



The Diocese of Fond du Lac

The Episcopal Church in northeast and northcentral Wisconsin

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, Bishop

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MEMO

To: Parochial Clergy and Senior Wardens
From: Bishop Matt Gunter
Date: October 28, 2020
Re: Visitation Dates for 2021-22

My Visitation to each congregation of the diocese is a great joy. Meeting members of our churches and breaking bread with them reinforces the unity of the Church. And then there was Covid. It has disrupted many things in our communal life. It has, does and continues to disrupt my ability to make Visitations. After consideration of how to do visitations through Easter of 2022, here is the plan going forward.

Visitation Form – Worship

Because of the pandemic's uncertainty, the form of Visitation will be determined two weeks prior to the date. Communication and planning can be done leading up to the date, but we need to be open to the possibility that the plan may change at the last minute. You will receive a digital copy of the "office of bishop" flyer to share with your members.

Option 1 – In Person Eucharist: My preferred option. If limitations allow and it can be done safely with low risk, I will be physically present to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Local conditions will be considered (e.g. if services are livestreamed, the average Sunday attendance) and the service will not include Confirmations or Receptions (see below). If able, we will have some type of after worship visit such as a socially distanced outside gathering or an "in your pews" time of fellowship. These decisions will be made two weeks prior.

Option 2 – Zoom Morning Prayer: My secondary option. I will lead Morning Prayer via Zoom. Not all may be able to access Zoom via internet, but there is a phone in options as well. This is not ideal; however Zoom Morning Prayer allows us to worship together. Immediately following there will be time for Zoom fellowship.

Visitation Connection – Beyond Worship

In addition to worship, I welcome an additional “beyond worship” opportunity.

Option A – Joining the Vestry: If pandemic limitations allow, I can attend a Vestry meeting in-person. If not, then via Zoom. I would share for about 10 minutes and then take questions. I would be a quiet observer during the rest of the meeting.

Option B – Joining a Group: If pandemic limitations allow, I can attend a small group meeting in-person. If not, then via Zoom. This could be a Bible study, or discussion group, or even a Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting. I am open to join any small group activity in your church, simply to be present.

Option C – Joining a Special Event: If pandemic limitations allow, I can attend a special event in person. If not, then via Zoom. This might be church movie night or concert or game night. I am open to join in any special event activity in your church, simply to be present.

Before the Visit

Here are the steps you need to do leading up to the Visitation.

1. Before Thanksgiving: Visit diofdl.org/visitation and select a preferred date of visitation. We ask each congregation to complete the form (even if you do not have a preferred date).
2. Early December: An official visitation calendar will be published.
3. After calendar published: Make sure the date is added to your church calendar and notify your members of the date.
4. One month before: Write and send me a one- to two- page summary report on the state of the congregation, spiritual and temporal. What are its joys and challenges?
5. Two weeks before: The Diocesan Office will be in touch to finalize arrangements.
6. After arrangements: Communicate the Visitation information to all members.

Confirmations & Receptions

In the hope of being able to gather in-person, we plan to hold a regional Confirmation and Reception services on Saturday, May 22. One will be in the western part of the diocese at 10:30 a.m. and a second in the eastern part at 4:00 p.m. Attendance is limited to those being confirmed or received and sponsors or immediate family. We plan to livestream the service. A Fall 2021 date will be determined later. The date is firm, so pray we will have the ability to gather.