

## Prepare to Promise ~ Preparation for Baptism, Confirmation & Marriage

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage (and Ordination) have this in common: each one involves *a promise*. The promises we make in these sacraments mirror and embody God's solemn promises to us. As we know, we receive grace in sacraments. But we also *give ourselves* in these sacraments. Through our participation in them, we give ourselves to God, through Christ, in the Spirit-led Kingdom.

We live in a world filled with casual promises. That we can distinguish between casual and solemn promises tells us something important. Solemn promises are special, and we save them for special relationships and special circumstances. Baptism and Confirmation, as well as Marriage and Ordination, all involve solemn promises. These sacraments involve our relationship with God, and our relationships with one another in God's Kingdom. These are relationships about which we never want to be casual.

Casual promises are often made without much reflection. But when it comes to sacraments, we prepare to make solemn promises. These are promises about which we are especially mindful, for we discover that sacramental promises involve accountability to God, and to one another in community.

At Grace we expect that all persons who are preparing to receive a sacrament, or to sponsor another person for a sacrament, will participate regularly in Sunday Eucharistic worship and in weekly Discipleship Formation offerings. We plan and provide Discipleship Formation offerings that are especially suited to helping people 'prepare to promise.'

If you have any questions about preparing to receive these sacraments - about what it means 'to prepare to promise' - please speak with me. I would be happy to talk with you about this important process.

Stephen Holmgren, Rector