



Bishop's Customary for the Diocese of North Carolina

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

With this letter you will find a copy of the Customary for the Episcopal visitations in the Diocese of North Carolina. This Customary is intended to provide a common set of guidelines for the visit of a Bishop to a local congregation. While my intent is to provide a norm for Episcopal visitations in the diocese I am mindful that every Bishop will have his or her own particular desires and practices, some of which may vary from these guidelines. That is as it should be.

Beginning with visitations scheduled after January 1, 2007 I am asking that whenever an Episcopal visitation is scheduled the Rector or Vicar should contact the Administrative Assistant of the Bishop visiting to arrange for a pre-visitiation telephone conference. That conversation will be for the purpose of reviewing the visitation information provided which covers details of liturgy, schedule for the day, etc. My hope is that this will also provide an opportunity, to share any information that will help the visiting Bishop to be more helpful and engaged in the life of the community and for the Bishop to share with the local priest any thoughts that he or she may have.

May God continue to bless, guide, encourage and direct us all as we seek to be a welcoming missionary community committed to living God's dream by making disciples of Jesus who make a difference in the world for the cause of the Gospel.

Your brother in Christ,

+ Michael B. Curry

Michael B. Curry

Nov. 2006

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I CONFIRMATION, RECEPTION AND REAFFIRMATION IN THE DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

The question of who should be confirmed, who should be received, and who should reaffirm their baptismal faith often arises given the various changes in the Canons of the Episcopal Church over the last few years. The following is intended to clarify this.

The sacramental rite of Holy Confirmation (including Reception and Reaffirmation) provides an opportunity for a mature and public affirmation of our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord within the body of Christ, the Church. The presence of a Bishop as a representative of our apostolic and catholic heritage, is a symbolic reminder that the body of Christ is not only the local community of faith, but the church catholic dispersed throughout the world. In addition, for persons whose Christian journey has been lived out previously in other Christian traditions, this rite sacramentally marks the new relationship within this particular branch of Christ's holy, catholic church.

With regard to confirmation the canons say the following: "It is expected that all adult members of this church after appropriate instruction, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism and will have been confirmed or received by the laying on of hands, by a Bishop of this church or by a Bishop of a church in communion with this church. Those who have previously made a mature public commitment in another church may be received by the laying on of hands by a Bishop of this church rather than confirmed," Title I Canon 17, Section 1c.

In this light the following guidelines apply in the Diocese of North Carolina:

1. *Preparation:* All persons confirmed or received should be prepared for the sacrament after a structured, substantive and significant process of catechesis and formation in the faith.
2. *Confirmation for Young People:* Young persons baptized prior to the age of discretion should be presented for confirmation after a structured, substantive and significant experience of catechesis and formation.
3. *Confirmation of Adults:* Adults who have been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God but who have not made previously made a mature public affirmation of faith should be confirmed after an adult process of catechesis and formation.
4. *Persons to be Received into this Communion:* Persons who have been baptized previously and have made a mature commitment of faith in any other Christian church may be received. This is a change from the previous practice of receiving persons only from the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. As mentioned previously it is expected that such persons will be prepared after a process of catechesis and formation appropriate for those being received.
5. *Re-affirmation of Baptismal Vows:* The opportunity to re-affirm baptismal vows with the laying on of hands by a Bishop is intended to provide an opportunity for the faithful to sacramentally mark significant experiences of spiritual growth, formation or study with a renewed faith commitment to our Lord and the way of a disciple. As with baptism and confirmation this moment in the person's spiritual journey should also be marked with a certificate.
6. For canonical and statistical purposes all persons who have been confirmed or received are considered both baptized and confirmed.

II LITURGY AND EPISCOPAL VISITATION

Holy Eucharist

When the Holy Eucharist is to be celebrated without baptism or confirmation the renewal of baptismal vows should be substituted for the Nicene Creed. Please use the form for the renewal of baptismal vows found in the Easter Vigil pages 292-294 of the Book of Common Prayer. Otherwise the Holy Eucharist should follow the rubrics and custom of the community.

Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist

At a service of Holy Eucharist with Baptism the Bishop will function as the celebrant for the entire liturgy.

The Bishop will offer the prayer of Thanksgiving over the water and the prayers following the baptism. The Priest, however, should baptize the candidate and perform the chrismation following it (but see the next paragraph when baptizing adults).

If one of the baptismal candidates is making a mature commitment of faith they may either be confirmed by the Bishop performing the chrismation at the time of baptism or, they may be confirmed by joining the other members of the confirmation class for the laying on of hands. They should not do both, but one or the other.

