

WNY Customary for Bishop's Visitation

The Bishop's visit to a congregation is great fun for the Bishop and should be a time for celebration of the ministry of the whole congregation. Although confirmations are important, they are not the only reason for the Bishop's visit – other parts of the ministry of the congregation should be celebrated as well.

Planning the Visit

Bishop Lane appreciates the opportunity to participate in various activities in the life of the congregation during his visits. Any or all of the following may be possible:

- ❖ Meeting with confirmands or the vestry and wardens on Saturday evening
- ❖ Having dinner with the clergy and spouses on Saturday evening
- ❖ Meeting with confirmands prior to the service (if he hasn't had the opportunity to meet them the evening before)
- ❖ Meeting with vestry and wardens following the service
- ❖ Having lunch with the clergy and spouses following the service
- ❖ Meeting with the community to answer questions and discuss current concerns.

If you have other ideas, please feel free to ask, and please confirm any events with the Bishop before you publicize them.

Please e-mail or send Shawn the bulletin for the services ten (10) days before the visit. Please also let Shawn know how many confirmations, receptions and reaffirmations you will have so that he can send you the correct number of certificates.

Use the Bishop's visit as an opportunity to publicize your congregation. Write an article about the Bishop's visit for your local newspaper and send it to them ten (10) days before the visit. A biography of the Bishop can be found on the Diocesan website (Episcopawny.org).

The **Canons** of the Episcopal Church say that during his visit the Bishop **shall examine the records** of the congregation and the life and **ministry** of the clergy and the congregation. This is difficult to accomplish in the course of a Sunday morning visit. So, ten (10) days before the visit please send the following information to Shawn – either electronically or in the US mail.

- ❖ A cover letter that describes the three biggest challenges facing the congregation and the three things that bring the most hope. Please also include any themes or issues that it would be helpful if the Bishop touched on in his sermon.
- ❖ The most recent month's treasurer's report as it was presented to the vestry or

Bishop's committee.

- ❖ The monthly average Sunday attendance at services for the most recent six month period.
- ❖ The most current parish directory, if there is one.

In addition please have the service book and the parish register available for review and signature.

Preparing Confirmands

Since Confirmation is a **“mature affirmation of faith,”** confirmands should be a minimum of 15 years old – or turning 15 during the current academic year. They should also be participating voluntarily without undue pressure from parents or parish.

While the exact confirmation preparation is left to the clergy in charge of individual congregations, the Bishop expects that those presented for confirmation or reception will be familiar with the following:

- ❖ **The Holy Scriptures** of the Old and New Testaments
- ❖ The history of the Anglican Church and the Episcopal Church in the United States
- ❖ The structure and polity of the Episcopal Church in the United States
- ❖ The **Catechism** of the Episcopal Church as found in the **Book of Common Prayer** and The contents of the Book of Common Prayer in general
- ❖ The structure and content of the **Holy Eucharist**
- ❖ The **Baptismal Covenant**
- ❖ The **Nicene Creed**
- ❖ Their own **personal faith, call and ministry**
- ❖ It is also appropriate for there to be a service project during preparation

Please write the first **name** of each confirmand in large print on an **index card** and hold that card where the Bishop can see it as he is confirming that person. This is in addition to the **name tag** the person should be wearing.

Some details for the Day

Bishop Lane will be present for the principle service of Sunday morning to which the whole congregation should be invited and will preach and celebrate. If you have regularly scheduled Saturday or Sunday afternoon services or if there is a special event or a reason for more than

one service, please let Shawn know so that proper planning may be done. The Bishop will be commuting from Rochester, NY, for most visitations..

The Bishop will try to arrive one hour before the first service. Please reserve a parking place for the Bishop if at all possible. Please also have someone watching for the Bishop to help carry his vestments and crozier to wherever you would like him to vest. Bishop Lane would like to preserve 15 minutes after meeting with the confirmands to prepare for the service.

If the Bishop is accompanied by a deacon, the deacon should be given the seat at the right hand of the Bishop's chair – or as close to that as is possible.

The Rev. Maria Lane will often accompany the Bishop. She prefers to be introduced as Maria or the Rev. Mrs. Lane. Please have someone designated to sit with her and show her where the bathrooms and the coffee hour is and to introduce her to other people.

If a lunch is to follow the late service please assign someone other than the Bishop or the priest of the congregation to say grace over the meal. The Bishop is often the last person to arrive at the reception and does not want people waiting for him to begin to eat. The priest should move the Bishop around to each table at the reception. Eating is less important to Bishop Lane than greeting people.

The loose offering should be designated for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. Shawn will send envelopes for the collection. The funds should be deposited by the church and a check written to the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York, noted for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund, and mailed to the Diocesan Center. Please don't hand the Bishop cash to take with him. **The Bishop will not take it.**

The Service

Bishop Lane often wears a cope at the beginning of the service and switches to the chasuble during the offertory – please place the chasuble in a convenient place. He will wear either the parish chasuble or his own. He will wear the chasuble for the rest of the service – so the cope can be removed to an out of the way place.

