



*An Order for
Confirmation*

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Approved by Conference 1998
Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa
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Introduction

Confirmation is an act of the church. It is for those who have been previously baptised (usually as infants) and who wish to affirm for themselves by profession of faith, their membership in the church.

Those who are confirmed within our denomination are admitted into responsible membership of The Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa. By prayer and the laying on of hands they are commissioned to participate in the ministry of the whole people of God.

A person who has been baptised in another denomination (with water, and using the Trinitarian formula) may offer as a candidate for confirmation within The Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa.

A confirmed member of another denomination seeking membership in The Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa should not be confirmed again, but welcomed [see the Lawbook (Section 1, paras. 3.1- 3.4)].

While it is appropriate for adult baptisms and confirmations to take place during the same service of worship, and while there is some shared language, the distinction between the two should remain clear. For example, adults being baptised are not confirmed, and those previously baptised are not "re-baptised" prior to confirmation. But all candidates may share in parts of the service such as *Candidate's Vows*, the *Personal Testimony of Faith*, and in the *Commissioning for Ministry in the World*.

Confirmation is both God's gift and God's call to discipleship. Confirmation is a rite of the church; it is not a private ceremony. It takes place within the context of congregational worship in the church attended by the candidate, ideally within a service of Holy Communion. If, in exceptional circumstances, confirmation occurs elsewhere, the presbyter should ensure that representatives of the congregation are present if at all possible.

It is the responsibility of the presbyter administering confirmation to ensure that the candidate has been carefully prepared beforehand, and is aware of both the personal and corporate implications of confirmation.

The resident presbyter shall normally preside and the district superintendent (representing the wider church) may be invited to preach. Along with the presiding presbyter and the district superintendent, others may be invited to participate in the laying on of hands. It is fitting that leadership of the service be shared by a presbyter and a lay person (Leader, in the liturgy).

Candidates for confirmation must be approved by the leaders' meeting or parish council.

It is suggested that sponsors, endorsed by the leaders' meeting or parish council, be available during the preparation time, during the confirmation service and for ongoing support of the candidate. As part of the preparation it would be appropriate for the candidates and sponsors to gather for prayer immediately prior to the service.

In keeping with the practice of the early church in its celebration of the gift of new life in Christ, it is suggested that Easter or Pentecost are particularly fitting times for confirmation, as well as baptism.

It is recommended that presentation of confirmation certificates be made at the end of the service (after Holy Communion) and that the newly confirmed lead the way out of church with their sponsors and families.

If this service is used within a co-operative venture, the above needs to be read alongside any local ecumenical agreement.

Given the vast quantity of liturgical resources now available, it is possible that the Faith and Order Committee has used some material without realising its source. The Committee asks for understanding if any recognise some part of this service as springing from their own.

Order of service for Confirmation

Preparation

Leader: Kia noho a Ihowa *The Lord be with you:*
ki a koutou.

People: **Ki a koe ano hoki.** *and with you also.*

A psalm or hymn may be said or sung.

Leader: We have come together to hear God's word,
to confirm..... in the faith,
and to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion.
Let us therefore examine our lives,
seeking God's grace
that we may come in repentance and faith.

Confession and Declaration of Forgiveness

Leader: Hear these words of Jesus Christ -
The first commandment is: Love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your soul,
with all your mind and with all your strength.

silence

The leader initiates the responses:

All: **Lord, we have not loved you**
with all our heart and soul and mind and strength.

Leader: The second commandment is:
Love your neighbour as yourself.

silence

All: **Lord, we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.**

Leader: Jesus also said -
I give you a new commandment: Love one another;
as I have loved you, so you are to love one another.

silence

All: Lord, we have not loved one another
as you have loved us.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

silence

Presbyter: Hear the word of grace:
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Therefore I declare to you, your/our sins are forgiven.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer may be said in any language.

