

The Church Pension Group

Guide to Rules of Address

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1. Introduction

This guide is designed for use by all employees of the Church Pension Group to achieve consistency in our communications, both written and verbal.

Rules for Forms of Address

Canonical Status

There are two types of employees of the Episcopal Church: those who are ordained (deacons, priests, bishops) and those who are not ordained (lay employees).

1.1 Rules of Address

When referring to a person who is ordained, she or he is a priest, a deacon, or a bishop. If you are in doubt, you may ask, “Are you a priest?” Never ask if he or she is “a Reverend.” It is grammatically incorrect to refer in writing or speech to a member of the Episcopal clergy as “Reverend” (as in “Reverend Doe”). In written communication, the function word “the” always precedes Reverend. Only capitalize “The” in “The Reverend” when it begins a sentence or is part of the salutation of a letter; in the body of a sentence, always use a lower case “t.”

It is always appropriate to address a cleric, based on gender, as Mr., Father, Ms., or Mother, accompanied by the last name. When referring to a male cleric in the third person, use “the Rev. Mr. Doe” or “Father Doe;” a female cleric may be referred to as “the Rev. Ms. Doe” or “Mother Doe.”

Clerics who have renounced their ordination vows or have been deposed are addressed as lay people.

When verbally addressing a bishop, say “Bishop Doe,” or simply “Bishop.” In writing, never address a letter to “Bishop John A. Doe;” the address is always “The Rt. Rev. John A. Doe.”

1.2 Age and Gender Rules of Address

| <i>Age</i> | <i>Gender</i> | <i>Marital Status</i> | <i>Customary Title</i> |
|-------------|---------------|---|------------------------|
| Up to age 8 | Male | Not Applicable | Master |
| 8 and Over | Male | Never Married, Single, Divorced, Married, Widowed | Mr. |
| Under 14 | Female | Not Applicable | Miss |
| 14 and Over | Female | Never Married, Single, Divorced, Married, Widowed | Miss, Ms., Mrs.* |

* A divorced woman with children may use Mrs. and her first name, as long as she retains her ex-husband’s surname. In all other cases, Mrs. is only used with the husband’s first and last name. The title Ms. is used with the woman’s first and last name.

1.3 Generation Markers

| <i>Generation</i> | <i>Generation Marker</i> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Self | Sr. |
| Son/Daughter | Jr. |
| Grandson/Granddaughter | III |
| Great Grandson/Granddaughter | IV |
| Great-Great Grandson/Granddaughter | V |

Note: Except for royalty, generation markers should not be perpetuated past the death of the common ancestor.

1.4 Military Rank

It is standard Church Pension Group policy that clerical honorifics supersede and replace military honorifics at all times.

1.5 Let the Client Guide You in Forms of Address

If you are contacted by a client, ordained or not, the way the client refers to him or herself in person, by telephone, in email, or in writing, should guide you in how to address that person. If you are unclear about gender or canonical status and you are speaking to them in person or on the telephone, it is appropriate to ask clients how they would like to be addressed. If you are addressing a client in writing and you are unsure about canonical status, use Mr. or Ms. or check with the Clergy Pensions department. The title “Pastor” is not commonly used in the Episcopal Church; it is commonly used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

2. Forms of Address for Clerics

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title and Abbreviated Title</i> | <i>Terms</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Presiding Bishop | The Most Reverend | Chief executive and spiritual leader of the Episcopal Church | The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori Presiding Bishop and Primate Episcopal Church Center 815 Second Avenue New York, NY 10017 | Dear Bishop Jefferts Schori: | Bishop Jefferts Schori |
| Diocesan Bishop Also known as The Ordinary | The Right Reverend (The Rt. Rev.) | The chief executive and spiritual leader of a diocese | The Right Reverend John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Bishop Doe: | Bishop Doe |
| Bishop Coadjutor | The Right Reverend (The Rt. Rev.) | Assistant bishop with the right of succession upon the resignation of the diocesan bishop | The Right Reverend John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Bishop Doe: | Bishop Doe |
| Bishop Suffragan | The Right Reverend (The Rt. Rev.) | Assistant bishop without the right to succeed a diocesan bishop; they may be elected diocesan bishop or bishop coadjutor. | The Right Reverend John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Bishop Doe: | Bishop Doe |
| Assistant Bishop | The Right Reverend (The Rt. Rev.) | Often a retired bishop who is assisting in a diocese without tenure. | The Right Reverend John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Bishop Doe: | Bishop Doe |

