



The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina

900B CentrePark Drive, Asheville, NC 28805 | (828)225-6656 | www.diocesewnc.org

Visiting Bishop's Customary for Pastoral Visitations

Introduction

The regular pastoral visitation of all parishes and worshipping communities of the diocese is among the principal responsibilities of the Bishop (or a representative Bishop) and is frankly the most pleasurable part of this office. We are honored and delighted to share that the Rt. Rev. Rob Skirving, recently retired bishop of East Carolina will be our visiting bishop for the rest of 2026 and through 2027.

Preparation and Planning

The forms must be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the Bishop's visit include a visitation form and a confirmation form. These forms may be found on the Bishop Visitation page of our website at www.diocesewnc.org.

Once these materials have been received by the diocese, a call between the congregational leader and Bishop Skirving will be arranged by Jess to take during the week or so ahead of the visit.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE MUST BE RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE VISITATION. Email the Order of Service directly to Jess Ives, jess@diocesewnc.org.

Following Bp. Skirving's visit, please submit the completed confirmation certificate. This form is also found online and must be submitted even if you do not have baptisms or confirmations. This is important for record keeping because we publish the list of confirmations following my visit to your parish based on this certificate. If you need a confirmation form or certificate prior to the visit, please contact Jess at the diocesan office, jess@diocesewnc.org or 828-225-6656.

If there will be any deviations from the normal approved liturgies or from the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, please seek prior approval.

The Day of the Visit

Bishop Skirving will arrive at least 30 minutes before the first activity (worship, Adult Formation, etc.)

A central focus of his visit, beyond worship and any Episcopal functions, is to be with your congregation.

Bishop Skirving highly values and enjoys adult formation time where he is available and present for conversation and questions. Bp. Skirving request that your Sunday morning service schedule be modified, if necessary, to accommodate time set aside for him to be with your people at an adult forum or extended coffee hour.

If your parish has more than one Sunday morning service, please let Jess Ives know if you need Bp. Skirving to attend all services. Experience in the diocese has shown that parishioners tend to come to the later confirmation service. Earlier service attendance does

drop significantly which would be a factor in your decision.

The Liturgy of the Day

The Propers should be for the appointed Sunday in the Church Year.

When a bishop visits, we prefer that the whole congregation uses a bulletin containing the full service as an expression of hospitality to the guest among us. When preparing the service bulletin, please include all applicable rubrics.

If there is to be a baptism or confirmation, Bishop Skirving will lead these parts of the liturgy while standing at the front of the Church or near the baptismal font. There is no need for a bishop's chair to be set up for this visit. Those being confirmed will be welcome to stand while Bishop Skirving prays with them.

For confirmation and reception, Bp. Skirving prefers to confirm or receive one at a time. Couples who wish may be confirmed together.

When there is no baptism, Bishop Skirving will have a conversation with the hosting clergy in the week or so ahead of the liturgy to sort out who will be responsible for which elements of this part of the liturgy. Bishop Skirving will be open to following local customs in this regard.

Bishop Skirving will celebrate the liturgy that is customary and normal in your parish, although he prefers not to chant.

Normally, liturgical colors will be that of the day. You may also use white for baptism or confirmation. Please be sure to indicate your choice of liturgical color on the visitation form. Bishop Skirving will speak with you about vestments in conversation ahead of the service.

Bishop Skirving will not expect anyone to serve as chaplain during his visit and will only need assistance from someone to hold his worship materials during elements of baptisms and confirmations. Otherwise, local clergy (priests and deacons) should largely continue in their usual roles. In congregations where there is not a deacon, Bishop Skirving asks the rector or another priest assumes the roles of the deacon in reading the gospel, setting the table and offering the dismissal.

The Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-charge should make the necessary parish announcements.

Please remind your congregation in the service bulletin and announcement time that it is customary that the undesignated offering on the occasion of the Bishop's visit go to the Diocesan Office, made out the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. Please do not give a check or cash to Bp. Skirving but mail the funds to Cliff Hudgins the following week: (Diocese of Western North Carolina, 900B CentrePark Dr., Asheville, NC 28805).