

September 2, 1998

Dear

Our **Friends in Faith** program is up and running again! What? You've never heard of such a thing? And if you have, you thought it always started in the spring! We're glad you asked. In addition to walking up to someone on Sunday morning and asking them to explain why they were a **friend in faith**, we thought it might be helpful to share a few of the highlights of our program.

We have reflected upon the definition of confirmation for the ELCA which states that 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."*

The best resource we have to help our young people feel a part of the larger family of God is **you**, the members! For the past 20 years, every April we have paired ninth graders with adults in a program called **Friends In Faith**. Each year the education board carefully considers who would make an appropriate friend to the youth looking forward to affirming their baptisms in the fall of their tenth grade year. For the very first time, we are able to begin our Friends in Faith program in September rather than April of the students ninth grade year.

We think you would make one of the following youth an excellent **friend in faith**! **In most cases, your name was suggested by either the youth themselves, or their parents.** This year's ninth grade class includes: Kimberly, Lona, Holly, Kristin, Karl, Crystel, Molly, Jennifer, Hayes, Amy, Tony, Eric, and John.

Just what does a **friend in faith** do?

At a parent meeting this past Wednesday, September 2, we put together a proposed calendar of events for the entire year. (*note the enclosed schedule of opportunities for you and your friend in faith*) **At your initial meeting together, (September 16 at 7:30 pm)** you will be asked to make some choices that you and your friend in faith will enjoy experiencing together.

Based on research from the Augsburg Youth and Family Institute, and the Search Institute, two years ago, we decided to ask our friends in faith pairs to remain together throughout the 4 high school years of the student. Therefore, if you accept the invitation to be a friend in faith for one of the students listed above, you will not be asked to be a friend in faith again, until this class graduates in 2002!.

To help you continue to develop your relationship after the initial year, the education board will plan friend in faith reunion events each year, such as the Beach Party at the Wissota State Park coordinated by Al's *Friend in Faith* group this past August. In addition, Pastor Greg will work with each of the 3 small group facilitators in order to give them plenty of ideas for fellowship, servant, & learning events.

If you are willing to serve in this very important capacity, **please contact Peggy. Her phone number is (723-_____)**. If we don't hear from you, Peggy will try to contact each of you by phone next week. Since there are 11 of you, your one call will save Peggy 11! Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Yours in Christ,

The education board, and pastors