



## **DIOCESE OF CHRIST OUR HOPE ACNA**

### **CUSTOMARY FOR EPISCOPAL VISITS**

The Rt. Rev. Steve Breedlove, Bishop Ordinary  
The Rit. Rev. Quigg Lawrence, Bishop Suffragan

## **Introductory Note from Bishops Steve and Quigg**

Throughout Anglican Church history, annual parish visits by the bishops of dioceses have been customary. The purpose of these visits is fundamentally *pastoral and relational* – a time when the bishop, clergy, and congregation can come together around the spiritual and strategic needs of each church community.

We (Bishops Steve & Quigg) consider it a great privilege and blessing to visit parishes each year. This is a highlight of our ministry – central to our desire to serve our clergy and churches – and we pray that it will be a highlight of your year as well. Solid participation by all or most of the lay leaders, clergy and spouses, and ministry staff is **optimal**. Please plan ahead with your team to maximize the visit!

To that end, we will proactively set up a weekend visit for each parish several months ahead of time. Once we lock in on a date, please ensure to place this on your personal and church calendar and protect that date. About 8 weeks out, Canon Ben Bowman, will send you this customary. Please read it carefully and begin to frame your expectations and desires for the parish visit. About 4-6 weeks ahead of time, Canon Ben Bowman will contact you (or your church admin) to walk through the parish visit and ensure that the basic plan is in place. Finally, about 2 weeks before the parish visit, the bishop will personally contact the rector to fill in all the details for the visit and make any remaining decisions.

Your point of contact for parish visits is the Rev. Canon Ben Bowman. Please direct all episcopal parish visit questions and plans to him:

[bbowman@adhope.org](mailto:bbowman@adhope.org)

(919) 619-3711

We look forward to visiting you!

Bishops Steve and Quigg

## **OVERVIEW AND DETAILS FOR EPISCOPAL VISITS**

There are **normative** (expected) elements of an episcopal visit, and there are **optional** elements depending on the need of the parish.

### **Normative for an Episcopal Visit**

Friday & Saturday

- 1-on-1 time with each member of the clergy, prioritizing the Rector. These are personal times for the Bishop and the clergy to connect, talk about spiritual life, cover the Clergy Personal Reflection and Evaluation form, and pray together.
- Time for the Bishop (and his wife) to take the Rector and his wife to dinner. By agreement, this can include other clergy and spouses as well.
- Meeting/s with the leadership of the church.
- If there is to be a confirmation, time with the confirmands as a group or individually is essential.
  - If the meeting is with the whole group, schedule enough time to represent 10 minutes per confirmand.
    - Group meetings with confirmands can easily be combined with a shared meal.
  - If the meetings are individual, schedule approximately 30 minutes per individual confirmand or couple (if both are being confirmed).
  - All sponsors of confirmands are welcome to attend the appropriate meeting with the Bishop.
  - Teenaged confirmands are encouraged to bring their parents or sponsors.
- Meetings with ordinands or aspirants, as needed.
- A shared meal and conversation with lay leaders, clergy & ministers, confirmands, or ordinands is a normal way to extend and enrich the time of ministry to the church.

Sunday: This is the time when the Bishops want to connect with the whole congregation.

- Determine/request the Bishop to preach and celebrate.
- If there is time, it is normal for the Bishop to have a time outside a worship service to engage the congregation about their questions and to cast vision for the ministry of the Diocese, etc. This could be during an adult educational hour, or at a potluck lunch or dinner/reception after the worship service. If there is no other prior activity planned for Saturday night, a general conversation with the church can be scheduled around a meal or reception on Saturday.

