

Bishop's Visits to Congregations

The bishop schedules visits to congregations, sometimes a year in advance. Most congregations want visits on Sunday mornings, and the bishop tries to honor that wish. Check the diocesan website to see when the next congregational visit is planned. If there would be a conflict, let the bishop know as soon as possible to see if a change in the date is possible.

The bishop normally does not make official visits on the First Sunday of Advent, the first Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday, and the Sunday following Christmas. On Christmas Eve, Easter Day, and Pentecost the bishop is at the cathedral.

Please use the lessons and Collect for the Day and the color of the season for the visit.

Depending in part on the local cleric's preference, the bishop will wear a miter and the congregation's chasuble or rochet and chimere for the visit.

Feel free to use either Rite I or Rite II liturgies from the Book of Common Prayer, or from *Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Expansive Language*, when that resource becomes available. Do not use the Eucharistic texts from *Enriching our Worship* during the bishop's visit.

If you are using incense, please remember that the appropriate times to use it are at the opening, at the reading of the gospel, and at the offertory. The bishop charges the thurible before each use. It is not customary to use incense at the procession at the end of the liturgy.

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 the bishop's pastoral staff during Confirmation. The bishop stands 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 are the usual candidates for Confirmation or Reception.

Make certain to have Confirmation, Reception, and Baptismal certificates ready for the bishop to sign, as well as the parish register available for signing. If an adult is being baptized, prepare a Confirmation certificate as well and enter that person's name in the parish register under Confirmation as well, in that the Signation by the bishop at Baptism is that adult's Confirmation as well.

The bishop is 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. They may be rung during the singing or saying of the Sanctus, and at the end of the Eucharistic canon.

If an overnight stay is involved, the congregation is 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 Fund. It is helpful that you mention this custom in written or spoken announcements, with an indication of how that fund is used.

Revised July 2018.