

# ***A Visit From the Bishop***

Suggestions for congregational  
leaders and pastors

## **Statement of Purpose**

Our bishop is spiritual and temporal leader for the Iowa Area. As such, he is not a guest. The bishop is an extension of the pastoral leadership for the congregation and the Area. Whatever the occasion for the visit, 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.

## **Arranging a Date**

A pastor should always put in writing any invitation extended to the bishop, suggesting choices of dates and the nature of the occasion, after conferring with the district superintendent.

Evening events should be concluded no later than 9:00 p.m.

## **Some Considerations**

The bishop will consider coming to any congregation at the invitation of the pastor, with these considerations taken into account:

- The nature of the occasion
- Whether or not he has visited that church or community recently.
- If the bishop's calendar permits
- Once an event is scheduled, do not surprise the bishop by adding an event or meeting or by changing the format. Check out changes with him prior to his arrival

## **Publicity**

- The episcopal office will provide an informational profile and a photograph of the bishop for local use when requested.
- Consult with the Conference Communications Office to determine if a member of their staff will be present for the event. If they will not be present, arrange for a photographer to take and send marked pictures with a brief explanation to the Episcopal office. (Note: Not all events can be highlighted in Conference publications.)

Alert the Episcopal office if members of the press might be present at the event and do not schedule a press conference without approval from the Episcopal office.

### **Please Send:**

- Specific driving directions from Des Moines, including approximate driving time. Include instructions on how to reach the church.

(The episcopal office will make all hotel/motel arrangements.)

- A copy of the order of service, one week prior to the event.

### **On Arrival at the Church**

Reserve a parking space when possible. It will save valuable time.

Assign a site coordinator in advance if the pastor is not going to be available for this role.

Give the coordinator specific instructions on where the bishop may go for a moment to relax, reflect and be refreshed in preparation for the worship occasion.

Allow time prior to the service for a rehearsal of each person's role.

### **Vestments**

Our bishop normally wears a robe for worship experiences and the stole of the liturgical season. If he is not to robe, or another stole is considered, please consult with the bishop.

### **Physical Arrangements**

If the bishop is not speaking from the pulpit, provide a lectern for a manuscript or notes.

### **Introductions**

- Make it short and simple. Avoid flowery speeches.
- In the worship service, make the introduction before a hymn, anthem or elsewhere to provide a 'break' between the introduction and the sermon or address.
- Introduce the episcopal family when present at some appropriate spot during the occasion.

### **Receiving Lines**

Some occasions provide the opportunity for the bishop and his family to greet persons. If a receiving line is planned, please see that he and his family are escorted to the line and are directed to the appropriate spot. Both the bishop and his family welcome the opportunity to meet and greet the people.

### **Hosting**

Both lay and clergy persons should share these responsibilities. Pastors may have details or interruptions to which they must attend. So pastors should feel free to ask lay persons to help the bishop/family to feel at home in unfamiliar surroundings.

Inquire if episcopal family members plan to be in attendance. If so, hosts or hostesses should be provided to assist the family member(s) in knowing where to go for relaxation and for refreshment following the trip. Please help the family to appropriate seating.

### **Protocol Reminders**

The bishop will serve as celebrant or the presider for any sacramental acts to be done as part of worship or celebration.

The bishop will give the benediction in a worship setting or on other occasions when the bishop is present for an official visit.

Custom indicates that the bishop is the last person in the processional and recessional.

### **Afterwards**

Please be aware that our bishop has other commitments, so feel free to inquire as to when he needs to depart and assist him in taking leave as appropriate.

### **Unannounced Visits**

- Always recognize the presence of the bishop. A simple and short statement is appropriate.
- Invite the bishop to join the pastor in greeting the congregation following the worship.
- The district superintendent is an extension of the office of the bishop. Your district superintendent and family member(s) should be provided all the courtesies and privileges of the bishop when he/she is invited to participate in worship or other events, in the absence of the bishop. When the bishop and district superintendent are present, the bishop is the Chief Pastor and the district superintendent is granted special recognition as an extension of the office of the bishop.