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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.

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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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