



SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means for receiving God's grace. The two great sacraments given by Christ to the church are:

- **Baptism** (*the entry into the formal church fellowship*)
- **Eucharist** (*Holy Communion, The Lord's Supper*)

The Episcopal Church recognizes that six other sacramental rites evolved in the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, including:

- **Confirmation** (*saying YES to the promises made for you at Baptism*)
- **Ordination** (*becoming a member of the priesthood*)
- **Holy Matrimony** (*entering into a covenant relationship with the person you love*)
- **Reconciliation of a Penitent** (*Confession/Forgiveness of Sin*)
- **Unction** (*the anointing of the sick with oil, or the laying on of hands*)
- **Funerals & Memorial Services** (*we commend our loved one to the loving hands of God, the Creator*)

Baptism

This is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the church. God establishes an indissoluble bond with each person in baptism. God adopts us, making us members of the church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. In baptism we are made sharers in the new life of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the foundation for all future church participation and ministry. Each candidate for baptism in the Episcopal Church is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons.

Sponsors (godparents) speak on behalf of candidates for baptism who are infants or younger children and cannot speak for themselves at the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates. During the baptismal rite the members of the congregation promise to do all they can to support the candidates for baptism in their life in Christ. They join with the candidates by renewing the baptismal covenant. At Saint David's the water of baptism is usually administered by affusion (pouring). Candidates are baptized "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and then marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross. Special oil blessed by the Bishop especially for this purpose is used for this marking. The newly baptized is "sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever." When all baptisms have been completed, the celebrant and congregation welcome the newly administered within the eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or another feast.

The Catechism notes that “Infants are baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God.” The baptismal promises are made for infants by their parents or sponsors, “who guarantee that the infants will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him.” Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, the Day of Pentecost, All Saint’s Day or the Sunday following, and the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord, but may be done at other times of the year, as well.

Please contact the Interim Rector to further discuss Baptism at Saint David’s.

Eucharist (Holy Communion, The Lord’s Supper)

The sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, and the principal act of Christian worship. The term is from the Greek, “thanksgiving.” Jesus instituted the eucharist “on the night when he was betrayed.” At the Last Supper he shared the bread and cup of wine at a sacred meal with his disciples. He identified the bread with his body and the wine with his blood of the new covenant. Jesus commanded his disciples to “do this” in remembrance of him. Christ’s sacrifice is made present by the eucharist, and in it we are united to his one self-offering. The Last Supper provides the basis for the fourfold eucharistic action of:

- Taking
- Blessing
- Breaking
- Sharing

Christ’s body and blood are truly present in the sacrament of the eucharist and received by faith. Christ’s presence is also known in the gathered eucharistic community.

In the Book of Common Prayer, the whole service is entitled the Holy Eucharist. The first part of the service is designated the Word of God. It usually includes:

- the entrance rite
- the lessons
- psalm or canticle
- the gospel
- the sermon
- the Nicene Creed
- the prayers of the people
- the confession of sin and absolution
- and the Peace

The second portion of the service is designated the Holy Communion. It includes the:

- Offertory

- The consecration of the bread and wine in the Great Thanksgiving
- The communion of the people
- The concluding prayers of thanksgiving and dismissal
- A blessing may be given prior to the dismissal

The eucharist is also called the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offertory.

This is the Lord's Table, all are welcome.

Confirmation

The sacramental rite in which the candidates "express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop." Those who were baptized at an early age and those baptized as adults without laying on of hands by a bishop are expected to make a mature public affirmation of their faith, recommit themselves to the responsibilities of their baptism, and receive laying on of hands by a bishop. Adults baptized with the laying on of hands by a bishop are considered to be confirmed.

The Prayer Book rite for Confirmation includes forms for Reception and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows. In some dioceses, those who have already made a mature Christian commitment in another denomination are recognized as members of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, and received into the fellowship of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. In other dioceses, those who have been sacramentally confirmed in the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches are received and others are confirmed. Those who have returned from a time of religious inactivity to an active practice of faith may publicly reaffirm their baptismal vows. Others who have experienced a renewal of faith or desire to renew their Christian commitment may also reaffirm their baptismal vows. Reaffirmation may be repeated, depending on the pastoral needs of the person. Preparation for Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation should help the candidates discover the meaning of Christian commitment in their lives, and explore ways that their Christian commitment can be lived.

Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation are rooted in the baptismal covenant. Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation may be done during the Bishop's Annual Visitation. When there is no baptism, the entrance rite for Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation follows the entrance rite for baptism. Candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation are presented in separate groups by their presenters. Candidates may have individual presenters who will support them in their Christian life by prayer and example. Presenters may be members of the clergy or laypersons. The candidates reaffirm their renunciation of evil and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ. They reaffirm the promises made by them or for them at the time of baptism. Those present in the

congregation promise to do all in their power to support the candidates in their life in Christ. The bishop leads the congregation in renewing the baptismal covenant. The Prayers for the Candidates from the baptismal liturgy may be used as the Prayers for the Candidates for Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation. The bishop lays hands on each candidate for Confirmation. The BCP provides specific prayers to be said by the bishop for Confirmation, for Reception, and for Reaffirmation. The bishop may shake hands with those who are being received to welcome them into this communion, and the bishop may lay hands on them in blessing. The bishop may also bless those who reaffirm their baptismal vows.

The Episcopal Church's theology of Confirmation has continued to evolve along with its understanding of baptism. Confirmation is no longer seen as the completion of Christian initiation, nor is Confirmation a prerequisite for receiving communion. Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body the church. Accordingly, Confirmation has been increasingly understood in terms of a mature, public reaffirmation of the Christian faith and the baptismal promises. Some dioceses require that candidates for Confirmation be at least sixteen years old to insure that the candidates are making a mature and independent affirmation of their faith. There is considerable diversity of understanding and practice concerning Confirmation in the Episcopal Church. Confirmation has been characterized as "a rite seeking a theology."

Classes are held prior to Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation.

Please contact the Interim Rector to further discuss this Rite at Saint David's.

Ordination

A sacramental rite of the church by which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by bishops to those being made bishops, priests, and deacons. The three distinct orders of bishops, priests, and deacons have been characteristic of Christ's holy catholic church.

Bishops carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the church. Presbyters (often known as priests) are associated with bishops in the ministry of church governance, along with the church's ministry of missionary and pastoral work, in preaching of the Word of God, and in the administration of the sacraments.

Deacons assist bishops and priests in all of this work, and have special responsibility to minister in Christ's name to the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the helpless.

The BCP provides rites for the ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons. No person is to exercise the office of bishop, priest, or deacon unless he or she has been ordained. The manner of ordination in the Episcopal Church has been generally recognized by Christian people as suitable for conferring the sacred orders of bishop, priest, and deacon.

In the Episcopal Church the ordained ministry is normally seen as a life-long vocation. Careful selection, discernment, and preparation are required before ordination takes place. The canons call for theological instruction in the Holy Scriptures; church history, including the ecumenical movement; Christian theology; Christian ethics and moral theology; studies in contemporary society, including racial and minority groups; liturgics and church music; and theory and practice of ministry.

Holy Matrimony (Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage)

Marriage is a solemn public covenant between two persons in the presence of God. At least one of the couple must be a baptized Christian. Prior to the marriage, the couple sign a declaration of intention. It states that they hold marriage to be a lifelong union; that they believe this union in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy, for help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity, and for the procreation (when it is God's will) of children and their Christian nurture. There must be at least two witnesses for the ceremony. A priest or bishop normally presides at the marriage. If no priest or bishop is available, a deacon can preside if permitted by civil law. The marriage may be celebrated and blessed in the context of a nuptial eucharist. The marriage service then replaces the ministry of the word, and the eucharist begins with the offertory. Any authorized liturgy for the eucharist may be used with the marriage service. Prior to the service, the Banns of Marriage may be posted to announce the upcoming marriage and insure that there is no impediment. The title "Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" in the 1979 BCP replaces the earlier title, "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony."

