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## *A VISIT FROM THE BISHOP*

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*\*\*Suggestions for congregational leaders and pastors when the Bishop visits your church*

### ***A Statement of Purpose***

When the Bishop visits your church, she is not simply a guest; she is an extension of the pastoral leadership for the congregation and for the Conference. The Bishop is present to strengthen the ministry of the local congregation and to affirm and enhance the connectional ministry and mission of The United Methodist Church. As the Spiritual and Temporal leader for the Conference, the Bishop also wants to meet and greet the people of your congregation, to make visible her role as a shepherd and pastor to the whole Conference.

### ***Arranging a Date for the Bishop to Visit***

Invitations for the Bishop to visit your church should always be put into writing, and emailed to Terri Biggins ([terribiggins@vaumc.org](mailto:terribiggins@vaumc.org)) in the Bishop's office with a copy to the District Superintendent. Include a description of the nature of the occasion, possible dates, and any other information that would be helpful. If the District Superintendent is available, she would like for them to accompany her to the church.

### ***Some Considerations***

The Bishop wants to visit different sizes of congregations and a variety of events. These considerations are taken into account when the Bishop responds to your invitation:

- The nature of the occasion
- Whether or not she has visited your church/community recently
- **If the Bishop's calendar permits accepting this invitation**

### ***Publicity***

You can go to the Conference website at: [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org) and click on Bishop for a picture and brief bio. (*pending update*)

### ***Please send Directions***

Please send specific directions (and a map) for the Bishop to use in finding your church.

### ***When the Bishop Arrives***

It is helpful if you reserve a place for the Bishop to park, or have someone available to direct her to a parking spot. Assign a coordinator in advance (usually not the pastor) who will provide instructions on where the Bishop may go for a moment to relax, reflect, and be refreshed in preparation for the worship service or other occasion.

### ***Physical Arrangements***

The Bishop normally will preach from a pulpit, but she might at times prefer to use a wireless or lavalier microphone to move around (if such is available). Typically, the Bishop will be seated in the chancel or platform next to the pastor or liturgist. Please provide a hymnal and bulletin.

### ***The Worship Service***

As you plan the worship service or other special occasion when the Bishop is to be present, please keep the following in mind:

- Please keep the introduction of the Bishop brief and simple. Avoid flowery speeches.
- It is helpful to have a ministry in song, dance, etc. just before the Bishop's sermon.
- It is helpful to keep the other parts of the worship service as brief as possible so that there is time for the Bishop to preach and to greet the people.

### ***Greeting the People***

The Bishop will want to greet the people of your congregation, preferably at the close of the service. Please have someone prepared to lead the Bishop to a spot for such as time of greeting.

### ***Protocol Reminders***

*The Bishop should serve as the Celebrant and preside for any sacramental acts to be done as part of any worship service or celebration.*

*The Bishop will give the benediction in a worship service or other setting when the Bishop is present for an official visit.*

*Custom dictates that the Bishop is the last person in any Processional and will follow the acolyte or be first in the Recessional.*

### ***Unannounced Visits by the Bishop***

In addition to visiting your church on special occasions by invitation, the Bishop also makes unannounced visits to congregations to keep in touch with the people of the Conference. If you notice the Bishop's presence during the worship service, it is appropriate to recognize her presence. It is also appropriate to invite the Bishop to join the pastor in greeting the congregation at the close of the service. The Bishop will inform the DS prior to the unannounced visit. When the Bishop comes unannounced the Bishop would like to worship and is not expected to participate in worship; but would greet the congregation at the end of the service.

### ***A Reminder about your District Superintendent***

The District Superintendent is an extension of the Office of the Bishop. Your D.S. and family should be provided the same courtesies and privileges of the Bishop when he/she is invited to participate in worship or other events. When the Bishop and the Superintendent are both present, it is appropriate to invite the Bishop and Superintendent to assist in the service.