

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

Bishop's Customary for Visitations

Revised August 2019

Thank you for your work in preparing for my visitation in your congregation or institution. What follows has been conceived in response to my work and presence in the Diocese to date. It is, however, a work in progress and will be modified from time to time as we discern together the effectiveness of my visitations for our common life. Please note that any questions or comments about this Customary may be made to Frank Ballard, 803-771-7800 x 106 or fballard@edusc.org. He will answer questions as he can and refer others to me as necessary. I invite and encourage you to seek clarification about any part of this document.

Blessings in Christ,



The Rt. Rev. W. Andrew Waldo
Eighth Bishop
The Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina

INTRODUCTION

The regular pastoral visitation of all parishes and worshiping communities of the diocese is among the principal responsibilities of my ministry among you. It is also one of the great delights of the episcopal office. It is my desire for the pastoral visitation to be at once both my *usual* time with you and a *special occasion* in the life of the parish. In a liturgical-sacramental church such as ours, these are not competing interests. My visitation ought not to be *unusual*.

The central act of every visitation is the preaching of God's Word and the joint celebration of the Holy Eucharist with the clergy and people of the parish. Other aspects of the visitation are often special sacramental occasions, such as confirmations, receptions, and reaffirmations, but these must never overshadow the central purpose of our time together. The principal reason for the Bishop's Pastoral Visitation is to strengthen relationships and our sense of common identity and missional purpose across the diocesan community. The availability of persons for confirmation or reception need not play any part in the scheduling of the visitation.

This means that I'm constantly looking for opportunities to engage with parishioners at a deeper level, whether it is with confirmands, etc., or with youth and/or adults in a forum environment. In general, there are things I look for and things I hope for when I am with you on a visitation.

Some things I look for:

- That those being confirmed, received or reaffirmed will be able to articulate what this moment in their life represents in their relationship to God in Christ Jesus,
- Opportunities to support you, the clergy, in your ministry,

- Signs of health and wholeness within the congregation and signs that might indicate a need for additional support,
- That records are well tended, and
- The sacraments duly and faithfully administered.

Some things I hope for:

- Opportunities for dialogue that strengthen our mutual understanding and relationships—between bishop and congregation and with the larger Church, and
- Opportunities to support the congregation in its life and work and at the same time to call the community to even higher standards of mission and ministry.

Regarding services, I will:

- Participate in the main service, and
- Preach at any visitation.

SCHEDULING

Pastoral visitations will be scheduled in such a way as to balance the following priorities:

- Length of time since the last pastoral visitation,
- Particular pastoral needs of the parish,
- The celebration of the feast of title or other significant event in the life of the parish.

The scheduling of visitations may be initiated by the Rector or Vicar of the parish, or by the Bishop's Office.

In order to facilitate planning, the visitation schedule will be created to cover the upcoming year, and is normally available in late September. You may request upcoming dates, but, normally, we will not make final commitments more than six months in advance.

Even with great care given to my visitation schedule, there will still be some need for flexibility. There will be parish emergencies, personal illness, travel delays, and a host of other things that may require last minute rescheduling. It is my commitment that such changes will be kept to a minimum, but, from time to time, they will occur.

When it is necessary or requested to schedule another bishop to assist me, all such invitations should come from my office. Parish confirmations, receptions and affirmations are not adequate reason for scheduling another bishop, as my main purpose, as stated, is to spend time with you and your parish.

PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

You should expect email contact from my Administrative Assistant 3-4 weeks prior to your scheduled visit. This should include:

1. Confirmation of the date of visit.
2. The Pre-Visitation Questionnaire, which should be completed and submitted to Frank Ballard at fballard@edusc.org two weeks prior to your scheduled telephone conversation with me. (This conversation will be with the senior warden in the absence of a rector/priest-in-charge.)
3. Confirmation of the day and time of our scheduled telephone conversation, typically the Tuesday prior to my visit.

4. A reminder to submit a draft of your service bulletin to Frank Ballard at fballard@edusc.org for review two weeks prior to our telephone conversation.
5. A reminder that you should expect to receive a copy of the Confirmation Form. Please make sure to review the form's instructions prior to our phone conversation.

It is important to remind the congregation that the undesignated offering goes to the bishop's discretionary fund for support of emergencies and non-budgeted ministries that arise in the course of the year. (These offerings have made significant differences, especially to clergy in special need.)

THE DAY OF THE VISIT

I will make every effort to arrive no less than 30 minutes before the first service.

