



## **Bishop's Customary for Pastoral Visitations The Episcopal Diocese of Ohio**

Regular pastoral visitation is both a responsibility and a great joy of the bishop. It's an opportunity to join the normal rhythms of Sunday with the special occasion of the visit. We come together to build relationships, join in the sacrament, and talk together about the congregation and its mission and vision for being a faithful, healthy, effective, and sustainable bearer of the love of Jesus in the community where they are.

Mindful that we have gone from the benefit of three bishops to one, we want to offer a few words on the impact of that change. Except for occasional exceptions, visitations will now happen on an approximately three-year cycle. The bishop's Executive Assistant, Deidre Thompson, will initiate scheduling of all visitations. We understand that some congregations will have communicants in need of the rites of initiation (confirmation and reception) more frequently than every three years, and some congregations may not have candidates for these rites when the visitation takes place. There will be regular opportunities for rites of initiation in every year throughout the diocese. If there are no rites of initiation on a visit, please do not stress, because coming together and celebrating the sacrament of Eucharist is a joy unto itself.

### **Schedule and Logistics for the Visitation**

- Please reserve a parking space for the bishop and prepare to meet her on arrival. She may need help carrying in her bags with vestments and crozier.
- Please have the service register and registers of sacramental rites ready for the bishop's review when she arrives. If you have Prayer Books and/or certificates to sign, please also have these available on arrival.
- If you have candidates for Reception, you need to receive proof of confirmation (usually a copy of the certificate) to present to the bishop prior to confirmation.
- Please return the Visitation Report form to the Bishop's Office the week after the visitation. The information goes to the Archives for diocesan recordkeeping.
- The day's schedule is outlined in the visitation form. Please note that the bishop will meet with the candidates for baptism/confirmation/reception/reaffirmation of vows before the service and the vestry following the service.
- During the week prior to the visitation, the bishop will have a zoom or phone call with the clergy or lay person in charge to discuss the visitation and life of the parish.
- The Visitation form and a copy of the Sunday bulletin is due to the Bishop's Office NO LATER than two weeks prior to the visitation.
- Please have any families who will be present sign the photo release form – the bishop will be using photos taken on the visitation day on social media accounts.
- The loose offerings taken to go to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund should be mailed to the Bishop's Office, not given to the Bishop on the day of the service.

## Liturgical Details

- The liturgical color will be the color of the season unless there is a baptism, in which case the color will be white. During Epiphany and Pentecost, the color may be red at the bishop's discretion.
- The Propers of the Day (from the Revised Common Lectionary) are used for Sunday visits (unless a Major or Patronal Feast is appropriate), except under extraordinary circumstances and with the consent of the bishop.
- The bishop's visitation always includes the Holy Eucharist with the bishop as celebrant and preacher (unless discussed and approved in advance).
- The bulletin cover should note that it is the Episcopal visitation (this is helpful for historical purposes and serves as explanation for any visitors).
- If it is your custom and preference to have the mass sung, please notify the bishop at least 3 weeks in advance.
- You may select whichever Eucharistic Prayer you feel best suits your congregation in the setting, as long as it is one of those approved for use in The Episcopal Church.
- The bishop would like a senior acolyte or lay minister to assist her during the service.
- Please place a glass of water under or on a table beside the bishop's chair.
- The bishop will bring her own crozier stand.
- Clergy from the parish should read the Gospel, prepare the table, and do the ablutions, stand at the altar with the bishop during the Eucharistic Prayers, assist in distributing Communion, make the announcements, and give the dismissal.
- Please include in the bulletin and the announcements the reminder that the undesignated offering goes to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund, for support of clergy, congregations, and non-budgeted ministries.
- Please have any language (printed or announced) around reception of communion to invite everyone to come forward – and give instruction on how to receive a blessing for those not baptized or who do not want to receive communion.
- The bishop will use the Episcopal blessing at the end of the service, and it should be printed in the bulletin as it includes congregational responses:
  - Bishop: Our help is in the Name of the Lord.  
People: The maker of heaven and earth.  
Bishop: Blessed be the name of the Lord;  
People: From this time forth for evermore.  
Bishop: The blessing, mercy, and grace of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.
- When there are no baptisms, confirmations, or receptions, the liturgy on the day of the bishop's visitation should include the renewal of baptismal vows. The renewal of vows (BCP p. 292) will replace the Nicene Creed in this case.
- The bishop's chair should be set in front of the altar facing the congregation.

- If there is a prie dieu available, it is helpful to use for confirmations, receptions, and reaffirmation of vows to make for ease of kneeling.
- If you have a printed bulletin with the liturgy, the bishop's copy needs to be no smaller than 12pt font. 14pt font is preferred where possible.
- If there are to be photos after the service (with those being baptized, confirmed, received, etc....and/or a Parish Photo), please have the person taking the pictures ready promptly following the service.
- The bishop enjoys taking selfies and group photos to post on social media so the diocese can get to know each other through photos and stories. Please make sure that congregation members are comfortable with this and that photo releases have been signed for children as necessary.
- If you take pictures during the day, please share them with the bishop before the end of the day so they can be included in her Social Media posts. If you post, please tag her in them: The Rt Rev Anne B Jolly.

#### **Baptisms:**

- Baptism is full membership in the body of Christ. Full preparation of sponsors (and parents of children to be baptized), as well as of the mature candidate, is essential and should be done by the clergy of the congregation prior to the baptism.
- The bishop, when present, is the celebrant; and is expected to preach the Word and preside at Baptism and the Eucharist. The priest of the parish or community may do the actual Baptism, if requested for pastoral reasons; otherwise, the bishop performs the actual Baptism.
- The bishop officiates at the Presentation and Examination of Candidates; says the Thanksgiving over the Water (even if the priest of the parish performs the Baptism), consecrates the Chrism, where applicable, reads the prayer, and officiates at what follows. The bishop also chrismates (even if the priest performs the Baptism).
- Where the baptized person is an adult (or young person who can reasonably make a mature affirmation of faith), the bishop will confirm them immediately after Baptism.
- The Paschal Candle is lit and in proximity to the font.
- Please make the chrism available in a small container from which chrism can be poured. An oil stock is for pastoral use, not for liturgical use.
- Have a branch or a small group of branches tied together to use for asperging the congregation after the Baptism. This can be done accompanied by an appropriate piece of music, during the procession from the font, or during the Peace.
- The Prayers of the People and the Confession are omitted if there is Baptism or Confirmation.

#### **Confirmations/Receptions/Reaffirmations:**

- Full preparation of candidates for confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation is expected. Confirmation is appropriate for those who were baptized at an early age and never made a mature affirmation of faith. Reception is appropriate for people who have been confirmed by a bishop in another denomination in

communion with the Episcopal Church (listed below) and now wish to be a part of the Episcopal Church. Reaffirmation is for those who have been confirmed or received at an earlier time in their lives and now desire to recommit to that faith anew.

- another province of the Anglican Communion
- the Orthodox Church
- the Roman Catholic Church
- the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- the Old Catholic Church
- the Philippine Independent Church
- the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar
- the Moravian Church in America
- The bishop lays hands on all people being confirmed, received, or reaffirming their baptismal vows.
- Chrism needs to be available for anointing those being confirmed.
- Each person being confirmed, received, or reaffirming vows should have a nametag with their name legibly printed. Clergy (or a representative) from the congregation will stand beside them and say their name and the rite being conferred as each person comes forward.
- It is appropriate, and an important symbol of our unity in the Body of Christ for those being confirmed or received to have sponsors. The sponsors may accompany them forward if desired by those on whom the rites are being conferred.