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ABSTRACT

By exploring selected Western epistemologies and Lutheran theology, this thesis argues for an approach to Lutheran Confirmation centered on the meaning-making process. Specifically, it is argued that meaning coemerges as an amalgam of inherited content, life experience and community interaction. For Confirmation to be a resource and catalyst for lifelong learning, curricula and teachers must account for the complexity and contributions of learner-formed meaning. Confirmation is analyzed as a rite and a process of ordered learning: constructivist theory guides a concise study of the epistemological roots of Piaget, Dewey, Polanyi and Whitehead. Luther’s intent, contemporary theology and the assumptions of constructivism are consistent with coemergence. “Essential, fallible and gracious knowing” are offered as epistemological-theological pillars to guide the intent of confirmation.
I acknowledge with thanks the work of my supervisor Dr. R. E. Y. Wickett and committee members Dr. Dianne Miller and Dr. Lloyd Njaa. They encouraged me to explore new ideas, patiently accommodated my frequent diversions and redirected me with timely questions.

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None of this work would have been accomplished without the support of my wife and son. They regularly sacrificed family time to enable me to study. I have also benefited from the prayers and support of my family and friends.
DEDICATION

All that I am all that I do and all I will be is by the grace of God:
it is with God that gratitude begins. With thanks to God I dedicate this thesis

To Lorene
Friend, Companion, Consultant and wife.

To Nathan
Friend, Motivator, Wit and son

And
To my Confirmation Students
Teachers, Challengers and Meaning-makers.
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