

July 2023

Dear Companions in Ministry,

The most joyous part of my role, weekly visitations, is also my chief responsibility. Regular visitation of our parishes is more than a duty, it is a vital component of our common life. Week by week, we are drawn together as one diocese through worship, conversation, and a renewal of relationship as followers of Jesus.

One important note: in order to visit each church every three years (ideally in person), there will be a few services that involve more than one congregation. As a result, you will see below references to “**host**” and “*co-host*” churches. Here are some specifics:

- This customary is written for the occasions when more than one congregation will be worshipping at a **host** church. Those preparing for visitations involving one church at a service will please simply follow the instructions for “**host church**”.
- The **host church** will complete all the pre-visit preparation steps listed below and I will have the pre-visit call with the clergy/wardens of the host church.
- The *co-host church(es)* will complete the “*co-host*” portions of Steps 1, 3, and 4 as listed below.
- It is my hope that, for these services, the *co-host church(es)* will work with the **host church** to design the service and provide service participants.
- Any online components of an in-person visitation (live streaming, recording, online bulletins, etc.) are part of your congregation's ongoing responsibility to provide an online worship presence and would be managed by your church for this service.
- After the service, there will be a brief, informal post-service congregational conversation with both **host** and *co-host* congregations.
- After the congregational meeting, the on-site Vestry meeting will be with the **host** church’s clergy and Vestry.
- The Vestry meeting for the *co-host church(es)* will take place via Zoom at another time that will be scheduled in advance.

Pre-visit preparation:

Preparations for the visit are simple and meant to ensure that our time is rich with worship, fellowship, learning more about each other, and discerning the call God is giving us as individuals, church, and diocese.

- 1) Teach your congregation about the diocese and the Bishop’s staff (host and *co-host* churches).** When announcing the visit, please invite your congregation to explore the diocesan website (<https://dioceseofnewark.org>), read our diocesan newsletters (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/e-news>), and to listen to (or read) my vlog posts (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/bishops-vlog>). At almost every visit I am asked about

diocesan-wide ministry and how it supports parishes, much of which is reported every two weeks in the diocesan newsletter, The VOICE. Many people ask for my thoughts on subjects that are publicly posted on my vlog. Our conversations will be enhanced with exposure to diocesan communications.

- 2) **Preparatory telephone discussion.** A phone call with the **host** church clergy-in-charge or wardens will be scheduled by Chloe Caprice, Bishop's Executive Assistant, in advance of the visit. A schedule for these preparatory phone calls is included in the email. Please plan on sharing a brief update about the parish. I will want to know:
 - the length of your tenure
 - the spiritual needs of your congregation
 - the blessings and challenges of your parish
 - an overview of community involvement
 - how the episcopal visit can support the parish's ministry.

- 3) **Liturgy Planning.** Liturgical texts authorized by the Episcopal Church should be used in the service during the visit. These include the *1979 Book of Common Prayer, Enriching Our Worship*, and the inclusive language Rite II text authorized in 2018. I hope that all *co-host* congregations will work with the **host** church to create the service bulletin and provide service participants. Please contact the Bishop's office if you have questions or need information.

- 4) **Please email the following to Chloe Caprice (ccaprice@dioceseofnewark.org) one week in advance of the call:**
 - Service Bulletin for the visitation day (final version from the **host** church)
 - A schedule including arrival time, parking information, service time, and vestry meeting (final version from the **host** church).
 - A copy of the most recent Annual Parish Meeting Report (**host and co-host** churches)
 - Links to your church website and any church social media (**host and co-host** churches)
 - Any other written material that you think is important for me to know (**host and co-host** churches)

During the pre-visit phone call, we will look at the bulletin, discuss any particularities of worship in your parish, and finalize the timing for the visit.

- 5) **Parish Vestments.** As a symbol of my pastoral role, I will wear the vestments of the **host** parish for the service. I will arrive with an alb, crozier, and mitre. Please have a stole and chasuble ready for my use. I will wear the chasuble for the entirety of the service.

- 6) **Arrival time.** I will do my best to arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled service time.

- 7) **Bishop's chaplain.** I will need a chaplain from the **host** church to meet me upon arrival,

to direct me within the church, and to assist during worship; I will meet with them to go over their duties before the service. A deacon or senior acolyte can serve in this role.

Chaplain's duties:

- Hold mitre and crozier before the service until needed.
- Carry my bulletin and prayerbook/hymnal in the procession
- Precede me in the procession
- Take the mitre and crozier after the collect of the day
- Return the mitre and crozier to me for the reading of the Gospel.
- Be prepared to take the crozier and mitre from me during the children's sermon.
- Return the crozier and mitre to me for the blessing after communion.
- After the service, if I remain in a receiving line, take the mitre and crozier to the sacristy.

