

# DIOCESE OF WESTERN KANSAS

## EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS AND CONFIRMATION



In accordance with Canon Law the bishop shall visit each congregation within the diocese at least once every three years (every effort will be made to visit more frequently than what is prescribed by the Canons). While these visits are normally done on Sundays, that does not preclude a weekday visit. The bishop will not schedule official visits for Palm Sunday, Easter, Christmas Eve or Day or Pentecost.

On Sunday visits the Propers for that Sunday will be used. On weekdays, other than Holy Days, propers for Confirmation or Baptism may be used if appropriate. For Confirmation the liturgical color will be red; for Baptism (and Confirmation) the color will be white. For a visitation without Confirmation or Baptism the color will be that of the season or Holy Day.

Depending on your preference the bishop will wear either a miter and your congregation's chasuble or his rochet and chimere for the visit. If no preference is made then the bishop will vest in rochet and chimere.

Two weeks prior to the visitation please fill out the attached checklist and return to the bishop's office. Also, let the bishop know when he can meet with the confirmands before the service, and also let him know of any other activities: vestry meetings, classes, etc.

Feel free to use either Rite I or Rite II Liturgies.

If there is a deacon in the congregation, that person will read the Gospel, prepare the table, and give the dismissal. In the absence of a deacon, the priest should plan to do these things, as well as offering any announcements and welcome. Lay leaders should do whatever they would normally do in the liturgy. Have someone ready to hold the pastoral staff during Confirmation. Generally, the bishop will stand during confirmation, so there is no need to provide special seating for the occasion. See attached notes on Confirmation.

The bishop will be happy to baptize infants, youths, and adults if you wish, or to preside over the service while assisting priests or deacons do the baptisms. It is nice to ask the candidates or their families which they prefer.

If the bishop will be staying overnight during his visitation, he will do so in a hotel. The bishop will generally make his own reservations, and you are not expected to cover the cost of the lodging.

It is the custom in the diocese to designate the loose offering at these services for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. It is helpful that you mention this either in the bulletin and/or during the announcements. This offering should be sent by check to the diocesan office.

## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is a mature public affirmation that people make regarding their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism, and it is done in the Episcopal Church in the context of the laying on of hands by a bishop.

Confirmation is one of the sacramental rites of the Episcopal Church, and it shares an ancient connection with baptism. Like baptism and ordination, we say that it makes such an indelible imprint on the person being confirmed that it is a rite that we do not repeat. Thus, we do not confirm for a second time people who have already been confirmed in another Christian tradition. Instead, we receive them into this tradition.

During most visits by the bishop to a congregation in the diocese there will be candidates for confirmation or reception. There may also be adults who wish to be baptized.

Confirmation is appropriate for anyone who is ready to make a "mature public affirmation". In fact, the Canons of the church state that it is expected that all adult members of this church will make this public affirmation. The Canons also state that adult members are people who are sixteen years of age or older. For pastoral reasons, it is often necessary to present candidates who are less than sixteen. The bishop requests that people being presented be at least twelve years old, and preferably older.

The Episcopal Church realizes that there are people who have made mature affirmations of faith in other Christian traditions and who wonder if that affirmation is equivalent to confirmation. Thus, in deciding whom to present for confirmation and whom to present for reception, please let the candidate make the decision based on what the canons state: "Those who have previously made a mature public commitment in another Church may be received by the laying on of hands by a Bishop in this Church, rather than confirmed."

The bishop will always lay hands on anyone being confirmed or received, and will use the appropriate prayer in the Book of Common Prayer for each. Normally, people who are being confirmed will kneel, while those being received will stand. If someone cannot kneel, it is of course satisfactory for them to stand.

If there is an adult who wishes to be baptized (and again, this applies to people who are twelve or older), the bishop will lay hands on that person in baptism, and this laying on of hands needs to be recorded in the congregation's register as confirmation. This is in accordance with the rubrics for the rites of baptism and confirmation. Please present only people age twelve or older for these combined rites of baptism and confirmation.

As far as record keeping is concerned, it helps to have baptismal and confirmation certificates ready for the bishop to sign either before or after the service. If certificates for Baptism or Confirmation are needed please let the bishop's office know at least a week prior to the visitation. If there are Prayer Books to be signed, have them ready as well. The bishop will sign the congregation's register and the service register after the liturgy concludes.



# The Diocese of Western Kansas Episcopal Visitation Checklist

Please Print...

Date of Visitation: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation & City: \_\_\_\_\_

Rector, Vicar, Minister in Charge or Supply Clergy: \_\_\_\_\_

Times of Service(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Rite 1 or 2: \_\_\_\_\_ If Rite 2, which Eucharistic Prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

Check Rites and Number of Candidates:

Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_

Receptions \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal of Baptismal Vows \_\_\_\_\_

Special Recognitions or blessings? \_\_\_\_\_

Special Events or Meetings \_\_\_\_\_

Please have your parish record books available for the bishop to review, including the Service Register for the bishop's signature.

**Please return this checklist to the bishop's office at least one week prior to the visitation via mail, fax or scan.**

Below, please note anything else it would be helpful for the bishop to know or be aware of...

