

Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota
Print Style Guide and Best Practices
(updated December 2008)

In general, follow guidelines found in the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* and the most recent edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Specific Episcopal references are from the Episcopal News Service/Episcopal Life Online/Episcopal Life Stylebook, updated in 2008.

Capitalization

- Use downstyle capitalization wherever possible.
 - the bishop (but Bishop Jelinek)
 - the cathedral
 - the church (the Church is okay for the global church)
 - the diocese (but the Diocese of California)
 - the rector
 - the vestry
- Do not capitalize pronouns referring to God (e.g., not He or Her). Avoid using gendered pronouns for God.
- Capitalize the title before someone's name or of an organization but keep abbreviated or generic descriptions lowercase.
 - Archbishop Desmond Tutu (the archbishop)
 - President Barack Obama (the president)
 - General Convention (the convention)
 - House of Bishops (the bishops)
- In headlines, capitalize major words and prepositions of four or more letters.
- Seasons are lower case.
- Observe the following:
 - Baptismal Covenant
 - Sunday school
 - communion of saints
 - kingdom of God

Punctuation

- Use colons before subtitles.
- In lists, use a serial comma.
 - apples, pears, and oranges
- Use italics for book titles. All other composition titles (movies, lecture series, etc.) are in quotes.
- Use quotes on first reference to introduce new terms.
- Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.
- Use exclamation points only when expressing shock, surprise, or disbelief. Do not use multiple exclamation points.
- Periods, commas, single quotation marks should appear inside quotation marks. Question and exclamation marks do not appear inside quotation marks unless they are part of the text being quoted.
- When multiple paragraphs are being quoted in succession, the first and subsequent paragraphs begin with quotation marks. Closing quotation marks are not placed until the quotation is complete.
- Use three periods for ellipsis dots.

Abbreviations

- Do not begin sentences with abbreviations or numbers.
- It is okay to abbreviate degrees:
 - B.A., M.Div., M.F.A., Ph.D.
- Spell out state names.
- Use U.S. as the adjective; otherwise spell out as United States.
- Use the word pages, not pgs., p., or pp.

Telephone Numbers

- Use hyphens between numbers.
651-644-4454

Dates, Numbers

- Follow the month, day, year format.
February 20, 1968
- Use a suffix only in specific cases when it is either common usage or the date is being referred to without a month.
July 4th
Our meetings are always on the 15th.
- Use the percent symbol.
12% (NOT 12 percent)

Time

- Use am and pm
- Omit :00.
- Noon is 12 pm; midnight is 12 am
- Use “to” for a time range rather than a hyphen.
6 pm to 7:30 pm

Online References

- Emails should be lower case unless specifically designated otherwise. Underlines should not be used unless the reference is a hotlink.
wendy.j@episcopalmn.org
- Websites should begin with www. and only be underlined when they are a hotlink.
www.episcopalmn.org (NOT http://www.episcopalmn.org or episcopalmn.org)
- Observe the following:
internet
the web
webpage
website
online
email
newsletter

Grammar and Writing Style

- Avoid sentences or phrases in all caps. THEY ARE HARD TO READ.
- Do not use the passive voice. It is not engaging for the reader.
Passive: The dog was crossing the street.
Active: The dog crossed the street.
- Do not switch from active to passive voice unless you are describing a continuous action.
- Avoid wordy constructions.
Wordy: The ECW will be having an event next Tuesday.
Better: The ECW will have a rally next Tuesday.

Insider Church Lingo

- the Episcopal Church (TEC) on first reference, TEC or “the Church” on subsequent
- The Book of Common Prayer on first reference, the prayer book or BCP thereafter
- Anglican Communion in first reference, “the communion” on second reference
- Use congregation rather than parish because not all Episcopal Church faith communities have the canonical status of parish
- Use Ordination or Ordination and consecration: The BCP (p. 511) calls the making of a bishop the Ordination of a bishop. The consecration takes place within the Ordination service.
- Capitalize the name of the sacrament, e.g. Baptism, Communion

Scripture References

- Scripture should be referenced as follows:
John 3:16
- Capitalize Gospel when referring to one of the four, lowercase otherwise
- Scripture should be capitalized in all references
- Events in Jesus' life are capitalized if used without reference to him, e.g. the Resurrection but the resurrection of Jesus

Congregation Names

- For reference to churches, always include the city on the first mention.
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, St. Paul; second reference, St. Mary's

Professional Titles, Clergy

- For reference to clergy, always use "the Rev." followed by the person's name
the Rev. Joe Jones
- Do not refer to clergy as Father, Mother, or Rev'd.
- On second reference use last name only.
Jones (NOT Rev. Jones)
- In quotations, it is okay to use the reference used by the speaker.
She said, "Bishop Jim..." (vs. Bishop Jelinek)
- Observe the following when addressing a specific individual:
the Rt. Rev. James L. Jelinek, VIII Bishop of Minnesota (second reference is the Bishop)
the Very Rev. Spenser Simrill, Dean of St. Mark's Cathedral (second reference is the Dean)
the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori (second reference is Jefferts Schori)
the Ven. Irma Wyman, Archdeacon (second reference is the Archdeacon)
- Observe the lowercase when referring to a general position:
the bishop
the canon to the ordinary
the archbishop of Canterbury
"At the same time, Bishop Carolyn Irish Tanner was one of the first bishops to issue a statement..."
(Soundings, December 2003)

Be aware of the racial, cultural, and gender implications of your writing.

- Use gender neutral language. Do not use mankind; instead, humanity or humankind. Do not refer to female priests or female bishops – they are priests and bishops.
- Use inclusive language. Avoid using terms that unnecessarily specify someone's gender, such as chairman.
- Use of the phrase 'same-gender unions' is preferable to 'same-sex unions'
- Observe the following:
 - Ojibwe
Indian for formal, journalistic writing (it is the AP recommendation); indigenous for all other writing
 - black for American individuals; African-American for people from Africa
 - Hispanic, Latino is acceptable for Hispanics who prefer that term. If possible, use a more specific identification, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc.
 - Gay, lesbian, LGBTQ
 - Clergy, clerical, ordained ministry (NOT clergyman, clergyperson)
 - Developing countries (avoid third world)
 - Greater MN, not outstate MN
- Lay, lay minister, lay ministry, laity, ministry of all the baptized (not layman, layperson)
- In generalizations, do not refer exclusively to spouse. Use the language of "partner" or "loved one" or, even better, delete the reference entirely.