

SHEPHERD OF SOULS AREA FAITH COMMUNITY CONFIRMATION 2026-2027: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS



Class Attendance

Candidates are expected to attend all scheduled classes. This includes the Wednesday evening classes for all 1st and 2nd year Confirmation candidates, as well as the monthly Sunday evening classes for 2nd year candidates. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to notify the Confirmation Coordinator of any absences. Absences may be excused in cases of illness/injury/health issues or emergency situations. The Coordinator will determine whether an absence is excused. An excess of unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. More than two excused Sunday absences, or four Wednesday absences, may result in a requested meeting with the Coordinator to discuss the situation.

Mass Attendance and Mass Journals

Regular and consistent Mass attendance is expected and required of all Confirmation candidates. All Confirmation candidates will be issued a Mass journal in which they will write throughout the faith formation year. Once per month, beginning in October and continuing through April, they must take notes at a Mass and submit their monthly entries to the Coordinator (or the DRE of their parish). The Coordinator will keep track of the completion of these entries and will reach out to families if candidates neglect to complete or submit them. *This is a mandatory component of the Confirmation program.* The questions to be answered each month are as follows:

- **Pick one of the Mass readings (1st Reading, 2nd Reading, or the Gospel). What is something that stood out to you, and why? Provide details.**
- **Briefly summarize the homily. How can you apply the homily's message to your daily life?**

Each answer should consist of at least one *detailed* paragraph. The entries will be due on the first class of each month (ex: October's entry will be due on the first

class in November.) The idea behind these journals is to give the candidates a greater understanding and appreciation of the Mass and its necessity in our lives.

Service Hours

Candidates must complete six (6) service hours and six (6) spiritual hours each year they are in the Confirmation program. They will be performed by the candidates on their own time, ideally alongside their sponsors and/or families. Spiritual hours focus particularly on acts of prayer and devotion, assisting with Mass, or participating in events/activities of spiritual significance. Service projects may be offered in class, but this is not guaranteed. Candidates and families can access a list of suggested/recommended service and spiritual ideas on the parish website. Should a candidate wish to pursue an idea that is not on the list, the candidate or their parents may present it to the Coordinator for review and approval. Candidates may spread out their service and spiritual hours however they wish within each year of the Confirmation program. (Candidates may not, for example, do all twenty-four hours as sophomores and then do none as juniors.) **All service and spiritual hours must be completed by Mar. 31st, 2027.**

Confirmation Commitment Sunday

2nd year Confirmation candidates and their sponsors will attend a Confirmation Commitment Mass on Sunday, Oct. 11th. The purpose of this Mass is to celebrate the candidate's commitment to Confirmation preparation. It is also a chance for the whole parish to embrace and pray for the candidates. Each of the parishes in our AFC will host its own Commitment Mass during the normal Sunday Mass times. If a sponsor is unable to attend, or one has not yet been selected, a parent may fill in for the sponsor.

Confirmation Retreat

All 1st year candidates are required to attend a Confirmation retreat. The retreat is designed to inspire candidates, build upon their faith, and instill within their hearts a deeper relationship with God. **The Diocese of New Ulm will host a single-day retreat at St. Aloysius in Olivia. The date & time for this retreat is Nov. 15, 2026, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.** Shepherd of Souls will provide transportation to and from the retreat. If a candidate misses the retreat for a valid reason (such as illness or a family emergency), the candidate's family will need to discuss alternatives with the Coordinator.

We will provide more information as we draw nearer to the retreat date. Prior to the retreat, the Coordinator will provide families with the rules, guidelines, and expectations of the retreat, as well as other important details, including cell phone policies and parish staff contact info. The consequences for violating these rules will also be clearly laid out.

It should be noted that attending the Confirmation retreat does *not* count at spiritual hours, as the retreat is its own requirement.

Saint Report

All 1st year candidates are required to write a brief paper on the saint whose name they have chosen. Candidates are asked to do research on the saints and find one that they admire and/or look to for inspiration. This saint will become their chosen saint for their Confirmation name. Candidates must type at least a one-page, double-spaced report about the saint. The report must include the following:

- A brief summary on the life of the saint.
- Why did you choose this saint?
- Does the saint play a significance in your life right now?
- Why were they canonized a saint?
- What do you have in common or hope to have in common with the saint?

This assignment is due Mar. 31. If a candidate decides to use their own given name as their Confirmation name, they must still research a saint and write a report.

NOTE: While AI may be used as part of the research process (though this is discouraged), candidates must submit their own work. AI plagiarism will not be tolerated, nor plagiarism in any form.