We are blessed with many churches that require more than one service in order to accommodate their growing congregations. I believe that, in order to welcome the visitors who may arrive according to times published on web sites and church signs, it is important to maintain all regularly-scheduled worship times. Ordinarily, I will come for the main service. If you'd like for me to come for an early service in addition, please check with my Administrative Assistant regarding my availability.

My strong preference is to combine meetings with those being confirmed, received, or reaffirmed into a general parish forum. I have found that when I meet only with confirmands, etc., I lose an important opportunity to get to know the whole community. I have found that I've been able to maintain conversation about the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those making a public act of faith within the context of a dialogue with established members to good effect. I wish to continue to structure my forum times in this way, but I am eager for your feedback after a visitation on how such a session worked in your community.

If you have a particular subject (liturgy, BCP, scripture, diocesan vision, mission, etc.) or circumstance that you feel would be helpful for me to address as a forum topic, let me know in advance so I can properly prepare.

If at all possible, it is helpful for me to meet briefly with members of the Vestry. I will also stay through the coffee hour/reception after the final liturgy. In most cases, I can stay for lunch with the clergy, the wardens and vestry, or any other combination of folks where you would find that time to be useful.

At some point in my visitation, I need to review the following:

- Sacramental books (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials),
- Parish service register, and
- Date of last audit and associated management letter.

I am very interested in maintaining a strong pastoral relationship with clergy and families. Since visitations are primarily a community-focused event, I invite and encourage you to make appointments with me on weekdays as needed or desired, or, if you're distant from Columbia, perhaps a dinner out the evening before a visitation. In such cases, Mary and I will stay at a nearby hotel.

FOLLOWING THE VISIT

There are three important tasks to complete and forward to my Administrative Assistant after my visitation:

1. Submit your answers to the Post-Visitation Questionnaire found on the EDUSC website.
2. Send in your offering for my discretionary fund.
3. Return your completed Confirmation Form.

THE LITURGY OF THE DAY

I anticipate that all visitations will be celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. 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 as found at BCP, p. 292. This should be substituted for the Nicene Creed at all services, even those that are otherwise Rite I.

Even when there are no baptisms, I will asperge the congregation as a sign of our baptismal unity. On such days, please be sure that you have blessed water available in your font prior to the liturgy. For the asperges, I will need a fulsome bowl and branches of *arbor vitae* or rosemary (about 10-12" long) tightly bound together.

The Proper of the Day will be used, even when initiation rites are to take place, and, except when there are baptisms (*white*), *the liturgical color will be that of the day*. Any departure from this should be discussed **far in advance** of the day of the visitation.

I am always happy to spend time with the children of the parish in ways you might see fit. I prefer spending time with them rather than preaching children's sermons. If you would like me to spend time with the children, please inform my office no less than two weeks before the visitation.

I am always pleased to sing as much of the liturgy as desired, but prefer not to sing the liturgy in parishes where this has not been the custom. When I do chant the liturgy, I normally chant the following:

- Collect of the Day
- *Sursum corda*, Preface, Doxology (Prayers I and II, Prayers A and B – solemn tone)
- *Sursum corda*, Preface, Doxology (Prayer D – solemn or Mozarabic tones; the latter preferred)

If your community chants the Memorial Acclamation, *please* make sure that music is available to me during the liturgy and make note of it by Post-It note in the altar book. The same is true of musical settings of the Lord's Prayer.

Let the deacon and me know *in advance of the liturgy* whether the Fraction Anthem will be said or sung, and, if sung, whether I should be the one leading it, or if you have a choir member or other cantor lined up.

On ordinary Propers, I expect to say (not sing) the Episcopal Blessing (BCP, p. 523) and ask that the text be printed in the bulletin and marked in the missal. However, I believe that it's important for us to make a practice of using the Seasonal Blessings/Prayers over the People (*Book of Occasional Services*, pg.22-29) and prefer to use these prayers in place of the Episcopal Blessing in the appropriate season—please print these blessings in your bulletin, too or, at a minimum, have a printed copy at the altar. I don't carry the *Book of Occasional Services* with me on visitations!

I chant Prayer C only when the community is accustomed to a form that includes sung responses throughout the prayer. It has not been my custom to chant only the *sursum corda* when using Prayer C. So, if you *do* use a sung form, let me know two weeks in advance, send a copy of it to my office, and I'll practice it for the visitation.

Please note that I prefer Prayer D to be used when my visitation falls on a Principal Feast Day. I also prefer the use of the contemporary (Alternative) wording of the Lord's Prayer. Additionally, I commend consideration of other authorized Eucharistic Prayers as found in *Enriching Our Worship 1*.

