

Confirmation in the Uniting Church

CONSTITUTION

Confirmed member is a member who is recognised as having affirmed the faith, and as sharing the right and responsibility of participation in the work and government of the Church.

REGULATIONS

CONFIRMED MEMBERS

6. The Church will recognise as confirmed members:

(b) such baptised persons as affirm their faith in Jesus Christ, accept the responsibilities of membership and acknowledge the discipline of the Church and are confirmed in the manner prescribed;

PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

1.3.2 Candidates for confirmation who have not been previously baptised shall be baptised either prior to or in conjunction with the confirmation.

CONDITIONS AND MODE OF CONFIRMATION

1.3.3 Confirmation shall be according to an order which meets the requirements of the Assembly and which makes provision for the candidate to declare: acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, determination to follow him in daily life, intention to participate actively in the fellowship of the Church and to support its work, and resolution to seek the extension of the reign of God in human society.

UNITING IN WORSHIP 2

UiW2 contains a reframing of confirmation as more clearly a reaffirmation of baptism. It also contains a liturgical pattern to lead to a catechumenate during Lent leading to baptism at Easter.

The Tenth Assembly commended to congregations and faith communities the Becoming Disciples process, known universally as the catechumenate. It is a major mission strategy that puts the formation of adult disciples at the centre of congregational life. Its focus is those who have never been baptised and who have heard the call of Christ in the life of a local congregation. It is based in the worshipping life of a local Church, and involves learning and practising the Christian life over a substantial period prior to baptism. It may also be adapted for the reaffirmation of baptism or confirmation of those already baptised.

A RITE OF WELCOME

- 1 A Rite of Welcome follows the Inquiry Phase of Becoming Disciples ('Touching the Edges') when inquirers experience hospitality, ask questions and have the gospel explained to them. Inquirers become candidates when they freely and joyfully begin to follow Jesus, taking on the disciplines of the Christian life. In the rite, they express their desire for life in Christ and renounce loyalties contrary to that calling. The congregation, in turn, commits itself to support them and pray for them.

- 2 The time for the Inquiry Phase is open-ended, should not be rushed, and will vary with every individual. When there are the first signs of a growing faith and a person is ready to make a serious commitment to exploring the faith, a companion is appointed as friend, mentor and role model. The companion is normally an older person of the same gender. In A Rite of Welcome, the inquirers are welcomed into the fellowship of Christ's Church.
- 3 A Rite of Welcome is the first of the rites in the Becoming Disciples process (the catechumenate). It is a rite of passage that marks the change from a person being an inquirer to being someone desiring to explore the Christian life in depth – a catechumen or candidate. In other words, the rite marks the transition from being a person who has a general interest in the faith to someone who is exploring faith seriously with a view to being baptised (or confirmed).

A RITE OF CALLING

- 1 A Rite of Calling follows the Formation Phase of Becoming Disciples ('Discovering the Riches') when candidates have attended worship regularly for a considerable time and have reflected on it. They have also met with a companion and met in a small group (the formation group) and studied some of the content of the Christian faith. These experiences have helped them to begin living as a Christian. The length of the Formation Phase is open-ended, should not be rushed, and will vary with every individual. When the congregation discerns with the candidates that they have undergone conversion and are ready to begin intensive preparation for baptism (or confirmation, or personal re-affirmation of baptism), the Rite of Calling is celebrated.
- 2 A Rite of Calling is the second of the rites in the Becoming Disciples process (the catechumenate). It is a rite of passage that marks the change of the person from being someone exploring the Christian life in depth to someone definitely preparing for baptism (or confirmation, or personal reaffirmation of baptism). It therefore marks the turning point from the extended formation of Phase 2 to the intensive six week prayerful preparation of the Candidacy Phase.

LENTEN RITES

- 1 The intensive Formation Phase ('Exploring the Depths') is the third phase of the Becoming Disciples process and is normally held during the season of Lent. It is time of prayer, penitence, retreat, fasting and self-examination as candidates prepare for baptism (or confirmation, or personal reaffirmation of baptism). Following The Rite of Calling on the first Sunday in Lent, on each subsequent Sunday of Lent the congregation hands over a symbol of the faith and prays for the candidates, thus supporting the candidates, as the Holy Spirit continues the work of conversion in their lives. The Easter Vigil on the evening of Easter Saturday (or early on Easter Sunday morning) concludes this phase, as candidates are baptised or complete their final preparation prior to baptism (or related rite) on Easter Day, or another Sunday in the season of Easter.