

CUSTOMARY – BISHOP’S VISITATIONS

I am very much looking forward to being with you for a formal Visitation. Please call me two weeks prior so we can talk about my visit. Please read the rest of this letter in preparation for those calls!

Because I frequently supply as the clergy of the day in congregations across the Diocese, this is a note to remind us all how “Visitation” is different from “supply” when I get to be with you.

There are certain things that *can only happen* during a Visitation. While none of these are required during a Visitation, if there are people in your community who are ready to make these commitments, I have to be there.

- **CONFIRMATION:** the ‘mature public affirmation’ of the commitments of their baptism. If a person has been baptized, yet not confirmed as a youth or adult, Confirmation is the appropriate response.
- **RECEPTION:** the declaration of commitment to become a full member of the local congregation and The Episcopal Church, by any previously baptized Christian. Often as an expression of gratitude to God for being welcomed into the congregation and/or an appreciation of our Episcopal ethos.
- **REAFFIRMATION:** a public acknowledgement of a personal experience spiritual renewal. May be repeated over the life of a devoted Christian.

If you are not sure if or which of these apply, please feel free to give me a call at 701.720.1916.

And there are certain things that *have to happen* during a Visitation:

- **Review of Parish Registers:** I will look at the records of Attendance, Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Deaths. Please gather these ahead of time (update them?) and have them somewhere convenient for my quick perusal.
- **Meet with Vestry:** This is the chance for us to catch up as leaders of this community and in the wider diocese. This is an informal conversation, but best limited to leadership except where we are a Vestry of the whole.

And then there are the things that *may happen* when I am there for Visitation, if you so desire:

- **Dine with Clergy/Spouse:** If possible, it is my pleasure to take the clergy (and their spouse) either to dinner the night before or lunch after coffee hour on Sunday, at a place of your choice.
- **Formation:** Bible Study, Episcopal 101 or some other opportunity for us to learn and share our faith together. I will make an effort to be available for this where travel and schedule allow.

I am SO looking forward to being with you. In the meantime, you remain in my prayers,

Faithfully,
Bp. Shay