



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

DEANERY AND PARISH CONFIRMATIONS

Some notes about the service from the Bishops

Foreword

Confirmation is a key moment in the journey of discipleship in our diocese, as we seek to nurture a confident people of God, a generous and visible people of Jesus Christ in this place.

That journey will be unique to each of us as we learn to believe, belong and behave as followers of Christ. As the Book of Acts shows us, the turning points of it can be differently patterned for different people. But the moment when someone chooses to say "from their own heart and with their own lips" that Jesus is their Way, their Truth, and their Life, is always very special indeed, a crucial turning point on the journey of faith.

Confirmation is a time:

- for the candidates to confirm (affirm) in public the faith into which they have been baptized, a faith in which they are made one with Christ
- for the church in the person of the Bishop to publicly confirm (recognise) their faith, and their intention to live a life of committed discipleship as one of its members
- for the candidate and church together to ask God to give them the power and gifts they need (*confirm* also means strengthen), through the Holy Spirit, to enable them to live in the way of Jesus.

It goes without saying that, though what the candidate and the church are doing on such an occasion is very important, it is the work of God through His Spirit that is vital. So we trust that you and your candidates will pray purposefully, as well as prepare practically, for this service; and we value time to meet and pray with the candidates before the service, as well as time to check the arrangements with you.

Where appropriate, we will be grateful if candidates are able to write to us through you to tell us something of their journey of faith, and perhaps to read or tell that as "testimony" within the service itself. Please indicate whether the stories are ones we can share.

We will be praying for you and your candidates as the service approaches. Please pray for us, for we are disciples too.

+ Stephen

+ David

Preparing for the Service

Dates are arranged each autumn for the next year's Confirmation services. The confirming Bishop will send an information sheet to the hosting parish or chapel well in advance of the service. This ensures that all the necessary practical details (e.g. parking and hospitality) and all essential details of the service (e.g. number of candidates, readings, inclusion of baptisms) are included in the Bishop's personal preparation for the service.

1. The Form of Service

A suite of services has been prepared, following the provisions for Common Worship Initiation Services. These can be found in downloadable form on Bishop David's blog at <https://bpdt.wordpress.com/confirmations/>.

The minister organising the service is asked to send a draft copy of the form of service to the confirming bishop two weeks before the confirmation. The draft should include details of readings and music. In addition, it is helpful if the names of the candidates are included. Where candidates are to be baptized as well as confirmed, please note this clearly against their names. The bishops particularly wish to be told of any unusual circumstances in the candidates' journey of faith, so that proper sensitivity can be shown in the service and afterwards.

The orders of service include material to cover the Reception of a Roman Catholic into the Church of England and the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith. The bishops are grateful to have full information about candidates presented under these headings. When there is no occasion for Reception or Affirmation, the material should be deleted.

The Lord's Prayer appears in contemporary language throughout the suite of services. The traditional language form may be substituted if this is the normal usage of the hosting church or chapel.

2. Readings and Music

The Common Worship Initiation Services volume provides tables of readings appropriate for baptism and confirmation. We recommend in general that readings be selected from the table, which can be found at this link [https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/christian-initiation/baptism-and-confirmation-supplementary-texts.aspx](https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/christian-initiation/baptism-and-confirmation/baptism-and-confirmation-supplementary-texts.aspx). In the major seasons of the church's year, readings should reflect the seasonal themes. Tables can be found at this link <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/christian->

initiation/baptism-and-confirmation/Seasonal-Provisions.aspx and are included on the Resources page. Please include readings in the draft copy of the service.

Seasonal variations for the Prayer over the Water can also be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/christian-initiation/baptism-and-confirmation/Seasonal-Provisions.aspx> The choice of hymns (or psalms or canticles) is a matter for local decision.

3. Cathedral Confirmations

Diocesan Confirmations take place in the Cathedral three times a year, at the Easter Vigil, at Pentecost, and in November, close to the Feast of Christ the King. The Vigil includes a celebration of Holy Communion; the latter two occasions are evening Services of the Word.

Candidates can now be registered online, following this link to a downloadable letter of introduction and booking form: <http://www.elycathedral.org/worship-music/confirmations>. Please use this form to notify the Precentor of the numbers at the earliest opportunity, and no later than two weeks before the Confirmation. Late candidates cannot be accepted. Please also include details of any candidates who will require Baptism at the service. The Precentor can be reached via the Chapter Office, The College, Ely CB7 4DL (tel. 01353 660335; email j.garrard@elycathedral.org).

4. Immediately Before the Service

The bishops will normally arrive half an hour before the service and like to meet the candidates on arrival. Please ensure that candidates are gathered at last half an hour before the service is due to begin. The bishops are happy to sign books, cards, etc., and will do this before the service if there is time. Please direct the bishop to the vestry for robing, and try to allow time for all involved to familiarise themselves with the space in which the Confirmation (and Baptism if applicable) is to take place.

5. Chaplain

The Bishop of Ely may on some occasions be accompanied by his chaplain. Where this is not the case, the officiating bishop would appreciate having one of the local clergy or Licensed Lay Ministers to act as chaplain. Duties can be agreed when the bishop arrives at the church.

6. The Confirmation

Common Worship offers the possibility of presenting the candidates to the congregation.

This should be done either by a godparent or a sponsor, or the minister most closely involved in the preparation.

At the actual confirmation, the normal practice is for both bishop and candidates to stand.

The candidates should be presented at the moment of confirmation individually by their parish priest. Please warn the bishop in advance of particularly difficult or unusual names.

Confirmation may be in the context of a Service of the Word or Holy Communion. The forms of service provided on the diocesan website provide for both possibilities. Separate templates are provided in each case for Confirmation alone, and for Baptism with Confirmation.

7. Holy Communion

The Bishop will preside, but it is very helpful if the parish priest undertakes to prepare the elements and make a judgement about numbers and amounts.

Those who have been confirmed will normally receive first.

9. Dress

The Bishops will normally wear vestments at eucharistic service, and cope and mitre or Convocation robes for a Service of the Word.

10. Collection

The object of the collection is the Diocesan Mission Fund. Cheques should be made payable to '*Ely Diocesan Board of Finance: Diocesan Mission Fund*' and sent with a covering note to the Diocesan Accounts Office at the Diocesan Office, Barton Road, Ely, CB7 4DX.

11. The Confirmation Return

Please ensure that a copy of the Confirmation return for each parish presenting candidates ["yellow form"] is completed and handed to the confirming bishop. Additional copies can be obtained from the Bishop of Ely's office (tel. 01353 662 749; email bishop@elydiocese.org).

The parish confirmation register should be given to the confirming bishop for signature; it will be returned to the presenting priest but the return form will be retained by the bishop for submission to the Bishop of Ely's office.

12. Car Parking

Please reserve a space for the bishop's car, unless there is plenty of room near the church.