



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA **Bishop's Visitation Customary**

The regular pastoral visitation of all parishes and worshipping communities of the diocese is among the principal responsibilities of the ministry of the Bishop.

The following guidelines are designed to provide assistance in the preparation and planning for the visitation of The Rt. Rev. Dr. Edward J. Konieczny, Bishop of Oklahoma, and to provide an environment for opportunities for personal interaction between the Bishop and the congregation.

Bishop's visitations will be scheduled in such a way as to balance the following priorities: the length of time since the last visitation; the need to schedule Episcopal rites; major parish anniversaries, dedications of new buildings, groundbreakings, particular pastoral needs of the parish, and the celebration of the feast of title or other significant event in the life of the parish (Some of these will out of necessity be scheduled on days other than Sunday).

For a weekend visitation, the Bishop will be available from Saturday evening through Sunday following the scheduled worship services. It is the preference of the Bishop to meet with Vestries and Bishop's Committees on the Saturday afternoon or evening prior to the visit. However, if this is not possible the Bishop will meet with them either before or after Sunday morning services. This time is intended for a meaningful exchange of the life and ministry of the congregation with the Bishop. This time should not exceed 1 ½ hours.

If you have questions about a visitation, please contact the Bishop's Executive Assistant, Marcia Crawford, at 405-232-4820 or by email, mcrawford@epiok.org. For any questions concerning the Liturgy or Order of Service, please contact the Canon to the Ordinary, The Rev. Canon José A. McLoughlin at 405-232-4820 or by email, canonjose@epiok.org.

Prior to the visitation

1. To assist in the preparation of the Bishop's visit, the completed Bishop's Visitation Worksheet form should be sent to the Bishop's Administrative Assistant at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the visitation. This will allow for proper coordination of the visit between the congregation and the Bishop's Office. It is important that specific expectations and objectives for the Bishop and the visit be described on the completed form. The final draft of the schedule of activities for the visit should be sent to the Bishop's Administrative Assistant no later than two weeks prior to the visit.
2. If required, overnight accommodations for the Bishop will be handled by the Bishop's Office.

During the visitation

1. The visitation is not intended to be disruptive to the life of the congregation and its worship schedule. Bishop Konieczny will attend all regularly scheduled Sunday services or a single service as best meets the needs of the congregation. He will preside and preach as provided for in *The Book of Common Prayer* at Holy Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. On Sundays, the Propers from the Revised Common Lectionary appointed for the day should be used. The Bishop will follow the order of worship normally used by the congregation. During the Prayers of the People, please use “Edward” instead of “Ed” when praying for the Bishop.

When there are no baptisms, confirmations, or receptions, the liturgy on the day of the Bishop’s visit should include the renewal of baptismal vows.

The Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge should make the necessary parish announcements. It is important to explain to the congregation that the loose plate offering, or checks designated to the bishop’s discretionary fund, are vital to the ministry of the bishop. These funds allow the bishop to provide much needed assistance to people throughout the diocese and beyond.

If the Canon to the Ordinary accompanies the Bishop during the visitation, he will serve as the Bishop’s Chaplain. If the Canon is not in attendance, a priest, deacon or other person may be asked to serve as Chaplain.

2. The Bishop’s visit should allow opportunities for the members of the congregation to meet with the Bishop in a variety of ways to share mutual concerns about the ministry of the congregation and the Diocese. Members of the parish are encouraged to wear nametags.

Adequate time should be provided for discussion of mission and ministry priorities as related to congregational and diocesan programs and resources. In addition to the coffee hour and/or reception, the following activities should be part of the visitation schedule with adequate time provided:

- a. A meeting with the candidates for baptism, confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation, and their sponsors 30 minutes prior to the service. In addition, the candidates should wear name tags for the service.
 - b. A meeting with the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee of the congregation.
 - c. In addition, the following meetings may be scheduled during the visitation:
 - i. A meeting with the Sunday school students and/or youth.
 - ii. An adult forum or teaching opportunity for the Bishop.
3. During the visitation, congregational records and documents, including the parish and service registers should be available for review by the Bishop. The Bishop will sign the Baptismal, Confirmation, and Service registers at the conclusion of the services. The Bishop is available for photos if desired and to sign Prayer Books as requested.
 4. Bishop’s Discretionary Fund contributions should be mailed to the Diocesan Office the week following the visit.

Documents required prior to visitation

1. Bishop's Visitation Worksheet, which may be found on the Diocesan website under the tab entitled, "*resources.*"

Documents required during the visitation

1. Church and Service Registers for review.

After the visitation

1. The confirmation record is signed by the clergy and returned to the Bishop's Office.
2. Contributions to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund are sent to the Bishop's Office (Checks should be made payable to the "Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma," with the notation, "Bishop's Discretionary Fund.")

Please fill in and return documents to the Bishop's Office at least 30 days prior to the visitation either by email, mcrawford@epiok.org; or by mail:

Ms. Marcia Crawford
Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma
924 N Robinson
Oklahoma City, OK 73102