

STYLE GUIDE

Below are the style guidelines for diocesan communications. In general, follow guidelines found in the [Associated Press Stylebook](#).

Capitalization

- Use lowercase wherever possible
- the bishop (but Bishop Mathes)
- the cathedral
- the church (the Church is okay for the global church)
- the diocese (but the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego)
- the rector or vicar or priest-in-charge
- the vestry or bishop's committee
- Do not capitalize pronouns referring to God (e.g., not He or Him). Avoid using gendered pronouns for God.
- Capitalize titles when they precede a name only (e.g., Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori)
- Lowercase titles when they are offset by a comma (e.g., the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church)

Spelling

- Spell out state names
- Bible
- Baptismal Covenant
- email
- online
- website

Punctuation

- Use colons before subtitles in headlines
- Do not double space after a colon
- Include spaces before and after an em-dash
- Do not use scare quotes
- Place all punctuation inside the quotation marks
- Omit the serial (Oxford) comma (e.g. priests, vicars and rectors)
- Use italics for book titles; all other compositions (movies, lecture series, songs) use quotation marks
- Remove double spaces after sentences. Search for double spaces and replace with single spaces; repeat until none found.

Time and Date

- Use a.m. and p.m.
- Omit :00 (e.g., 6 p.m.; not 6:00 p.m.)
- Use “to” for a time range rather than a hyphen (e.g., 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.)
- Add the day of the week before the date (e.g., Tuesday, October 9)
- Omit “st,” “rd” and “th” after the number (e.g. Tuesday, October 9, not 9th)
- Never use “o’clock” or “noon”
- Omit the year

Congregation Names

- When referring to churches, always include the city in the first mention (e.g., St. Paul’s Cathedral, San Diego; second reference St. Paul’s Cathedral)
- Do not use “Episcopal” or “Church” in the title unless it is part of the name of the church (e.g., St. Luke’s, not St. Luke’s Episcopal Church)

Clergy Reference

- For reference to clergy, always use “the Rev.” followed by the person’s name (e.g., the Rev. Sally Smith)
- Capitalize the t in “The Rev.” only when it is at the beginning of a sentence. (e.g., On Sunday, the Rev. Sally Smith preached in the rain.)

- Do not include academic titles, but if necessary, you may add Ph.D. after the clergy person's name (e.g., the Rev. Sally Smith, Ph.D.)
- Do not refer to clergy as Father, Mother, Reverend or Rev'd in writing
- On second reference, use last name only (e.g., Smith, not the Rev. Smith)
- In quotations, it is okay to use the reference used by the speaker.

Please Observe

- the Rt. Rev. James Mathes or the Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes (second reference Mathes)
- the Most Rev. Michael Curry (second reference Curry)
- the Very Rev. Scott Richardson, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral (second reference Richardson)