Please use the propers and preface for the Sunday. Also use the color for the season, unless there is Baptism or Confirmation. If there are confirmations only: use red. If baptism and confirmation: use white.

Bishop Lane prefers services from Enriching Our Worship and use of the Contemporary Lord's Prayer. He also appreciates a variety of music.

At the service, the Bishop will open the liturgy. If there is a special Bishop's chair, the chair should be left in its normal place in the sanctuary. The Bishop will begin the service from there or by standing in the center of the chancel.

If there are baptisms and confirmations, after the sermon is finished, the Bishop will **stand** at the center for the Examination and the Laying On of Hands. If there are no baptisms or confirmations, the Bishop will continue the service with the Creed after which the person appointed reads the Prayers for the People.

When there is a baptism, the baptismal party should be brought to the Bishop who will first address candidates and/or sponsors using the form on page 301-313. Then, the confirmands and other candidates will be presented (by standing in place or coming forward as is most convenient). The Bishop will then lead the congregation in the Baptismal Covenant. A lay reader should then lead the congregation in the Prayers for the Candidates. The Bishop, priest and baptismal party then move to the font. The Bishop reads the Thanksgiving over the water and then the **Priest** will administer the water baptism. When all have been baptized, the Bishop then leads the prayer and seals each candidate with chrism.

In the case of an adult baptism, this suffices for confirmation as well. That person should not be presented again, but should be given both a baptismal and confirmation certificate. After welcoming those baptized, they may return to their seats and the other candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation are then presented, each in turn by name. They stand one at a time before the Bishop for the laying on of hands. When all have been presented, the peace is then exchanged. Prayers of the People are normally omitted. The certificates can be presented at a convenient time.

If there is no baptism, but there is confirmation, reception or reaffirmation, use the service beginning on page 415. The Bishop will lead the congregation in the Baptismal Covenant. A lay reader then leads the congregation in the Prayers for the Candidates. The candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation are then presented, each in turn by name. They stand one at a time before the Bishop for the laying on of hands. When all have been presented, the peace is then exchanged. Prayers of the People are normally omitted. The certificates can be presented at a convenient time.

The Bishop would prefer that the deacon or priest who is reading the gospel come to him for a blessing prior to the gospel procession.

The local priest should make announcements as usual, wherever they usually occur in the course of the service. If the announcements occur after the Peace, the Bishop will conclude

with the offertory sentence.

It is important that the local pastor and other clergy stand at the altar with the Bishop during the Eucharistic prayer. Ours is a shared ministry. The Bishop would like to be fully involved in administering communion and for all vested priests and deacons to administer Communion. If space is tight, we can adapt.

Other information

The form for reporting confirmations is located on the Diocesan website. Please complete it and mail it to the Diocesan office within 3 days of the service. Please don't hand it to the Bishop to take with him. And, please don't give the Bishop messages to remember and deliver. Email him instead.

Notes for Deacons

It is all about paying attention to what is going on in the service, what will happen next in the service and what the Bishop needs and will need.

The Bishop will process in and process out carrying the crozier and wearing the mitre – please be ready to carry his prayer book if necessary.

The Bishop will hand off the crozier to the chaplain as soon as he is in place at the beginning of the service.

If the Bishop is leading the opening prayers from the middle of the chancel – please stand on his right, hold the crozier in your left hand with the crook facing out and hold the Bishop's prayer book open to the correct spot in your right hand so that he can see it. When he proceeds to his seat please place the crozier in a convenient place (not lying on the altar)

If the Bishop is leading the opening prayers from the Bishop's chair, please place the crozier in a convenient place and then hold the Bishop's prayer book for the opening prayer.

The Bishop will normally need the crozier again three times: (a) at the Gospel reading, during which time he will hold it, (b) held next to him during the baptism and confirmation rites and (c) for the final blessing (after which he will keep it to process out). If you are the only deacon, bring the Bishop the crozier before getting the gospel book and coming to him for his blessing.

If there is a procession to the baptismal font, the Bishop will need the crozier and mitre.

As for the mitre, the Bishop doesn't wear it to pray, but wears it as follows:

- ❖ On through the opening acclamation, removing it for the Collect.
- ❖ On for the presentation of candidates if he is sitting down – if he is standing it stays off
- ❖ Off for the Prayers for the Candidates at Confirmation or Baptism (and the Blessing of the water if there is a baptism)
- ❖ Off for Confirmation itself
- ❖ Off for the Eucharistic Prayer
- ❖ On for the final blessing.

Please hand the mitre to him with the bottom edge facing him – the back of it up with the lappets flipped over the mitre so that he can put it on in one movement.

During Baptism and Confirmation please stand on the Bishop's right holding the crozier in your left hand – crook facing out and hold the Bishop's prayer book in your right hand so that he can see it.

During the Eucharistic prayer either the deacon or one of the priests at the altar should turn the pages in the Altar Book. The deacon should stand at the Bishop's immediate right hand.