All: Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come;
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

**E to matou Matua i te rangi,
Kia tapu tou Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tou rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tau e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite ano ki to te rangi.
Homai ki a matou aiane
he taro ma matou mo tenei ra.
Murua o matou hara,
me matou hoki e muru nei
i o te hunga e hara ana ki a matou.
Aua hoki matou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia matou i te kino:
Nou hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te kororia,
Ake ake ake. Amine.**

or

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name
echo through the universe!
The way of your justice and peace
be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.**

(Jim Cotter)

Ministry of the Word

The Bible is read.

The sermon is preached.

A creed or affirmation from the service of Holy Communion (pages 9 and 11) or one of the following may be used.

Affirmation of faith

STAND

Leader: Let us affirm our faith.

All: You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.

You are our God. We worship you.
(A New Zealand Prayerbook)

or

Leader: Let us affirm our faith.

All: We believe
in God the creator,
who gives birth to all that is
with labour and sighing
and looks into the world with joy and love.

We believe
in Christ the reconciler,
who is earthed in our life
and enfleshed in its patterns of dying and rising,
who gives honour to our reality
and grace to our way.

We believe
in God the free Spirit,
who weeps with our grievings
in the depths of our darkness
and dances among us high on life's mountains -
the Spirit who finds us with newness and hope.
We believe in the community of faith,
which is born of our humanness,
is nurtured in sharing
and grows whole in our struggling
and celebration
as one people of God.
(Dorothy McRae McMahan)

SIT

Confirmation

*Candidates for confirmation come forward, along with their sponsor(s).
If there is more than one sponsor, one speaks for all.*

Sponsor: With joy we present.....
for confirmation.

Presbyter:,
we are delighted to welcome you.
Already you are a member of the church
by your baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit.
Today, in confirmation, the church prays
that you may be strengthened and sustained
to remain in Christ forever.
Let us pray:

All: **God of love,
we give thanks for our own calling
to be disciples of Christ.
Through our lives of faith and love
may your grace be known
and your name honoured;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Candidate's Vows

Presbyter: In the light of the gospel that the church proclaims
we ask you:
Do you turn away
from all that is evil and life destroying?

Candidate: With God's help I do.

Presbyter: Do you turn to God
seeking to become part of the new creation
in Jesus Christ?

Candidate: By the grace of God, I do.

Presbyter: Do you affirm your baptism
and your place in the church?

Candidate: I do.

Candidates may recall their baptism by making the sign of the cross on their forehead with water from the font.

Presbyter: You are called to a life
of worship and freedom,
truth and beauty,
compassion and courage.
May your heart and mind and soul
remain open to the Spirit of God.

Candidate's Personal Testimony/Statement of Faith

Laying on of Hands and Prayer

*The candidate kneels and those appointed to lay on hands come forward.
The presbyter calls everyone to silent prayer, after which one or more may offer prayer.*

Presbyter: Let us pray:
By the power of your Spirit,
set heart(s) alight with love for you.
May your gifts of grace grow within her/him:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of discernment and inner strength,
the spirit of wonder in your presence,
the spirit of knowledge and delight in your service.

All: Amen.

The presbyter, district superintendent, and others appointed lay hands upon the head or shoulders of each candidate in turn, and the presbyter prays:

Presbyter: Holy Spirit, giver of life
may be strengthened
with your gifts of grace
to be a faithful disciple of Christ.

*When all have received the laying on of hands, the newly confirmed stand.
One of the following or some other blessing may be said or sung.*

**May the mystery of God enfold you.
May the wisdom of God uphold you.
May the fragrance of God be around you.
May the brightness of God surround you.
May the wonder of God renew you.
May the loving of God flow through you.
May the peace of God deeply move you.
May the moving of God bring you peace.**
(Joy Cowley, *Alleluia Aotearoa* 95)

**The love of the faithful Creator,
the peace of the wounded Healer,
the joy of the challenging Spirit,
the hope of the Three in one,
surround and encourage you,
today, tonight and forever. Amen.**
(Kathy Galloway ed.- *The Pattern of Our Days*)

**May holy Wisdom,
kind to humanity,
steadfast, sure and free,
the breath of the power of God;
may she who makes all things new,
in every age,
enter your soul,
and make you a friend of God,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**
(Janet Morley- *All Desires Known*)

*The name of the candidate may be entered in the membership register (or
at the end of the service).*

Commissioning for Ministry in the World

Presbyter:,
with all the baptised you share
responsibility for ministry in the world.
May God's Spirit guide you to be Christ's disciple
in this land of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

We ask you to pledge yourself anew
to Christian ministry.