Forms of Address for Clerics (continued)

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title and Abbreviated Title</i> | <i>Terms</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Deacon | Deacon (Dn.) or The Rev. Doe, Deacon | Ordained to the diaconate, a deacon serves at the discretion of his/her bishop. “Transitional” deacons will be ordained priests after six months to one year. Deacons who are not transitional will remain deacons permanently. | The Rev. John Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. Jane Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Deacon Doe: Dear Mr. Doe: Dear Deacon Doe: Dear Ms. Doe: | Deacon Doe Deacon John Mr. Doe (familiar) John Deacon Doe Deacon Jane Ms. Doe (familiar) Jane |
| Priest | The Reverend (The Rev.) | Ordained after a period of time serving as a deacon | The Rev. Jane Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Mother Doe: Dear Ms. Doe: | Mother Doe Ms. Doe (familiar) Jane |
| Dean | The Very Reverend (The Very Rev.) | Senior clergyperson in charge of a cathedral or theological school. In some cases a seminary dean may be a lay person. In some dioceses, they are priests elected to preside over a regional deanery. | The Very Reverend John Doe The Cathedral of St. James 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Dean Doe: | Dean Doe |
| Canon | The Reverend Canon (The Rev. Cn.) Mr., Ms., Miss, Mrs. for a non-ordained canon | An ordained or lay member of a cathedral staff. Sometimes this is an honorary title unrelated to cathedral duties; the position may be held by a lay person, in which case the title is still “Canon.” | The Reverend Canon John Doe The Cathedral of St. James 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Canon Jane Doe | Dear Canon Doe: Dear Canon Doe: | Canon Doe Canon Doe |
| Canon to the Ordinary | The Reverend Canon (The Rev. Cn.) <i>This position also may be held by a lay person</i> | Member of a diocesan staff who assists the diocesan bishop. (Diocesan bishops are also known as the Ordinary.) | The Reverend Canon John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Canon Jane Doe | Dear Canon Doe: Dear Canon Doe: | Canon Doe Canon Doe |

Forms of Address for Clerics (continued)

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title and Abbreviated Title</i> | <i>Terms</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Archdeacon | The Venerable (The Ven.) | Archdeacons (deacons or priests) oversee the work of deacons in the diocese as the bishop's representative and/or assist in the oversight of mission congregations and the strategy for mission in a diocese, again as the bishop's representative. | The Venerable John Doe The Diocese of Newark 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Archdeacon Doe: | Archdeacon Doe |
| Provost | The Reverend (The Rev.) | Oversees or superintends a cathedral, diocese, university or other institution | The Reverend John Doe The Cathedral of St. James 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Provost Doe: | Provost Doe |
| | Mr., Ms., Miss, Mrs. for a non-ordained provost | A provost can be a lay person. | Mr. John Doe, Ms. Jane Doe | Dear Provost Doe: | Provost Doe |
| Rector | The Reverend (The Rev.) | Ordained to the priesthood and the priest in charge of a parish church | The Reverend John Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Reverend Jane Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Father Doe: Dear Mr. Doe: Dear Mother. Doe: Dear Ms. Doe: | Father Doe Father John Mr. Doe (familiar) John Mother Doe Mother Jane Ms. Doe (familiar) Jane |
| Vicar | The Reverend (The Rev.) | Priest in charge of a mission congregation | Same as above | Same as above | Same as above |
| Curate | The Reverend (The Rev.) | Assistant to the rector of a parish | The Reverend John Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Reverend Jane Doe St. James Church 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Father Doe: Dear Mr. Doe: Dear Mother. Doe: Dear Ms. Doe: | Father Doe Father John Mr. Doe (familiar) John Mother Doe Mother Jane Ms. Doe (familiar) Jane |

