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# Episcopal Church Style Guide

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**By:** The Public Affairs Office

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The official name of the church is The Episcopal Church.

When writing about the Episcopal Church, please follow these guidelines:

- In the first reference, the full name of the church is preferred: The Episcopal Church.
- When referring to church members, the term "Episcopalian" is preferred.

We elect a Presiding Bishop, who is our chief pastor and primate of the church. Chosen by the House of Bishops from one of its members, the Presiding Bishop serves for nine years, or until normal retirement age, if that occurs first. In formal usage, he or she is known as "The Most Reverend," usually abbreviated to "The Most Rev." His or her first name (or preferred forename) is always used, together with an initial, if applicable (e.g., "The Most Rev. John A. Smith", or "The Most Rev. A. John Smith").

All other bishops should be addressed as above, but using the form "The Rt. Rev." Priests and deacons are referred to as "The Rev."

Our church is organized into dioceses, and there is at least one diocese in each state. However, some states have two or more dioceses. For example, we have a Diocese of New Jersey, but in the northern part of the state there is a Diocese of Newark. Likewise, there is a Diocese of Texas, but there are several other dioceses in that state.

The bishop with jurisdiction of a diocese is usually known as the "diocesan bishop," and is sometimes known as the "Ordinary." He or she may have other bishops to assist, who are referred to as "bishops suffragan" and are elected in the same way that bishops are, by representatives of the members of the diocese. The bishops suffragan have no jurisdiction, however, they may be assigned

responsibility of specific areas and be delegated some authority by the diocesan. For example, the Diocese of New York, which comprises 10 counties in the southern part of the state, has three bishops to assist the diocesan, and each is assigned a specific area of the diocese.

In addition to bishops suffragan, other bishops, usually those who have resigned or retired from dioceses in which they were first called to serve, may serve in a similar capacity to suffragans. These are sometimes called “assistant bishops” or “assisting bishops,” or even, “bishop assisting.” For example, the Bishop of California has four retired bishops with the title of “Assisting Bishop,” all of whom have retired, but who continue to work to a greater or lesser extent.

There are several honorary titles in use. Senior members of the staff at a cathedral are usually given the title of “Canon.” Most of these are priests, in which case they are known as “The Rev. Canon.” Occasionally, a lay person with special responsibilities is given the title of Canon, in which case they are properly addressed simply as “Canon.”

Each diocese has a cathedral, usually purpose-built, or a “pro-cathedral,” usually a fairly large church that serves as a cathedral in the absence of a full cathedral. A few dioceses have more than one cathedral. It is usual to have a dean, who acts as head of the “chapter” or governing body of the cathedral. Some bishops prefer to retain full authority in their cathedral, in which case they may appoint a provost.

How do I address clergy?

Title	Written	Salutation	Spoken
Presiding Bishop	The Most Rev.	Dear Bishop	Bishop
Bishop	The Rt. Rev.	Dear Bishop	Bishop
Dean	The Very Rev.	Dear Dean	Dean
Archdeacon	The Venerable	Dear Archdeacon	Archdeacon
Canon	Canon	Dear Canon	Canon
Priest	The Rev.	Dear Mr./Ms... Dear Father/Mother	Mr./Ms. Father/Mother
Deacon	The Rev.	Dear Mr./Ms... Dear Deacon	Mr./Ms. Deacon

## Resources:

■ [Brand Guidelines For The Episcopal Church \(Http://Www.Episcopalchurch.Org/Files/Attached-Files/Tec-Styleguide-V5.Pdf\)](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/attached-files/tec-styleguide-v5.pdf)

■ [Tec-Styleguide-Spanish-04.04.12.Pdf \(Http://Www.Episcopalchurch.Org/Files/Attached-Files/Tec-Styleguide-Spanish-04.04.12.Pdf\)](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/attached-files/tec-styleguide-spanish-04.04.12.pdf)