

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Confirmation FAQs with Fr. John Newton

What is confirmation?

Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop. If you've been baptized, instructed in the Christian faith, are penitent for your sins, and ready to affirm your confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you may be confirmed (from the *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 860).

What is the difference between being confirmed and received?

Practically speaking (for adults), nothing. The prayer the bishop prays over you is different depending on whether or not you're being confirmed or received, but the net effect is the same: you become an "official member in good standing" of the Episcopal church, which gives you voting privileges at our annual meeting, an opportunity to serve on the vestry, etc. Traditionally, those who have already been confirmed in a different denomination are "received" into the Episcopal Church rather than being confirmed a second time. There are small nuanced theological distinctions between being confirmed and received, but we can go over those together to see which option is right for you. You will choose which one fits your spiritual life at this time—a choice we can make together after learning more about your spiritual journey.

What is involved? What is expected of me?

You will be expected to be present at 10 am the day of the Bishop's visit to meet with the Bishop and the other confirmands. At the 11 am service, you will come forward and the Bishop will lay hands on you and pray a special prayer from the Book of Common Prayer. To see the liturgy for yourself, turn to page 413 in the Book of Common Prayer. I will keep you informed every step of the way. Your job is to show up on time, bring family if possible, and to remain open and prayerful to experiencing God in and through this process.

Isn't confirmation for 8th graders?

Nice try! Yes, we confirm 8th graders (as a rite of passage) and we confirm/receive adults. I expect adults to outnumber 8th graders each year. You will not be alone.

Is prep work required?

Yes, a little. There will be several options to receive formation ahead of time.

I want to talk more. Who can explain what all this means?

The Rev. John Newton. My cell is 512-619-8722. Just text to set up a time to talk, or try calling. You may also email jnewton@st-michaels.org and set up an appointment.

Does being received/confirmed come with any specific expectations, such as tithing?

No.

I am not sure I ever want to serve on vestry, and I am happy calling St. Michael's home even if I am not "officially" an Episcopalian. Do I really need to be confirmed/received?

Of course not. This is the wonderful thing about Christianity. You are free, free, free, and always free. Did I mention that you are free? That said, I do think making this choice still has tremendous value. In a world where we like to keep our options open, it can be a powerful spiritual experience to liturgically and ritually go before the Body of Christ and, with one's actions, declare oneself a member—to say, "Here I stand!" It also energizes the congregation to see adults making this choice, and the energy grows, builds, and revitalizes St. Michael's. Put differently, if you choose to be confirmed/received, it won't just bless you—but all of us! It would cause me great, great joy to have you say "yes." But nothing is at stake and you always remain free to choose. St. Mike's will be your home either way!!