3. Forms of address for married or partnered clerics

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title and Abbreviated Title</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Male Deacon | Deacon (The Rev.) | The Rev. and Mrs. John Doe 123 Oak Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. John Doe and the Rev. Dr. Michael Jones | Dear Deacon and Mrs. Doe: Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe: Or, Dear Deacon. Doe and Dr. Jones: Dear Mr. Doe and Dr. Jones: | Deacon and Mrs. Doe Deacon John and Mrs. Doe Or, Deacon Doe and Dr. Jones Mr. Doe and Dr. Jones |
| Male Priest | The Reverend (The Rev.) | The Rev. and Mrs. John Doe 123 Oak Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. John Doe and the Rev. Dr. Michael Jones | Dear Father and Mrs. Doe: Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe: Or, Dear Father John and Mrs. Doe: Or, Dear Mr. Doe and Dr. Jones: Dear Fr. Doe and Dr. Jones: | Father and Mrs. Doe Mr. and Mrs. Doe Or, Father John and Mrs. Doe Or, Mr. Doe and Dr. Jones Father Doe and Dr. Jones |
| Female Deacon | Deacon (The Rev.) | For different last names: The Rev. Jane Doe and Mr. Michael Jones 123 Post Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. Jane Doe and Ms. Jean Hart Or, The Rev. Jane Doe and Mr. Michael Hart 123 Post Street Newark, NJ 07102 For the same last name: The Rev. Jane and Mr. Michael Jones | Dear Deacon Doe and Mr. Jones: Dear Ms. Doe and Mr. Jones: Or, Dear Deacon Doe and Ms. Hart: Or, Dear Deacon Doe and Mr. Hart: Or, Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones: | Deacon Doe and Mr. Jones Or, Deacon Doe and Ms. Hart Or, Deacon Doe and Mr. Hart Or, Mr. and Mrs. Jones |
| Female Priest | The Reverend (The Rev.) | For different last names: The Rev. Jane Doe and Mr. Michael Jones 123 Post Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. Jane Doe and Ms. Jean Hart For the same last name: The Rev. Jane Doe and Mr. Michael Doe 123 Post Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Jones | Dear Mother Jane and Mr. Jones: Dear Ms. Doe and Mr. Jones: Or, Dear Mother Jane and Ms. Hart: Or, Dear Mother and Mr. Doe: Or, Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones: | Mother Jane and Mr. Jones Or, Mother Jane and Ms. Hart Or, Mother Jane and Mr. Doe Or, Mr. and Mrs. Jones |

Forms of address for married or partnered clerics (continued)

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title and Abbreviated Title</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Bishop (All types of bishops except the Presiding Bishop) | The Right Reverend (The Rt. Rev.) | The Rt. Rev. John and Mrs. Doe The Cathedral of St. John 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rt. Rev. Jane Doe and Mr. John Hart | Dear Bishop and Mrs. Doe: Or, Dear Bishop Doe and Mr. Hart: | Bishop and Mrs. Doe Or, Bishop Doe and Mr. Hart |

Titles and Honorifics

Honorifics are titles conferred on ordained and lay employees. The honorific classes are as follows:

- Academic Degrees, Membership in the Bar, Professorships
- Military Rank
- Professional Certifications
- Membership in Professional Organizations
- Public Office

Rules of Precedence

In general, follow these guidelines for determining which salutation takes precedence:

- A cleric who is also a doctor should be referred to as Dr. and not Father or Mother
- For all clerics with doctorates who hold canonical roles (i.e., Archdeacons, Deans, Canons), the title associated with the canonical role should supersede the use of “Dr.”
- A bishop should never be addressed as “Dr.” even when he/she has an earned degree.
- For all clerics and lay people, the prefix “Professor” or “Prof” may be used before the last name, when the first name is not being used, if they hold a doctorate and are teaching.
- CPG recognizes all the degrees listed on page 7 as doctoral level degrees and appropriate for the use of the honorific “Dr.” in a salutation, with the exception of a Doctor of Jurisprudence.

Academic Degrees

Seminary and secular academia confer degrees in several disciplines. The Episcopal Church does not equate the conferment of a seminary degree with a canonical event—the degree is the prerequisite in a canonical process. No distinction is made between Episcopal and non-Episcopal seminaries.

