

Deanery Confirmation Guidelines for All Parishes

1. Candidates for Confirmation must be **at least 16 years of age or in the 11th grade**. An exception to this are persons who are in the *Journey To Adulthood* program.
2. All candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows should be presented at the Deanery Confirmation service. Adult candidates for Baptism may also be presented. In preparing candidates, parishes should review "Guidelines for the Celebration of Rites of Christian Initiation and Renewal of Faith" in the Diocesan Resource Notebook (DRN.) A summary is provided in the document, *Definitions: Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation*.
3. **Two weeks prior to the service, submit information on the report form** to the Deanery Chairperson and to the Diocesan Office:

The names of Candidates and their Sponsors or Presenters and whether they are being presented for adult Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation. See *Definitions: Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation* regarding certificates.

This information will be used in the service bulletin, for name tag preparation, and to provide you with a sufficient number of blank certificates.
4. Prepare parish registers for Baptism and Confirmation in advance, so that they can be brought to the service for the Bishop to sign following the service.
5. Inform the Candidates that the Bishop will be available immediately following the service for photographs and to sign Prayer Books, etc., at the reception.
6. In addition to their parish clergy, Candidates are encouraged to have a lay sponsor or spiritual companion from their congregation to present them.
7. Candidates and Presenters (including Sponsors of candidates for Baptism) **are expected to be at the church no later than one hour prior to the service** for rehearsal.
8. At the service: Candidates are to wear name tags that will be provided. They will process with their Presenters during the entrance hymn(s) and be seated together near the front of the church.
9. Presentation and Examination of Candidates:
 - A. Baptism:

Following the sermon, candidates for adult Baptism and their sponsors will come forward and face the Bishop. Candidates will be presented individually by their sponsors (BCP, p. 301.) All Candidates should review the questions in the (BCP, pp. 301-3) and be prepared to respond **boldly**.
 - B. Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation:
 - 1) When there is a Baptism: Candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation are presented after Candidates for Baptism (BCP, p. 303.) When there is no Baptism, Candidates are presented immediately following the Sermon (BCP, p. 415.)

- 2) Candidates and Presenters remain in place and stand for the Presentation. The congregation remains seated. Candidates should review the questions on pp. 303 and 415 prior to the service and be prepared to respond **boldly**.

10. The Baptism:

- A. During the Prayers (BCP, pp. 305-6), the Bishop, candidates and sponsors, and clergy and acolytes assisting with the baptism move to the font. Parish clergy will administer the water rite for the adult candidates from their parish. After all Candidates for Baptism have received the water rite, if the font is not at the front of the church, the candidates, sponsors, and assisting ministers will return to the front of the congregation and face the congregation. The Bishop will then administer the post-baptismal rites (BCP, p. 308.) After the reception by the congregation ("We receive you..."), all return to their seats.
- B. The service continues with the Bishop at his chair for the Laying on of Hands for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation (BCP, pp. 309-10.) The newly baptized adults are not presented for Confirmation or Reaffirmation when they receive the laying on of hands by the Bishop at the sealing. They are considered to be baptized and confirmed.

11. The Laying on of Hands (BCP, pp. 309-10 or 418-19 if there is not Baptism):

- A. Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation follow the Prayers for the Candidates when there is no Baptism. (BCP, pp. 417-18)
- B. Ushers direct the "flow of traffic" during this portion of the service. Candidates file forward individually with their Presenters to receive the imposition of hands by the Bishop. Confirmation candidates kneel; Candidates for Reception and Reaffirmation stand.
- C. When kneeling or standing, Candidates should look at the Bishop rather than bowing their heads. The Bishop marks the Confirmation Candidates on their foreheads with the sign of the cross, but they will not be chrismated (anointed with holy oil) or buffeted (touched or slapped on the cheek). Candidates for Reception and Reaffirmation receive laying on of hands as a gesture of blessing by the Bishop. This is not a "re-Confirmation."
- D. When the Bishop lays hands on the candidate, the Presenters should also lay hands on the candidate's shoulder and join in the blessing.

12. Candidates and Presenters will not process out during the concluding hymn(s).

13. Certificates will be distributed to the Candidates by each parish rector or designated person following the service. See *Definitions: Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation*, p. 2, for information regarding certificates.

