

Diocese of Southwest Florida



Guidelines for Licensed Lay Ministry

GUIDELINES FOR LICENSED LAY MINISTRIES

Diocese of Southwest Florida

Background

The Catechism declares that the mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

At our baptisms, we are initiated into the body of Christ and receive a baptism by water and the Holy Spirit whereby we are given gifts which we bring to the body for the sake of the ministry of the Church. Title III, Canon 4 (Of Licensed Ministries) specifically provides six specialized ministries, among the many ministries of the Episcopal Church. They are:

- Pastoral Leader
- Worship Leader
- Preacher
- Eucharistic Minister
- Eucharistic Visitor
- Catechist

The Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge may request the Bishop to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise these ministries. The license may be revoked by the Bishop upon request of or upon notice to the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge. In renewing the license, consideration shall be given to the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge. Any person licensed in this Diocese may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in this Diocese or another Diocese only at the invitation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.

Each of these specialized ministries calls for specialized training. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of these lay ministers are established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry (COM). Training is to be provided by the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge or by the School for Ministry Development (SMD) as appropriate. Day to day oversight and accountability of these ministries are under the direction of the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge of that congregation or community of faith.

Licensed Lay Ministries

A person licensed for any of these specialized ministries must be a confirmed communicant in good standing (unless in extraordinary circumstances be a communicant in good standing). They are to be selected, trained, and deployed based on diocesan guidelines.

Pastoral Leader

Exercise pastoral or administrative responsibilities

Guidelines for Training, Examination, and Competency include courses in Holy Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, Conduct of Worship, Use of Voice, Church History, Doctrine as found in the Creeds and the Catechism, Parish Administration, Appropriate Canons, and Pastoral Care.

Training may be provided through School for Ministry Development or equivalent training resources.

Worship Leader

Regularly leads public worship

Guidelines for Training, Examination, and Competency include practice in Conduct of Worship, Use of Voice, and Liturgy with emphasis on the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal.

Training may be provided through School for Ministry Development or equivalent training resources,

*e.g., EFM, DOCC, Kerygma, or Seminary Courses
or Parish-led courses in leading public worship.*

Preacher

Preach in the congregation of clergy exercising oversight

Guidelines for Training, Examination, and Competency include Courses in Holy Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, Conduct of Worship, Church History, Christian Ethics and Moral Theology, Doctrine as found in the Creeds and the Catechism, Pastoral Care. Training shall also be given in the Use of Voice and Homiletics.

Training may be provided through School for Ministry Development or equivalent training resources,

e.g., EFM, DOCC, Kerygma, or Seminary Courses.

Eucharistic Minister

Administer consecrated elements at Eucharistic celebration

Guidelines for Training include History of Eucharistic Ministry, Altar Guild Guidelines, Personal Preparation, Practice of Ministry in Church, Homes, Hospitals, etc.

Training may be through School for Ministry Development Courses in Eucharistic Ministry or Parish-led courses in Eucharistic Ministry.

Eucharistic Visitor

Take consecrated elements "in a timely manner" following a celebration

Guidelines for Training include History of Eucharistic Ministry, Altar Guild Guidelines, Personal Preparation, Practice of Ministry in Church, Homes, Hospitals, etc.

Training may be through School for Ministry Development Courses in Eucharistic Ministry or through its equivalent, e.g., Stephen Ministry Certification, Christian Caregiving Certification, Mourner's Path Leaders Training, Seminary Training, or Parish-led courses.

Catechist

Prepare persons for baptism, confirmation, reception, renewal of baptismal vows

Guidelines for Training, Examination, and Competency include Courses in the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, Church History, Doctrine as found in the Creeds and the Catechism, and Methods of Catechesis

Training may be through School for Ministry Development Courses, or equivalent courses found in EFM, DOCC, Kerygma, or Seminary Training.

Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors

1. The minister in charge of a congregation shall instruct the congregation through sermons, newsletters, and teachings on the reasons for commissioning lay persons for these ministries.
2. The minister in charge shall determine who needs and desires communion under the provisions of this canon, and the frequency of that ministration which is most suitable.
3. The minister in charge shall determine the number of persons required to undertake a regular schedule of extended communions. As a general rule, no person should be asked to take communion to more than two homes on a Sunday.
4. The minister in charge shall select and prepare in accordance with the diocesan guidelines suitable persons for these ministries and shall recommend them to the bishop for licensing. It is expected that licensed Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors shall do their best to pattern their lives in accordance with the teachings of Christ, striving in all things to be wholesome examples to the people of God.
5. These licenses shall be issued for a period of five (5) years and may be revoked by the Bishop upon request of or upon notice to the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge.
6. Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. (III.4., 2006 ed.)
7. It is recommended that the person to be ministered to be prayed for specifically in the Prayers of the People by the congregation on that day.
8. It is desirable that other parishioners, relatives, and friends be present to communicate with the person visited.
9. The sacrament shall be carried in a suitable container provided by the parish for this purpose.
10. If the sick person cannot receive either the consecrated Bread or the Wine, it is suitable to administer the Sacrament in one kind only.
11. Eucharistic Visitors shall not vest for the administration of Communion.
12. Eucharistic Visitors shall have recorded their ministry in the Service Register within a week of their visit.
13. The administration of the Sacrament to the persons visited should take place in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. Following the communions of the people, the Eucharistic Visitors may come forward and be commended for this ministry with the following or similar words:

*In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts,
that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's
Body and Blood. We who are many are one body, because we all share one
bread, one cup.*

Commissioning of Those Who Administer the Sacrament
(From the Book of Occasional Services)

The Celebrant says these or similar words:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Our purpose is to commission these persons in the Name of God and of this congregation to a special ministry to which they are called.

The Celebrant asks the sponsor or sponsors:

Are these persons you are to present prepared by a commitment to Christ as Lord, by regular attendance at worship, and by the knowledge of their duties, to exercise their ministry to the honor of God, and the well-being of his Church?

Sponsor: I believe they are.

The Celebrant then says these or similar words:

You have been called to a ministry in this congregation. Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with diligence?

Candidate: I will.

Celebrant: Will you faithfully and reverently execute the duties of your ministry to the honor of God, and the benefit of the members of this congregation?

Candidate: I will.

Sponsor: I present to you these persons who have been chosen and licensed to administer the sacrament in this congregation.

Antiphon (in unison)

The cup of blessing which we bless is a sharing in the Blood of Christ. The bread which we break is a sharing in the Body of Christ.

Celebrant: As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup:

Response: You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Celebrant: Let us pray. *(Silence)*
Grant, Almighty God, that those who minister the Bread of Life and cup of blessing may live in love and holiness according to your commandment, and at the last come to the joy of your heavenly feast with all your saints in light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant: In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you [N.] to administer the sacrament in this Parish [and give you this _____ as a token of your ministry].

**DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION BY EUCHARISTIC
VISITORS TO PERSONS WHO ARE ILL AND INFIRM**

The Eucharistic Visitor MAY be accompanied by other persons from the congregation.

The Eucharistic Visitor greets the people.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

Response AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Collect of the Day

Gospel of the Day, or some other passage of Scripture appropriate to the occasion.

Brief comments may be offered summarizing the sermon of that day.

Suitable prayer may be offered.

A Confession of Sin may be said

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Minister: May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Administration of the Holy Communion

Closing Prayer

O gracious God, whose Christ stretched out arms of love upon the hard wood of the cross to embrace all the peoples of the earth: We give you thanks for feeding our brother/sister with the Sacrament of that precious Body and Blood, which is the sign and instrument of our common life, and also for enriching our parish family by his/her sharing with us the food of our pilgrimage, the foretaste of that heavenly banquet of which we shall partake with all your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Minister: Let us bless the Lord.

Response: THANKS BE TO GOD.