6. Classes of Honorifics

Academic Degrees

| <i>Degree</i> | <i>Standard Honorific</i> |
|--|---------------------------|
| Philosophical Doctorate/Doctor of Philosophy | Ph.D., D. Phil. |
| Medical Doctorate/Doctor of Medicine | M.D. |
| Doctor of Business Administration | D.B.A. |
| Doctor of Dental Surgery | D.D.S. |
| Educational Doctorate/Doctor of Education | Ed.D. |
| Doctor of Veterinary Medicine | D.V.M. |
| Doctor of Musical Arts | D.M.A. |
| Doctor of Apologetics | D. Apol. |
| Doctor of Biblical Studies | D.B.S. |
| Doctor of Christian Counseling | D.C.C. |
| Doctor of Christian Education | D.C.E. |
| Doctor of Church Administration | D.C.A. |
| Doctor of Ministry | D. Min. |
| Doctor of Pastoral Counseling | D.P.C. |
| Doctor of Religion | D. Rel. |
| Doctor of Religious Literature | D.R.L. |
| Doctor of Divinity | D.D. |
| Doctor of Sacred Music | D.S.M. |
| Doctor of Theology | Th.D. |
| Doctor of Law* | J.D., Esq. |
| Doctor of Pharmacy | Pharm.D. |
| Doctor of Science | Sc.D. |
| Doctor of Public Health | Dr.P.H. |
| Doctor of Laws/Legum Doctor (Honorary) | LL.D. |

* If a lawyer has received the J.D. (Doctor of Law), is working, and uses the title, he or she is addressed professionally as John Doe, Esq. (“J.D.” is omitted.)
A lawyer’s name is not preceded by “Mr.,” “Ms.,” “Miss,” or “Mrs.” when the last name is followed by Esq.

7. Addressing a cleric with honorifics

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Honorifics</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Ordained | The Rev. The Ven. The Rev. Canon The Rt. Rev. | Use any of the academic titles listed on page 7. Honorifics are gender-neutral. Multiple honorifics are separated by inserting a comma after the last name before the honorifics, and then commas to separate each honorific. | The Rev. John A. Doe, Ph.D., D.D., Th.D. 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Rev. Dr. John A. Doe Or, The Venerable Jane A. Doe, D. Min, D.D. Or, The Rev. Canon Jane A. Doe Or, The Rt. Rev. John A. Doe, D.D. | Dear Dr. Doe: Or, Dear Dr. Doe: Or, Dear Archdeacon Doe: Or, Dear Canon Doe: Or, Dear Bishop Doe: | Dr. Doe Or, Dr. Doe Or, Archdeacon Doe Or, Canon Doe Or, Bishop Doe |

8. Addressing a couple with honorifics

| <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Honorifics</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| Ordained and non-ordained couple | The Rev. The Ven. The Rev. Canon The Rt. Rev. | Use any of the academic titles listed on page 7. Honorifics are gender-neutral. Multiple honorifics are separated by inserting a comma after the last name before the honorifics, and then commas to separate each honorific. | The Rev. and Mrs. John A. Doe, Ph.D., D.D., Th.D. 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 Or, The Venerable Jane A. Doe, D.Min, D.D. and the Reverend John A. Doe, M.D. 123 Main Street Newark, NJ 07102 | Dear Dr. and Mrs. Doe: Or, Dear Archdeacon and Dr. Doe: | Dr. and Mrs. Doe Or, Archdeacon Doe and Dr. Doe |

9. Addressing a lay person with honorifics

| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Customary Title</i> | <i>Honorifics</i> | <i>Envelope and Top of Letter</i> | <i>Written Salutation</i> | <i>Verbal Address</i> |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | Mr. | Use any of the academic titles listed on page 7. | John A. Doe, M.D. | Dear Dr. Doe: | Dr. Doe |
| Female | Miss, Ms., Mrs. | Use any of the academic titles listed on page 7. | Jane A. Doe, D.C.E., D.C.C. | Dear Dr. Doe: | Dr. Doe |
| Male Female | Professor, Mr. Professor, Ms., Mrs. | Professor | Jane A. Doe, Ph.D. or John A Doe, Ph.D. Department of Mathematics Louisiana State University Acadian Way Baton Rouge, LA | Dear Professor Doe: | Professor Doe |

10. Canonical events: Renunciation and Deposition

| <i>Canon Event</i> | <i>Canonical Status</i> | <i>Honorific</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Renounced | Lay | Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mrs. — unless earned a doctorate, in which case, Dr. |
| Deposed | Lay | Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mrs. — unless earned a doctorate, in which case, Dr. |