



# THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

## Guidelines for Episcopal Visitations

2017-2018

*The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori*

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Visitations are a remarkable opportunity to focus on mission and ministry in your congregation, and to strengthen connections and synergy with the wider Body of Christ. During my time with you in San Diego, I hope to learn more about your particular gifts and challenges and to share your story with the wider diocesan and Episcopal Church communities.

I look forward to sharing in your lives in the coming months, and ask that you equip me to be most effective by sending the liturgical bulletins and service details (including lectionary choices) to the diocesan office three weeks before a scheduled visit. Bobbi Hoff will schedule a telephone appointment in which we can work out other details of the visitation.

### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

#### Teaching:

I will normally preach and preside at each of your weekend liturgies, and hope that the visitation will also include a time for teaching. My preference is for a conversational “forum” opportunity, where I may address emerging issues and then open the floor for questions. The goal is to learn something of each other’s stories and see the hand of God at work within and around us.

#### Serving:

I am particularly interested in how members of your congregation are living out their baptismal ministries in response to and partnership with others in the local and wider communities. How are you engaged in God’s mission among and around you? What can you tell and show me about this engagement, and about your plans to respond to emerging needs? I am eager and willing to join you in serving, strategizing, and advocating. Bobbi Hoff can help you find a time for this, around the Sunday visitation or on another visit.

#### **Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation:**

Baptism is full membership in the body of Christ. Full preparation of sponsors (and parents of children to be baptized), as well as of the mature candidate, is essential. It is most appropriate that adults be baptized (and thus confirmed in the same service) by the bishop. I encourage you to hold adult baptism for such visitation.

As with baptism, full preparation of candidates for confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation is expected. Confirmed is appropriate for those who were baptized at an early age and never made an adult affirmation of faith. This church receives individuals who have made such an adult affirmation of faith in another Church Communion and now wish to be a part of the Episcopal Church. Reaffirmation is reserved for those who

have been confirmed or received at an earlier time in their lives and have been absent from the community for an extended time, or for other extraordinary circumstances. Regular participants in congregational life have abundant opportunities to renew their baptismal vows.

Please schedule at least a few minutes for me to meet with any candidates before the service.

## **SCHEDULING**

I hope and plan to visit each congregation at least once before your next diocesan bishop takes office, and will prioritize visits given these realities:

- the length of time since the last pastoral visitation;
- the need to schedule episcopal rites: major parish anniversaries, dedications of new buildings, groundbreaking, etc. (Some of these may be scheduled on days other than Sunday);
- 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 will be coordinated by the Bishop's Office, and you are encouraged to request any particularly desired dates.

## **EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT**

The ministry of oversight (which is what *episcopal* means) is shared in this church, and continues from bishop to bishop. That oversight has much to do with a wider-picture view, and is an important part of what a bishop's visitation is meant to engage. Questions of mission in a local and often changing context are always pertinent.

Some of this oversight has to do with the data of daily life, for we are accountable to God and our neighbors for how we use and steward the bounty we receive. In a congregation, part of this work involves examining the records. Please have these available for me:

- Service Register
- Church Registers
  - Baptism
  - Confirmation
  - Communicants
  - Marriage
  - Burial

## **LITURGICAL GUIDELINES**

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. This should be substituted for the Nicene Creed at all services, even those that are otherwise Rite I. Please use the form found on Page 292, omitting the phrase in the preface, "now that our Lenten observance is ended." I will conclude the Renewal of Baptismal Vows with the prayer found on page 294. The liturgy continues with the Prayers of the People.

The Proper of the Day will be used, even when initiation rites are to take place, and normally the liturgical color will be that of the day. Any departure from this should be discussed with me before the day of the visitation. As required by the Canons, you should be using the Revised Common Lectionary.

If a children's sermon is your normal practice, please inform me ahead of time, and I will prepare a children's message. I am always happy to spend time with the children in the congregation in other contexts as well.

I am willing to sing as much of the liturgy as desired, if informed beforehand. I will use the simple tone.

I will normally wear the vestments of the parish, although I can bring red, green/multi, or white vestments if advised beforehand. Otherwise I will bring a plain alb, mitre, and pastoral staff. I will wear the chasuble for the entire liturgy, rather than changing to or from a cope.

I will generally preside from the place from which it is normally done. I will stand for confirmations and receptions, so the bishop's chair need not be moved from its usual location.

Archdeacon Bob Nelson is now scheduling deacons to participate in Episcopal Visitations. Please count on a deacon being involved in the liturgy. The details will vary, but will normally include such things as:

- holding the Prayer Book during the initiatory rites so that my hands are free
- receiving and retrieving the pastoral staff at various times during the liturgy
- assisting at baptisms.

In the absence of a deacon, these duties may be performed by a senior acolyte or assisting lay minister.

The rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge should make the necessary parish announcements. *It is important to remind the congregation that the undesignated offering goes to the Bishop's Pastoral Needs Fund for support of emergencies and non-budgeted ministries that arise in the course of the year.*

If the parish custom includes birthday, anniversary, or other public prayers for individuals in the congregation, please discuss this with me beforehand. The parish priest, who knows the congregants, should lead the liturgical action. I will join the group and bless when appropriate.

I will resume the presidency of the liturgy with the offertory sentence.

At confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation, candidates should be presented in groups in that order, following the baptismal candidates. Please have the confirmands come forward first to be confirmed, those to be received next, followed by those to reaffirm. Nametags are preferable to cards in identifying the candidates.

Chrism is not used 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. Note that the baptism of an adult includes anointing and completes the rite, and constitutes confirmation.

### **AFTER THE VISITATION**

Please return to the Office of the Bishop the confirmation record signed by the clergy. In addition, please send contributions to the Bishop's Pastoral Needs Fund.