CUSTOMARY for the BISHOP’S VISITATION in 2019

Please conform to the rubrics appropriate for the occasion concerning the Bishop's role at a visitation. (BCP p.298. Holy Baptism, p.254 Eucharist, p.412 Confirmation)

The visitation is a time to review the parish registries and service book. Please have these ready for my signature. I am also available to meet with the vestry if you request that as part of the response you send to Elizabeth’s e-mail that you should receive no less than 1 month prior to my visit. At least 2 weeks in advance of my visit, please send to Elizabeth copies of your most recent membership directory, most recent newsletter, current year budget, prior year actual income/expense report, current Balance Sheet, a list of your Vestry or Bishop’s Committee and any other key persons it would be helpful for the Bishop to be reminded of.

We will follow the appointed lessons from the Revised Common Lectionary. Please let me know ahead of time which Hebrew Scripture you have chosen. Otherwise I tend to go with track 1.

I will preside from the Bishop's chair. If none exists, or if the Bishop's chair is remote from the sacred space for the liturgy of the Word, then I will use the normal seat for the presider.

If there is a deacon, s/he should read the Gospel, lead confession, prepare the table, and dismiss the people. If there are two deacons, one would read the Gospel, and dismiss the people. The other would lead confession and prepare the table. This deacon could also be my chaplain.

If there is no Deacon, then the Rector or Vicar assumes the functions of reading the Gospel, setting the table and giving the dismissal.

I would like to have someone designated as the Bishop's Chaplain. This does not need to be an ordained person. The chaplain would take my staff after the procession, and return it to me before the reading of the Gospel. In most circumstances it seems that I am able to take care of the miter during the service. The chaplain comes to take the staff from me after the Gospel and before I go to preach. I will not need the staff
again until the end of the service at the Blessing. The chaplain assists me with the Prayer Book during baptisms and confirmations and ordinations.

Chrism is used during baptisms, but not during confirmation.

When I baptize an adult, I will immediately lay hands on in an act of commissioning for service, saying words from the confirmation service.

I will Receive adults from a Church with the historical episcopate, or from a Church in full communion with us, i.e., ELCA. As work advances with the Methodists and with the CUIC churches, this offering will broaden. Until then, I would prefer to Confirm all others.

Those receiving laying on of hands will normally kneel for the action. This should take place at a place close to the chancel steps rather than at the altar rail.

I invite all members of the congregation to come forward for the reaffirmation of their baptismal vows. This is something which I want to have as a focal point of the Bishop’s visit, preferably with relevant preparations taking place several weeks beforehand. Such preparation might include review of the Baptismal covenant, reevaluation of one's life vocation in daily life and within the faith community, and a rededication to Christ as Lord and Savior. Some might hold a weekend retreat and offer first-time confessions.

Please bring the offertory directly to the altar where it will stay during the Great Thanksgiving. There is nothing blasphemous about having the money offering on the altar during the Eucharistic Prayer. Remove at the close of the distribution.

Plate offering for the occasion is designated for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. The BDF envelopes, available by request from my office are often placed in the bulletin on the day of the visitation or the Sunday before, highlighting the opportunity to give, and in so doing, contributing to the needs of many. The money should be counted by the Church officials and mailed in one check to the Diocesan House.

I prefer the altar book set up on my left side.
I do not self serve communion. It is my tendency to offer communion to those around me and then wait to receive from whomever before we distribute at the altar rail.

Local customs of ringing sanctus bells etc. will be honored, but let me know ahead of time. Otherwise, I only reverence the elements after the final doxology.

I am not accustomed to singing final doxology, though I prefer to chant the Sursum Corda and proper preface.

I prefer silence between the Gospel reading and the sermon. No wrap-around sequence hymn verses.

I possess matching cope and chasubles and will wear the cope in procession on most occasions. I change into the chasuble at the offertory. The chasuble is laid out on the altar rail on the side close to the bishop’s chair. I do not change back into the cope for the recession.

Receptions after baptisms and confirmations are to be set up for the honor of those being confirmed or baptized and not for the Bishop. It would be good to include hearth healthy foods among the menu choices for any meals I attend with your congregation.

ONE OTHER MATTER:

I do not ask for many perks BUT I would appreciate a parking spot made available for my use, especially when attending special occasions with a large crowd and limited parking. A helpful deacon or chaplain looking out for me with an eye to assisting with vestments, books, etc. creates good humor.

Updated: November 2018