



*Affirming Baptism
&
Making Disciples*

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

oursaviorswetsalem.org

Grades 7-8

2024-2025

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We live in an ever changing world. Yet, with all the change around us, there are two things that have remained constant – our calling to be disciples of Jesus, and the embrace of a loving God who renews and restores us.



That is what our baptism is about – living out our calling, while being empowered by God’s promises of grace. Long ago, at the baptism of your child, you entered into a covenant that is built on the calling and the promise. And in return you promised to share your faith, nurture discipleship, and connect your child with the community of God’s people.

The confirmation program at Our Savior’s seeks to assist you in your ongoing faithfulness to your promises. We can’t take your place – you are the parent! We can, however, support your work and join you in this journey.

Our Savior’s confirmation ministry focusses on creating disciples. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus directs us to baptize...teach...and make disciples. For 2000 years that is what the church has done. And we continue that task in 2024...and into the future. We seek to make disciples of our young people, disciples ready to make a difference in a hurting, broken world. How we do that has changed over the centuries, but the calling and the presence of God’s Holy Spirit, the dynamic of baptism, remains the same.

So, in a sense, our program itself becomes an exercise in living out our baptism! We are, therefore, excited to have you join us in our journey of faithful living as we not only learn about discipleship, but as we live it out in our gathering, exploring, learning, and growing in faith!

General Program Outline

WORSHIP PARTICIPATION

Worship is essential to our lives as disciples of Jesus. In worship we take intentional time to bring praise and adoration to the God who has given us everything. At the same time, we receive the blessings of a good and gracious God through Word and Sacrament, given in the midst of the gathered Body of Christ. Can't beat it...and you can't get it anywhere else! Being off by yourself just isn't the same!

Over the past years, however, we have also discovered the opportunity of worshipping online, and many have made use of that avenue of worship. Either way, worship is not about us, but about a good and gracious God who gathers us together, in person or virtually, and nourishes us with life!

All of our families are encouraged to worship together. Even secular experts list "worshipping together" as one way families can remain strong and connected.

7-8th graders are to complete "worship notes" for each service. **20 worship notes are expected** from September to the end of May. Worship includes Saturday/Sunday, but also special services – Christmas, Lent, etc. If you attend another church, bring a bulletin from the church, signed by the pastor to document your attendance. You can also watch the video and submit a "worship note" online, but online notes will be counted as ½ value. We will give an update periodically, but it is the confirmand's responsibility to keep track of their participation in worship.

Finally, we ask our 7th graders and 8th graders to participate more deeply in worship by serving as acolytes. We also encourage families to sign up to usher – it’s not that hard!

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

All kids are welcome to “after school” on Wednesday. Come and hang out right after school is done, around 3 PM. Loosely structured activities, fellowship with other kids, and time for homework are all a part of “after school.” Dinner is included at 5:30, followed by class time for 6-7th graders at 6 PM.

Parents take one week to provide the meal. Guidance is available on good menu items, quantities, etc. It’s a great time to connect with the kids of this congregation, and best of all – *clean-up of eating space and dishes is NOT your responsibility!*

Kids who participate in “after school” sign in upon arriving. For security and safety reasons, after they sign in they are required to remain in the building or outside on the church grounds.

There is no “after school” on early release Wednesdays (Oct 9, Feb 5, May 7). No dinner is served, and we begin with classes at 6 PM.

Although 8th graders do not normally have class until 7 PM, they are always welcome to “after school” and dinner...and then hangout until their class time.

Learning for Grade 7

Grade 7 includes a variety of learning experiences, including classroom and out of classroom activities. Course work consists of 15 core sessions and five individual electives, focusing on fundamentals of faith and discovering what discipleship is about. Some parental assistance will be needed during the course of the year, so please step forward to make this year work for our kids!

- **Core courses cover foundational aspects of our life of faith.** Core courses meet 15 times, and attendance is expected of all students.
- **Confest, sponsored by the La Crosse Area Synod,** and designed for confirmation students, will be held on Wednesday, October 9, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We will leave Our Savior's at 4:15 and return close to 8:30. There is a \$5 cost for dinner. We will be looking for parents to help with transportation!
- **A “Servant Leadership” project.** An opportunity to live out our discipleship, and reflect on what it means to us.
- **Each student takes five electives** – Four of the electives are on Wednesday evenings; one elective is taken from a list of three that occur other times. *Unless otherwise noted, there is a limit of 11 in each elective course.*
- **Class sessions run from 6-7 PM on Wednesday evenings, unless otherwise noted.**
- The **Food Pantry Scavenger Hunt** is September 11. In smaller groups we go out into the community to gather donations for the food pantry.
- **The Norwegian Dinner** (November 2), **Lenten Soup Suppers** and **Easter Breakfast** are other ways for 7th graders to share and serve.

- 7th graders will join the ecumenical community as we share in **Advent worship on December 11 at 7 PM at The West Salem Presbyterian Church.**
- 7th graders will close out the year with an **Outdoor Gathering** on May 14 during class time. Bring a chair!

