

Who Will Be Our New Bishop?



The Episcopal Church

Your church is part of the Episcopal Church, which has churches all over the world.

This is the shield of the Episcopal Church.

The shield is a history lesson for our church.

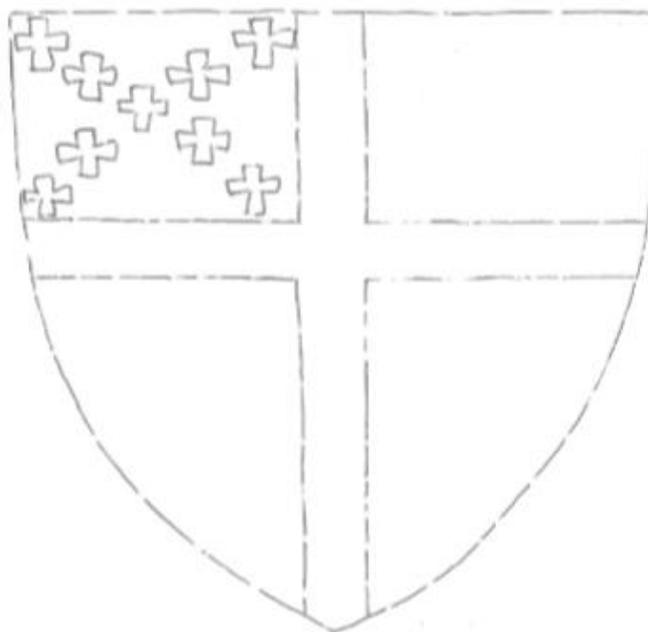
The Episcopal Church in America was founded in 1789, as a separate group from the Church of England.

The shield is red, white, and blue, the same colors as our American flag.

The whole background is white with a red St. George's cross. St. George is the patron saint of the Church of England.

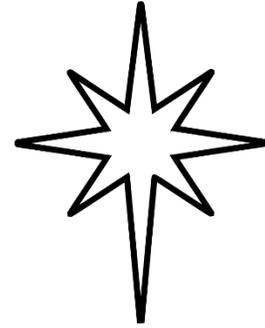
Just like the American flag, the section in the top left corner is blue. In that section, there are 9 small crosses that represent the original nine dioceses of the USA in 1789.

The "X" formation is in remembrance of St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. This reminds us that the Church of Scotland ordained **Samuel Seabury** to be the first American BISHOP in 1784.



The Diocese of Bethlehem

The United States is a big place, so the Episcopal Church divides it into 9 provinces. The provinces are then divided into dioceses.

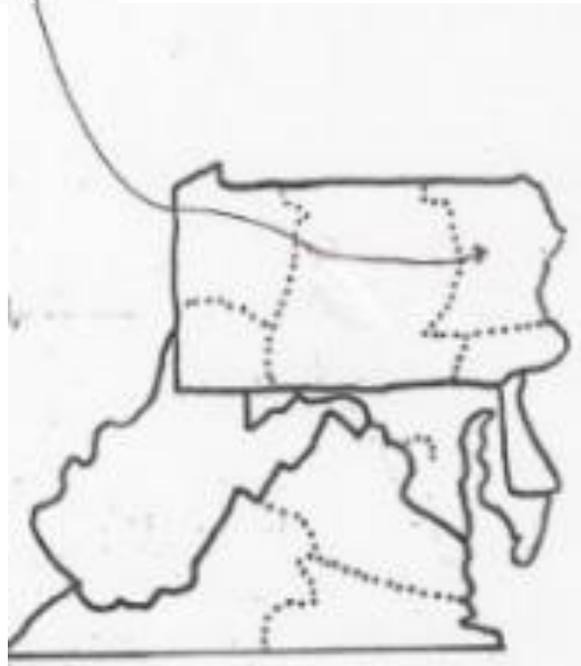


Dioceses are to the national church as the states are to our country.

Our Diocese is part of Province 3, which includes all of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, DC.

