

Special Liturgies Customary

The Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane

The What and the Why of a Customary

A customary provides a process, a pathway, for us to make the parish event an opportunity to celebrate your congregation's mission and ministry. Hopefully, it informs you of my preferences for the visitation and all of its elements, so we know what to prepare for, how to prepare, and what to expect. It has more than just a practical side to it. It enables all of us to fully participate in the day, the worship and whatever else we plan. Getting all of this taken care of well before my arrival should make it relaxing for all of us and allow us to be open to what the Spirit is doing, rather than wondering about the details of what happens and when. Let us plan for our time together carefully.

Procedures

A celebration defined in this customary is one of the following:

- Ordination
- Celebration of New Ministry
- Parish Event, excluding Bishop's parish visitation (please refer to Bishop's customary for Parish Visitation)
- Community Event with Holy Eucharist

Ordination

Ordinations will normally take place in the parish of one's first call, at a time to be determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Rector. The Bishop, in consultation with the Ordinand, will set tentative dates and discern the Preacher for upcoming ordinations. **These dates are established for planning purposes only. No public announcements or invitations should be released until the Standing Committee and Bishop have given final consent for ordination.**

In case of Principal or Major Feasts, the Propers are to be those of the Feast. In the case of Lesser Feasts, the Propers may be those of the Feast, of Ordination, or an appropriate combination of the two, approved by the Bishop. For ordinations that do not take place on feasts, the Propers will be those for the ordination. Except in the most exceptional of circumstances, there will be no ordinations during Lent.

Please set up a meeting with the Bishop as soon as possible following notification of final consent to ordination. The liturgical color for the ordination will be red.

The Book of Common Prayer only requires two presenters, a priest and a layperson. It is fine to have additional presenters, but if the group gets too large then it is difficult for the congregation to see and participate easily. Although family, close friends, supporters, and seminary classmates are often invited, please remember that the parish you serve has called you to this ministry. It is their call to you, on behalf of the church, that makes it possible for the ordination to proceed. Please give the Bishop names of family members (relationship) and significant friends you would like recognized. The parish you serve should be properly represented among the presenters.

The Bishop's gift to the ordinand is a Bible. After consultation with the Bishop, other symbols of office or instruments may be given as gifts during the liturgy.

Whenever possible, there should be two deacons involved in the ordination: the Bishop's Deacon and the Deacon of the Liturgy. Normally these two deacons should be deacons of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester. If there are deacons assigned to the parish in which the ordination takes place, those deacons should serve. The Bishop's Deacon accompanies the Bishop and assists with his book, miter, pastoral staff, and serves communion with the Bishop. The Deacon of the Liturgy reads the Gospel, prepares the altar, serves communion with the new priest, and says the dismissal. A child or youth Acolyte could serve as chaplain to the Bishop.

Please appoint a Minister of Ceremonies who, together with the Bishop and the Rector, will plan the liturgy. The Ordination Planning document is available as a guide.

When it is time for the ordinand to sign the Declaration of Conformity, plan to have no fewer than 3 and no more than 5 presenters who will sign the Declaration as Witnesses. Please ask these individuals in advance so they are prepared to be signatories on the document.

The Litany for Ordination is to be sung or said.

During the Litany for Ordination, the ordinand should kneel as able.

Lay persons should read the first two readings. The Deacon of the Liturgy should read (or chant) the Gospel.

At the time of The Consecration, the Bishop's Deacon should stand by the Bishop and hold the Prayer Book. The Deacon of the Liturgy should be prepared to receive the miter when the Bishop removes it for the conclusion of the ordination prayers.

At the time of vesting, the ordinand is vested with the stole/chasuble (only priests have chasubles.) The Bible is given to the ordinand by the Bishop and then other instruments or symbols of office may be given.

After the post-communion prayer, the Bishop will invite the new Priest to bless the people.

Please note a rehearsal may be scheduled just prior to the celebration to put all participants at ease.

Celebration of New Ministry

Within the first six months after the arrival of the Priest, please arrange through the Bishop's Office a process of setting up a Mutual Ministry Baseline for the congregation. This will be mostly driven by the call document, which is primarily the Parish Profile. After completion of this and a call as Rector from the Vestry, the Wardens should contact the Bishop in writing with a copy to the Executive Assistant.

Upon acknowledgment from the Bishop's staff that a call has been made, please contact the Executive Assistant to explore dates for the Celebration of New Ministry, which will be reviewed and approved by the Bishop. Simultaneously, if the newly called rector is not canonically resident, the priest should begin the process of transferring canonical residence to the Diocese of Rochester.

As often as possible, the Celebration of New Ministry will take place on Feasts of the Church. In the case of Principal or Major Feasts, the Propers are to be those of the Feast. In the case of Lesser Feasts, the Propers may be those of the Feast or Propers of the Day. ***Please note that there will be no Celebrations of New Ministry scheduled during Lent.***

Please keep in mind that the Celebration of New Ministry may take place 4-6 months after the call from the Vestry, depending on the time of year, so that proper planning can be done between the Priest, the Vestry and the Bishop.

Please use the service from **Enriching our Worship**, [click here to view sample](#).

General Procedures for Celebrations

Once the date of the Celebration is approved by the Bishop, all related communication is driven by the parish leaders.

After the celebration date has been confirmed by the Bishop's office:

- You may request samples of liturgies from the Executive Assistant and work with the Communications Director on your invitation design and getting the word out.
- You may request mailing labels from the Communications Specialist for your invitations to Clergy, Diocesan Elected Officials, Lay Leaders and Bishop's Staff.
- Please note on your invitation how clergy should vest (i.e., festive stoles, red stoles.)

It is imperative, when planning to invite a former rector or priest-in-charge back to a parish for a celebration, that contact is made with the Bishop's office to ensure that the clergy person is a priest in good standing.

District Deans, Clergy and Lay Leaders should make every effort to attend celebrations. The new Rector should issue these invitations.

To begin initial planning of the liturgy please think about:

- Type of liturgy you envision.
- Individual preferences that apply to you, your family, or the church.
- Music ideas.
- Participation of the Dean of the District, Chair of the Search Committee, and as many members as possible from Commission on Ministry, Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and Trustees in the celebration.
- Who you would like to preach.
 - Please note: The Bishop will approve the selection of the preacher and will send the official letter of invitation; please send the name and contact information to the Executive Assistant when appropriate.
- Any other general concerns about the liturgy or celebration.

Kindly contact the Executive Assistant to set up a time to meet with the Bishop regarding details of the liturgy. This meeting should be held 3-6 weeks prior to the Celebration date.

- Please bring a draft of the liturgy to the meeting.
- Identify the designation of the offering.
- Any particular concerns about the liturgy or celebration.

A final Liturgy should be sent electronically to the Bishop with a copy to the Executive Assistant a week in advance of the celebration.

The Day of the Celebration

The Bishop will make every effort to arrive no less than 30 minutes before the liturgy.

- Please have a designated parking space for the Bishop near the entrance of the Church.
- The Bishop will vest with the clergy.
- Please have family members meet with the Bishop just prior to the liturgy for prayer.

The Bishop will invite the Rector or the Deacon to set up the altar and to do the ablutions following the liturgy as is your custom.

Please be mindful that the Bishop, as host and celebrant, prefers to receive communion after everyone else in the congregation has received.

After the post-communion prayer, the Bishop will ask the new Rector to bless the people.