



# Guidelines for Bishop's Visitation

## Bishop's Visitation and Worship

### Purpose:

These guidelines are provided for a smooth worship experience and the ministry of the bishop. The purpose is to ensure a smooth, meaningful, and well-prepared visitation that supports the parish in its ministry, celebrates community, and upholds the liturgical and sacramental life of the church.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all congregations, clergy, and lay leaders in the Diocese of Idaho hosting a Bishop's visitation.

### Guidelines for a Successful Visitation:

1. **Advance Planning:** The Bishop's visitation schedule is planned at least a year in advance. This allows the Bishop to visit all churches at least once a year, exceeding the canonical requirement of once every three years. Given the distance between churches and the number of parishes without a resident priest, these visits are vital for enabling ministries, solving problems, and guiding discernment and growth. **Please contact the Diocesan Office six months before the visitation schedule to ensure you are still on the Bishop's calendar.** Once your date is confirmed, mark it on all parish calendars.
2. **Liturgical Preparations:**
  - **Readings:** The parish leadership is responsible for choosing the readings for the visitation from the **Revised Common Lectionary**. The chosen readings must be communicated to the Diocesan Office in advance.

- **Sermon and Presiding:** The Bishop will preside at the service and will also preach.
- **Bishop's Visitation Form:** The visitation form, with all required information, must be completed and submitted to the Diocesan Office no later than five days before the visitation. This ensures the Bishop has sufficient time to prepare the sermon.

### 3. **Confirmation and Reception:**

- **Preparation:** If there are individuals to be confirmed or received, they should meet with the Bishop in a private session approximately 30 minutes before the service.
  - **Name Cards:** For each person being confirmed, a name card must be prepared. This card should be held by the person during the confirmation so the Bishop can call them by name. Please ensure the Bishop knows the correct pronunciation of each name.
  - **Sponsors:** It is expected that each person being confirmed will have sponsors. Sponsors may include the Senior Warden, other members of the church, a priest, or family members. The Bishop prefers two sponsors per person, and the same sponsors may serve for multiple individuals.
4. **Baptisms:** If a baptism is to occur during the Bishop's visitation, the Bishop will preside. If a parish clergy member is present, they will assist; if not, the Bishop will baptize the person presented. Sponsors are also expected for baptisms, and the same guidelines for confirmation sponsors apply.
  5. **Financial Stewardship:** The loose offering collected at the service is designated for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund to support Camp Scholarships. **This offering must not be given to the Bishop in an envelope.** Instead, it should be sent as a check directly to the Diocesan Office, made out to "The Episcopal Church in Idaho" with a memo line indicating "Discretionary Fund."
  6. **Financials:** Please provide the parish financials to the Bishop to be taken back to the treasurer at the visit.
  7. **Meeting with Clergy and Leaders:**
    - **Clergy Presence:** All clergy associated with a parish are expected to be present for the Bishop's visitation. If it is not possible for a licensed clergy member, whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary, to attend, they must inform the Bishop of their absence.
    - **Clergy Meeting:** The Bishop hopes to have a short visit with the clergy

separately after the service and other meetings, to learn about their lives and ministry.

- **Meetings with Leaders:** A meeting or a Q&A session with the Vestry, youth, or both is welcomed and appreciated.

## **Review:**

These guidelines will be reviewed periodically by the Bishop and the Diocesan Council to ensure their continued effectiveness and relevance to the liturgical and pastoral needs of the Diocese.