14. Photographs are not to be taken during the service. A Deanery photograph of all Candidates with the Bishop can be taken immediately following the service and made available to parishes and individuals. Groups and individuals from parishes can be photographed with the Bishop after the Deanery Group Photograph if there is one.

DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

Definitions: Confirmation, Reception, Reaffirmation

(from "Guidelines for the Celebration of Rites of Christian Initiation and Renewal of Faith")

From *Concerning the Service*, prefatory to Confirmation: with forms for Reception and for the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows (BCP, p. 412):

In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the Bishop.

Those baptized as adults, unless baptized with laying on of hands by a Bishop, are also expected to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism in the presence of a Bishop and to receive the laying on of hands.

These rubrics indicate that adult members of the Episcopal Church are expected to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive laying on of hands by a Bishop. Persons who have made this affirmation of faith and received imposition of hands by a Bishop are considered to be confirmed members of the Episcopal Church. The Bishop will use the words for Confirmation, for Reception, or for Reaffirmation, depending upon the circumstances of each candidate.

The following definitions emerged during the development and implementation of the 1979 Prayer Book and are in accord with the Canons of the Episcopal Church ("Of Regulations Respecting the Laity," I.17.1.a-d.) These definitions are currently in effect in the Diocese of Western Michigan.

CONFIRMATION: Confirmation is the **first** occasion when a person baptized at an early age makes a **mature** public affirmation of faith and commitment to the responsibilities of Baptism. Thus:

Candidates for Confirmation must be at least 16 years of age or in the 11th grade.

An exception to this are persons who are in the *Journey To Adulthood* program.

Persons baptized at an early age should be presented for Confirmation when they are ready and have been prepared to make a mature affirmation of the baptismal vows and obligations made on their behalf by parents and godparents. At the Confirmation service, they make a mature public affirmation of faith and receive laying on of hands by the Bishop, and thus are considered to be confirmed.

Persons baptized as adults in the Episcopal Church, without laying on of hands by a Bishop, should not be presented for Confirmation but for Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, because they made their first mature public affirmation of faith at their Baptism.

Persons baptized as adults in the Episcopal Church, with the laying on of hands by a Bishop, are considered to be confirmed because they have made a public affirmation of faith and received imposition of hands by the Bishop at their Baptism. Hence they are not to be presented for Confirmation.

RECEPTION: Persons who have been baptized with water in the Name of the Trinity, who have been members of another Christian communion, and who now desire to live their faith within the fellowship of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion are presented for Reception. Because they make a public affirmation of faith and receive imposition of hands by the Bishop, they are considered to be confirmed.

REAFFIRMATION: Persons who have already made a mature public declaration of faith within this Communion are presented for Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows. This may include:

Persons baptized as adults in the Episcopal Church, without the laying on of hands by a Bishop. They are presented for Reaffirmation, not Confirmation, because they have already made a mature public declaration of faith at their Baptism. At this Reaffirmation, they make a public affirmation of faith and receive imposition of hands by the Bishop, and thus are considered to be confirmed.

Persons who are already considered to be confirmed may be presented for Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows if they desire to express a renewed or deepened commitment to the faith and responsibilities of their Baptism. This may include baptized persons who have made a mature public declaration of faith, have later left the church or fallen away from active faith, and now wish to express their revived commitment; and baptized persons who have made a mature public declaration of faith and are now experiencing a call from God toward new growth in faith, commitment, or service.

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CERTIFICATES: Certificates are presented to indicate that persons affirming their baptismal vows and receiving imposition of hands by the Bishop are thereby considered to be confirmed members of the Episcopal Church. Four types of certificates are issued following receipt of the Report of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation by the Bishop's office.

- A. Baptism, for those making an adult commitment to Christ and at the same service receiving the laying on of hands by the Bishop.
- B. Confirmation, for those baptized at an early age and now presented for Confirmation.
- C. Reception, for those who have been baptized members of another Christian communion and now presented for Reception.
- D. Reaffirmation, for those baptized as adults in the Episcopal Church, without laying on of hands by the Bishop, and now presented for Reaffirmation.
- E. No certificates are issued for those now presented for a subsequent Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows.

