

**RESOLUTION FOR THE 135th ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN
APRIL 24-25, 2009**

Subject: **Returning Confirmations to the parishes**

Originator: The Vestry of All Saints' Church, Saugatuck

RESOLVED, that this 135th Convention of the Diocese of Western Michigan urge and encourage our bishop, The Right Reverend Robert R. Gepert, to return to the policy of holding confirmations in the parishes during his pastoral visit to said parishes.

As Christian people, it is important to ask, "What in the life and teaching of Jesus supports this resolution?"

Rationale: Confirmation is the culmination of an extremely important and personal journey both to the confirmands and to the members of the parish. To hold it among the parish family has great meaning and involves all members of said parish.

Explanation: We recognize that there is not a biblical sanction, much less mandate for the Sacramental Rite of Confirmation. However, it has long been an important tradition within the Episcopal Church that when a young person is sufficiently mature in years, wisdom, and spirituality that they are welcomed into full adult membership. As a young adult, in the presence of their bishop, clergy, and fellow parish family members, they publically proclaim that they are embracing and fulfilling the promises made on their behalf at baptism. We must also remember that there are adults, perhaps inactive for many years, perhaps affiliating with us from another denomination, who wish to make a public proclamation of their decisions.

The tradition, until quite recently, was that this rite occurred in one's home parish when the bishop came on his/her visitation. And even though Confirmation does not have a biblical sanction, it was always a very important event in the life of the parish. Every effort was made to make this a special and memorable day, not only for the confirmands and their family, but the entire parish as well. It was an act which helped bind us in love to one another and to God, and emphasized the relationship between lay, clergy, and bishop. We believe we should have the option to return to this important tradition.

In a rapidly changing society, in the midst of uncertain economic times, many of our members have expressed a spiritual need for the sense of connection created by this sacramental rite.