Instructions for regular worship service/s:

- Because the Bishop is coming to communicate a vision and minister episcopally, he will normally determine the texts and subject of the message(s). This will be confirmed with the Rector in plenty of time to make adjustments to the preaching schedule.
- We will accommodate local liturgical customs, but it is important that you review the particulars of the liturgy in advance with the Bishop.
- Regarding the Eucharistic Prayer, the Diocese has authorized the following “family” of Eucharistic Prayers:
  - 1979 BCP Prayers A, B, and D
  - 1928 BCP Prayer of Consecration
  - ACNA (Common) Prayer of Consecration
  - ACNA (Standard) Prayer of Consecration
  - ACNA (Renewed Ancient Form) Prayer of Consecration
  - Kenya Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Please use any one of the above for the Eucharistic as they are composed, without alteration. Where an epiclesis is included, it is to be retained.
- Please use the following wording for the Fraction anthem, if one is used: *Christ our Passover is sacrificed, once for all upon the cross: Therefore, let us keep the feast.*
- Where there is a Deacon, the Deacon is to prepare the altar, read the Gospel, and assist with Holy Communion. If not, the Priest will do so.
- The liturgical color used should reflect the Rite being administered—red for confirmation, ordination, and baptism, or the designated color of the liturgical season for the celebration of the Eucharist. The liturgical color for major feast days always supplants the color for confirmation.
- The Bishops will normally vest in Rochet, Chimere, and Stole. However, these details are certainly negotiable according to the custom of the parish.

Optional for an Episcopal Visit

- Confirmation, Reception, Reaffirmation
- Ordination
- Baptism
- Installation of New Rector
- Dedication of New Worship or Ministry Space
- Launching a Major Stewardship Campaign
- Commissioning and/or Licensing of Lay Ministers
- Commissioning of a New Church Plant/Launch Team
- Commissioning of Missionaries
- Targeted retreats: If Sally Breedlove is able to come, she often leads women’s day-retreats or prayer/spiritual direction retreats for mixed groups.

## Instructions for Episcopal Services

### RE: Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation:

- We urge all churches to prepare your people to be confirmed, received, or reaffirmed as part of your regular program of adult and youth discipleship. More and more DCH churches find an annual confirmation service to be an essential and life-giving opportunity to bring together intentional discipleship and episcopal ministry in the parish. The process of discipling people toward confirmation, capped by a time of prayer and conversation with the Bishop and a confirmation service the next day, is a spiritual highlight in the life of the whole parish. Since confirmation is the culmination of a process of weeks, or months, of Bible study, prayer, and personal discipleship, confirmation weekends require long-range preparation. We will provide resources to Rectors and churches that are beginning this important discipleship ministry in each DCH church.
- A full explanation of Confirmation as it is practiced in the DCH, along with the liturgy that we use for Confirmation services, is available under the Resources Tab of the Diocesan website ([www.adhope.org](http://www.adhope.org)).
- **Please note: Because confirmation is a more rigorous liturgical service, please coordinate the details of this liturgy with Canon Ben Bowman ([bbowman@adhope.org](mailto:bbowman@adhope.org)), by sending him your service draft with the full liturgy four or more weeks ahead of time.**

### RE: Ordination

- All ordinands for the diaconate and their rectors must work with the Diocesan team to make every effort to celebrate each diaconal ordination at an appropriate annual Regional Retreat. However, exceptions can be made, particularly if there is no expectation (or possibility) for a subsequent priestly ordination, or there are extenuating family, travel, or work circumstances. Please contact Canon Art Going ([agoing@adhope.org](mailto:agoing@adhope.org)) to request a possible exception for a diaconal ordination.
- Priestly ordinations are normally celebrated in the local parish setting. A parish visit from the Bishop is a prime time when an ordination can be celebrated.
- Ordinations follow a prescribed liturgy from the Province. Both diaconal and priestly ordination liturgies are available under the Resources Tab of the Diocesan website ([www.adhope.org](http://www.adhope.org)).
- **Please note: Because ordination is a prescribed liturgical service of the Province, coordinate the details of this liturgy with Canon Ben Bowman ([bbowman@adhope.org](mailto:bbowman@adhope.org)), by sending him your service draft with the full liturgy four or more weeks ahead of time.**

### RE: Combined Liturgical Activities

- At times, it is advantageous to combine baptisms with confirmations, or confirmations and an ordination, etc., during one service led by a bishop. The DCH keeps copies of such services that you can adapt for local use. Whenever there is an unusual liturgical twist to a service, please discuss this with Canon Ben Bowman ([bbowman@adhope.org](mailto:bbowman@adhope.org)) as early as possible within the parish visit planning process. He will provide you with samples of various liturgical services and/or direct you further in your planning.
- All unusual or exceptional liturgical services should be firmed up at least two weeks prior to the visit so that the Bishop can go through the liturgy with the appropriate local leader(s) and make any final decisions necessary to insure a wonderful time of worship!

