

Early Church Practice

The practice of Confirmation is not recorded in Scripture. Nowhere are we commanded to "confirm" people. However, Jesus, St. Paul, Peter, Moses and so many others commanded us to grow in the faith (Colossians 2:6-7), "continue in the things you have learned" (II Timothy 3:15-17), and put one's faith into practice each day by any means possible (Deuteronomy 6:4ff.).

From the beginnings of the Christian Church adults and children were baptized and taught the Christian Faith as Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). At Pentecost, thousands were baptized in a single day (Acts 2). Scripture records many times when entire households were baptized. "Households" included not only family members, but all the families of servants living in her extensive household (Acts 16:14-15).

What Is Confirmation?

"Confirmation" is a rite developed by the Church. Lutherans do not hold it as a sacrament. At confirmation, a baptized person publicly "confirms" their faith at the Lord's altar. Unbaptized persons are traditionally baptized at their time of their confirmation.

In every case, confirmation involves some form of instruction. Lutherans base their confirmation instruction on Luther's *Small Catechism*. The oldest catechism still in use, Luther's *Small Catechism* taught six essential areas of faith ("chief parts"). These include...

- 1) How Christians Live (The Ten Commandments)
- 2) Who God Is (The Apostles' Creed)
- 3) How To Pray (The Lord's Prayer)
- 4) How To Forgive And Be Forgiven (The Office Of The Keys And Confession)
- 5) What Baptism Is (Holy Baptism)
- 6) What The Lord's Supper Is And Does (The Lord's Supper)



Lutheran Confirmation Today

There are many ways Lutherans conduct confirmation. Regardless of the method of instruction, the goal is always to provide a significant base for a growing faith.

As important as confirmation is, the ritual of confirmation is not as important as the development of faith which confirmation strives. Confirmation's goal is to encourage, by God's Word and Holy Spirit, a growing, dynamic, life-long expression of faith which endures until we receive the "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Why Do I Have to Go Through Confirmation?

For young people who have been brought up in the church, much of what it means to be a Christian and to take on the ministry of being a church member is already well-known.

You've listened in worship and in religious education classes and have an idea of why we have church services.

You've (hopefully) been in Sunday School and seen baptisms and come to receive a blessing at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The purpose of Confirmation is to organize all the stuff you've been learning over the years and fill in a few blanks you may have.

- * Confirmation prepares you to make your own public profession of Christian faith first made at your baptism by parents and sponsors.
- * Confirmation helps Confirmands understand how they fit in the church and how they are part of the marvelous Body of Christ.
- * Confirmation explores God's great love for the world--and for you--and explains it in a meaningful way.
- * Most importantly, Confirmation provides a fundamental understanding of Christian Faith so that we can attend Holy Communion and receive it's full benefits (I Cor. 10-11)

Of course, Confirmation is about your becoming a member of the church, experiencing the joy of serving the Lord's Church, and sharing in the responsibilities of making the church do what God would have it do.

The Confirmed members of the church you belong to have ministered together to provide the best confirmation instruction available. At your confirmation, you become an on-going part of the Church which will confirm Christians until Jesus comes again.