

## Official Visits to Congregations in the Diocese of Arkansas

Each year the clergy or lay leaders in charge of each congregation will have the chance to request when they would like the bishop's official visit. Please remember that not all visits will be on Sunday morning, although I will do my best to make certain that at least alternate visits are planned for a Sunday.

Please use the propers of the day and the color of the season for the visit. I will normally wear rochet and chimere for visits. If you have a particular need for cope and miter, please let me know in advance.

Two weeks before my visit:

- 1) please send to my office a list of the scripture lessons to be used.
- 2) Let me know if you really desire that I chant the *Sursum Corda*.  
I normally do not, but when I do, I use the simple setting.
- 3) Let me know when I am to meet the confirmands before the service.
- 4) Confirm the time I am to arrive and the time of any vestry meetings, meals, or Christian education classes.

Feel free to use either Rite I or Rite II liturgies. If you are using a Eucharistic prayer from "Enriching our Worship," please make certain that a text of appropriate size is available for my use during the service.

If there is a deacon in the congregation, that person will read the gospel, prepare the table, and give the dismissal. In the absence of a deacon, the priest should plan to do these things, as well as offering any welcome and announcements. Lay leaders should do whatever they would normally do in the liturgy. Have someone ready to hold my pastoral staff when I confirm. I will stand during confirmation, so there is no need to provide special seating for the occasion. Please read "Confirmation in the Diocese of Arkansas" to see who will be confirmed or received.

If you are using incense, I ask that I not be requested to bless it prior to the reading of the gospel.

I am happy to baptize infants, youths, and adults if you wish, or to preside over the service while assisting priests or deacons do the baptisms. It is nice to ask the candidates or their families which they prefer.

If you use Sanctus bells, please do not ring them at the words of institution during my visit.

If I am staying overnight, I will usually do so at a motel. You may be asked to make reservations, but you are not expected to cover the cost of lodging.

It is the custom in this diocese to designate the open offering at the time of the annual visit for the bishop's discretionary fund. It is helpful that you mention this custom in either written or spoken announcements, with some indication of how that fund is used.

Larry R. Benfield  
Bishop of Arkansas