



Diocese of the
MID-ATLANTIC
Anglican Church in North America

Diocesan Policy on Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation May 23, 2015

The following “Preface Concerning the Confirmation Liturgy” was approved by the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America on January 7, 2015:

Anglicanism requires a public and personal profession of the Faith from every adult believer in Jesus Christ. Confirmation by a bishop is its liturgical expression. Confirmation is evident in Scripture: the Apostles prayed for, and laid their hands on those who had already been baptized (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6).

In Confirmation, God, through the bishop’s prayer for daily increase in the Holy Spirit, strengthens the believer for Christian life in the service of Christ and his kingdom. Grace is God’s gift, and we pray that he will pour out his Holy Spirit on those who have already been made his children by adoption and grace in Baptism.

At the direction of the Bishop, and after public reaffirmation of their baptismal promises, those having made adult professions of faith in other Christian traditions (including those confirmed in other traditions) are *received* into the Anglican Church with prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

Confirmed believers who are already members of this Church (including those received from other traditions as above, those returning to active Christian discipleship after lapse, and those experiencing a renewal of Christian commitment or significant life transition) may also *reaffirm* the pledges made to Christ and his Church with prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

Note also that 2 Timothy 1:5-7 shows the laying on of hands upon the believer by the apostle/bishop:

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

This laying on of hands by Paul is what we would call Timothy’s “confirmation.” 1 Timothy 4:14, which refers to the laying on of hands by “the council of elders,” is a reference to Timothy’s ordination.

The above Preface makes clear a number of key points:

1. All persons in our Church are expected to make a mature (adult) affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ and receive the laying on of hands by a bishop of our Church.
2. The laying on of hands by the bishop is done in “Confirmation,” “Reception,” or “Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows,” as follows:
 - “Confirmation” is for those who are making a mature (adult) affirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ for the first time in a service of public worship of any Christian denomination.
 - “Reception” or “being received” is for those who have previously made a mature (adult) affirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ in another Christian denomination and who are now being received into the Anglican Church. Reception is not limited to those who come from the Roman Catholic or other churches with the historic episcopate. Those coming into the Anglican Church in North America who have previously been confirmed in The Episcopal Church should be received.
 - “Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows” is for those who have previously been confirmed in the Anglican Church or received into the Anglican Church and who now wish to reaffirm their faith. This is a repeatable experience. In addition to the examples offered in the Preface, above, spouses of those being Confirmed or Received often wish to reaffirm their faith at the same time.
3. There is no minimum or standard age for Confirmation. However, it marks a mature commitment to Christ. Young people should not be confirmed because the parents want them to be or because it is expected that all children of a certain grade will be confirmed. An appropriate level of maturity is not normally reached until high school.
4. When adults are baptized when the bishop is present, the bishop will mark the newly baptized adult with oil and the sign of the Cross and lay hands upon him or her. Such persons are considered to be both baptized and confirmed. They are not to be presented for Confirmation at a subsequent time.
5. Until a Confirmation rite is approved for the Anglican Church in North America, churches should use the 1979 Book of Common Prayer Confirmation liturgy, coupled with the ACNA Short Form of Holy Communion or the Communion liturgy the church customarily uses.

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Appendix

Below are the questions and answers concerning Baptism and Confirmation from *To Be a Christian, An Anglican Catechism* of the Anglican Church in North America.

102. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive that grace, and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. (1662 Catechism)

103. How should you receive the sacraments?

I should receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ is necessary to receive grace, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in my life. (1662 Catechism; Articles of Religion, 28)

104. What are the sacraments of the Gospel?

The two sacraments ordained by Christ, which are generally necessary for our salvation, are Baptism and Holy Communion, which is also known as the Lord's Supper or the Holy Eucharist. (Articles of Religion, 25)

105. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

The outward and visible sign is water, in which candidates are baptized "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" – the name of the Triune God to whom the candidate is being committed. (1662 Catechism, 1 Peter 3:21; Matthew 28:19)

106. What is the inward and spiritual grace set forth in Baptism?

The inward and spiritual grace set forth is a death to sin and a new birth to righteousness, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. I am born a sinner by nature, separated from God, but in baptism, rightly received, I am made God's child by grace through faith in Christ. (John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 2:12; Galatians 3:27-29)

107. What is required of you when you come to be baptized?

Repentance, in which I turn away from sin; and faith, in which I turn to Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord and embrace the promises that God makes to me in this sacrament. (Acts 2:38)

108. Why is it appropriate to baptize infants?

Because it is a sign of God's promise that they are embraced in the covenant community of Christ's Church. Those who in faith and repentance present infants to be baptized vow to

raise them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, with the expectation that they will one day profess full Christian faith as their own. (Acts 2:39)

109. What signs of the Holy Spirit's work do you hope and pray to see as a result of your baptism?

I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit who indwells me will help me to be an active member of my Christian community, participate in worship, continually repent and return to God, proclaim the faith, love and serve my neighbor, and strive for justice and peace. (Hebrews 10:25; 12:14; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:1)

118. What is confirmation?

After making a mature commitment to my baptismal covenant with God, I receive the laying on of the bishop's hands with prayer. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)

119. What grace does God give you in confirmation?

In confirmation, God strengthens the work of the Holy Spirit in me for his daily increase in my Christian life and ministry. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)