CORE COURSES

The Sacraments – September 25, October 2 & 16

Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer – November 20, December 4 & 18

The Ten Commandments – January 5 & 29, February 5

Servant Leadership – October 23, November 6, April 23

ELECTIVE COURSES

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/confirmation-2/

GROUP ONE

CHURCH STUFF

NOVEMBER 13

Checking Out Another Faith Community

A time to explore another Christian community and how they see God and God’s work in the world. What do we as Lutherans share with them, and how do we differ? *Pastor Dan McCurdy from the West Salem Presbyterian Church joins us.*

Working the System

Worship includes some “behind the scenes” work on audio and video. Learn how our new tech system works, and how to operate it. Maybe...you can be one of our “techies!” *Limited to a maximum of 5 participants.*

Grief and Faith

Losing a loved one is really tough. But...there is hope...for healing and for life. Find out how to cope with the loss of someone special, and how to help others with their grief. *Taught by Pastor Kris Bjerke-Ulliman, Hospice Chaplain.*

Using Art to Express Faith

Art can be a powerful way to speak – so how can art be used to express our faith – to others, and to our ourselves? A simple art project is included. *Taught by Angie Hemker, Middle School art instructor. This course will be offered twice – BUT YOU CAN ONLY SIGN UP ONCE!*

GROUP THREE MORE FAITHFUL LIVING FEBRUARY 19

Using Art to Express Faith

Art can be a powerful way to speak – so how can art be used to express our faith – to others, and to our ourselves? A simple art project is included. *Taught by Angie Hemker, Middle School art instructor. This course will be offered twice – BUT YOU CAN ONLY SIGN UP ONCE!*

The End Times...or Just Another Day?

Read the news – lots of tragedies and bad things going in. Is the end of time approaching or just life in fast lane? Let's see what the Bible tells us – you might be surprised!

If Only the Leaves Could Talk...Oh Wait, They Can!

Let's take a walk in the neighborhood and explore the wonders of an "urban forest." What are we seeing as the world returns to life after a long winter? And how is this part of God's renewal of the earth? *Taught by Jim Kerkman, retired forester.*

Christian Symbols

We use lots of symbols in church. We will learn a bit about symbols, and then venture into the sanctuary to look at the symbols used in our own church building.

Quilts for Jesus**Early Release Wednesdays, 1-3 PM****Oct 9 or Feb 5 or May 7**

Come on an early release day and work with the quilting group as they assemble quilts that go around the world. See how the work can be fun as we work together for the sake of God's people.

Limited to two participants each session.

Christmas Tree Prep**December 1, 11:30 AM**

Stay after worship and help decorate the Christmas trees in the sanctuary, and other decorations in the building. Get the season started – and get yourself into the spirit of the season! *Limited to eight participants.*

Easter Egg Prep**April 9, 7 PM**

Spend a bit of time preparing the eggs for the Easter egg hunt for the younger kids. They love it...and so will you! *Limited to eight participants.*

Learning for Grade 8

8th grade confirmands use a different schedule than the 7th graders. The 8th grade year completes the “faith learning” and expands the discipleship experiences, and includes a number of interactive experiences.

Unless otherwise noted classes are Wednesday evenings from 7-8 PM. Parents will be asked to assist in several activities.

- **Core courses cover foundational aspects of our life of faith.** Core courses meet 14 times, and attendance is expected of all students.
- **Confest, sponsored by the La Crosse Area Synod,** and designed for confirmation students, will be held on Wednesday, October 9, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We will leave Our Savior’s at 4:15 and return close to 8:30. There is a \$5 cost for dinner. We will be looking for parents to help with transportation!
- The **Food Pantry Scavenger Hunt** is September 11 at 6 PM. In smaller groups we go out into the community to gather donations for the food pantry.
- 8th graders will join the ecumenical community as we share in **Advent worship on December 11 at 7 PM at The West Salem Presbyterian Church.**
- A **Halloween party** for younger children, planned and led by the 8th graders, at 6 PM on Wednesday, October 30. Some parents will be needed to assist us.
- **Dinners with seniors** – as part of our learning, we will prepare, deliver, and share a meal with a senior or senior couple in late January or early February. Some parents will be needed to make this happen! We will also ask families to contribute to the cost of the meal.

- **Hanging of the Greens** will be on December 4, with 8th graders leading the worship. Prep time will be November 20 at 6 PM.
- During Lent 8th graders will work with Angie Hemker on an **art project** in preparation for the Confirmation. We will meet following Lenten worship on March 12 and 26.
- **The Norwegian Dinner** (November 2), **Lenten Soup Suppers** and **Easter Breakfast** are another way for 8th graders to share and serve.
- **Preparation for Affirmation of Baptism**, will be on Wednesday, April 9, following Lenten worship.
- **Affirmation of Baptism** will be Sunday, April 27, at 10:30 AM. Invite sponsors and family to join us!

