's what's important:

- 1) Attend worship regularly (at least once a month), fill out a worship sheet.
 - a. Attend special services during Christmas, Lent, & Holy Week
- 2) Sign up to Lector on a Sunday morning.
 - a. Steve Hudspeth does a great job of working with Confirmands to prepare them for this day. Kids are sometimes nervous – and they always feel like they've achieved something special afterwards. Steve will help your child feel comfortable with the reading and with participating in worship in this way.
- 3) Make Confirmation Class a priority. We need the kids here in order to prepare them to make this decision.
- 4) Keep an open mind and an open heart. Ask questions. Don't be afraid to speak up if something doesn't make sense.

The Confirmation year is a journey. And it's intended to help set patterns for the rest of a young person's life. We want them to make a mature confession of faith and, if they're ready, to choose to live their life following Jesus.

Parents: You play a critical role in your child's formation. You are the best model of what it means to be faithful. Talk to your child about why all this matters to you:

Why do you go to church?

What do you believe? What do you struggle with?

How do you decide on your pledge?

How do you decide what other ways you will support the life and ministry of St. Matt's?

How do you continue to grow in your own faith journey?

How do you live out the promises of your Baptismal Covenant in the world?

You are their best models on the road to confirmation. Sharing with them what your faith means to you and why it's important to support the parish with your time, talent, and treasure will change the way they think about these commitments. Pray with them. Be brave – have good conversations. And if you have questions or need help, we're here. Just look at page 11.

The Arc of the Year

This year, your child will be learning about the Christian faith and about our particular understanding of that faith in the Episcopal Church. They will begin on 10/22 with a deeper dive into the Baptismal Covenant and what Confirmation means. And then we will make our way through the year exploring the Church, the Bible, and various other topics that will invite them into a deeper understanding of what it means to say yes to Jesus.

By the end of the year, it is important that they are ready to choose for themselves whether or not to be confirmed. We will ask them to share what they believe with us at a dinner for Confirmands, Mentors, and Families the night before Confirmation. This will be a really special night and it's very important that all our Confirmands and their families plan to be here on May 30th & 31st.

We have put together a really special year for your child. A year that will invite them to begin the transition into being young adults. A year that will ask hard questions, a year that will strengthen and challenge them. A year that will celebrate them and remind them that they belong to God and to St. Matt's.

More than anything, what we want them to know deep in their bones at the end of this year is that:

God loves them unconditionally.

We (at St. Matt's) love them unconditionally.

This is a place where they can be themselves.

They have it within them to love and be loved.

They are inherently good and they are built to live a good life – a life of love.

And God wants them to use that love to participate in making the world good.

The purpose of this year is to instill a lifetime of faith in them. So that they know how to respond in a world where there is a lot of noise, anxiety, and pain. We want them to be able to speak for themselves and to speak for God's love – to understand their own tradition well enough to feel comfortable and to claim their place. And we want them to understand deeply the value of being in Christian community – and that the journey of faith is a lifelong, transformational journey. Confirmation isn't just a box to check on the way to high school – it is a deeply important spiritual decision, one that has implications for the rest of their lives; one that invites them into a joyful, healthy, abundant life now – and into an eternal life after this one is over. This is the good news, the promise of baptism, and the assurance of Confirmation.

**Strengthen, O Lord, your servant [*Name*] with your Holy Spirit;
empower *him/her* for your service; and sustain *her/him* all the days
of *his/her* life. *Amen.***

2019-2020 Confirmation Team

Have questions? Need more information? We're all here to help.



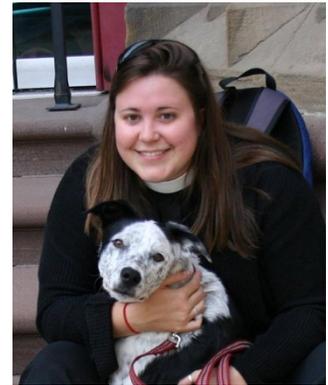
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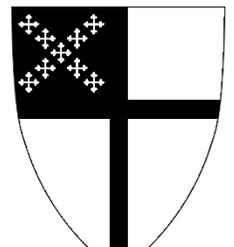


The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Rector
marissa@stmatthewswilton.org



And our Parish Intern, Meg Stapleton Smith, will be making an appearance at some Confirmation classes as well to teach and to be present with and for our kids.

Regular Worship Schedule at St. Matthew's



Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 8:00 am and 10:00 am

For more information and for special services and events, please visit our website!

Staff

Rector	The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach, marissa@stmatthewswilton.org
Deacon	The Rev. Dcn. Don Burr, don@stmatthewswilton.org
Parish Administrator	Nancy Johnson, office@stmatthewswilton.org
Children, Youth & Family	Samantha Trolice, samantha@stmatthewswilton.org
Bookkeeper	Louann Miska, louann.miska@gmail.com
WEPCO	Sandy Muschler, wepco@optonline.net
Sexton	Max Gil
Parish Intern	Meg Stapleton Smith

Wardens and Officers

Sr. Warden	Chris Perry	Asst. Treasurers	Bruce Beebe, Andrea Sato
Jr. Warden	Jen Kepner	Clerk	Anne Newton
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis		

The Vestry

Dave Cristini	Kim Hall	Peter Denious
Michael Kaelin	Andrea Sato	Tim Jarvis
Jessica Christ	Dodo Roberts	Brian Angerame

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is a parish in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.
The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas & the Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, Bishops

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