

# The Petra Press

## Newsletter of the Williamstown Lutheran Church

Stephen Sweyko

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November 2025

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### Pastor's Corner

Blessings in the name of our risen Lord.

We've got confirmations coming up, two of them, this month. One will be held on November 16<sup>th</sup>, and the other on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Confirmation is a period of instruction in the Christian faith for those who have been baptized as youths. Traditionally, the instruction lasted two years that were conducted when the confirmands were in either the 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> grades or 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grades. After the two-year period of instruction, the confirmands were asked to profess their faith in Christ and were admitted to the Lord's Supper. Traditionally, the days where confirmation was held were Palm Sunday or Pentecost. We're not being strictly traditional as to the timing by having confirmation this month, but we've got six confirmands who have received instruction and ready to be confirmed.

In one strong sense, confirmation gives the confirmands nothing that they don't already have. The confirmands were fully Christian even before we started confirmation instruction through the Sacrament of Baptism. The Holy Spirit has been working and strengthening faith in them throughout their lives through the Gospel since they were baptized. Confirmation doesn't make a confirmand a "real Christian" now. They already are. Confirmation is not a "renewal" of what they have already received. God made them His own in Jesus Christ through baptism, and we cannot renew something that is totally God's act.

So, why confirm? Confirmation gives older teenagers an opportunity to be schooled in the doctrines of the faith so that they have better understanding of the contents of that faith into which they have been baptized. They hear Law and Gospel, and through the Law they see more clearly their sins and their need for forgiveness. And through the Gospel, they receive the forgiveness that we all so desperately need in Jesus Christ. The confirmation rite gives confirmands, "catechumens" is the more traditional term, an opportunity to publicly confess the faith that they have received and in which they have been instructed. Additionally, confirmation is often associated, though it can doesn't have to be, with instruction for receipt of the Lord's Supper, helping the confirmands understand how to examine themselves prior to receiving Holy Communion as outlined in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11. Our confirmands will receive the Lord's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper for the first time when they are confirmed.

Please join me in celebrating the grace of God in Jesus Christ given to our six catechumens this month.

See you in church!

In Christ, Pastor Stephen Sweyko

**Church Services**                      **Sundays @ 10:15 a.m.**  
**Bible Study 9:00 a.m.**  
**Children's Sunday School 11:30 a.m. ( Sunday School 11/30)**

**November 16:**                      **Confirmation: Simon Skalecke, Austin Baril, Zac Prestridge**  
**Cake and Ice Cream for confirmands after service**

**Thanksgiving Eve:**              **Service with Communion @ 7:00**

**November 30:**                      **Confirmation: Samantha Hensel, Shelby Hensel**  
**Pot Luck**

### **ADVENT SERVICES**

**Mid-Week Services:**    **12/3; 12/10; 12/17 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Youth Christmas**

**Service:**                              **December 21**

**Christmas Eve:**                      **5:00 p.m.**

**Christmas Day:**                      **10:15 a.m.**