Day of the visit:

Parking: Please be sure to email parking instructions to Chloe Caprice. She will enter them into my calendar so that I have them on the morning of the visit. While we may discuss it during our call, I will not remember verbal instructions in the rush of Sunday morning. I will rely on what is in my calendar.

Schedule:

When putting the schedule together it is helpful to remember that I am not a guest for the day, but, rather, the chief pastor of the diocese preaching, celebrating, and pastoring the people of our diocese.

In addition to the worship schedule, please include times for the Vestry meeting, closing reflection, and my arrival/departure times.

When the congregation moves to the parish hall, I will be available briefly to talk with and meet parishioners informally, before meeting with the Vestry.

The meeting with the **host** church clergy and Vestry will take place after the brief (10 minutes maximum) break with the congregation. There is no preparatory work for this meeting. It is helpful for the Vestry to attend the congregational meeting before meeting with me, but even if that is not possible, please schedule the Vestry to meet with me for an hour.

The meeting with the **co-host churches' clergy and Vestries** will take place via Zoom at another time that will be scheduled in advance.

A schedule might look like the following:

- **9:30:** Arrival, meet the worship team, line up, and pray with the worship team.
- **10:00:** Worship (On Sundays with one Visitation service, a 10 am service time is preferred but I can also start at your regular time if requested).
- **11:30:** Informal brief conversation with parishioners in the parish hall/gathering area.
- **11:40:** Host church Vestry meeting
- **12:40:** Reflection with host church clergy
- **12:45:** Depart

Worship:

- Five minutes before the service I will gather with the worship team and choir for prayer before the procession.
- During the procession, I will follow the chaplain.
- I will preach and celebrate. It is important to note that I will not be chanting at the service and that I will usually preach the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) Gospel lesson. If for some reason you are not using the RCL, you will need to email the gospel reading to Chloe Caprice two weeks prior to the visitation.
- Another ordained person, deacon, or priest, will read the Gospel (if available). I will bless the reader if that person presents themselves to me. This is not necessary or required, but it is offered if desired.
- I will preach from the broad step. If a microphone is needed, we will need to test it beforehand. I am prepared to give a children's sermon; we can discuss the best place for that message during the call.
- The Nicene Creed will be replaced by Renewal of Baptismal Vows (BCP 292) at all services.
- The clergy-in-charge or warden will lead announcements as usual. If there are prayers or blessings for anniversaries, the clergy will offer those. I will resume the service with the Offertory Sentence.
- The loose plate offering will be directed to the Alleluia Fund for Outreach. A check for funds collected (payable to "Diocese of Newark") may be mailed to my office (31 Mulberry St., Newark, 07102), with "Alleluia Fund" written on the memo line. Please insert the following in the Sunday bulletin:

At the Bishop's request, the loose plate offering will be directed to the Alleluia Fund for Outreach, a diocesan-wide effort that supports ministries addressing food, shelter, education and international outreach. Grants are awarded annually to congregation-based or -affiliated programs – shelters welcoming, helping, and housing neighbors, food ministries striving to meet the ever-growing need, after-school and summer programs educating and nurturing at-risk children, and international programs promoting health, fighting disease, and responding to disasters. For more information, please visit the diocese's website, www.dioceseofnewark.org/alleluia.

- The deacon or priest will set the table, when available.

- The Service Book will need to be opened to the Sursum Corda. Please mark all page turns with a ribbon or tape flag. While I do not typically need pointing, please be at the ready in the event I lose my place.
- The priest and/or deacon will elevate the chalice as I elevate the bread.
- I will give communion to the people standing at the altar with me. After they have received communion, the priest will give communion to me. We will then follow your normal practice for communion.

After the service:

- I will greet people in the church.
- After the service, I will look at the parish registers of congregations present.
- Informal brief conversations with parishioners
- Vestry Meeting for the **host** church

One final thing:

Reflection: the priest of the **host** church and I will have a short meeting to reflect on the day's joys, learnings, and opportunities. We will ask ourselves two questions:

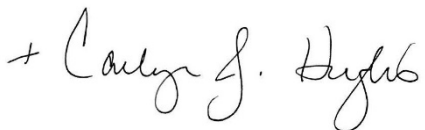
- How did we see God in our midst?
- How is God calling this congregation to ministry?

This will be a short discussion and we will close with a prayer.

A time of reflection with the clergyperson of the *co-host* church will take place at the end of the *co-host* Vestry meeting, using these same questions.

Thank you in advance for the extra effort that you and key members of your congregation will make to prepare for this visit. I look forward to our time together.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carlye J. Hughes". The signature is written in black ink and is preceded by a small cross symbol.

The Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes
Bishop of Newark