Certificates include a space to indicate the place where the candidate was baptized, was confirmed, was received or reaffirmed baptismal vows. The parish where the Deanery Confirmation takes place should be indicated, rather than the candidate's home parish.

DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

Deanery Confirmation Service Suggestions for Parishes

1. Several weeks before the service, each parish is encouraged to include the names of their Candidates in their parish bulletin and newsletter, so that the congregation may support them in prayer and fellowship. During the time of preparation, Candidates (and their Sponsors or Presenters) should be prayed for by name at the Prayers of the People.
2. All parishioners are encouraged to attend the Deanery Confirmation service. For several weeks prior to the service, parish bulletins and newsletters should include announcements of the date, time, and place of the service.
3. At the regular parish service(s) on the morning of or the **Sunday before** the Deanery Confirmation service, Candidates can be recognized and sent forth. A suggested rite is attached.
4. During the liturgy on the **Sunday following** the Deanery Confirmation service, it is appropriate to recognize those who were baptized and those who affirmed their baptismal promises and received laying on of hands. They may be in procession and seated together during the liturgy. They may take prominent roles in the liturgy, as appropriate to their gifts and training; for example, as lector, leader of prayers, oblation bearer. A suggested rite of welcoming is attached.
5. On the Sunday following the Deanery service, parishes are strongly encouraged to provide a reception for those who were baptized and those who affirmed their baptismal promises and receive laying on of hands.
6. The Deanery or a parish may arrange for the Deanery Confirmation service to be videotaped for presentation to those unable to attend. Each Deanery may also arrange for a group photograph to be taken after the service and made available to all parishes in the Deanery. See Guidelines for Deanery and Hosting Parish, 3 E, for information regarding videotaping and photographs.

DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

Deanery Confirmation Service Guidelines for Hosting Parish and Deanery

1. Information and guidelines follow for planning the Deanery Confirmation Service:
 - A. The order of service will be prepared at the Diocesan Office, and a camera ready copy will be sent to you. The copy will include all details about the service -- propers, hymns, service music and other instructions. The Bishop will be the preacher.
 - B. The liturgical color is the color appropriate to the season (Easter: white; Pentecost: red.) The Bishop wears the eucharistic vestments of the host parish or will bring his own.
 - C. The Bishop presides from a chair placed in front of the Table or at the top of the chancel steps. This may be the customary "Bishop's chair" if easily movable or a simple wooden chair will suffice. During the Peace, the chair is removed.
 - D. If there is an adult Baptism, place the font where the congregation can easily see and hear. If the font cannot be moved and is remote from the sight of the congregation, consult with the Bishop's Office about alternatives.
 - E. The Altar Book should be marked in advance, including the sung Proper Preface of Baptism, solemn tone.
 - F. The Bishop does not bless Chrism at this service. The hosting parish should have Chrism (oil with fragrance) available. If not, please inform the Bishop's Office.
 - G. If baked bread is used, loaf/loaves should be of such a size that large amounts of bread are not left over after distribution of Communion. The texture of the bread should be moist enough so as to minimize crumbs and disintegration which can make administration difficult and distracting. The Bishop recommends pita bread.
 - H. Ushers and oblation bearers should bring the offerings of bread, wine, and money to the Table and present them directly to the Deacon, not an acolyte. The alms basins will be placed on the Table and remain there until the conclusion of Communion, when the vessels are cleansed and removed.
 - I. A lavabo is needed for the Bishop after the offerings have been presented by him.
 - J. The Bishop alone presides at the Table. One or two Deacons will be vested to assist him. Other clergy should not vest unless serving as liturgist or eucharistic minister. The Deanery clergy will not be vested and will only be in procession if they are accompanying and/or presenting candidates for the laying on of hands.
 - K. The Bishop chants the *sursum corda* and Proper Preface. No sanctus bells are sounded during the service.

- L. Immediately following the Invitation to Communion (BCP, p. 364), one of the Deacons administers Communion to the Bishop. The Bishop then communicates the Deacon and other Liturgical Ministers.
- M. The Bishop administers Bread to the congregation. The other Eucharistic Ministers (clergy or lay) assist as needed with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Deacon(s) replenish the Sacrament as needed by the Eucharistic Ministers.

