

General Guidelines for Lay Eucharistic Ministers

Lay Eucharistic Ministers “LEM” are an essential part of worship in this Church. We simply could not have the beautiful services that we do without the team of skilled individuals that read, pray, and assist the Priest at the Altar. On behalf of the entire Church, thank you for committing to this very important ministry and helping to spread the Gospel.

Description:

A Lay Eucharistic Minister is authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Requirements:

The Bishop licenses lay Eucharistic Ministers to the Rector or Vicar. They function under the direction of a Deacon if any, or the Rector or Vicar. Lay Eucharistic Ministers must be confirmed adult communicants in good standing, meaning they must worship at regularly scheduled and special services, have an identifiable ministry in the Church and/or in the world, and they should be known to the treasurer of the congregation as one who makes a responsible pledge.

Introduction

Eucharistic Ministers serve at the Altar during Holy Eucharist by administering the Chalice “in the absence of sufficient deacons and priests.” [BCP p.408] They may also read the Old Testament and/or New Testament Lessons and/or led the Prayers of the People. In the absence of an acolyte, they may also hold the Gospel Book when the Deacon or Priest proclaims the Gospel and may assist the Deacon or Priest in preparing the Table for the Eucharist.

Before we go into specifics, we should establish some basic guidelines for Lay Eucharistic Ministers:

1. Please make your schedule and availability known to LEM Coordinator, who will periodically (monthly) produce the LEM schedule and distribute it.
2. It is your responsibility to keep track of when you are scheduled to serve. If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, you are responsible for finding a replacement and notify the LEM coordinator and Deacon.
3. Please arrive and be vested at least 15 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin.
4. Servers should always be vested in a white hooded Alb, unless directed otherwise.
5. If you make a mistake, DO NOT PANIC, just correct the error and move on with reverence.
6. These guidelines do not reflect any requirements for Covid or Covid like diseases.
7. During special services like Easter, Christmas, and days our Bishop is in attendance, some of these guidelines may be modified.

There are three duties that Lay Eucharistic Ministers may perform in our Church: Reading the lessons, Offering the Prayers, and Serving at the Altar. We will now offer specific instructions for LEM when serving at the Altar.

If you are scheduled to serve, prepare yourself by reviewing any materials (e.g. Prayers of the People) for which you may be responsible. Prepare spiritually by praying and meditatively reading the Propers (Scripture Readings for the Eucharist).

Pray for the clergy and people with whom you will be serving at the Eucharist. Pray for all the people to whom you will be administering the Chalice.

Enter into God's Presence as you meditate and pray and ask God to assist you by His grace to be an effective and eager minister at the Eucharist.

Serving at the Altar

Serving at the Altar can be intimidating to some because it can feel like being on stage. Just remember that no matter how dramatic the service may seem, this is not a performance; this is an act of divine worship. Our goal is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to do things in an orderly and properly way that glorifies God. We want everyone's attention to be focused on God, not on what we are doing.

Start of Service

Gather in the Narthex, standing on the Gospel "left" side, behind the Acolyte or Crucifer if no Acolyte, process towards the altar with about 5 feet space behind the person in front of you. Go directly to the Epistle "right" side of the Altar, do not stop. Wait for Priest and bow in unison with the Priest. Then move to your seating area.

Lectionary Readings

Read the lectionary, if directed to do so.

Gospel procession and reading

When the call is made for the "Reading of the Gospel," stand and wait until the Deacon (if no Deacon, it will be the Celebrant) starts to move to the front of the Altar, then you go to the Epistle side of the Altar and bow with the Deacon. Then follow the Crucifer out; when the Crucifer stops and turns around, move up and stand directly in front of the Crucifer and turn around. The Deacon will hand you the Gospel Book. When it is time for the Gospel to be read, the Deacon will take back the Gospel Book, raise it to the congregation, and will hand it back to you.

Once the Gospel is read, the Deacon will take back the Gospel Book, raise it to the congregation. Then moving in unison with the Deacon, move over to the right side of the aisle and let the Crucifer move back to the Altar. Following about 5' behind the Crucifer, go back to the Altar, wait until the Deacon sets down the Gospel Book, bow in unison with Deacon, then move back to your seat.

Just a few tips: Remember to stand and sit in unison with the Celebrant and/or Deacon it looks so much better. Keep an eye on the Celebrant and Deacon throughout the service in case they need you.

