



Bishop's Office Protocol

Bishop Appointment Requests

Bishop Wright is available for office visits Monday - Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for urgent matters, if applicable. Friday is Bishop Wright's day off. To schedule an appointment, please contact the Executive Ministry Coordinator at ibarrow@episcopalatlanta.org or call 404-601-5320 Ext. 111. Please note that all appointments are scheduled for 30 minutes. In some cases, Bishop Wright may request that your appointment with him be scheduled after a face-to-face meeting with a Canon staff member.

Requests should be sent via email (add in subject line: urgent or appointment) and include the following:

- Purpose for visit
- Preferred days and times
- Outline or summary of discussion topic(s)

To schedule an appointment with Bishop Whitmore, email bishopkeith@episcopalatlanta.org. Bishop Wimberly is available for parish visitations scheduled by the Executive Ministry Coordinator.

Visitations

The Bishop is the spiritual and temporal leader of the congregation. As such, the Bishop is not a guest. The Bishop is an extension of the pastoral leadership for the congregation. Whatever the occasion for the visit, the Bishop is there to strengthen the ministry of the local congregation.

Visitations will be scheduled in such a way as to balance the following priorities:

- the length of time since the last pastoral visitation;
- the need to schedule episcopal rites: major parish anniversaries, dedications of new buildings, groundbreakings, etc. **Please note:** It may be necessary to schedule these on days other than Sunday);
- particular pastoral needs of the parish;
- the celebration of the feast of title or other significant event in the life of the parish;
- The celebration of a New Ministry.

- **Directions**

Send specific driving instructions from Atlanta, including approximate driving time. Maps are helpful.

- **On Arrival at the Church**

- Reserve a parking space, when possible or appropriate.
- Assign a host or hostess in advance.

- Give the host/hostess specific instructions on where the Bishop may go for a moment to relax and be refreshed after the trip in preparation for the worship occasion, particularly if the trip is one hour or more.

Clergy New to the Diocese

All clergy new to the Diocese, whether licensed or canonically resident, will be invited to attend an orientation session at a venue chosen by the Bishop. This orientation typically takes place at Presbyters Conference.

Learning to Lead (L2L) is a seminar designed for all priests newly ordained or new to the Diocese of Atlanta. It seeks to instill in participants an understanding of leadership as activity and seeing it as the act of mobilizing a group to make progress on their toughest challenges. Newly ordained priests **MUST** complete two years in L2L. All other clergy new to the diocese are required to participate in L2L for one year which convenes monthly September through May.

Attendance at Meetings

All active clergy are required to attend the annual Presbyters Conference, Annual Diocesan Council in November, as well as any called meetings of Council. Clergy also are expected to attend Clericus meetings and Clergy Days, which the Bishop may schedule from time to time. Licensed presbyters are requested to attend the annual Presbyters Conference and are encouraged to attend other clergy gatherings. Retired clergy are welcome to attend.

Canonical Residence/Letters Dimissory

In order to apply for canonical residence, rectors must have a full-time, stipendiary position (40 hours per week) at a church or institution of the Diocese of Atlanta.

Rectors are required to present Letters Dimissory within three months of their appointment as rector/vicar (Title III, 9.4). Send email requests to kbreedlove@episcopatlanta.org.

The bishop will not accept Letters Dimissory until the hourly/stipendiary criteria is met, the bishop has determined that accepting Letters Dimissory is appropriate, or the Bishop has instructed the clergyperson to request them.

➤ Presbyters

When a call to the Diocese of Atlanta has been issued and accepted, rectors should request Letters Dimissory from the Ecclesiastical Authority in the diocese of your canonical residence. Request that Letters Dimissory be sent to The Rt. Rev. Robert C. Wright, 2744 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA. 30305.

Assistants, Associates, and Curates must be licensed and after 18 months the bishop will consider your application to receive your Letters Dimissory.

➤ **Deacons**

Unless a deacon has been licensed in the Diocese of Atlanta, the clergy may not serve as deacon for more than two months. A deacon may not transfer Letters Dimissory without written consent from the Bishop of Atlanta (C&C, III.7.6).

➤ **Interim/Retired Clergy**

The Bishop does not accept Letters Dimissory for interim clergy or retired clergy.

Directories

➤ **Online Clergy Directory**

The online Clergy Directory is for diocesan clergy only and is posted on the website. A password supplied by the Diocesan Office and Adobe Acrobat Reader are required to open it. To request the password, contact the Transitions Office, Office of the Bishop at (404) 601-5320, Ext. 110. To keep the clergy directory as correct and current as possible, please complete the *Clergy Contact Update Form* on the diocese's website - <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Clergy/> (About the Diocese / Clergy Pages).

➤ **Supply Clergy**

Supply clergy, those clerics who are available to substitute for a rector or vicar for worship services, are listed in the online Supply Clergy Directory. All requests to be added to and removed from the directory can be submitted by completing the *Clergy Contact Update Form* on the diocese's website - <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Clergy/> (About the Diocese / Clergy Pages).

According to Canon 10.4, the Senior Warden or a designated lay leader is responsible for arranging supply clergy. A list of clergy who are available to supply and the current standard rates for hiring supply clergy are available on the diocesan website.

➤ **Licensed Clergy**

Licensed clergy are welcome in the Diocese and are encouraged to participate fully in its life. In addition, licensed clergy are required to make an annual report to the Bishop and to request licensing for the next calendar year, if that is their desire. If no report or request for licensing is received, they will be removed from the list of licensed clergy and must reapply to be reinstated.

Licensed clergy are reminded that they are to comply with Canon & Constitution, I.6.2, making an annual report to the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are canonically resident.

Licensed clergy serving in congregations are expected to register for Diocesan Council. Although diocesan canons do not provide such licensed clergy a vote at Council, it is customary to grant them seat and voice when the Council organizes for business. Only those clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese of Atlanta may vote; other clergy have a vote in the Diocese in which they are canonically resident.

Licensed clergy in congregations may register for Diocesan Council as visitors and are encouraged to do so.

Remarriage Petitions

NOTE: All petitions must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the proposed wedding date.

The following information must be provided:

1. Full legal names and ages of both parties to the proposed marriage.
2. Name(s) of the Episcopal congregation(s) in which these persons are active members.
3. Name(s) of the former spouse(s).
4. Date(s) of the final divorce decree(s): For a second marriage, a waiting period of one year from the date of the final decree is required. Copy of the decree must accompany each petition. If the former spouse is deceased in lieu of a divorce, a copy of the death certificate or copy of the service bulletin should accompany the remarriage petition.
5. If any children of the divorced spouse are minors, a statement of the court-ordered financial arrangements for their support and whether all such payments are current.
6. Based upon counseling with the couple, a separate statement from the clergyperson as to why the prior marriage(s) failed, why the couple feels the proposed marriage will be different, and how the couple intends to place God at the center of their marriage and home.
7. Based upon your counseling with the couple, a separate statement from the clergyperson affirming that he or she is firmly convinced that the petition should be granted and giving reasons for this opinion.

Continuing Education Report

The following standards regarding the continuing education of priests and deacons apply:

- All full-time, stipendiary priests shall take 40 Contact Hours of Continuing Education annually.
- All active deacons shall take 20 Contact Hours of Continuing Education annually.
- A Contact Hour is defined as each hour the student and instructor are together in a learning situation, as distinguished from a Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

Reports for each year should be completed online through the diocese's website and submitted by the end of December, and no later than Jan. 31 of the following year. You must attach all supporting documents (copies of certificates of attendance and completion received for all Continuing Education, as well as courses not offered through the Diocese of Atlanta) to the online form in order to obtain confirmation of your report submission.