

9-3-98

Dear families of 9th graders,

Pastor Roger and I met with some of you last evening and outlined our Friends in Faith program, and shared a schedule for the remainder of the year. Please find included in this mailing a copy of the revised schedule, based on input received last evening. We had to make one change. **Luther Park was not available on January 8/9. Therefore we took the liberty to move the 9th grade study retreat to January 29/30.**

We are very excited about our Friends in Faith program, which is now over 20 years “young.” Your class also has the distinction of being the first one to begin their Friends in Faith program at the start rather than the end of your Freshman year!

The national church is just now beginning to see the importance of a program of this nature for its youth. *(In the article “Raising moral children” in the February 1998 issue of The Lutheran, Peter Benson of Search Institute said that if he had a magic wand and could change one thing, he’d ensure that every child and teenager in America always had ongoing relationships with at least three other caring adults outside their families.)*

Why bother with one more program for your already over-scheduled teenager?

We know that there is a direct relationship between the maturity of faith levels in teens and children and their opportunity to discuss issues of faith with their parents and other adults. *(Our Genesis Experience is based on this same research. In that same article noted above, Benson states: “Wisdom transmission-the best of our culture-our faith, our ideals, our values, our moral principles, our boundaries-travels best intergenerationally.*

Unfortunately, many church and school programs and curricula divide generations.”) Nationwide, only 29% of our church teenagers feel that non-relative adults care about them. *(Our present midweek and friends in faith structure is designed in part to counter this feeling.)*

Nationwide, over 60% of our church teenagers want to know how to learn to love life more, recognize right from wrong, and gain a sense of life’s purpose. Research shows that the conversations with other adults during these years will help meet this need.

Our own congregation’s agreement with the ELCA’s statement of purpose for confirmation. It reads in part, *“the purpose of confirmation is to help the baptized child to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.”*

Two years ago we added a new twist to our Friends in Faith program. We asked our adult matches to commit to their student for the entire four years of their high school experience. We will be looking for the same commitment from this year’s friends in faith.

The youth board wants to remind each family to pull out the brightly colored youth page from each monthly newsletter! Remember, you are part of the high school youth group!

What's coming up? Check out the September issue you just received.

We look forward to our first meeting on September 16 at 7:30 p.m. when you will get to meet your friend in faith.

Your fellow students of the Word,

Pastors Roger and Greg