



CUSTOMARY FOR EPISCOPAL VISITATION IN THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

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I

LITURGY AND EPISCOPAL VISITATION

Holy Eucharist

When the Holy Eucharist is to be celebrated without baptism, the renewal of baptismal vows should be substituted for the Nicene Creed. Please use the form for the renewal of baptismal vows found in the Easter Vigil pages 292-294 of the Book of Common Prayer. Otherwise the Holy Eucharist should follow the rubrics and custom of the community.

Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist

At a service of Holy Eucharist with Baptism the Bishop will function as the celebrant for the entire liturgy.

The Bishop will offer the prayer of Thanksgiving over the water and the prayers following the baptism. The Priest, however, should baptize the candidate and the Bishop will perform the chrismation following it.

Propers of the Day

It is expected that all three lessons and the appointed Psalm of the day will be used at liturgies during the Bishop's visitation.

The Bishop will assume that you are using the **Revised Common Lectionary** unless otherwise noted on the visitation information sheet. Please make sure the Bishop knows which alternate readings you choose. Please send a copy of your program two weeks ahead of the visitation.

If there is only a Holy Eucharist without other sacramental rites the bishop will generally sit in the Bishop's chair at its normal location or in the president's chair if there is no designated seat of the bishop.

Bishop's Special Needs Fund

It is important for the Rector or the Vicar to remind the congregation that the undesignated offering is for the Bishop's Special Needs Fund used for religious and charitable purposes, pastoral emergencies, and ministries that arise in the course of the year. Make checks payable to Diocese of Western Michigan – Bishop's Special Needs Fund.

Announcements

Announcements should be made by the Rector or Vicar at the time usually set apart for the same. Generally the Bishop will have brought his or her greetings as part of the sermon.

Bishop's Chaplain

The Chaplain to the Bishop should be the Deacon if one is present. If not, a senior acolyte or adult lay minister should be assigned this duty.

The Bishop will normally process (entrance and retiring) carrying the staff. The Chaplain will process immediately in front of the Bishop carrying the Bishop's books and other appointment. Upon arrival at the Bishop's place of seating the Bishop will give the staff to the chaplain who may then place it in a suitable location.

Following the sermon the Chaplain carries the staff and stands by the Bishop for the reaffirmation of baptismal vows if the service is Holy Eucharist, or for the presentation and examination of candidates and the administration of the sacraments in the case of baptism.

For baptism, the chaplain may be asked to hold the missal or prayer book of the Bishop during the Thanksgiving over the Water and during the chrismation.

After the initiatory rites (at the peace) the Chaplain may place the staff in a suitable place and lay the miter upon the altar.

Chaplain should give the miter and staff to the Bishop when the Bishop is to pronounce absolution after confession of sin or God's blessing at the conclusion of Eucharist.

After the retiring procession the chaplain should take the miter and staff to the sacristy or vesting area.

Liturgical Colors

The following liturgical colors should be used when the Bishop's visit includes:

- **Eucharist only – Color of the Season**
- **Easter season – White**
- **Baptism and Eucharist – White unless other color requested by Priest or the Bishop**

Liturgy	Rite	Color*
Eucharist only	Rite I, Rite II, or Supplemental (per custom of the parish)	Color of the Season
Baptism and Eucharist	Rite II	White

**Exceptions are to be requested of the Bishop*

Certificates

Clergy are responsible for producing or procuring certificates of baptism. The baptizing presbyter should sign as officiant and the Bishop will sign under her or his name.

The Bishop will usually sign the certificates the morning of the service – if there are more than 40 certificates to be signed, the priest should have the certificates delivered to the office of the bishop for signature prior to the service. Please arrange with the Bishop’s assistant for these signatures.

Other Liturgical Notes

When completing the form for the scheduled Episcopal visitation, the person completing the form should give special care to notation of any particular liturgical customs: use of incense, asperges, or if the Mass is to be Sung by the Bishop. Also, any particular liturgical observances that may be included in the liturgy should be included in that section as well.

If there are to be special dedications of vessels, rooms, etc., these should be noted on the form and the liturgical forms from the *Book of Occasional Services* should be printed in the bulletin. If it is not possible to print in the bulletin then a copy of the *Book of Occasional Services* should be available for use in the liturgy.

Cultural Considerations in Liturgy

We continue to grow as a more diverse people of God with differing traditions of exercising our faith liturgically; it will be important for the priest to share any cultural distinctiveness which may be helpful to the Bishop in exercising a ministry of presence at the visit.

