



## **BISHOP'S VISITATION CUSTOMARY**

**(Please read carefully)**

**The visitation of their bishop is an important time in the life of the congregation, and can be a more worthwhile experience if there is some careful preparation. This is meant to be a guide to help the clergy and the congregation prepare for the visit, but also to help me prepare for my time there with you.**

**The importance of prayer.** I am hoping that my visitations will be times of renewal and refreshing in the Holy Spirit for the congregation, the clergy, and me. This will not occur without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which usually occurs when people have been praying (and fasting) for God to have his way in the services and meetings of that day. Please prepare for my visit by asking the congregation to pray for God's anointing on the services, on me, on the ministry of the Word, on the administration of the Sacraments, and that all who are present encounter the Living God.

**A leadership meeting the day before or after the last service.** When possible, my strong preference is that I meet with some segment of a parish's leadership to have a discussion of how the parish is faring. It could consist of vestry and rector; or wardens, clergy and key staff; or some other configuration. My only request is that the rector (or vicar) and some vestry leadership would be there. I will essentially ask some diagnostic questions, which you can share with others in advance if you wish:

- 1) "What is the primary focus/ vision/ mission of your parish?"
- 2) How well do you think that is being fulfilled?" These are based on Peter Drucker's assessment questions: "What business are you in? How's business?"
- 3) Have you begun a process of succession planning for your Rector (or Vicar)? If yes, do you have a plan in place? This is an appropriate conversation no matter how long the Rector has been there.
- 4) Have you completed your Parish Assessment? If so, what have you learned from it? If not, where are you in the process and when do you expect to have it completed?

**When I arrive for worship.** My being met by a priest, deacon, designated Chaplain, or acolyte at the car and assisting with the carrying of my Bishop's Vestments and the crozier will be very helpful, if possible.

**Food.** Different parishes will have different customs, but having some kind of meal (or healthy snack or bottle of water if there in no meal planned) soon after the Liturgy will be a help.

**Parish Register.** As part of my canonical duties, I may like to inspect and sign the Parish Register (in whatever form it is in) while I am there.

**Signatures.** If you have items for me as bishop to sign (certificates, Bibles, prayer books, etc.), please have them ready to be signed before the service and laid out in the room near where the bishop will be vesting. NOTE: most congregations prefer to print their own confirmation certificates using the diocese template, but the Diocese can print the certificates with the person's name for Confirmation and Reception. However, the Diocesan staff will need the full names (First, Middle, & Last) at least two weeks in advance of the Sunday of the visitation.

**Service Bulletin.** It is important that you email your Service Bulletin to both my administrator and me by Thursday noon so I can prepare appropriately for your service. If you are having Confirmations and Receptions, the liturgy I prefer to use for that part of the service can be found here: [http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts\\_for\\_common\\_prayer](http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer) .

I've decided that I will use the ACNA lectionary (also found at the web address above) for the years to come. I will no longer be using RCL or the BCP 1979 lectionary. For 2019, we are now in Year C.

**Offering.** It is appropriate to take up an offering for my bishop's discretionary fund when I visit, which is used to help priests, people, parishes, and with other various needs. However, I do not want to cut into your regular offering so I need you to tell us the way you would like to handle it. You can tell the congregation that the loose offering will be used in this way; or you can just designate an amount of which the Treasurer would write a check payable to the diocese (not to me) and memo: Honorarium or Bishop's Visit. Also, when you are visited by an assisting bishop on my behalf, he will need an honorarium (amount to be determined). Again, you can determine the best way to do this (in some cases, this will need to be paid out of the bishop's discretionary fund because of the budget of the church).

**Administering Communion.** Since we have a variety of practices within our diocese and within the Anglican Communion, I would value having the rector or designated person to direct me when it comes time to serve the sacrament to the congregation.

**Clearing the Table.** At the end of Communion (before of the Post-communion Prayer), someone (usually a deacon or assisting priest) should clear or reset the Table. I do not consume the remaining wine, and would prefer that the vessels be emptied and cleaned after the service, although I know that in some places this is done after the congregation has received and at the clearing of the Table.

**Pictures.** In today's climate, people want to take pictures. I am fine with this, but prefer that a group photo be arranged for ahead of time rather than have a last minute scramble.

Please let us know if we can help in any way as you prepare.

Thank you for your ministry.

*Neil*

+Neil G. Lebhar

**Complete the following Form.** Please complete the following form and return to the bishop's office via email along with a copy of the Service Bulletin by Thursday NOON before the Bishop's visit.

DATE OF VISITATION \_\_\_\_\_ SERVICE TIME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF RECTOR/ VICAR \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF OTHER CLERGY \_\_\_\_\_

RECTOR/VICAR'S CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS OF WHERE THE CHURCH MEETS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WHERE SHOULD THE BISHOP PARK? \_\_\_\_\_

WHO WILL MEET THE BISHOP TO ASSIST HIM? \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE WILL THE BISHOP VEST? \_\_\_\_\_

IS THERE A SPECIAL CELEBRATION OCCURING WITH THIS VISITATION? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

IF YES, PLEASE DESCRIBE \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THERE BE A MEETING WITH THE LEADERSHIP DURING THIS VISITATION?

WHEN \_\_\_\_\_ WHERE \_\_\_\_\_ WITH WHOM \_\_\_\_\_

WHICH EUCHARISTIC LITURGY WILL BE USED? \_\_\_\_\_

WHICH LESSONS ARE BEING USED? \_\_\_\_\_

WHICH BIBLE TRANSLATION DO YOU USE? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Please email the lessons and the translation to the Bishop and Administrator at least two weeks prior to the visit.*

THE COLOR WILL BE \_\_\_\_\_

DO WISH THE BISHOP TO WEAR A COPE AND MITRE? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NO PREF \_\_\_

THE SERMON IS PREACHED FROM \_\_\_ PULPIT \_\_\_ EX CATHEDRA \_\_\_ CENTER OF AISLE

CHAPLAIN TO ASSIST BISHOP WITH CROZIER, BOOKS, ETC. \_\_\_\_\_

THERE WILL BE:  BAPTISM  CONFIRMATION  RECEPTION  REAFFIRM

INCENSE WILL BE USED  YES  NO  GOSPEL  OFFERTORY  OTHER

IS THERE A PARTICULAR ISSUE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THE BISHOP TO ADDRESS DURING THE SERMON OR AT THE ANNOUNCEMENTS? IF YES, EXPLAIN. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

WILL THE BISHOP BE SPEAKING TO A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASS?  YES  NO

IF YES, WHAT TIME? \_\_\_\_\_

IS THERE A PARTICULAR SUBJECT YOU WOULD LIKE THE BISHOP TO ADDRESS?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WILL THERE BE A RECEPTION AFTER THE SERVICE?  NO  YES

IF YES, IS THIS A FULL MEAL RECEPTION?  NO  YES

WILL THE BISHOP BE JOINING ANYONE FOR LUNCH AFTER THE SERVICE?  
 NO  YES.

IF YES, WHO? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_