## Schedule and Preparation

### At least eight weeks prior to the visit:

- Begin to frame out the visit! Please think through the weekend and its possibilities, and come up with a general plan for what you most want to achieve. Then talk with Canon Ben Bowman directly to discuss the framework and answer any questions you may have so that detail planning can begin.

### At least four weeks prior to the visit:

- Complete the overall weekend visit plan with Canon Ben Bowman, locking in every element.
- Frame out the services and begin to work out details. If there are ordinations, confirmations, commissionings, etc., be sure that you have been in contact with Canon Ben Bowman for appropriate liturgical guidance and examples.
- In your conversation with the Bishop, please confirm travel/arrival/departure details.

### Two weeks prior to the visit:

- At least two weeks in advance of a parish visit, the Rector or designated administrator should contact Canon Ben Bowman, for any help clarifying any unresolved questions or details about the visit.
- Begin to pray through the Clergy Personal Reflection and Evaluation and *make sure that all clergy in your parish have a copy and complete it in preparation for meeting with the Bishop.*
- Make a phone call to the Bishop to walk through the weekend schedule, including the worship services and liturgies, for final input and decisions. It's best to get this phone call scheduled several days ahead of when you hope to make the call.

### The week of the visit:

- A final copy of the service bulletin(s) should be sent to the appropriate Bishop and Canon Ben Bowman on or before Thursday prior to the visit.

### Lodging for the Bishop and his wife:

- Because the weekend is packed, it is best if they stay in a hotel or private guesthouse so that there is time for them to prepare and pray for each activity. Unless otherwise requested by the Bishop, the diocese will arrange for the Bishop's lodging.

Dietary Restrictions:

- Bishop Steve cannot eat mammal meat. Therefore, when planning his meals, please avoid beef, pork, lamb, veal, etc. Chicken, fish, and veggie options are fine.

## During and After the Visit

Finances:

- We do not ask our churches to cover the cost of an episcopal visit. However, we do ask that a contribution of **at least \$500** be made to the DCH Clergy Care Fund at the time of each parish visit. This Fund provides the means for us to intervene in times of critical spiritual need in the lives of our clergy. At the discretion of the Bishops, it will be used 100% for clergy support, such as counseling for personal or marital crises, financial counseling, interventional help for issues which threaten the viability of a clergy person's ministry or spiritual well-being, emergency provisions for rest and recovery in the case of burnout, etc.
  - Please make checks out to "Diocese of Christ our Hope," with "Clergy Care Fund" in the memo line, and mail to: PO Box 52449, Durham, NC 27717.
- In addition, the diocese has a Bishop's Discretionary Fund, the purpose of which is to offer financial assistance to those in need at the discretion of the Bishop. While the DCH Clergy Care Fund is specifically and only for the care of clergy within our diocese, the Bishop's Discretionary Fund encompasses a broader range of mission, whether within or without our diocese. Please consider donating to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.
  - Please make checks out to "Diocese of Christ our Hope," with "Bishop's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line, and mail to: PO Box 52449, Durham, NC 27717.

Media (audio and photos):

- If you have the technology for it, please create an audio recording of the Bishop's sermon in digital format (mp3 or similar) and email the file to Kate Breedlove ([kbreedlove@adhope.org](mailto:kbreedlove@adhope.org)). If you do not have digital recording capabilities, a CD is also acceptable. Please ensure that the CD is given to the Bishop, or mailed to the Diocese.
- If at all possible, please assign someone in your congregation to take photos of the Bishop's visit, prioritizing the worship service/s and larger fellowship events. Please transfer all media to Kate Breedlove ([kbreedlove@adhope.org](mailto:kbreedlove@adhope.org)).