



Installation



of a BISHOP

LAYING ON HANDS

When installing a bishop, the laying on of hands with prayers for the Holy Spirit is a visible reminder of the newly elected bishop's calling, which publicly marks the continuity between this bishop's particular call and the ministry of oversight in the whole church throughout the ages.

Who participates

At least three bishops in historic succession are to be included in the laying on of hands. These bishops may be from this church or from churches in a full communion relationship with the ELCA. One of these bishops in historic succession shall be a bishop of The Episcopal Church.

In addition to bishops in historic succession, other ELCA bishops, as well as judicatory leaders from churches with which the ELCA is in full communion, may participate. Bishops of the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, especially where a companion synod relationship exists, are an especially important sign of partnership. Be clear with all who are invited to participate regarding when and how this will happen.

How it happens

Because this action is integral to the service of installation, the highest priority should be placed on visibility. It is tempting to "expand the circle" and include more than the participants listed above. This is likely to lead to confusion about how or why some were invited to participate and others were not, while creating a visual barrier between the bishop-elect and the assembly.

Participants in the laying on of hands should be standing near the bishop-elect during the rite of installation in a semicircle that is open to the rest of the assembly. As the presiding bishop lays hands on the bishop-elect and prays for the Holy Spirit, the other participants may join in laying hands on the bishop-elect. Alternately, each, one at a time, may lay on hands in silence during the singing of the hymn of invocation and end with the prayer spoken by the presiding bishop as she/he alone lays on hands. In this instance, other bishops could easily move to a position that indicates their participation but does not obscure visibility.

The bishop-elect must consult with the presiding bishop well before the installation rehearsal when considering involving people other than those listed above in the laying on of hands prior to the day of the service.