



The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Congregation Visitation Information

Revised July 2016

The Right Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton

Bishop of Maryland

The Right Reverend Chilton R. Knudsen

Assistant Bishop of Maryland

The Reverend Canon Scott G. Slater

Canon to the Ordinary

Basic Customary for All Episcopal Visitations

At least three weeks before a scheduled visitation, we expect the rector/vicar/priest-in-charge (or the warden, if no priest) to arrange an appointment with the visiting bishop/canon to discuss specific plans for the visitation.

Whenever possible, there should be **one combined service**. We recognize there may be situations due to congregational size or circumstances when having one combined service may not be feasible. In those instances, clergy should consult with the visiting bishop/canon well in advance to discuss other options.

During the visitation, the bishop/canon would like to have an informal meeting with the vestry/advisory board before or following the morning's principal service. This 30-45 minute meeting will be an opportunity to share information, hopes, and dreams about programs and ministries. Please schedule this to also allow time for brief visit and walk-through with candidates for confirmation, reception and/or reaffirmation before worship.

Following the service is an especially appropriate time to host a reception or luncheon so the visiting bishop/canon may meet and greet church members. Please consider building in enough time for the bishop/canon to offer thoughts and respond to questions.

Unless it's a patronal feast, the propers should be those appointed for the Sunday and taken from the *Revised Common Lectionary*. When there are choices, or if one of the bishops or canon has a specific lesson request, that will be communicated in advance.

Further Instructions and Expectations for Bishops Sutton and Knudsen

- The bishop will arrive 15 minutes before the first event.
- If there are confirmations, the bishop will either sit in the cathedra (bishop's chair) while confirming or stand at the altar rail, whichever works best for the liturgical space and needs of confirmands.
- Bishop Sutton is often accompanied by a diocesan archdeacon who serves as his chaplain. She or he normally reads the Gospel lesson, helps prepare the altar, and gives the dismissal. Let the bishop know if you prefer for the archdeacon to participate in another way.
- Each bishop will preside for the entire service and prefers clergy of the church to stand together at the altar for the prayer of consecration.
- As to vestments, the bishops usually wear cope and miter. They have their own vestments, but let them know if you'd prefer them to wear the church's chasuble during the Holy Communion.

Some Liturgical Preferences

- A chaplain precedes a bishop in procession, and places the miter and crozier on the altar at the appropriate time.
- If the service is a major feast of the church or major saint's day, the bishops prefer to have a general confession.
- If there is a baptism, the bishops prefer the clergy of the congregation to do the water, and the bishops will do the chrismation.
- The bishops will bring greetings to the congregation during announcements.
- The bishops prefer to use a lavabo, if available.
- The bishops are prepared to chant the parts of the service if that is the custom of the church.
- From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, the bishops do **not** want the Agnus Dei read.
- During Lent, the bishops will begin the service with the Penitential Order.
- Please have your service book and books of records available for the bishops to see and sign.
- Please remind the congregation that the loose plate offering goes to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. *Please do not give the bishops cash* but send a check to their attention at 4 E. University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Note: *Both bishops are allergic to shellfish; you may have it for others, but please be sure they know which dish(s) contain shellfish. The bishops prefer to have a selection plated to take with them.*

Further Instructions and Expectations for Canon Slater

- I will plan to arrive 30 minutes before the first event.
- I will preside for the entire service unless the rector/vicar wishes to share leading the Liturgy of the Word, at which point I would lead the absolution and all following. When space permits, I am pleased to have clergy of the church stand with me at the altar.
- I travel with an alb, which I prefer, but also have a cassock and surplice. I prefer to wear your stole and chasuble (if you have them) for the entire service (unless it is warm in the church).
- I am happy to use a lavabo, but it is not my personal custom.
- I am willing and able to chant those parts of the service if that is your church's custom.
- I am prone to overheat, so I would appreciate having a glass of water available.
- Since I do not perform confirmations, please contact the bishops' office about a regional confirmation or participating in an Eastertide confirmation service at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore (which is always an option).
- I prefer vegetarian fare, though I am not strict about it.
- I do not maintain a discretionary fund, so it is neither necessary nor appropriate to send the loose plate collection to me.