

Confirmation and Reception in the Episcopal Church

This coming Sunday, May 21st Bishop Field will confirm and receive those who have been preparing to make their statement of faith as a Christian and become a member of the Episcopal Church. This is an important time in the hearts and minds of those who will make this commitment and for the church.

The Episcopal Church's theology of Confirmation has continued to evolve along with its understanding of baptism. Confirmation is no longer seen as the completion of Christian initiation, nor is Confirmation a prerequisite for receiving communion. Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body the church (BCP, p. 298). Accordingly, Confirmation has been increasingly understood in terms of a mature, public reaffirmation of the Christian faith and the baptismal promises. There is considerable diversity of understanding and practice concerning Confirmation in the Episcopal Church. Confirmation has been characterized as "a rite seeking a theology."

Below, from our catechism, located on page 860 in the Book of Common Prayer are the questions and answers that describe what confirmation and reception is.

Q. What is Confirmation?

A. Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

Q. What is required of those to be confirmed?

A. It is required of those to be confirmed that they have been baptized, are sufficiently instructed in the Christian Faith, are penitent for their sins, and are ready to affirm their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

This is a time for our parish to celebrate our candidates who have studied and met for classes preparing them for this day. Each candidate makes their own decision to be confirmed or received. Parents do not make these decisions for their youth, and there is no pressure from me, the priest, to suggest that because they have completed the preparation, that they need to make the decision to be confirmed as an Episcopalian. For some there are many questions about the meaning of being affiliated and associated with any formal religious faith tradition, and I truly believe it is a decision that one must make on their own, with all the information available to them.

Our candidates for confirmation are: Brady and Shea Blankenship and Devin Conn. Our candidates for reception into the Episcopal Church are: Mrs. Kelly Blankenship and Mrs. Lyn Jandt. Please join me and all others in prayers for them as they make their decisions this weekend.