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist

A sample order of service for a Eucharist, which includes Baptism and Confirmation, is included with this customary. Said service should follow the format of the Book of Common Prayer beginning on page 299 ff.

It should be noted that at the presentation and examination of the candidates the baptismal candidates are presented first and then examined (pages 301-303). Children able to speak for themselves should be encouraged and prepared to answer the baptismal questions. Candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation are then presented and examined according to the form on page 303. These candidates will stand when they are presented

whether as a group or by individual name. Please let the Bishop know how you have prepared the candidates to be presented. Lastly, the entire congregation is asked to stand as the community of faith renews its baptismal faith in our Lord.

Confirmation and Eucharist

For the service of confirmation and Eucharist the forms provided on page 413 should be followed. A sample order of service for Confirmation and Eucharist is included with this customary. It should be noted that at the time of Prayers of the People, the rubric makes provision for the prayers of candidates which either uses the prayers on petitions on page 305 or 306 or, with the observation of a period of silence before the Bishop prays as on page 418. If the prayers on pages 305/306 are used, they should be noted in the bulletin with someone designated to lead the petitions.

The Laying on of Hands

Candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation should be prepared to kneel before the Bishop for the laying on of hands if they are physically able to do so.

They should also be made aware that most Bishops sometimes follow the laying on of hands and prayer with the buffet (slap) as an outward sign of the quickening of the spirit in the life of those having now reaffirmed their baptismal covenant.

For services with larger numbers of confirmands it is desirable that two candidates come forward at a time – the Bishop will always lay hands and pray on them individually, but this can produce a more effective movement when there are large numbers to be confirmed.

Propers of the Day

It is expected that all three lessons and the appointed Psalm of the day will be used at liturgies during the Bishop's visitation.

Beginning with January of 2007 the Bishop's will assume that you are using the **Revised Common Lectionary** unless otherwise noted on the visitation information sheet.

Bishop's Chair

For services of confirmation, reception, reaffirmation – the Bishop's chair or some other suitable chair should be placed at the top of the chancel steps. The bishop will be seated there for the liturgy of the word. After the peace the chair may be moved to another location for the liturgy of the table.

If there is only a Holy Eucharist without other sacramental rites the bishop will generally sit in the Bishop's chair at its normal location or in the president's chair if there is no designated seat of the bishop.

Bishop's Discretionary Fund

It is important for the Rector or Vicar to remind the congregation that the undesignated offering is for the Bishop's discretionary fund used for religious and charitable purposes, pastoral emergencies, and ministries that arise in the course of the year.

Announcements

Announcements should be made by the Rector or Vicar at the time usually set apart for the same. Generally the Bishop will have brought his or her greetings as part of the sermon.

Diocesan Prayer

On the occasion of the Bishop's visit the Diocesan prayer for mission should be printed in the bulletin and prayed in unison between the peace and the offertory, or at the conclusion of the announcement period. The prayer is copied below.

Bishop's Chaplain

The Chaplain to the Bishop should be the Deacon if one is present. If not, a senior acolyte or adult lay minister should be assigned this duty. Every Bishop will have particular practices with regard to the task of the chaplain. The following generally applies, however.

The Bishop will normally process (entrance and retiring) carrying the staff. The Chaplain will process immediately in front of the Bishop carrying the Bishop's books and other appointment. Upon arrival at the Bishop's place of seating the Bishop will give the staff to the chaplain who may then place it in a suitable location.

Following the sermon the Chaplain carries the staff and stands by the Bishop for the reaffirmation of baptismal vows if the service is Holy Eucharist, or for the presentation and examination of candidates and the administration of the sacraments in the case of confirmation, reception, reaffirmation and baptism.

For baptism and confirmation the chaplain may be asked to hold the missal or prayer book of the Bishop during the Thanksgiving over the Water and during the laying on of hands.

After the initiatory rites (at the peace) the Chaplain may place the staff in a suitable place and lay the miter upon the altar.

Chaplain should give the miter and staff to the Bishop when the Bishop is to pronounce absolution after confession of sin or God's blessing at the conclusion of Eucharist.

After the retiring procession the chaplain should take the miter and staff to the sacristy or vesting area.

Liturgical Colors

The following liturgical colors should be used when the Bishop's visit includes:

- **Eucharist Only – Color of the Season**
- **Easter season - White**
- **Confirmation, Baptism and Eucharist – Red unless other color requested by Priest or the Visiting Bishop**

<i>Liturgy</i>	<i>Rite</i>	<i>Color*</i>
Eucharist only	Rite I, Rite II, or Supplemental (per custom of the parish)	Color of the Season
Baptism and Eucharist	Rite II	White in Easter Red otherwise
Confirmation and Eucharist		
Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist		

**Exceptions are to be requested of the visiting Bishop*

Certificates

Clergy are responsible for producing or procuring certificates of baptism, confirmation, reception and reaffirmation.

