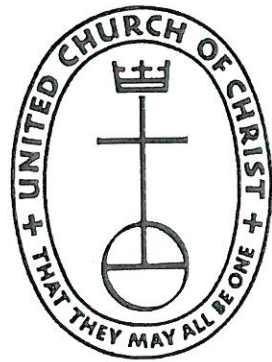
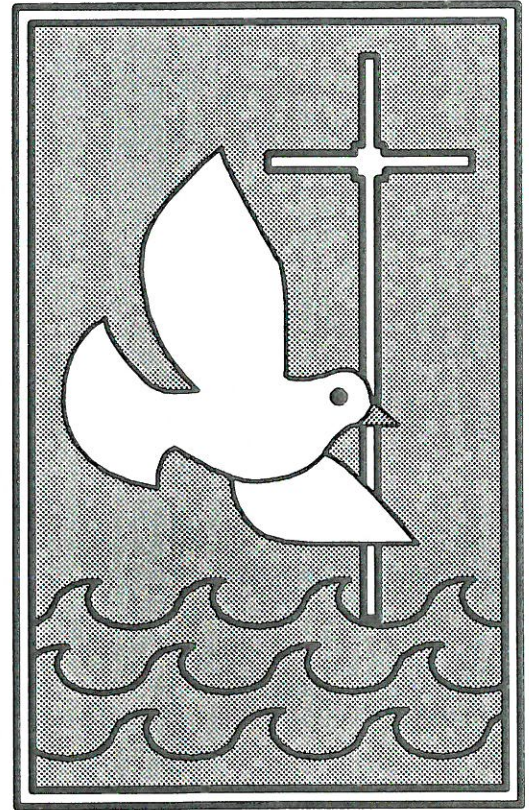


For more information contact your local United Church of Christ.

CONFIRMATION



Practices of Faith
in the United
Church of Christ

Foundation

I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

— *Ephesians 4:1-6 (adapted from NRSV)*

What is confirmation?

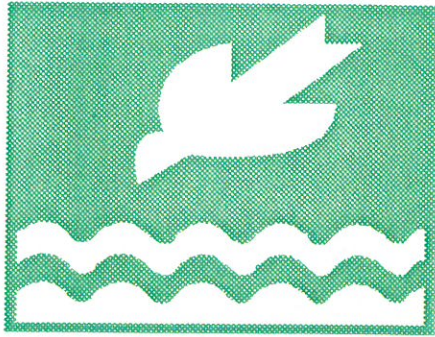
A person is joined into the universal church, the body of Christ, through the Sacrament of Baptism. Confirmation is affirmation of baptism and follows baptism. It is a rite of the church which happens during public worship. In the service of confirmation confirmands say “yes” to their baptism and the church says “yes” to their growing faith. As a child who has already been baptized approaches adolescence, the local church offers that person the opportunity to give public assent to the baptismal promises. If baptism has not already taken place, the service of confirmation includes a service of baptism. Confirmation celebrates this occasion of affirmation of baptism in the life of the individual and of the local church. Liturgies in the *Book of Worship* of the United Church of Christ which include affirmation of baptism are the *Rite of Confirmation*, the *Order of Reception of New Members*, and the *Renewal of Baptismal Vows* in the *Great Easter Vigil*. Each of these is a time when Christians may say “yes” to their baptism and each can be understood as confirmation.

At what age is one normally confirmed?

In many congregations, one is confirmed in the junior high, middle school, or senior high school years. However, confirmation also can take place for older youth and adults who may seek to affirm their baptism at any time in their lives.

What preparation is necessary?

Many local churches offer an educational or faith formation program of several months to a year or more, conducted by the pastor, Christian educator, mentors, deacons, or other adult leaders in the church. Some United Church of Christ Conferences or Associations sponsor confirmation retreats or camps at various times during the year. However, it must be understood that even though confirmation may involve extensive educational preparation, it is not equivalent to secular graduation. Nor is it a completion of baptism, because Christians live into their baptismal vows through their whole lives.



When is the best time to hold a service of confirmation?

Easter and Pentecost are the traditional times for the Rite of Confirmation in the church year and may lend extra meaning to the service. However, a service of Confirmation can take place any time.

What is the role of the congregation in confirmation?

Just as with baptism, in the Rite of Confirmation, the congregation promises to be prayerful about and supportive of the confirmands in their continuing faith journey. Young adult and older adult members also can serve as teachers or mentors for the confirmands.

Where do we get the term confirmation?

The word "confirmare" originated in the fifth century and means "to strengthen" or "to make firm." Confirmation as we understand it is not mentioned by name in scripture. Traditionally, confirmation has been associated with the laying on of hands (placing one's hands on another in prayer) and the invocation of the Holy Spirit to give strength to persons in their identity and activity as Christians.

What are some new ideas about confirmation?

Many congregations are finding a mentoring program to be meaningful, either instead of or alongside of more traditional confirmation curricula. Work camps, service projects, and retreats have replaced classroom instruction in many faith formation programs. Some congregations, as well as United Church of Christ ecumenical partners, are discovering that confirmation can be an effective way to incorporate adult new members into the church.