II

NON LITURGICAL MATTERS AND EPISCOPAL VISITATION

Phone Conversation with the Bishop Prior to Visitation

One month before the scheduled visitation the priest should contact the administrative assistant of the Bishop to arrange a conversation with the Bishop.

That conversation will be for the purpose of reviewing the visitation information sheet which covers details of liturgy, schedule for the day, etc. Please identify any special circumstances which the Bishop needs to be aware of or matters you would like to address with the Bishop during his visit. Any other comments you may have that might be helpful to the Bishop in making his preparation would be welcome also.

Schedule for Visit

On the form provided please outline the schedule of activities for the Bishop’s visit (liturgical, educational or community) and the time involved. The Bishop’s visit should always include a meeting with the Vestry and Clergy. Other opportunities for the Bishop to be with the congregation can be in formal educational settings, informal conversation during coffee hour, Bible study, prayer group, or Sunday school classes.

Vestry Meetings

The visitation normally includes a meeting of Bishop, Clergy and the Vestry. The Bishop would prefer to meet with the vestry the Saturday prior to visitation. He suggests a 4:00pm meeting, (1-2 hours) followed by dinner/social time with the vestry at the church.

The agenda for the vestry meeting will generally be as follows:

- Gathering prayer
- Introductions
- General sharing and conversation between the Bishop and Vestry
- Closing prayer and dinner/social time

This is a general format but please feel free to discuss other areas in the pre-visitation phone conference.

To facilitate the vestry meeting with the Bishop the Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden of vacant cure is asked to make the following arrangements.

- Time and place of meeting during the visit
- Select someone to act as recorder for the meeting. Their job is to develop a summary of points made in the meeting. This summary should become part of the vestry minutes; a copy should be sent to the diocesan office for the church file. The summary will provide a basis for future conversation as well as a follow up on items identified, etc.
- Distribute this letter to all clergy and members of your vestry.
- Identify two or three areas of congregational life or other areas you prefer for discussion.

Review of Parish Registers

The Rector or Vicar shall present to the Bishop all parish registers for review by the visiting Bishop.

Parking

Please have a spot reserved for the Bishop near the entrance to the church complex. It is also helpful to have someone available to greet the Bishop and to assist with carrying vestments, staff and other materials related to the visit.

Timeline leading to the Bishop's Visitation

The office of the Bishop will mail visitation forms to the Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden of vacant cure.

One Month Before the Visit: Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden return visitation forms to the Bishop's office. Rector/Vicar makes a phone appointment for a pre-visit conversation with the visiting Bishop.

III - Episcopal Visitation Information Sheets

To be returned to Diocesan Office, 535 S. Burdick St, Suite 1, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

FAX: 269-381-7067 Attn: Molly Ettwein

Email: mettwein@edwm.org

One month before the scheduled date of the visit

1. Date of Visitation: _____

2. Name of Congregation: _____

Name of Rector/Vicar/Senior Warden: _____

3. Contact numbers:

Church: (include area code): _____

Rector/Vicar Home: (include area code): _____

Cell (include area code): _____

4. Directions to Church: (also give any special directions about parking or church entrance)

5. Schedule of the Day (generally between 9:00am and 3:00pm) Please list all scheduled activities including services, educational hours, vestry meeting, etc. The meeting with the Vestry should be scheduled for Saturday afternoon before Visitation.

Service or Activity

Time

Notes

-
-
-
-
-

Episcopal Visitation Information Sheet (continued)

6. Liturgy: *Please check the appropriate entry and include an approximate number of persons anticipated for the sacrament.*

Time of service: _____

_____ Holy Eucharist without baptism

_____ Baptism

_____ Other

Time of service: _____

_____ Holy Eucharist only

_____ Baptism Number to be baptized: _____

_____ Other

7. Other liturgical notes: *Include information on dedications, blessings, or other special liturgical aspects of the services.*

8. Episcopal Vestments: *The Bishop will normally vest in chasuble (or cope) and miter unless rochet and chimere are requested below. The Bishop would prefer the congregation's chasuble.*

9. Propers of the Day: *The Bishop will assume that the Revised Common Lectionary (Episcopal version) is being used unless otherwise noted below.*

Where there are alternative readings allowed please specify which readings will be used for that visit.

10. Comments or areas for discussion with the Bishop:

IV - Vestry Meeting Preparation Sheet

Possible Questions for Conversation

1. Identify 2 – 3 areas of congregational life mentioned and consider those areas using the following questions.
2. What are we doing well?
3. What could we do better?
4. Understanding that success is not a value of the Gospel---if we were not afraid/if resources were available---what would we do?