In the case of baptism the baptizing presbyter should sign as officiant and the Bishop will sign under her or his name.

The Bishop will usually sign the certificates the morning of the service – if there are more than 40 certificates to be signed the priest should have the certificates delivered to the office of the visiting Bishop for signature prior to the service. Please arrange with the Bishop’s assistant for these signatures.

Name Tags

Please have the candidates names printed on a name tag with the word confirmation, reception or reaffirmation as appropriate printed on the name tag.

If there are candidates whose names may be difficult to pronounce please alert the Bishop ahead of time. It is often helpful for one of the clergy to stand by the Bishop to assist with pronunciation.

Other liturgical notes

When completing the form for the scheduled Episcopal visitation the person completing the form should give special care to notation of any particular liturgical customs: use of incense, asperges, or if the Mass is to be Sung by

the Bishop. Also, any particular liturgical observances that may be included in the liturgy should be included in that section as well.

If there are to be special dedications of vessels, rooms etc., these should be noted on the form and the liturgical forms from the *Book of Occasional Services* should be printed in the bulletin. If it is not possible to print in the bulletin then a copy of the *Book of Occasional Services* should be available for use in the liturgy.

Spanish language services

If the Bishop is able to speak Spanish for a congregation who worships normally in Spanish the liturgy should be in the language of the people. If the Bishop does not speak Spanish, as is the case with the present Bishops, a translator should be present especially for the translation of the sermon and the Eucharistic prayer. The sermon and the Eucharistic prayer should be translated for the hearing of the people. Logistics should be worked out with the Bishop and priest prior to liturgy.

Cultural considerations in liturgy

We continue to grow as a more diverse people of God with differing traditions of exercising our faith liturgically, it will be important for the priest to share any cultural distinctiveness which may be helpful to the Bishop in exercising a ministry of presence at the visit.

III

NON LITURGICAL MATTERS AND EPISCOPAL VISITATION

Phone conversation with the Bishop prior to visitation

One month before the scheduled visitation the priest should contact the Administrative assistant of the Bishop visiting to arrange a conversation with the Bishop.

That conversation will be for the purpose of reviewing the visitation information sheet which covers details of liturgy, schedule for the day, etc. Please identify any special circumstances which the Bishop needs to be aware of or matters you would like to address with the Bishop during his visit. Any other comments you may have that might be helpful to the Bishop in making his preparation.

Time of the Bishop's visit

Bishop's visits should begin approximately at 9:00 a.m. and end by 3:00 p.m. (depending upon the parish). Generally, the Bishop's do not participate in the early service on a visitation.

Schedule the Day

On the form provided please outline the schedule of activities for the Bishop's visit (liturgical, educational or community) and the time involved. The Bishop's visit should always include a meeting with the Vestry and Clergy for 1 – 1½ hours. Other opportunities for the Bishop's to be with the congregation can be in formal educational settings, informal conversation during coffee hour, Bible study, prayer group, or Sunday school classes.

Vestry meetings

The visitation normally includes a meeting of Bishop, Clergy and the Vestry. We will continue to use the SWEEPS format appended to this customary. For the meeting we would ask that you and your Vestry identify three areas only of the seven SWEEPS to discuss.

The agenda for the vestry meeting will generally be as follows:

- Gathering prayer
- Introductions
- Discussion of 3 of the Sweeps areas using the 3 questions
- General sharing and conversation between the Bishop and Vestry
- Closing prayer and departure

This is a general format but please feel free to discuss other areas in the pre visitation phone conference.

To facilitate the vestry meeting with the Bishop the Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden of vacant cure is asked to make the following arrangements.

- Time and place of meeting during the visit.
- Select someone to act as recorder for the meeting. Their job is to develop a summary of points made in the meeting. This summary should become part of the vestry minutes; a copy should be sent to the Diocesan House for the church file. The summary will provide a basis for future conversation, follow up on items identified, etc.
- Distribute this letter to all clergy and members of your vestry.
- Identify two or three areas of congregational life using the SWEEPS areas or other areas you prefer for discussion using the questions listed below.

Review of Parish Registers

The Rector or Vicar shall present to the Bishop all parish registers for review by the visiting Bishop.