Because every liturgical space has its own challenges, I prefer to preside from the place/chair from which it is normally done. I prefer to stand for confirmations and receptions, so the bishop's chair need not be front and center except in unusual circumstances.

If the parish has a deacon, he or she should be prepared to assist me. The details will vary, but will normally include such things as:

- holding the Prayer Book so that my hands are free for liturgical gestures,
- holding the pastoral staff when we are not in procession, and
- assisting with the chrism at baptisms, etc.

If the parish does not have a regularly-assigned deacon, I will assign a deacon to accompany me on the visitation. *The assisting deacon's name should always be printed in the service bulletin, in this manner: "The Rev. Deacon"*

If for some reason, a deacon cannot be present, these duties (above) may be performed by a senior acolyte or assisting lay minister. Except under unusual circumstances these duties are not to be performed by presbyters. "Bishop's Chaplains" are a liturgical anachronism born of the era when the diaconate had been suppressed.

Whenever deacons are present, they should also expect to:

- arrange with the rector for the provision of the branches for the asperges,
- meet me upon arrival and assist with my vestments, prayer book, crozier, stand, etc.,
- assist me in vesting, as needed,
- read the gospel,
- announce the confession of sins,
- set the holy table,
- mark and point the missal for me,
- stand ready to refill supplies of bread and wine for those administering the sacraments,
- clear the holy table,
- proclaim the dismissal,
- repack my vestments and accoutrements and ensure that they are in the vehicle for my return trip, and

- take notes for me during the forum with the congregation and the vestry meeting.

Help from local priests on particularities of local traditions in setting/clearing the table will be much appreciated by all visiting deacons who may not have performed the liturgy in that space. It would be especially helpful for these matters to be reviewed in advance of my arrival.

Regarding Gospel Processions and the Processional Cross, my desire is for the Gospel Book to be the primary focus of the Gospel Procession and for it to be simply accompanied by torches.

The Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge should make the necessary parish announcements. I will resume the presidency of the liturgy with the offertory sentence.

After Communion, I encourage the congregation to stand for the post-Communion prayer and Blessing.

THE ROLE OF SUBDEACONS IN THE LITURGY (VISITATIONS AND OTHERWISE)

The clarification of the role of the deacon during visitations above naturally leads to a desire to comment on the role of the subdeacon, both during diocesan liturgies (my visitations) and when serving in their home congregations at other times. I am very much aware that there are dedicated servants in this role to be found in a few congregations of the diocese. **The overarching principle to keep in mind is that the subdeacon is a lay person assisting those who are ordained in exercising their liturgical ministry without usurping any duties canonically reserved for the ordained, even in the absence of a deacon.**

A deacon is assigned for each of my visitations (where a deacon is not already placed in the congregation) and the congregation is notified in advance. It is incumbent that the Priest in Charge in those congregations with subdeacons clarify with the visitation deacon any of the following roles/assistance that might be desired – preferably in advance.

In general, the following duties comprise the traditional liturgical role of the subdeacon during the regular service schedule of the congregation.

- Make sure, in the absence of a deacon, that the altar book is properly marked prior to the liturgy.
- Assist the deacon by carrying the Book of Gospels in procession and holding it for the deacon to read. In the absence of a deacon the subdeacon performs the same function for the priest.
- Facilitate the movement of sacred vessels to the altar when the deacon (or priest) is ready to set the altar for the Great Thanksgiving. This means hand the vessels to or take them from the deacon or priest. (The subdeacon **does not** directly place upon or remove items from the altar in any circumstance.)
- Assist during the Eucharistic Prayer, if no deacon is present, by pointing to the text in the altar book and turning the pages.
- Assist as a chalice bearer, if licensed, during the distribution of the elements.
- Assist the deacon and /or priest with the movement of sacred vessels from the altar at the time of ablutions. Please note that **only** the celebrant or deacon performs the ablutions.
- Read (or chant) the Epistle lesson (as determined by local practice).

WHEN THERE ARE BAPTISMS

The Pastoral Visitation of the Bishop is one of the principal occasions for baptism, and every effort should be made to make the visitation a baptismal feast, in contrast to an occasion for confirmation and reception. ***Please notify my staff well in advance when baptisms are to be part of my visitation.***

Unless the space militates against it, the baptismal liturgy should unfold as follows:

- the presentation of the candidates, examination, and the baptismal covenant will be conducted from the chancel steps (or the equivalent);
- during the litany (the prayer for the candidates), we will process to the font in the following manner:
 - the deacon or acolyte bearing the paschal candle (instead of cross and torches);
 - the bishop;
 - presbyters, deacons, and assisting clergy;
 - baptismal candidates and sponsors; and
 - the congregation where practicable.
- I will bless the water and prefer to sing it when the Eucharist itself is sung;
- The altar book should be marked and available for the water blessing;
- One or more of the presbyters should do the water bath;
- Where it is parish practice, the newly baptized (or their sponsors in the case of babies and small children) may be given a candle lighted from the paschal candle;
- The prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the chrismation will take place at the font;
- I will then asperge the congregation, for which I need a fulsome bowl to dip into the font; and
- The Peace will be offered from the chancel steps **after** I finish the asperges.