Sponsors

Each candidate must have one sponsor who is:

- At least 16 years old and sufficiently mature for this role (Canon 874)
- A fully initiated Catholic (Baptized, First Communion, Confirmed)
- A practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church (leading a life of faith in keeping with the role of sponsor)
- Not the candidate's own father or mother

The duty of a sponsor is to be act as a role model and witness to our Catholic faith, to support the candidate and their families on the faith journey, and to pray with and for the candidate. A godparent is the recommended choice for a sponsor, but this is not strictly required (Canon 893).

The sponsors of 2nd year candidates are asked to attend the monthly Sunday evening classes and Confirmation Mass rehearsal. **They are also asked to be present at the Confirmation Mass itself, scheduled for Apr. 25th at 2:00 PM at St. Philip's.** Candidates and sponsors are encouraged to meet outside of class and discuss issues relevant to the candidate's spiritual journey. A sponsor's guidebook is available with more detailed information.

1st year candidates must decide on their sponsors by Jan. 6th. 2nd year candidates must decide upon their sponsors by Nov. 11th (if they haven't already). A Sacramental Information Form will be made available, in both paper and digital form. Families can choose which of the two to fill out (the required fields and information are the same).

Letter to the Bishop and Catechist Interviews

Each 2nd year candidate will write a letter to the bishop indicating his or her readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. Instructions and criteria for this letter can be found on the parish website. Letters should be addressed to Bishop Chad Zielinski, and candidates should write their own names legibly. **The candidate will complete the letter at home and submit it to the Coordinator on or before the due date of Dec. 9th.**

Interviews are an integral part of Confirmation preparation and provide a useful tool in assessing the growth and readiness of the candidate. It is an opportunity for the catechist to evaluate the candidate's attitude regarding the Confirmation process, and the spiritual growth of the candidate through the process. Interviews for 2nd year candidates are tentatively scheduled for March 2027.

Catechists will let candidates know in advance what day and time their interview is scheduled for. Interviews will be approximately ten minutes in length.

Confirmation Checklist

Requirements

Due Dates

Attend Confirmation Commitment Sunday Mass (2 nd year candidates only)	Oct. 11 th
Attend the Confirmation Retreat (1 st year candidates only)	Nov. 15 th (Held at St. Aloysius Catholic Church, Olivia)
Write a Letter of Intent to the Bishop (2 nd year candidates only)	Due by Dec. 9 th
Select a Confirmation/saint name*	Due by Jan. 6 th (1 st year)
Choose a sponsor*	Due by Nov. 11 th (2 nd year)
Submit copy of baptismal certificate**	
Complete the interview with catechist (2 nd year candidates only)	March 2027 (dates TBD)
Submit saint report (1 st year candidates only)	Due by Mar. 31 st
Fulfill all service & spiritual hours requirements (All candidates)	Due by Mar. 31 st
Attend Confirmation Mass Rehearsal (2 nd year candidates and sponsors)	Apr. 18 th (Held at St. Philip's)
Attend Confirmation Mass (2 nd year candidates and sponsors)	Apr. 25 th (Held at St. Philip's)

**This information will be requested in the Sacramental Information Form. It will include required fields for Confirmation name, sponsor (including contact info) and sacramental information.*

***If your child was baptized at St. Philip, St. John, Our Lady, or St. Gertrude, then we should already have their baptismal certificate on file. Only those families whose children were baptized elsewhere will need to submit a copy of their child's baptismal certificate.*

Confirmation Calendar 2026 – 2027



AFC Sunday Evening Confirmation Sessions (6:30 – 8:00 PM)

(For 2nd year Confirmation candidates and their sponsors)

October 4 * November 1 * December 13 * January 3 * February 7 * March 7 * April 18

(The April 18th session will be the Confirmation Mass rehearsal.)

St. Philip Wednesday Evening Confirmation Sessions (6:30 – 7:30 PM)

(For both 1st year and 2nd year Confirmation candidates)

September 16, 23, 30 * October 7, 21, 28 * November 4, 11, 18 * December 2, 9, 16
January 6, 13, 20, 27 * February 3, 10, 17, 24 * March 3, 10, 17, 31 * April 7, 14, 21, 28

The Churches of St. John's and Our Lady have their own Wed. evening schedules. Please consult the Shepherd of Souls website calendar or contact Dcn. John Hansen or Deb McCann for St. John's and Our Lady schedules, respectively. St. Philip's 11th grade classes end after the Apr. 21 session.

Confirmation Commitment Sunday

(For 2nd year Confirmation candidates)

Sunday, Oct. 11 – refer to AFC Sunday Mass schedules. St. Philip's Mass is at 8:00 AM.

Confirmation Retreat

(For 1st year Confirmation candidates)

Nov. 15, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Confirmation Liturgy

Held at St. Philip's

Sunday, Apr. 25, at 2:00 PM