Parking

Please have a spot reserved for the Bishop near the entrance to the church complex. It is also helpful to have someone available to greet the Bishop

and to assist with carrying vestments, staff and other materials related to the visit.

Timeline leading to the Bishop's visitation

The office of the Bishop will mail visitation forms to the Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden of vacant cure.

One Month Before the Visit

Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden return visitation forms to the Raleigh, Bishop's office, and send copy to Assistant Bishop Charlotte office, or Assisting Bishop Greensboro office, depending upon Bishop who will be making the visitation.

Rector/Vicar makes a phone appointment for pre-visit conversation with the visiting Bishop

After the Bishop's Visit

The confirmation forms are returned to the Raleigh Bishop's office, with a copy sent to the Visiting Bishop office no later than two weeks after the visitation.

AREA, CLUSTER AND CONVOCATIONAL VISITATIONS

Area Visitations

An area visitation is one in which the visitation is to several congregations in a particular area of the diocese. An area visitation generally begins on a Saturday and ends by 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. The visiting Bishop will ask one of the local clergy to serve as coordinator for the area visit. The coordinator will work with the Bishop's office and the local clergy and congregations to design the weekend visitation.

Cluster Visitation

For Cluster Ministries of the diocese the Bishop's visitation will be scheduled over a weekend beginning Saturday morning and concluding by Sunday at 3:00 p.m. The Cluster Missioner is responsible for designing and coordinating the visit, working with the Bishop's office, cluster council and vestries.

Convocation Confirmation

Convocational confirmations especially during the Easter season provide a real opportunity to affirm our catholic heritage as part of a wider universal and diverse church

Convocational confirmations are coordinated by the Deans, working with the Bishop having pastoral responsibility for the convocation and the clergy of the convocation.

Episcopal Visitation Information Sheet

*To be returned to: Diocesan House, 200 W. Morgan St., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27601 or FAX: 919-834-7553 Attn. Margo Acomb
ne month before the scheduled date of the visit.*

1. Bishop Visiting_____ Date of Visitation_____

2. Name of Congregation_____

Name of Rector/Vicar/Senior Warden_____

3. Contact numbers

Church area code_____ #_____

Rector/Vicar home area code_____ #_____

Mobile (if applicable) area code_____ #_____

4. Directions to Church_____

(If Bishop Gregg or Bishop Marble are visiting please provide directions)

5. Schedule of the day (generally between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.) *Please list all scheduled activities including services, educational hours, vestry meeting, etc. The meeting with the Vestry should be scheduled for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.*

Service or Activity	Time	Notes
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		

Continued on next page...

Episcopal Visitation Information Sheet, continued

6. Liturgy *Please check the appropriate entry and include an approximate number of personas anticipated for the sacrament. It is assumed that services are Holy Eucharist, but please not if the service is Holy Eucharist only*

Time of service _____

_____ Holy Eucharist without baptism, confirmation, reception or reaffirmations

_____ Baptism Number to be baptized _____

_____ Confirmation Number to be confirmed _____

_____ Reception Number to be received _____

_____ Reaffirmation Number reaffirming _____

Other

Time of service _____

Holy Eucharist only

Baptism

Confirmation

Reception

Reaffirmation

Other

Continued on the next page...

Episcopal Visitation Information Sheet, continued

7. Other liturgical notes *Include information on dedications, blessings, or other special liturgical aspects of the services.*

8. Episcopal Vestments *The Bishops will normally vest in chasuble (,or cope) and miter unless rochet and chimere are requested below.*

9. Propers of the Day *The Bishops will assume that the Revised Common Lectionary (Episcopal version) is being used unless otherwise noted below.*

Where there are alternative readings allowed please specify which readings will be used for the visit.

10. Vestry Meeting: *Please identify the SWEEPS areas to be discussed with the Vestry*

11. Comments or areas for discussion with the bishop.

SWEEPS - Vestry Meeting Preparation Sheet

To facilitate the vestry meeting with the Bishop the Rector/Vicar or Senior Warden of vacant cure is asked to make the following arrangements.

1. Time and place of meeting during the visit.

2. Select someone to act as recorder for the meeting. Their job is to develop a summary of points made in the meeting. This summary should become part of the vestry minutes; a copy should be sent to the Diocesan House for the church file. The summary will provide a basis for future conversation, follow up on items identified, etc.

3. Distribute this letter to all clergy and members of your vestry.

4. Identify two or three areas of congregational life using the SWEEPS areas or other areas you prefer for discussion using the questions listed below.

