

Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

“Guidelines for Leaders” - Chapter 8

Dedication of Churches



Chapter 7 of these Guidelines explained the steps that need to be taken when you plan to erect a new church building. This chapter is about the steps to take when you are preparing to ask the Bishop to come and dedicate the building.

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa has a number of canonical requirements which are linked to various forms. This chapter introduces you to those forms, and all that must be done before the dedication can take place. You will see that all these requirements are designed to make sure that the church is properly registered in the name of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist and that everything is in place for worship and ministry.

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist

1. (E5) List of Things Required Before a Church May Be Dedicated

Before a church or a burial ground is dedicated, the following instruments should be prepared. Your Archdeacon (who is a member of Diocesan Trustees) and the Diocesan Registrar can help you with them.

- 1) The Deed of Conveyance or Donation or other Title of the ground and such other documents as shall be required to vest the ground in the Diocesan or Provincial Trustees.
- 2) The Petition to the Bishop to dedicate accompanied if possible, by a diagram, or otherwise an accurate description, setting forth the abuttals and specific measurements in metres of the building and ground respectively, to be signed by the incumbent and the churchwardens
- 3) A notice of the Bishop’s intention to dedicate the church or burial ground, with the day and hour appointed for it, is to be fixed on the church door at least three days beforehand. The burial ground or other precincts of the church are to be properly enclosed, fenced and completed with gates and pathways.

The church is to be completed and furnished with the following requirements:

- ✠ A lectern Bible
- ✠ A Book of Common Prayer and “An Anglican Prayer Book”
- ✠ A Font of sufficient size with a cover
- ✠ A Holy Table or Alter
- ✠ A Credence Table
- ✠ A fair Linen Cloth and other linen for use at the Holy Communion.

- ✦ Proper vessels for the due administration for the Holy Communion and an alms dish (or bag)
- ✦ A Prayer Desk Pulpit and/or Lectern
- ✦ A Fireproof Safe
- ✦ A Table of prohibited Degrees of Marriage Registers of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Burials and a Service Register
- ✦ A professional valuation of the building for insurance purposes.

2. (E3) Petition to Dedicate a Church

This form (see p 38) is the formal request to the Bishop to dedicate the church. It should be submitted to your Archdeacon, who will complete form E6 and submit them both to the Bishop.

Once The Bishop and Registrar are both satisfied that all requirements have been met, they will sign this Petition to give permission for the dedication to take place.

3. (E6) Certificate by the Archdeacon

After receiving form E3 from the parish, the Archdeacon is required to visit and inspect the new church to make sure that all the requirements in form E5 have been met. The Archdeacon will advise you if there are things still to be done.

Once he/she is satisfied that everything is in order, the Archdeacon will complete the certificate that the building is ready for dedication (E6 -see p 39) and submit it to the Bishop and Registrar with form E3.

4. (E7) Notice of Intention to Dedicate

Having received the necessary forms, and once the Registrar as signed form E3, the Bishop will issue the Notice of Intention to Dedicate (E7 - see p 39). The date and time will be agreed by the Bishop and Parish Executive. This notice should be read to the members of the parish and placed on the door or notice board of the church that will be dedicated.

5. Service of Dedication

The Bishop has a special liturgy for the service of dedication which he will give to the Parish Executive. It normally takes place in the context of the Eucharist, and is a great time of celebration.

During this service the Bishop will give the Rector or Priest in Charge and Churchwardens the Deed of Dedication - which should be framed and mounted in the church or kept safely.

If you prepare well by following all the steps outlined above, it will make life easier for everyone, and you will be ready to use the church building for worship, ministry and mission.

(E.3) Petition To Dedicate A Church

To be completed by the Parish Executive

To the Right Reverend by Divine Permission Bishop/Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

We, the Incumbent and Churchwardens of the Parish of in the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist respectfully inform you:

- 1) That with the consent of the Diocesan Trustees a church has been erected on

(Note: describe in full)

A plan of the said church and the site is annexed hereto.

- 2) That it is necessary that the said church should be dedicated and set apart for the celebration of Divine Service.

Wherefore we ask that you dedicate the said church in the Parish of to the honour of Almighty God and to his service and worship, in accordance with the use and order of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA); and that the said church may be known by the name of

..... (Incumbent)

..... (Churchwarden)

..... (Churchwarden)

Date.....

To be completed by the Bishop

We hereby grant the petition of the above petitioners.

Dated at this day of..... in the year.....

..... (Bishop)

To be completed by the Diocesan Registrar

I hereby certify that the Deed of Transfer (or other deed of title) with diagram annexed thereto, dated the day of in the year referred to in the above petition, has been duly passed in favour of and the said deed is now in the Diocesan Registry.

Dated at this day of..... in the year.....

..... (Diocesan Registrar)

(E.6) Certificate By The Archdeacon That A Building Is Ready For Dedication

To the Right Reverend Bishop/Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

This is to certify that on the day of in the year I visited the church at....., and found that the building is suitable and properly furnished and equipped for the purpose of divine worship and the performance of rites and ceremonies in accordance with the Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and the Regulations of this Diocese and is ready for dedication.

Signed

Archdeacon of

Date

(E.7) Notice Of Intention to Dedicate

..... by Divine Permission, Bishop/Bishop Suffragan of St Mark the Evangelist

To the Rector, Churchwardens and Parish Councillors of the Parish of

We greet you in the name of the Lord.

Whereas a petition has been addressed to us by yourselves asking us to dedicate a church at

And whereas the Archdeacon has certified that the said church is properly furnished and ready for dedication:

Now therefore we give notice of our intention, God willing to dedicate the said church on the day of in the year at and we bid you to cause notice of this our intention to be given to the parishioners of the Parish of

Signed (Bishop)