Classes/Counseling sessions take place (usually with the priest who will perform the service) well in advance of setting a date. Please contact the Interim Rector to further discuss Holy Matrimony at Saint David's.

Reconciliation of a Penitent (Sacrament of Reconciliation, Confession)

Sacramental rite in which those who repent may confess their sins to God in the presence of a priest and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. It is also called penance and confession. The church's ministry of reconciliation is from God, "who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." The ministry of reconciliation has been committed by Christ to the church. It is exercised through the care each Christian has for others, through the common prayer of Christians assembled for public worship, and through the priesthood of the church and its ministers declaring absolution. The Reconciliation of a Penitent is not limited to times of sickness. Confessions may be heard at any time and any place.

The BCP provides two forms of service for the Reconciliation of a Penitent. Only a bishop or priest may pronounce absolution. A declaration of forgiveness may be used by a deacon or lay person who hears a confession. When a confession is heard in a church building, the

confessor may sit inside the altar rails while the penitent kneels or sits, as able, nearby. The confession may be heard in a place set aside for greater privacy. It is also appropriate for the confessor and penitent to sit face to face for a spiritual conference that leads to absolution or a declaration of forgiveness. After the penitent has confessed all serious sins troubling the conscience and given evidence of contrition, the priest offers counsel and encouragement before pronouncing absolution. Before pronouncing absolution, the priest may assign a psalm, prayer, or hymn to be said, or something to be done, as a sign or penitence and act of thanksgiving.

The secrecy of the confession is morally absolute for the confessor and must not be broken.

The adage “all may, some should, none must” expresses the Anglican/Episcopalian understanding of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Please contact the Rector to further discuss the Sacrament of Reconciliation at Saint David’s.

Unction (Anointing)

Sacramental use of oil as an outward sign of God's active presence for healing, initiation, or ordination. Anointing with oil by smearing or pouring may accompany prayers for healing and the laying on of hands in the rite for Ministration to the Sick. The signing with the cross of the newly baptized may be done by anointing with the oil of chrism, which signifies that the person is “sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever.” The oil for anointing may be scented, with different fragrances used in services for healing, initiation, or ordination.

Extreme Unction

Use of oil for the anointing of the sick at the time of death. After the seventh century, western Christianity associated the rites of anointing with penitence and death. This differed from the earlier practice of anointing for healing and recovery from illness. Unction became a rite reserved for situations in extremis, near death the various movements of liturgical renewal in the twentieth century have recovered the anointing of the sick in its ancient sense as a rite of healing. Anointing may also be done at the time of death.

Please contact the Interim Rector to discuss and arrange Anointing at Saint David’s.

Funerals and Memorial Services (Burial of the dead)

Funerals and Memorial Services is an opportunity to bid farewell, remember the dearly departed's life with us, and to offer a welcome and graceful sense of closure. These rites in the Episcopal Church may include:

- Songs and/or Anthems may be sung by the assembly or soloist, or spoken.
- Psalms - a collection of poem lyrics that offer comfort.
- Scripture Readings from the Bible where we hear words of comfort, reassurance, and promise.
- Prayers - we pray for the dead, loved ones left behind, and for the love that eternally binds us together.
- Homily - a brief message giving hope in the resurrection and eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- Holy Communion - we join with believers past, present, and yet to come through our Lord Jesus.
- Apostles' Creed - a brief statement outlining our faith as passed down through time.
- Commendation - we commend the soul of our loved one to God, the Creator and Redeemer.

The Book of Common Prayer provides both traditional and contemporary liturgies which may include Holy Communion. The burial office is an Easter liturgy. The liturgical color is appropriately white, and the Paschal candle should be lighted as a visible reminder of Jesus' resurrection and our hope of life everlasting in Christ. At the Burial of the Dead those who mourn may express grief and sorrow as they share in the community's expression of faith, hope, and mutual support in Jesus Christ.

If there is a serious illness, the Rector should be notified, especially if hospice is part of the plan. When death occurs, notify the Rector, so plans can be made and dates for a service determined.