

# More and More: Confirmation Sunday

by Joy J. Kiser



*Defend, O Lord, your servant [name] with your heavenly grace, that he [or she] may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until he [or she] comes to your everlasting kingdom.*

The Rt. Rev. Mark J. Lawrence, Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, presided over a holy and spirit-filled Confirmation at a brimful St. Philip's this past Sunday. For 60 confirmands, the bishop made the sign of the cross on their foreheads with the chrism, and then, laying his hands firmly upon their heads, he said with strength and conviction the beautiful, ancient words of the confirmation prayer. Bishop Lawrence had already taught and emphasized to the confirmands the depth and meaning of this blessing by explaining the words at the forum that preceded Confirmation. There, Bishop Lawrence made very sure that the confirmands understood that increasing in the Holy Spirit is an action, not just an easy gift that comes because of Confirmation. They must pay attention to their lives as Christians and live lives that will be filled with the Holy Spirit, more and more.

He used memorable metaphorical stories that explained the Great Commission of Christ to the Apostles to go out to teach and to heal. Confirmands were told that they—or other people, or objects—are not to be the center of their being. Christ is their center. The bishop commissioned the confirmands to remember that and to go out into the world to show it. He told them it is an ongoing process and might be slow in the beginning. He recounted the promise he made to God as a young boy: if God would please just find his turtle, he would do anything for Him. He said it wasn't until he was in his early 20s that God made it clear that the time had come for him to keep his promise and do anything and everything for the glory of God.

During the service, each of the 60 being confirmed, the three being received, and the four reaffirming their faith received equal concentration and care from Bishop Lawrence. Add all these together, and you can feel the length of the service. The bishop received hearty laughter and appreciation when he announced, 3/4 of the way through Confirmation, that it was time for a seventh-inning stretch. All agreed and stood and stretched, and then,

refreshed, all were back to the sacredness and glory of the Confirmation.

Bishop Lawrence did add an important phrase of his own to the words of confirmation. Each time, as slowly and emphatically as he'd said "more and more," he added the words "at last": "... daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until *at last* he comes to your everlasting kingdom." He seemed to be reminding us that Christian formation and witnessing take time, and the reward is, at last, the everlasting kingdom of God.

*Joy Kiser is the Altar Guild Director of the Parish of the Good Shepherd in Waban, MA, where she also serves as a lector and at the altar as subdeacon and master of ceremonies. Her grandson was confirmed on Sunday.*

## In Search of Unique Items for the Tea Room Gift Shop!

The Tea Room Committee is hoping to make this year's gift shop the best one yet! Please drop your items off at the church office. Items like homemade jams or jellies, knitted or crocheted scarves and hats, and local cookbooks are always big sellers. Think you don't have anything to contribute? Take a look at the list below and think again!

- cookie mix in a Mason jar (look it up on Google!)
- framed photos of St. Philip's
- prints of paintings of St. Philip's
- gift cards to local restaurants
- gift certificates to your own business

Questions? E-mail [landrews@stphilipschurchsc.org](mailto:landrews@stphilipschurchsc.org).