

# Confirmation at St. Mark's



Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.

Growing in our understanding of the Christian faith is a lifelong process. At various times during our lives we may feel a need to affirm publicly what we believe and to make a renewed commitment to live out our faith in our daily lives.

## **What are the different ways Anglicans renew their commitment?**

In the Anglican Church there are three formal ways of affirming one's faith – confirmation, reception and reaffirmation.

## **What is confirmation?**

Persons who have been baptized as infants or young children have the opportunity to confirm the promises their sponsors made for them. Often this happens in the early teenage years, but confirmation can take place at any age – adult confirmations often take place today. Confirmation is not a gateway to Holy Communion – in other words, you do not have to be confirmed to receive Communion. All those that are baptized are welcomed to partake of the Eucharist.

## **How does a person prepare for confirmation?**

Preparation includes learning more about the basic beliefs of the Christian faith as well as examining how one's faith is expressed in daily life. Preparation at St. Mark's is designed so that confirmands and parents experience a year in the life of the church in liturgy, doctrine and service. Candidates for confirmation can ask any questions they may have about the Christian faith and the Anglican style of worship.

Classes usually run from November to October, with the confirmation usually taking place the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Please visit our website for more details and a current schedule of classes.

## **What happens at confirmation?**

The service is among the rites of the Anglican Church at which the bishop presides. During the service candidates are asked to affirm their faith as it is expressed the Baptismal Covenant. This covenant, found in the Book of Alternative Services, expresses a commitment of belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the

Holy Spirit. As well, those being confirmed commit themselves to resisting evil, repentance after falling into sin, proclaiming the good news of God in Christ by word and example, loving one's neighbours and striving for justice and peace among all people. The bishop lays hands upon each candidate's head and offers a brief prayer for the Holy Spirit to support you in the commitment you are making. The service of Holy Communion (the Eucharist) is then celebrated.

### **What is reception?**

People who were baptized and confirmed in another Christian tradition and who have found themselves drawn to the Anglican Church of Canada may ask to be formally recognized as a member of this denomination in the rite of reception. This service is not required of new Anglicans, but some may wish to formally acknowledge the move from one Christian family to ours. Preparation is similar to that for confirmation. The rite takes place at the same time as confirmation in the presence of the bishop with the laying of hands.

### **What is reaffirmation?**

Reaffirmation is a rite available for those who have been confirmed or received but who, for a variety of reasons, wish to reaffirm their baptismal vows. For some people, this desire may come because of a long separation from the church. Others may want to reaffirm their vows to celebrate a time of significant spiritual renewal in their lives. The bishop also presides at the rite of reaffirmation, which takes place at the same time as confirmation and reception.

### **Are there fees for confirmation, reception or reaffirmation?**

There is no fee for these services. We are reminded by Christ that we have received the faith freely, and freely are we to share with others. No one should hesitate to consider affirming his or her faith because of financial restraints or concerns.

The Christian faith, however, calls all to a life of stewardship – the sharing of our gifts of time, talent and financial resources. Those who feel called to make a public declaration of faith should consider how they will commit their gifts in the service of God.

### **In what other ways do Anglicans renew their faith?**

In the Christian life we are continually affirming our faith. Every time we participate in a service of Holy Communion we affirm our faith as we recite the creed, respond to the prayers and receive the bread and wine. Every time we witness a baptism and pledge our support of the newly baptized in their life of faith, we do the same. Confirmation, reception and reaffirmation can be a more personal expression of commitment to God.

Through confirmation, reception and reaffirmation we celebrate the faith that we have and seek the strength of God and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to help us persevere in our Christian journey.