Candidates respond to these questions together.

Presbyter: How will you follow Christ in your daily life?

**Newly
confirmed:** With God's help
I will seek to love and obey Christ
and be open to the Spirit of God
through prayer and the study of the Bible.

Presbyter: Will you be a faithful member
of the Christian community?

**Newly
confirmed:** With God's help
I will share regularly in worship
and support the work of the church
with my time, talents and money.

Presbyter: Will you actively participate
in the mission of the church?

**Newly
confirmed:** With God's help
I will care for creation;
I will work for justice and reconciliation;
I will witness to Christ in word and deed.

Charge to the Congregation

CONGREGATION STANDS

Presbyter: People of this congregation:
love, encourage and support
these brothers and sisters in Christ,
that they may continue to grow in grace
and the knowledge and love of God.

All: **With God's help
we will live out our baptism and confirmation
as a loving community in Christ:
nurturing one another in faith,
upholding one another in prayer
and encouraging one another in service.**

CONGREGATION SITS

Intercessory Prayers

The following may be included in the intercessions:

Leader: God of faithful, constant love,
our lives have been touched and enriched
in countless ways by the community of faith.

All: **Thank you for the love
that draws us out of ourselves
and gives us the courage to reach out for others.**

Leader: Open us to those who have never heard your call,
and to those who have lost their way;
to those who find themselves
caught up in forces beyond their control
that lessen their humanity.

All: **May your Word of redeeming love
be spoken through our words and our lives.**

Leader: Open us also to those who see you, O God,
in a different light,
or from a different perspective from our own:

All: that we may listen to one another
and, together, discover new directions
for our journey.

Leader: In a world where bitterness and hatred
threaten human life itself:

All: give us courage to reach out in love
and to make possible
new beginnings through our faith.
Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

(1992 Methodist Order for Holy Communion pages 19 - 27)

Peace

Offertory

Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayer

Holy Communion

Presentation of confirmation certificates and candles

The newly confirmed and their sponsors may gather at the front of the church.

Certificates are presented.

The sponsor of each person confirmed may take a candle, light it from the Easter candle or from a candle on the communion table, saying:

Sponsor:, you belong to Christ
the light of the world.

or, walk in the way of Christ;
shine with the light of Christ.

When all the newly confirmed have received lighted candles:

Presbyter: Let your light shine before others
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to God.

Sending forth and benediction (blessing)

Presbyter: Go in peace to love and serve God.

All: God the Creator grant us grace and strength.
God the Redeemer grant us new life.
God the Spirit empower and encourage us.
The Three-in-one be with us, every one. Amen.

or

Presbyter: The grace of Christ attend you;
the love of God surround you;
the Holy Spirit keep you
this day and forever.

All: Amen.

or

Presbyter: Let us go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast to what is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour all people;
love and serve God
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

and/ or

**All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.
Amen.**

**Kia tau ki a tatou katoa,
te atawhai o to tatou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga ki te Wairua Tapu.
Amine.**

The grace in Fijian, Tongan and Samoan can be found on page 31 of the Order for Holy Communion.

The following may be sung unaccompanied:

**Ma te marie a te Atua
Tatou katoa e tiaki;
Mana ano e whakau
O Tatou ngakau ki te pai.**

The peace of God
keep us all.
God will conform
our hearts in goodness.

**Ma te Atua Tamaiti ra,
Ma te Wairua Tapu hoki,
Ratou, Atua kotahi nei.
Tatou katoa e whakapai.
Amine.**

May the Son of God
and the Holy Spirit too,
One God,
bless us all.
Amen.

The newly confirmed, their sponsors and families lead the way out of church

The names of newly confirmed are entered in the membership register (if not previously)