The Cost of Confirmation

Confirmation has a cost! Staff time investment is significant, and we use a variety of resources to make things happen, all of which have a cost. 8th graders have a cost of \$15 for flowers and cleaning the robes. They will also, as part of a group, provide the materials for a dinner with a senior. In general, however, Our Savior's offers our confirmation ministry without charging participants as part of our ministry to the community around us!

So, how do we make it work? Through our regular offerings and gifts that support the ministry of this congregation, we make this discipleship ministry a reality. ***Your support of Our Savior's regular ministries is an important part of making a difference in the lives of your children, children around us, and those who will enter this ministry in years to come.***

Finally, don't forget to pray for us! Confirmation is an exciting, exhilarating ministry, but it is also sometimes daunting and even a bit tiring. Pray for leaders, group guides, and for kids too!

Things You Need to Know

- We have worked hard to craft an engaging ministry that raises up disciples. We cannot, however, do it without parents. See page 13 for more on parent's role in this ministry.
- When West Salem schools have a snow day (or no school due to other reasons), or school dismisses early, confirmation will also be canceled that day. When in doubt, call the office!
- We know that electronics, including phones, are a big part of kids' lives, but not in class! Best to leave them home, but if they are here phones and other devices are to be turned off while class is in session. Devices not turned off will be "relocated" until class is ended.
- We expect confirmands to act as children of God. Discipline is not generally an issue, but if it is we will work with parents. Some things will not be tolerated:
 - Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are not allowed at all.
 - If your child bullies or endangers other students, he/she will be removed.
 - Behavior disrespectful toward adults, or that is destructive of property, is not acceptable.
 - A covenant regarding behavior and responsibilities has been developed and will be expected to be followed.
- If issues arise during the year please come and speak with us – we want what is best for all our confirmands, and we need your participation to make that happen!

Stuff for Parents

1. Show interest in your child's faith development and especially in their work toward affirming their baptism.
2. As pastoral staff, guides, and others in the confirmation ministry, we solicit and treasure your prayers and your insights. We are a team together.
3. Be a good example – you as parents have the greatest impact on the faith and life of your children. Believe it or not, they learn from you!
4. Worship with your child – they need it – and so do you. Studies show that families that worship together have a greater closeness, and work better together especially as kids get older.
5. Pray together as a family – it may be awkward at first, but you will grow into it!



7th Grade Calendar

Date	Event
September 11	Scavenger hunt for food pantry
September 18	Setting the stage
September 25	Sacraments-1
October 2	Sacraments-2
October 9 (4:15-8:30)	Confest @ English Lutheran, La Crosse
October 16	Sacraments-3
October 23	Servant Leadership Intro
October 30	NO CLASS
November 6	Servant Leadership
November 13	Elective
November 20	Prayer-1
November 27	<i>Thanksgiving Eve worship – 7 PM</i>
December 4	Prayer-2
December 11	Ecumenical Advent worship
December 18	Prayer-3
December 25-Jan 1	<i>Christmas Break</i>
January 8	Elective
January 15	Ten Commandments-1
January 22	NO CLASS
January 29	Ten Commandments-2
February 5	Ten Commandments-3
February 12	NO CLASS
February 19	Elective
February 26	On Center Stage

March 5-April 16	<i>Lent and Holy Week worship</i>
April 23	Servant Leadership
April 30	Moving Off the Stage
May 7	Elective
May 14	Outdoor Gathering

8th Grade Calendar

Date	Event
September 11 (6 PM)	Scavenger hunt for food pantry
September 18	Apostle's Creed-1
September 25	Apostle's Creed-2
October 2	Apostle's Creed-3
October 9 (4:15-8:30)	Confest @ English Lutheran, La Crosse
October 16	Jesus, Monsters and Me
October 23	Party Prep
October 30 (6 PM)	Halloween Party
November 6	Servant Leadership
November 13	NO CLASS
November 20 (6 PM)	Hanging of the Greens prep
November 27	<i>Thanksgiving Eve worship – 7 PM</i>
December 4	Hanging of the Greens
December 11	Ecumenical Advent worship
December 18	Gifts and Stewardship-1
December 25-Jan 1	<i>Christmas Break</i>

January 8	Gifts and Stewardship-2
January 15	Gifts and Stewardship-3
January 22	Generations
January 29	Gifts and Stewardship-4
February 5	NO CLASS
February 12	Discovering the Word-1
February 19	Discovering the Word-2
February 26	Discovering the Word-3
March 5	<i>Ash Wednesday worship – 6:15 PM</i>
March 12	Art Project
March 19	<i>Lenten worship (6:15) – NO CLASS</i>
March 26	Art Project
April 2	<i>Lenten worship (6:15) – NO CLASS</i>
April 9	Last minute stuff – BE HERE!
April 16	<i>Holy Week – NO CLASS</i>
April 23	Servant Leadership
April 27 (Sunday)	Affirmation of Baptism – 10:30 AM