

St. Paul's Church, Wokingham
All Saints' Church, Wokingham

Service of Confirmation



**President and Preacher:
the Right Reverend Olivia Graham
Bishop of Reading**

**Sunday the 26th of March 2023 at 6.15pm
at St Paul's Church, Wokingham**

We rejoice that so many people from our local Churches are responding to God's call to renew the faith of their Baptism in the sacrament of Confirmation. This is a significant moment in their life-long journey of faith and discipleship. We are glad and privileged to share this day with them. Some of them have written short personal statements which are printed at the back of this Order of Service.

The Sidespeople are there to answer any questions you may have and to make you feel welcome and at home. Toilets are in the Parish Rooms, across the churchyard. The Children's Chapel is at the back of church and those aged about six and under are welcome to find things there to do (and bring them back to their seats if they would like to). Like all of our main services, please be aware that the service is livestreamed. You can speak to a Sidesperson if you have any concerns or questions about this.

We use incense at St Paul's. It draws all of our senses into worship. It rises to God with our hearts and it is used to point out holy things- the altar, the Gospel, the gifts of bread and wine and us, God's precious, holy and redeemed children.

Please be sensitive to the needs of those around you who may wish to prepare for the service in prayer and silence by avoiding unnecessary conversation and noise before the service begins. You may find it helpful to prepare for worship by quietly saying this prayer:

*God of glory and of light, bless us this day,
especially those who are being confirmed.
Inspire our worship, direct our thoughts,
guide our prayers, and strengthen us to follow you always,
through your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The Rector of St Paul's welcomes everyone and introduces the service.

Opening Hymn: Come down, O love divine (137)

Come down, O love divine,
Seek Thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
'Til earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far out-pass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
'Til he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Words: Italian, Bianco da Siena (d. 1434), trans. R F Littledale (1833-1890)

THE GATHERING

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

There is one body and one Spirit.

There is one hope to which we were called;

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **one God and Father of all.**

Peace be with you. **And also with you.**

The Bishop introduces the liturgy.

THE COLLECT

*The Bishop introduces a time of silent prayer,
saying 'Let us pray'.*

Heavenly Father,

by the power of your Holy Spirit

you give to your faithful people

new life in the water of baptism.

Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,

that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love,

and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The New Testament Reading: Acts 2.1-4, 12-16

(read by a member of the congregation from All Saints, Wokingham)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God (342)

Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Breath on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
Until this earthly part of me glows with the fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God, so shall I never die
But live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

Music: H S Oakley (1830-1903)

Words: Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Please stand for the Gospel, facing the Gospel procession.

The Gospel: Luke 11.1-10

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' ²He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

⁵And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend,
and you go to him at midnight and say to him,

"Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine
has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him."

⁷And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything."

⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.

¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, And for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON, by the Bishop of Reading

THE LITURGY OF INITIATION

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The candidates for confirmation are presented by their Godparents or a sponsor with the words:

Bishop, I present N.

The Bishop asks the candidates:

Have you been baptised in the name of the Father,
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?

I have.

Are you ready with your own mouth
and from your own heart
to affirm your faith in Jesus Christ?

I am.

The Bishop then addresses the congregation:

Faith is the gift of God to his people.

In baptism the Lord is adding to our number
those whom he is calling.

People of God, will you welcome these candidates
and uphold them in their life in Christ?

With the help of God, we will.

THE DECISION

The Bishop addresses the candidates:

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

May God, who has given you the desire to follow Christ,
give you the strength to continue in the Way. **Amen.**

*The Bishop and the candidates move to the Font.
The congregation turn to face the back of Church.*

During the procession we sing the first two verses of

He who would valiant be

(tune Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), words John Bunyan (1628-1688))

He who would valiant be 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master.
There's no discouragement shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round with dismal stories
Do but themselves confound - his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might; though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right to be a pilgrim.

THE PRAYER OVER THE WATER

Praise God who made heaven and earth,
who keeps his promise for ever.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

We praise you, loving Father,
for the gift of your Son Jesus.
He was baptized in the River Jordan,
where your Spirit came upon him
and revealed him as the Son you love.
He sent his followers
to baptize all who turn to him.
Now, Father, we ask you to bless this water,
that those who are baptized in it
may be cleansed in the water of life,
and, filled with your Spirit,
may know that they are loved as your children,
safe in Christ for ever. **Amen.**

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Bishop addresses the whole congregation:

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together with these candidates the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

*The candidates are invited to sign themselves with the cross
with holy water from the font as a reminder of their own baptism.*

**Almighty God, we thank you
for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all those who have been baptised into your name.
Keep us faithful to our baptism
and so make us ready for that day
when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*The Procession returns from the font,
during which the Bishop sprinkles the congregation with water
and we sing the final verse of **He who would valiant be***

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end, shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away! I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day to be a pilgrim.