Notice that there are five Dioceses in Pennsylvania:

- The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh
- The Diocese of Pennsylvania
- The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania
- **The Diocese of Bethlehem**



Color the Dioceses in Pennsylvania

The Seal of Our Diocese

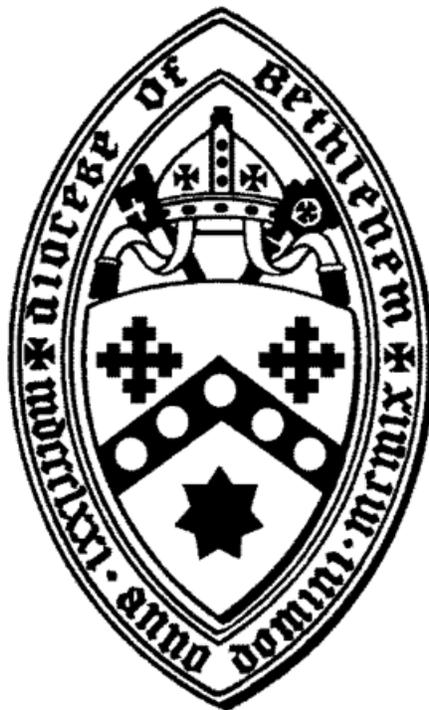
Just like the Episcopal Church has a shield as a symbol, each diocese has a seal.

This is the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem Seal. The overall shape is called a vesical. It represents a fish, an ancient Christian symbol.

The crest is a mitre, key, and crozier - symbols for the Episcopacy.

The Roman numerals tell us about our history.

- MDCCCLXXI = 1871. This is the year the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania was founded, which included Bethlehem.
- MCMIX = 1909. This is the year the Diocese of Bethlehem separated and became its own diocese.



Our Next Bishop

The Bishop is a priest specially ordained to lead the diocese. The Bishop acts as the authority of Christ in our diocese. His or her role is to teach and care for the spiritual needs of the priests and people of the diocese.

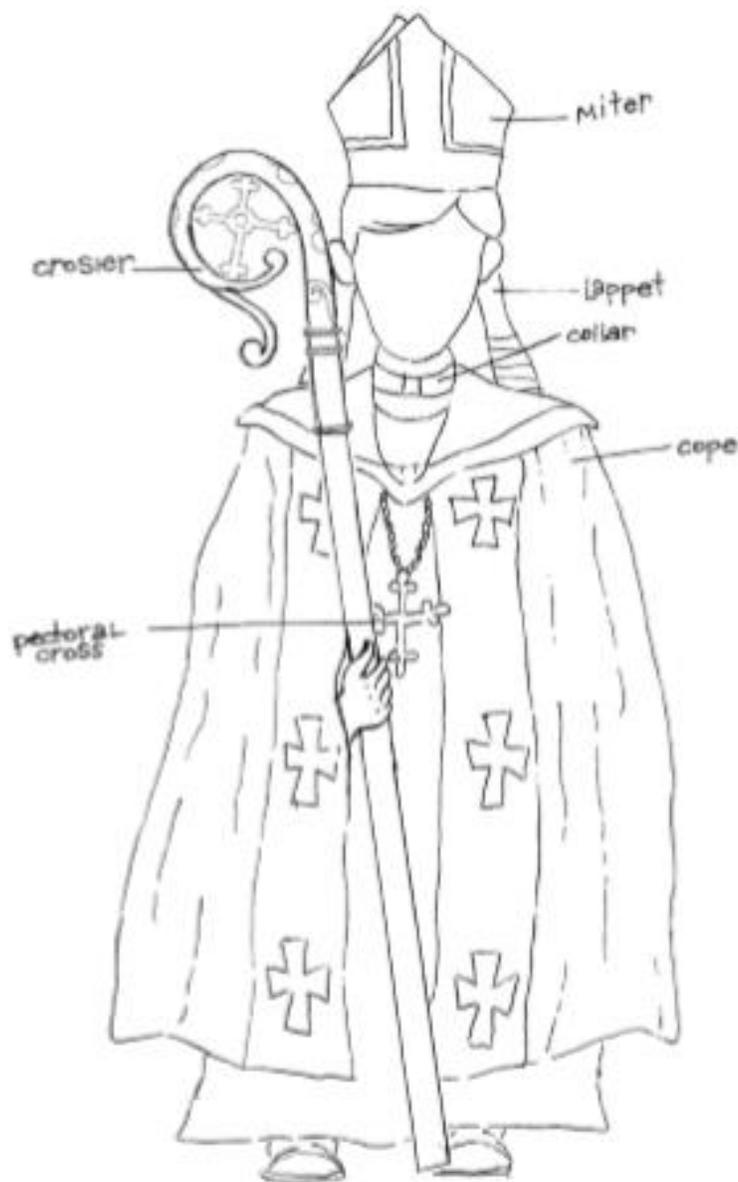
Bishops visit each church regularly. They baptize and confirm members and ordain priests and deacons of the diocese.

Our new Bishop will be elected. Every priest and deacon get a vote. The laity (the people of the church) vote. Each parish has at least one laity vote; more are given based on how many people there are in the parish.

A Bishop can be a man or a woman.

The President Bishop (the Bishop of the entire Episcopal Church) is Michael Curry. He will be here to help consecrate our new bishop.