At the chrismation, I prefer to use enough oil that it runs down the forehead. Therefore, please make the chrism available in a vessel worthy of the public celebration of the liturgy. Oil stocks are more appropriate for pastoral than for liturgical use. Please have a filled bowl with lemons squeezed into it and a towel for me to dry my hands following the chrismation.

Please notify me *in advance* if you need more chrism. Otherwise, I will anticipate an adequate supply.

If I am doing the baptism, I will use my hands and copious amounts of water. I recommend sufficient terry cloth hand towels be available.

CONFIRMATION AND RECEPTION

For the foreseeable future, I will continue to do liturgies for confirmation and reception in local congregations.

The question of who should be confirmed, who should be received, and who should be reaffirmed is not as complicated as it once was. Changes made in the canons with respect to church membership by the General Convention of 1985, and refined in 1988, have made this fairly simple in practical application:

Confirmation is

- for persons who were baptized as children in the Episcopal Church or who came to this church with their families before making a "mature commitment,"
- for newly baptized adults to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop at the earliest opportunity following their baptism, and
- also appropriate for adults of any age who are making a mature commitment for the first time.

Reception is

- for those who have previously made a mature commitment in *any other Christian church*, regardless of the pedigree of the minister.

The previous practice of receiving Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians and confirming everyone else, no longer applies. The requirement of *Called to Common Mission*, that we receive ELCA Lutherans and not confirm them, is not an exception to the canonical position, but is consistent with it.

Since the canons require that all persons come "under the hands" of the bishop, persons who are received are, for canonical purposes, understood to be confirmed. When there is to be confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation at a parish visitation, candidates may come in the most convenient order. At the Presentation of Candidates, please present each individually by his/her *full Christian name*.

To identify candidates, name tags with full Christian names are preferable to cards. Name tags should also have a letter indicating whether they are to be confirmed, received, or reaffirmed ("C", "R", or "A" are sufficient). On the Visitation Form which will be sent to you, please indicate beside each name those candidates being Confirmed (C), Received (R), or Reaffirmed (A). (A sample copy of the Visitation Form is attached.)

In order to comply with the changes in the canons on church membership, the laying on of hands will be used for reception and reaffirmation as well as confirmation. It is my observation that we are confirming too many adults who come to us from other Christian traditions. In speaking with new members informally after the liturgy, I sometimes inquire about where they are from, and I discover that most of them come to us as mature believers. Under the present canons such persons should be received, not confirmed. If your practice is to abide by the "old tradition" (*it was never a canon or a rubric!*) that we receive only Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, and that we confirm everyone else, please note that the Prayer Book and canons laid that tradition aside more than a generation ago and feel free to inquire with my office if there

are any aspects of this that are unclear.

I will not be using chrism for confirmation. In the New Testament, anointing is associated with Baptism. In the Prayer Book, the use of chrism occurs only in the baptismal liturgy, while the laying on of hands is associated with confirmation.

One liturgical note for Confirmation when there are no baptisms should be made. When using the petitions at BCP, p. 305-306 as the Prayers for the Candidates remember to return to the top of BCP, p. 418 for my concluding prayer.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- My trifocals never seem to adjust to the placement of the missal when it's on a stand (unless the altar is very low in height), so I prayerfully request that you place a small pillow or a hymnal wrapped in cloth (the cloth for appearance's sake) in place of the missal stand. If for some reason it is forgotten, I'll certainly manage, but it's a big help!
- I often get hypoglycemic in the late morning, and it would be a huge help to me if you have water and some nuts available to me before the service to stave that off.
- I am also aware that extreme weight gain is a major potential hazard of my office, and therefore humbly ask that at parish meals, a few low-carb and 100% whole grain items be made available. A brief visit to a meeting of the House of Bishops will quickly convince anyone of the reality of this hazard... It's not that I don't love the delicious offerings you might prepare for me and your parish, I just need to stay as healthy as possible.

I look forward to my visit with you and your congregation and to sharing in fellowship and worship of our Lord.