



The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Guidelines for Confirmation

Revised September 2020

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Bishop of Maryland

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Assisting Bishop of Maryland

The Diocesan Regathering Guidelines must be followed for all visits by the bishops. Some liturgical practices may have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Confirmation services are an integral and important part of our diocesan life together. The individuals you present bring an exciting energy, faith and love to our Church. The Confirmation service gathers family and friends from all generations to witness an individual's mature, adult commitment to faith and to the promises made for them at baptism.

The ceremony and presence of the bishop accentuate the gifts and importance of our Episcopal tradition and faith. It is in that spirit that your bishops have established diocesan standards for confirmation and offer support and resources for your Confirmation programs.

Confirmations and Receptions can be part of the regular bishops' visitations or on special feast days. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there will not be any diocesan confirmation services. However, the bishops are willing to visit more than one church in a region on the same day, offering an abridged service at each.

Remember, that Confirmation is an *individual adult rite of discipleship*. To receive the sacramental rite of Confirmation in the Diocese of Maryland, **we expect each candidate will have received quality instruction in the congregation** and that each person presented:

- should be old enough to make a mature decision. The minimum *recommended* age is 15, but pastoral exceptions are possible (see below).
- is a regular participant in the life, worship, education, and outreach of the congregation presenting them.

Confirmation or Reception?

Candidates whose baptisms have been recorded in a denominational context and who wish to affirm their faith as adults shall be presented for **Confirmation**. Candidates who have been confirmed previously by a bishop in the historic succession (Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or Eastern Orthodox) **or** have made an adult affirmation of faith (baptized as adults) may be presented for **Reception** into the Episcopal Church during a service of Confirmation.

About Preparation

Congregation-based preparation for Confirmation should include the basics of Christian faith and the Anglican expression of it. Because each candidate should be of such maturity as to be able to make meaningful vows, the minimum age we *recommend* is fifteen, but pastoral exceptions may be allowed for youth ages 12 to 14, but no younger than 12. Individual pastoral exceptions should be approved by the Vestry in advance.

At the Rite

- Confirmation services are usually held in the context of the Holy Eucharist, although during the COVID-19 pandemic a service without Holy Eucharist is permitted.
- On Sundays, use the appointed lessons of the day and liturgical colors for the season.
- At the presentation (BCP page 415), each rector/vicar/priest-in-charge/formation leader and sponsors will stand in the order listed in the bulletin and introduce the candidate by saying, "On behalf of _____ Church, I present..."
- Candidates stand when their name is called and continue standing until **all** confirmands and those being received are presented.
- Those standing will be asked two questions (BCP page 415) and are expected to answer **clearly and loudly**.
- The bishops prefer to **sit** for Confirmations. Please plan to provide a kneeling cushion to be placed before the seated bishop on which confirmands will kneel.
- At the time of Confirmation, the sponsor(s) comes forward and then, one-by-one, confirmands and those being received come forward. In between each candidate the bishops will use proper sanitization.
- Confirmands **kneel** before the bishop; those being received **remain standing**. Candidates will say their name **clearly and loudly** when asked. And then return to their seats.