Any large quantities of the Sacrament remaining after the distribution of Communion should be reverently removed to the sacristy or placed on a credence table for consumption immediately after the service. Large amounts of consecrated Wine should be poured outside on the ground or down the piscina if one is available.

2. **The Deanery is responsible for:**

- A. Arranging for Liturgical Ministers from participating parishes as follows:
 - 1) Acolytes, Ushers, and Altar Guild. There should be a minimum of three acolytes: a crucifer and two torchbearers for processions, including a Gospel procession. A second crucifer to precede the Bishop's party in the processions is desirable if possible. There should be a minimum of two ushers but four would be preferable. Ushers will direct the "flow of traffic" at the laying on of hands: Candidates file forward individually with their Presenters to receive the imposition of hands by the Bishop. Confirmation candidates kneel; Candidates for Reception and Reaffirmation stand.
 - 2) A Liturgist (lay or clergy) to oversee planning the worship space: seating, rehearsal for Liturgical Ministers, Candidates, and Presenters. The Liturgist will serve as overall coordinator of the service. This person should be vested.
 - 3) Lectors (lay) to read the first two lessons and lead the Prayers for the Candidates (BCP, pp. 305-306.) Additional Prayers of the People will not be included. Sponsors or Presenters may perform these ministries. Lectors are expected to be trained for their ministry and to practice their reading in the worship space prior to the service.
 - 4) Deacon(s) to read the Gospel, prepare the Table, give the Dismissal and attend the Bishop as per his instructions. Clergy or Lay Eucharistic Ministers assist in distributing Holy Communion. No one is to be assigned as a Bishop's chaplain.
 - 5) Oblation Bearers. If there is adult Baptism, it is appropriate for the newly baptized and/or their sponsors to be assigned this ministry. When there is Confirmation only, it is appropriate for newly confirmed persons to exercise this ministry.
 - 6) Liturgical Ministers are to be at the church for rehearsal no later than one hour prior to the service.

- B. Arranging for an organist and choir in consultation with the hosting parish. Choir rehearsal is the responsibility of the organist and/or choir director and will need to be coordinated with the rehearsal for the Candidates, Presenters, and Liturgical Ministers, including opportunity for Lectors and Deacons to practice their readings.
- 1) Under separate cover, the Diocesan Office will inform the Deanery Chairperson and hosting parish of the music and appointed lessons in advance.
 - 2) Other music may be selected by the Deanery choir director for choir anthems. The service allows for two anthems: one at the offertory and one during Communion. Their texts should be appropriate for the occasion and/or church season.
 - 3) An anthem may be sung while the offering is being collected. Following the collection, bread, wine and the offering are presented together during the singing of an offertory hymn.
- C. Preparing an insert (size 8½ x 7) for the service bulletin which will include the following:
- 1) The names and parishes of participants in the liturgy.
 - 2) The names of Candidates, their parishes, and whether they are being presented for adult Baptism, Confirmation, Reception or Reaffirmation. This information is provided to the Deanery chairperson by each parish.
 - 3) Designating a person to prepare and distribute name tags to the Candidates at rehearsal. The printed first names should be large enough for the Bishop to read easily; and the tags should indicate whether the person is being presented for adult Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation.
 - 4) The title(s) and composer(s) of any choir anthem(s).
- NOTE:** The offering this year will be divided between the Deanery and the Diocese. One half will be designated by the Deanery. The other half will be designated by the Bishop.
- D. Coordinating with the hosting parish a festive reception to follow the service.
- E. Photographs and videotaping:
- 1) If possible, arranging for a group photograph (both in color and black and white) of all Candidates with the Bishop following the service and making it known that this photo is available to parishes and individuals.
 - 2) Submitting a group photo (preferably black and white) to the *Western Michigan Episcopalian*. Contact the Communications Officer, for more information.
 - 3) Providing the opportunity for groups, families or individuals from parishes to be photographed with the Bishop.

- 4) Making arrangements for any videotaping of the service. If taped, the video camera must remain in a fixed position throughout the service and must be unobtrusive. Prior to the service, the Bishop must approve the video setup.
 - F. Working with the hosting parish to provide nursery and child care during the service.
3. Refer to and review **Deanery Confirmation Guidelines for All Parishes**.

