

Confirmation 2022/23

Submitting to be More Vile

The Class

This three-part (10-week) class will teach basic history, theology, and practice of Methodism. Each week's discussion will be based on one chapter of *Submitting to Be More Vile: The Illustrated Adventures of John & Charles Wesley* by Charlie Baber. Books will be provided. Youth confirmands are encouraged to meet Sundays before worship (9-10am), adults (and youth who missed Sunday) are encouraged to join virtually Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm. Confirmands are strongly encouraged to attend no less than 7 weeks of classes (Sunday OR Wednesday).

Part 1: History

Week 1: A Brand Plucked

Sunday, September 18, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, September 21, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 2: Bad Romance

Sunday, September 25, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, September 28, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 3: Predestiny's Child

Sunday, October 2, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, October 5, 7-8p (Google Meet)

BREAK

Part 2: Theology & Discipline

Week 4: The Fantastic Quadrilateral

Sunday, October 23, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, October 26, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 5: Loving God

Sunday, October 30, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, November 2, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 6: Loving Neighbor

Sunday, November 6, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, November 9, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 7: Directions for Singing

Sunday, November 13, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, November 16, 7-8p (Google Meet)

BREAK

Part 3: The Church

Week 8: Shepherding the Shepherds

Sunday, December 4, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, December 7, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 9: Onward to Perfection

Sunday, December 11, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, December 14, 7-8p (Google Meet)

Week 10: At-One-Ment

Sunday, December 18, 9-10a (at church) OR Wednesday, December 21, 7-8p (Google Meet)

The Responsibility

Membership in the church is a commitment. It is about forwarding the mission of Christ, through the local church, by one's prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Each confirmand is encouraged to begin living out their commitment before they make their profession of faith and take formal vows of

membership in the church. The living of one's faith and commitment to the church will look different for each person, but each person is encouraged to do no less than:

1. (Prayers) Join *and* read the prayer chain.
2. (Presence) Attend worship and/or another gathering of the church at least twice per month.
3. (Gifts) Financially support the church on a regular basis. Each person is encouraged to be accountable to their financial commitment to the church by submitting a pledge.
4. (Service & Witness) Volunteer at least once per month.

Our vows of membership and commitments to the church are not made alone. Each member vows to help the other live into their faith as a faithful disciple of Jesus and member of local church. Each confirmand will be paired with a member/sponsor who will contact them at least once per month (outside of formal church gatherings) to encourage and check-in with them. These members/sponsors can help answer questions about the church and the living out of one's faith.

The Debrief

Each confirmand will meet in-person at the church with the pastor and their member/sponsor to talk about how they understand membership and if they are ready to take on the responsibility of membership. These meetings will occur in-person at the church (or via Google Meet) the month prior to Confirmation Sunday.

The Confirmation: Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023

On Easter Sunday, during worship, persons who have completed the class, begun to take on the responsibilities of membership, and completed a debrief with the pastor and member/sponsor will be given the opportunity to publicly profess their faith and become professing members of Franklin United Methodist Church. Member/sponsors are encouraged to stand with confirmands as they make their profession. If confirmands cannot make this service, they may make their public profession of faith and commitment at a later date to be scheduled in conjunction with the pastor.

What do I need to know about confirmation in the UMC?

This content was produced by *Ask The UMC*, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.

What does "confirmation" mean?

United Methodists use the term "confirmation" to mark the first time a baptized Christian publicly "confirms" their intention to live the vows of the baptismal and membership covenant and so becomes a professing member of the local congregation and The United Methodist Church.

Can I be confirmed more than once?

We expect that there may be several occasions during one's Christian life when one may wish to re-affirm or re-profess their commitment to live the baptismal and membership covenant faithfully. Doing so more than once does not change or add to one's status as a professing member in the Church. So while we encourage people to re-affirm as they find need, we do not call any subsequent reaffirmations or re-professions "confirmation."

I thought "confirmation" referred to a series of classes over weeks or months. Was I wrong?

While the process of preparing to confirm or profess one's commitment to live out the baptismal and membership covenant may take considerable preparation, which may include classes, retreats, service projects, and other spiritual exercises, the term confirmation properly belongs to what we do in the ritual when we publicly confirm our commitment.

What is the minimum age for confirmation in The United Methodist Church?

Our Judicial Council has clarified (Decision 1032) for us that the determination of when someone is ready to say with integrity that they will live out the baptismal and membership vows is left solely to the appointed pastor. The appointed pastor has full discretion to decide whether someone is ready, regardless of their age.

That said, the nature of the questions we ask and the vows we take requires some degree of agency-- ability to act on one's own behalf-- that is more compatible with at least early adulthood than late childhood. A number of our ecumenical partners, most notably bishops in The Episcopal Church, have set confirmation no sooner than age 16 (the average age when a child may first legally declare emancipation and enter into contracts across the US). Discipleship Ministries has noted that what became a common time for American Protestants of late middle school (7th or 8th grade) in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as it remains common today, corresponded roughly to early adulthood in those times, but no longer does today. We do well to consider all environmental and contextual factors that may surround a given child as we consider the "earliest" age at which we may decide to offer professing membership, and so confirmation.

I wasn't confirmed when I was a teenager. Is it too late for me to be confirmed now that I am an adult?

No, it is not. Remember, confirmation as such is not a process, though preparing for it should involve some kind of process. Confirmation is simply the first time a baptized Christian makes their public commitment to live out the baptismal and membership covenant among us and so become a professing member with us. You may be confirmed at 16, 60, or 92!

I am coming to The United Methodist Church as a confirmed member of a church in another denomination. Do I need to be confirmed again?

No, you do not. While we do ask that all persons seeking to become professing members in The United Methodist Church publicly profess our baptismal and membership vows, we do not call that process "confirmation" for those who are coming to us as "confirmed" or "full" members of other Christian denominations. We, as do many of our ecumenical partners, call it "reception." We will also offer you a process to orient you to life in our version of the baptismal covenant and in the wider life of the congregation, the district, the conference, and the denomination.