

## Preparing for Reconciliation

*Drop-in: with Rev Sonya in the Reconciliation Room (Library)*

*Maundy Thursday, 3:00-5:30pm or shortly after the service*

*Good Friday, after the Noon service until 3:00pm*

*By Appointment: call the office to schedule an appointment with Father Sean or Rev Sonya*

If you are feeling nudged or nagged toward the sacrament of Reconciliation and need help preparing, then this is for you!

Most people feel anxious about this sacrament. That's okay. That's totally normal. Just don't let your anxiety stop you from experiencing the grace of this sacrament.

What you share in confession is completely confidential. The priest who hears your confession will not share it with anyone else, under any circumstance, nor will the priest bring it up with you outside of the confessional. If you are concerned about the priest having a negative opinion of you based on what you confess, please keep in mind that every priest is a sinner too. We all have our "stuff." Our God is a God of love and mercy. The sacrament of Reconciliation is one of God's gifts of love and mercy through the Church. It is healing, not shaming. It is safe. It is liberating.

What you share in confession is completely up to you. Santa Claus will not show up at any time to identify things from the naughty list you've neglected to say! You'll probably want to take some time in advance of the sacrament to think about what you want to confess. You don't need to come up with a list of every sinful thing you've ever done. Just identify the few things that are most distressing to you. Ongoing habits are probably more significant than isolated mistakes.

Here are some ideas to help you prepare. You don't need to do all of these. Just try on the ones that sound most helpful to you at this time. Try not to bring a "whip" with you into this time of preparation. This is about self-awareness and reconciliation, not self-loathing and punishment. If self-loathing and shame arise, gently acknowledge them and make a commitment to bring them to the sacrament for healing.

1) Begin with a prayer of gratitude that God's reconciling love has already touched you. God is already with you in this.

2) Read "The Reconciliation of a Penitent beginning on page 446 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. There are copies of the prayer book at the church and you can also find it online at [www.bcponline.org](http://www.bcponline.org). This will give you a rough idea of what to expect when you meet with a priest.

3) Pay attention to where your soul is troubled.

Are memories stirred up of particular incidents or a chain of events?

Is there some recurring, damaging pattern of behavior?

Are you experiencing shame or self-loathing? Do you know why?

4) Review the Baptismal Covenant (*The Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 304-305).

Are you participating in personal prayer, communal worship, and holy companionship?

Are you reflecting on and trying to follow the teachings of Christ?

Is the “Good News” evident in the way you live and how you speak?

Are you honoring the image of God present in all people?

Do your words and actions create more peace?

Do your words and actions promote justice?

5) Reflect on the 10 Commandments in the Book of Exodus, chapter 20, verses 1-17.

“Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

**There is only one more thing to do...show up to receive God’s grace in this sacrament!**