THE CONFIRMATION

*The Bishop confirms the candidates on behalf of the whole church.
The congregation participate by praying for the candidates,
during the service and beyond.*

Our help is in the name of the Lord
who has made heaven and earth.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, **now and for ever. Amen.**

Almighty and ever-living God,
you have given these your servants
new birth in baptism by water and the Spirit,
and have forgiven them all their sins.
Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them:
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding;
the Spirit of counsel and inward strength;
the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness;
and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord. **Amen.**

Choir Anthem:

**Come down O love divine,
by William Harris (1883-1973)**

The Bishop calls each candidate forward in turn saying:
N, God has called you by name and made you his own.

The candidate kneels. The Bishop lays her hand upon each saying:
Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Bishop then anoints each candidate with Holy Oil and says:
Receive the seal of the Spirit.

When all the candidates have been confirmed we pray together:
**Defend, O Lord, these your servants
with your heavenly grace,
that they may continue yours for ever,
and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more
until they come to your everlasting Kingdom. Amen.**

THE PEACE

The congregation is invited to stand.

Will you welcome those newly confirmed into the family of God
as an essential part of the Church family? **We will.**

Will you seek to love, encourage,
strengthen and guide them, holding them in prayer? **We will.**

Will you promise to be open to learning more of God
from them and with them? **We will.**

The Bishop introduces the Peace:

God has made us one in Christ.

He has set his seal upon us

and, as a pledge of what is to come,

has given us the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The bread and wine are brought to the altar and a collection is taken for the Bishop of Oxford's Charity while we sing the hymn:

O Jesus I have promised (420)

O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me, my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle if Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if Thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me hear Thee speaking in accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self will.
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, Thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised to all who follow Thee
That where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend.

O let me see thy footmarks, and in them plant mine own;
My hope to follow duly is in Thy strength alone.
O guide me, call me, draw me, uphold me to the end;
And then in Heaven receive me, my Saviour and my Friend.

Tune: William H Ferguson (1874-1950)

Words: John Bode (1816-1874)

Blessed be God,
By whose grace creation is renewed,
by whose love heaven is opened,
by whose mercy
we offer our sacrifice of praise.
Blessed be God for ever.



Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable
to God the Almighty Father.
**May the Lord accept the sacrifice
at your hands, for the praise
and glory of his Name, for our good
and the good of all his Church.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER (Prayer B)

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

The Bishop praises God for his mighty acts, and then we sing
**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

The Bishop recalls the Last Supper, and we declare
...Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:
**Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

The Eucharistic Prayer continues, before concluding:
...by whom and with whom and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As we rejoice in God's new creation, we pray in faith and trust:

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Jesus says, I am the bread of life,

whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

Lord, our hearts hunger for you; give us this bread always.

AGNUS DEI (Lamb of God)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

THE INVITATION

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which He gave for you, and His blood which He shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that Christ died and lives for you and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Please come forward for Communion as directed by the Sidespeople.

If you normally receive communion in your home church, or would like to do so today, then you are welcome to do so.

At St Paul's we have not yet reintroduced the chalice- we receive only the bread which, in Anglican theology, is full communion.

Gluten free wafers are available on request.

If you would prefer to receive a blessing, please come forward with everyone else, and simply bow your head. During the distribution we sing:

Be still, for the presence of the Lord
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here;
come bow before him now with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
he burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.
How awesome is the sight - our radiant King of light.
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place:
he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace-
no work too hard for him, in faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

Writer: David J Evans (b. 1957)

and then the Combined Choir sings:
Ave Verum by Philip Stopford (b.1977)

Translation of the Latin words;

Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,
having truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind,
from whose pierced side water and blood flowed:
Be for us a foretaste [of the Heavenly banquet] in the trial of death!
O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus, O Jesus, son of Mary, have mercy on me. Amen.

PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

God of mercy, by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

THE SENDING OUT

*During the final hymn, **The Lord's my Shepherd** by Stuart Townend
(b.1963), each person who has been confirmed
is given a lit candle. The Bishop leads them in procession
towards the Church door and back towards the world.
We turn to face west for the conclusion of the service.*

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights. *Chorus*

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know. *Chorus*

*The Bishop addresses the newly confirmed, reminding them of their baptism:
God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and has given us a place with the saints in light.
You have received the light of Christ.
Walk in this light all the days of your life.
Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.*

THE COMMISSION [Addressed to all of God's people]

All those who are baptised are called to worship and serve God.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting evil,
and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim by word and example
the good news of God in Christ?
With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,
loving your neighbour as yourself?
With the help of God, I will.

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society,
by prayer for the world and its leaders,
by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?
With the help of God, I will.

Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of creation,
and sustain and renew the life of the earth?
With the help of God I will.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,
that you may be rooted and grounded in love
and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. **Amen.**



*[The shell is an ancient symbol of pilgrimage.
It reminds us that each of us is a pilgrim, and that we are
members of a pilgrim Church, striving to be like Christ.]*

THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The Father, whose glory fills the heavens,
cleanse you by his holiness

and send you to proclaim his word. **Amen.**

The Son, who has ascended to the heights,
pour upon you the riches of his grace. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, equip you
and strengthen you in your life and ministry. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you,
this holy and joyful day, and always. **Amen.**

Go in the light and peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

*Please join the Bishop and the newly-confirmed in the Parish Rooms
for tea and cake after the service: and please continue to pray for those
who have committed themselves afresh to Christ this day.*

GETTING TO KNOW SOME OF THE CANDIDATES

All Saints' Church, Wokingham

Sebastian Boatın

Terence (Terry) Hand

My confirmation will make me feel closer to Jesus and the Holy Spirit and also will make me a stronger person. This will further my faith with the Lord, my family and Church. Both my wife and children are confirmed, so I would also like to be confirmed. During my regular attendance at church by me being confirmed it will also make me feel closer to God and to feel his presence.

Brenda Padgett

I wish to be confirmed to thank God for my family and the blessing of the arrival of my new twin grandchildren. I want to affirm my faith as a Christian and show I am part of the Church by taking part in communion in accepting bread and wine.

St James', Finchampstead

Fletcher Peffers-Moore

I would like to be confirmed because this will bring me closer to the church family and help me make more like minded friends. I feel this will draw me nearer to God and enable me to have a better lifestyle, like one of a Christian. Being a Christian is a way of showing our love for God. Going to church helps me use my time more wisely and makes me think about the aspects of life.

Bethany Kpaka-Gbongitta

I would like to be confirmed, because it will strengthen my personal relationship with Christ, and I will be able to follow the path he chose for me. I will also become closer to God, and I will confirm my faith and prove that I want to be a Christian and I am proud to be one. When I accept my confirmation, I will be even more committed to practicing my beliefs, by praying and going to church, and I will receive the holy spirit. Being confirmed will make my understanding of Christianity grow, and it will ultimately make me a better person.

Faye Fowler

I would like to be confirmed because I have a strong faith in Christianity. When I was baptised it was my Mum and Dad's decision, now it's time for me to show I want to be a part of God's family. I would like to take the bread and wine to share the body and blood of Christ.

Angelica Zabbia

Dear Lord, I want to be confirmed as I believe I am at the perfect time in my life to grow a better connection and understanding of you and the holy spirit. I attend many church services and pray to you almost everyday and I have been brought up in a Christian home.

Claudio Zabbia

Dear Lord Jesus, I would like to be confirmed as I believe that this is the next step in my Christian journey. In doing this I believe that this will bring me closer to God and I will be able to make a better connection with him, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Dante Zabbia

Dear Lord Jesus I want to be confirmed because I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be free by feeling the happiest I've ever been. Please on my confirmation see me be enlightened by becoming a true Christian- so dear Lord Jesus, please help me become a better Christian.

Pamela Zabbia

I want to be confirmed today so that I can have a deeper relationship with God. It is important to me that I continue to be active in the church and do my very best in God's eyes. I have already become a leader in the church and have committed myself to the positive work in the community. I want God to be proud of me in everything I do.

St Paul's Church, Wokingham

Freya Gibbs

I want to be confirmed not only because many of my family members have, but that when I have gone to church in the past few years I have felt closer to God and I want to be part of the Christian community properly. What it means to me is being part of God's family, and being more mindful of the world. I think religions make people more mindful. What it also means to me is being a part of something big and kind.

Hugo Hargreaves

Hello, my name is Hugo and here is a short paragraph on why I would like to be confirmed. I would love to be confirmed because it means I will become closer to God and Jesus. Secondly being Christian to me means to be loving and caring towards everybody around me. Being confirmed will also make me a bigger part of the church community as that is one of the reasons I love going to church.

Rufus Hargreaves

Hello, my name is Rufus and I would really like to become confirmed and this paragraph tells you why. Firstly, I think this would strengthen my connection with Christianity. I also think it will be good for me because I love the holy Trinity with all my heart, so getting confirmed would make me feel like a better Christian. If I get confirmed I think God would feel like I am following in his footprints more closely. I also love the community so getting committed to being a Christian would help me have a stronger knowing of what the people around me believe. Loving God is the best thing for me to do. So, getting confirmed will be good.

Ella Morgan

I want to get confirmed because as a child I took my mother's, grandparents' and mamgu's beliefs to follow God. I have decided I'm ready to make my promise to God to follow him and the 10 commandments, and to love Jesus.

Jacob Melhuish

Being a confirmed Christian will help me to do what is right and to think of others and not just of myself. It will help me to do what God wants me to do and to remember that God has a plan for everyone. It will help me to remember to treat others the way that I would like to be treated.

Being a confirmed Christian will help to lead me away from wrongdoing and evil and will give me hope of going to Heaven and having eternal life.

Stella Pantea

St Sebastian's Church, Wokingham Without

Fitzroy Morrissey

I live in Wokingham with my wife, Dyedra, and work as a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford. I attend St. Sebastian's Church, where I help at the Base (the youth service) and sometimes lead the worship music. While I have been a Christian since childhood, I have experienced a real deepening of my faith in recent years, and am very grateful for the opportunity to confirm that faith today.

GOD
has called you by name
& made you HIS
OWN

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