



## What is the Role of a Bishop?

One of the three orders of ordained ministers in the church, Bishops are charged with the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. Bishops represent Christ and his church, and they are called to provide Christian vision and leadership for their dioceses. An “episcopal” church is a church governed by bishops, and “episcopal” services are led by bishops.

*This piece outlines the roles and characteristics applicable to all Bishops.  
See “Types of Bishops” for the varieties of ways these duties can be carried out.*

Bishops stand in the apostolic succession, maintaining continuity in the present with the ministry of the Apostles. Bishops serve as chief pastors of The Episcopal Church, exercising a ministry of oversight and supervision, with responsibility for the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church.

All Bishops, active and retired, are members of the House of Bishops, which meets regularly at both the Provincial and National level, to guide the Church both spiritually and administratively.

Episcopal services include:

- Ordination and Consecration of Bishops,
- Ordination of Priests,
- Ordination of Deacons,
- Celebration of a New Ministry, and
- Consecration of a Church or Chapel.

Bishops also preside at services of Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation.

Bishops bless altars and fonts, and the blessing of chalices and patens and church bells are traditionally reserved for the bishop.

Bishops-elect are ordained and consecrated after consent has been received from a majority of the diocesan standing committees and from a majority of the bishops exercising jurisdiction in the Episcopal Church. (If the episcopal election takes place within three months before General Convention, the consent of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies is required instead.)

Three bishops are required to participate in the ordination and consecration of a bishop.

Given the role of a bishop, gifts of discernment, teaching, wisdom, and pastoral sensitivity, are important. A bishop should have demonstrated skills in conflict resolution and listening. A bishop should also be a theologian and faithful student of Scripture. Their life should be deeply rooted in prayer and he/she should be able to articulate the core doctrines of the Christian faith and live out the Great Commandment (Love God and love your neighbor, see Mk.12:28-34) and the Great Commission (Go and make disciples of all nations, see Matt. 28: 16ff).

If you have any questions or comments, please submit an inquiry to the Discernment Committee on the Diocese’s Transition web page:  
<https://dioceseofeaston.org/transition/>