S W E E P S

The acronym **SWEEPS** is a handy way to identify the different dimensions and aspects of the life of a congregation. The letters of the acronym stand for the following:

S Service to others and witness to the Gospel in the world

W Worship of God in Word and Sacrament

E Education and formation of adults, children and youth in the Christian faith

E Evangelism as sharing the love of God that we have known in Jesus with others

P Pastoral Care through ministries of caring, compassion, support

S Stewardship of our lives through the dedication of our time, our money,
and the gifts we have been given for the work of the Gospel

Questions for Conversation

Identify 2-3 areas of congregational life mentioned in the acronym
SWEEPS and consider those areas using the following questions.

- 1. What are we doing well?**
- 2. What are we doing that's not going well?**
- 3. Understanding that success is not a value of the Gospel, --- if we were not afraid – if resources were available – what would we do?**

Agenda of the Vestry Meeting
(Generally 1 – 1 ½ hour)

The agenda for the vestry meeting will generally be as follows:

- Gathering prayer
- Introductions
- Discussion of 3 of the Sweeps areas using the 3 questions
- General sharing and conversation between the Bishop and Vestry
- Closing prayer and departure

This is a general format but please feel free to discuss other areas in the pre visitation phone conference.

Sample Order of Service
Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
Rite Two

Hymn
Acclamation and Responses, page 299
The Collect of the Day

THE WORD OF GOD

The Old Testament
Psalm
The New Testament
Hymn
The Holy Gospel
The Sermon The Rt. Rev. _____

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Presentation and Examination of the Candidates for Baptism, pages 301-302
Presentation and Examination of the Candidates - Confirmation, Reception & Reaffirmation
The Baptismal Covenant, pages 304-305
Prayers for the Candidates, page 305-306
Thanksgiving over the Water, pages 306-307
The Baptism, Prayer and Signation, pages 307-308
The Welcome of the Newly Baptized, page 308
Prayers for those Renewing of Commitment, page 309
Laying on of Hands with Prayer, pages 309-320
Concluding Prayer, page 419
The Peace, page 310
Announcements (Please include an appeal for the Bishop's discretionary fund)
Diocesan Prayer For Mission

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Sentence (said by the Bishop)
The Offering of Bread, Wine and Money
Anthem or Hymn
The Great Thanksgiving, Eucharistic Prayer A, pages 361 ff
The communion of the People
(Communion Hymns)
Post-communion Prayer, page 365 or 366
The Blessing
The Dismissal, page 366
Hymn

Sample Order of Service
Holy Confirmation and Eucharist
Rite Two

Hymn
Acclamation and Responses, page 413
The Collect of the Day

THE WORD OF GOD

The Old Testament
Psalm
The New Testament
Hymn
The Holy Gospel
The Sermon The Rt. Rev. _____

CONFIRMATION

Presentation and Examination of the Candidates for Confirmation, pages 415-416
The Baptismal Covenant, pages 416-417
Prayers for the Candidates, page 418
(The petitions on pages 305-306 may be used if the priest in charge desires)
Laying on of Hands with Prayer, pages 418-419
Concluding Prayer, page 419
The Peace, page 419
Announcements (Please include an appeal for the Bishop's discretionary fund)
Diocesan Prayer For Mission

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Sentence (by the Bishop)
The Offering of Bread, Wine and Money
Anthem
The Great Thanksgiving, Eucharistic Prayer A, pages 361 ff
The communion of the People
(Communion Hymns)
Post-communion Prayer, page 365 or 366
The Blessing
The Dismissal, page 366
Hymn



I affirm that the following person(s) were **Confirmed or Received**

at: _____ on _____

BY: **(Circle)** The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry The Rt. Rev. William O. Gregg
The Rt. Rev. A. C. "Chip" Marble Jr.

NAME	CONFIRMED	RECEIVED
1 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

_____ Number Baptized

_____ Number Reaffirmed

Signature of Cleric (Rector/Vicar)

Return to: Bishop's Office, c/o Margo Acomb, 200 W. Morgan St., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27601-1338

Diocesan Prayer for Mission

*Most gracious and loving God:
Strengthen the hearts of your
people in this diocese
That loving you with
our whole heart,
And loving our neighbors
as ourselves,
We might, in the power
of the Spirit,
Obey the call of Jesus,
To go into our world
as disciples
Making disciples,
And making a difference
Through your saving love.
Amen.*

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me
To bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To let the oppressed go free,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
Luke 4:18,19*

*Go therefore and make disciples
of all nations, baptizing them in
the name of the Father, of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to obey everything
that I have commanded you
and remember, I am with you
always, to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:19,20*

Revised Nov. 2007