

## 2.0 CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is a pivotal event in an Anglican's spiritual formation. It is the occasion to publicly ratify one's vows made in Baptism, and can be especially meaningful to those who were baptized before the age of reason when Baptismal vows were made on their behalf. Confirmation provides a public commitment to enter into mature Christian ministry and service, and proclaims one's identity as a member of the Anglican Communion.

### **The Nature of Confirmation – The Laying on of Hands**

Based on the Apostolic precedent of Acts 8:14-17, the Bishop in apostolic authority lays hands on those to be confirmed (1) that they may be strengthened with the Holy Spirit, (2) that they may increase in the knowledge of and obedience to God's Word, and (3) that they may be preserved unto eternal life.

The candidates publicly renew their Baptismal vows, or ratify and confirm the vows made on their behalf; acknowledge themselves to be bound to believe and to do the same, and promise to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The congregation promises to support the candidates in their Christian lives, and they are released in the power of the Spirit to the service to which the Lord has called them.

*Ephesians 2:10*

Though called a sacrament in some parts of the Greater Church, Confirmation is not one of the two Great Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) that were instituted in specific form by Jesus Christ himself. Nevertheless Confirmation is a fundamental sacramental rite of the Church that is allowed if not commended by Scripture. *Articles of Religion, XXV*

Anglican Confirmation is administered only by a Bishop; thus while it brings the persons being Confirmed into the local church community, it also manifests their *connectedness* with both the historic and the present day One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church that exists beyond the local church.

Confirmation, like Baptism, is a *once-only-not-to-be-repeated* rite, if performed by a Bishop (whether Anglican or not) in line of descent in the historic Apostolic Church. However, persons "confirmed" in another denomination or independent church – who have not experienced a Confirmation administered in Apostolic succession – are proper candidates for Anglican Confirmation. For example, Roman Catholics and Eastern & Russian Orthodox Christians may be *received* but not *confirmed*. Lutherans and Methodists would be *confirmed* but not *received*.

## The Benefits of Confirmation

Although Confirmation is not a salvation issue, it has important spiritual benefits, including:

- + **Confession** Publicly acknowledging Christ is *transformative*, as seen in Jesus' statement "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven," and in Joshua's confession "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." As knees are bowed and tongues confess, God confirms his servants. *Matthew 10:38; Luke 12:8; Joshua 25:15*
- + **Accountability** Publicly accepting the responsibility for one's own spiritual formation sets one firmly on the path to increasing maturity in the Christian walk.
- + **An Offering to God** In Confirmation, one shows forth God's praise, not only with the lips but by giving up one's self to His service. *C.f., The General Thanksgiving; Romans 12:1*
- + **Commissioning** In the Laying on of Hands and prayer the Bishop commissions the candidates in the power of the Holy Spirit for the service to which the Lord has called them. *Ephesians 2:10*

## Who should be Confirmed?

Confirmation must not be required of any person. Like Baptism it must never be thought of as a rote ceremony but should be heartily desired. "For with the heart one believes . . ." *Romans 10:10* Nevertheless, anyone who teaches others should be Confirmed, as teachers are held to a higher standard. *James 3:1*

Before someone may be nominated as a Candidate for ordination, Warden, Vestry or Bishop's Committee member, Licensed Lay Minister, Catechist, or Preacher, that person must be a Confirmed Member in Good Standing.

## Preparedness for Confirmation

**Please prepare your confirmands with this exhortation and examination firmly fixed in your mind:**

*Dearly beloved, it is essential that those who wish to be Confirmed in this Church must 1) publicly confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; 2) become his disciple; 3) know and affirm the Nicene Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and 4) have received instruction in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the 5) Catechism of the Church. God's grace is imparted in baptism where we are made God's children by adoption and given the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Spirit, manifested in 6) gifts and 7) fruit, we are enabled to be God's people for the sake of the world.*

*Now, these candidates here desire publicly to confess their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and their commitment to follow him as Lord. They also desire the strengthening of grace through*

*the laying on of hands that the Holy Spirit may fill them more and more for their ministry in the Church and in the world.*

**The Christian Maturity Markers Identified in the Exhortation and Examination are briefly Explained:**

1. Publically testifying by word and deed that Jesus is the Savior of the world and Lord of all
2. Practicing as a normative habit 'Jesus Following,' both inwardly by learning and outwardly by evangelism, and actively discipling other to do the same
3. Convicted inwardly of the truth and practicing frequently by worship and devotion
4. Sufficient knowledge of scripture, not only for understanding but for sharing with others
5. Able to share with others the meaning of Christian doctrine
6. Has explored and is ministering in his/her lay vocation from the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11)
7. Is maturing in inward character by expression of the spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-25)