A Bishop wears special clothes when they visit.



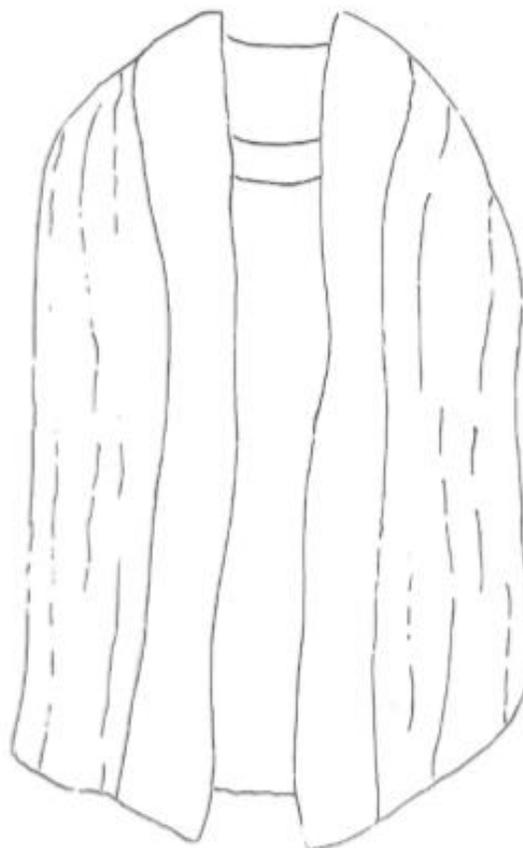
The Cope - A Shepherd's Cloak

The Cope is a long cape worn when the Holy Eucharist is celebrated.

It is like a shepherd's cloak that could shelter a lamb.

The Cope can be white or any color of the church year.

The Cope can be plain, or it can have a design on it. It is up to the Bishop who wears it.



The Mitre - A Special Hat



The Mitre is a symbol of the Bishop's authority. It is a folding, pointed hat with lappets that drape down the back of the neck.

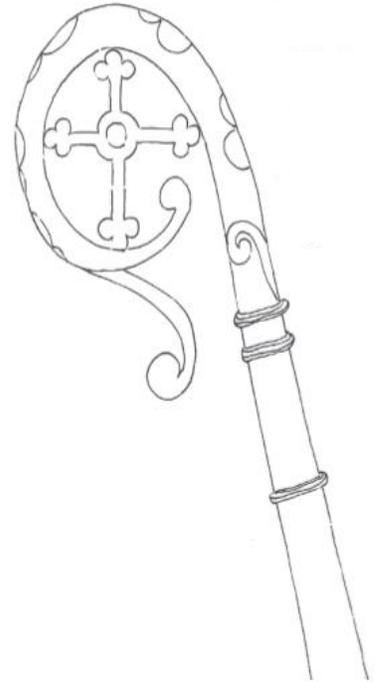
It generally matches the cope. The top is shaped like the flames of Pentecost.

The Crozier - A Shepherd's Staff

A Bishop carries a crozier to symbolize that he or she is the shepherd of his or her flock.

The crozier is a walking stick to show that the bishop's call is to travel near and far to preach the Gospel.

The curved end is like the crook a shepherd uses to lead lambs along, and the pointed end symbolizes the bishop's role in defending the faith.

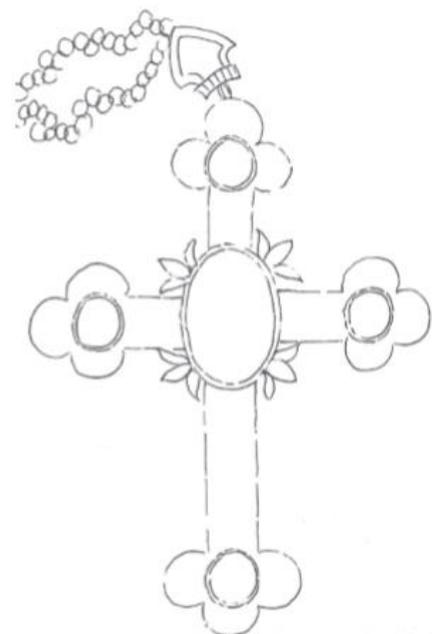


The Pectoral Cross

The Bishop's pectoral cross is usually a large cross hanging from the neck by a cord or chain that reaches far down on the chest, below the heart.

It can be up to 6 inches long!

Like all other Bishop's signs of authority, the Bishop has the say over whether this cross will be plain or ornate.



