



Holy Week Confession at Emmanuel

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9

What is the sacramental rite of Reconciliation?

It is private confession made one-on-one with a priest, who acts on behalf of Christ's holy church. According to the Catechism (page 861 in the Book of Common Prayer), it is "the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution."

Is it mandatory?

Nope. We have a saying around this rite that "All may, none must, some should." Unlike some other faith traditions, we do not require private confession. Many people, however, choose to make it a regular spiritual practice. In addition, those who find their consciences troubled by particular burdens, are preparing for Confirmation/Reception, or are either new to the faith or returning after some time away may find it spiritually helpful to receive personal counsel and assurance from a priest that their sins have been forgiven.

Will I be given penance to do?

Not really. At least not like you may envision. During the rite, the priest "may offer counsel, direction, and comfort." This often includes assigning some act of devotion – usually a prayer or Scripture reading – to be undertaken as "a sign of penitence and act of thanksgiving", but this is generally done with gratitude and is not intended to be burdensome.

How confidential is this, really?

Completely. Our tradition holds that the secrecy of the confessional is "morally absolute". Nothing discussed during your confession will ever be disclosed to another person, or even brought up again with you in conversation (unless you choose to bring it up). It is also legally privileged and clergy cannot be compelled to reveal the contents of a confession. If it helps,

clergy practice the art of “holy forgetting” – there is no little black book of people’s secrets and you don’t have to worry about the priest treating you differently in the future. We are all human.

What does the liturgy look like?

There are two forms. The first begins on page 447 in the Book of Common Prayer and is quite short and simple. The second begins on page 449 and is influenced by the Eastern Orthodox tradition. This one is slightly longer and sets Reconciliation in the context of Baptism. We have found that Form One works well for those who make somewhat regular confessions and that Form Two works well for a first confession. In either form, after naming your particular sins, the priest will lay hands upon you and pronounce God’s forgiveness.

Should I prepare for my first confession?

Yes. This is pretty important. Although you may choose to confess at any time, we have found that a period of self-examination beforehand can prove very helpful. Feel free to take notes during this time and bring them with you for use during your confession. If you would like specific questions to ponder or exercises to guide this time of preparation, feel free to ask.

Is this appropriate for children as well?

It depends. For teenagers, it may be. If they are at a stage in life where they understand what they have done wrong and feel sorry for it, then confession may be helpful.

When and where are confessions being offered?

Appointments can be made at any time of the year, but we are suggesting Holy Week as particularly appropriate. Both daytime and evening appointments will be available that week. There will be options for appointments shortly before and after each worship service during that week to avoid the need to make a separate trip. Confessions can be made in the church, in the chapel, or in a clergy office, as you prefer.

How do I book an appointment?

Contact one of our priests directly:

Rev. Ellen – email rector@eeclg.org, or text/call (630) 258-8882

Rev. Dave – email assistant@eeclg.org or text/call (810) 357-1019