The Bishop's Ring - A Signature Seal

A new Bishop receives a special ring as a gift when consecrated. Sometimes it is handed down from the previous bishop, and sometimes it is made new.

Like a wedding ring, it is a symbol of commitment, the bishop's commitment to the Church and the people under his or her care. Most bishops' rings are often set with an amethyst stone, which is purple - remember that purple is the bishop's special color.



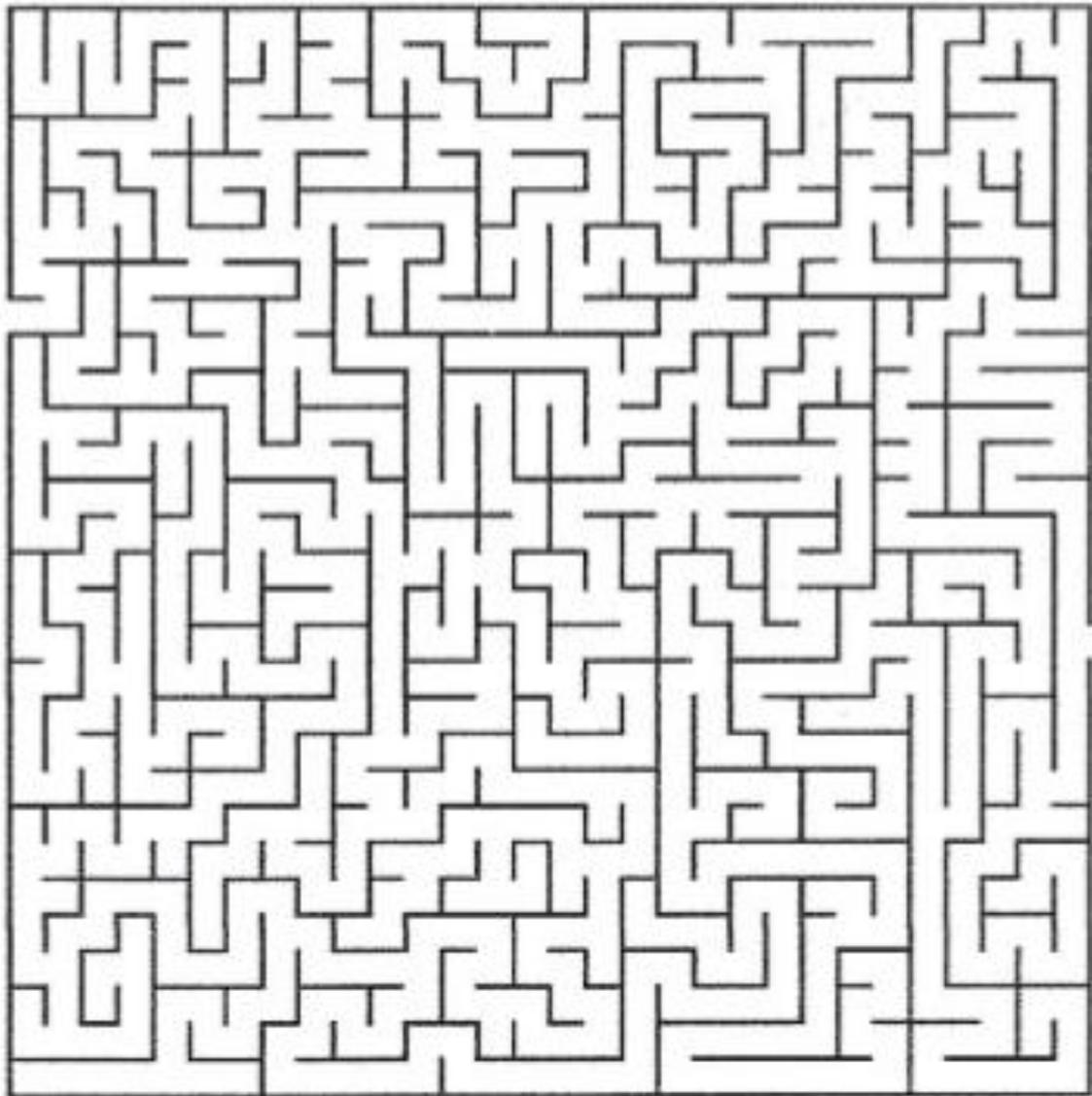
The Cathedra - A Special Seat

The bishop has a special chair or "throne" that is reserved for the Bishop.

Having this chair in your church symbolizes that the Bishop, rather than the parish priest, is the authority over the local church.



Help the Bishop Find Your Church



A publication of the Diocese of Bethlehem.
A special thanks to the Diocese of Alabama and the
Diocese of Central Pennsylvania for sharing their work.