Sermon

This is your time to listen and hear what our preacher has to say. Enjoy, be filled with today's teaching

Prayers of the People

Be prepared to read the Prayers of the People if the Celebrant or Deacon asks you.

Holy Communion

Once the Altar has been set, move up to the epistle corner on the altar, the same distance-space from Celebrant as the Deacon. (Note: only Ordained persons and a Deacon in training are permitted to set & clear the Altar for Holy Communion)

When the Celebrant completes the words "The Gifts of God for the People of God... by faith, with thanksgiving." . Go to the Credence table, pick up the extra Chalice and put it on the Altar and put next to the Missal book. Then move over next to/near the Deacon to receive Communion.

The Deacon will fill your Chalice with wine; you receive the Chalice and purificator or the bread (if assigned) and administer to the individuals in the congregation as they kneel or stand in front of the ministers.

You will then move to the Gospel side, near the choir, and communicate the parishioners moving to the center, then back to the Gospel side again as needed. (Note: if there is not a Deacon or another Priest present, you will communicate the whole congregation.)

Guide the Chalice to the mouth of the communicant, which is easiest if they take hold of the base or the cup itself. Rotate the Chalice a 1/4 turn between each communicant, while wiping the rim. While it is best never

to let go of the Chalice in most cases, allow the communicant to control the flow of wine.

Provide for intinction by taking the Host from the communicant, dip about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of Host in the wine, and place on the communicant's tongue. Do not allow the communicant to “dip” the Host.

*The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words
BCP pg 325*

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.
[*Amen.*]

or with these words

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [*Amen.*]

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [*Amen.*]

For continuity, it is best if the LEM's words of administration are from the same rite and the same format as that used by the Celebrant.

If you need additional wine, fill your Chalice from the ewer, which will be on the corporal. Do not fill more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Only consecrated items are on the corporal. NEVER use unconsecrated wine or bread. If we run out of wine or bread, get with the Celebrant so the additional wine/bread can be consecrated.

Be alert and look out into the congregation to see if an usher indicates a parishioner needs Communion at their pew, if so, alert the Celebrant that Communion needs to be taken out to a parishioner and follow the Celebrant.

When finished, consume any leftover wine, or ask an usher to consume the wine, or place the Chalice through the small doors at the credence table. Standoff to the side, near your prelude, until the Altar has been cleared, then move back to the Epistle corner of the Altar. (Note; if Celebrant does not move up to the Altar for the final blessing or after the

final blessing when the Celebrant moves to their predue, do the same on your side.)

When Celebrant starts to move to the front of the Altar, you do the same, bow in unison with the Celebrant, then process out.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some questions which may occur to you as you begin your service as a Lay Eucharistic Minister. When in doubt, ask the Celebrant any questions or concerns you may have *before* the Eucharist.

What do I wear when serving at the Altar?

Church “traditions” may vary, but generally speaking, a white alb with hood and cincture is worn. This is fitting since, although it is often associated with ordained clergy at the Eucharist, the alb is really a *Baptismal garment*.

How do I hold the Chalice?

The stem of the Chalice usually has a “knob” on it: this should be grasped firmly, and your wrist should function as a “hinge” with which to bring the Chalice to the lips of the communicant. This allows you to be in control of the Chalice while being flexible in your movements. Many communicants will take hold of the Chalice as you move it toward them, to guide it to their mouth. *Do not* let the communicant take the Chalice from your hand, but gently follow this movement while keeping your hand on the knob on the stem of the Chalice.

Some communicants do not touch the Chalice themselves, and will expect you to guide it to their lips. Be careful. Make sure that the Chalice is in contact with the lips of the communicant, but don’t apply any pressure. Gently tip the Chalice to allow a small amount of Wine to be taken.

How do I hold the purificator (small hand towel)?

Make sure to turn the purificators “*inside-out*,” so that the embroidery is not directly in contact with the Wine. Your Altar Guild will thank you: embroidery soaked with Wine is very difficult to clean properly.

The easiest way to hold the purificator is to drape it over your index (or index and middle finger), so that it covers the palm of your hand. You can either let it hang free or put the hanging end between your ring finger and pinky finger. This allows you to control the purificator and have a “groove” between your index and middle finger to place on the lip of the Chalice as you wipe it after a person has received.

You may want to adjust the purificator several times during Communion so that more than one single area of the purificator is utilized for wiping. Wipe the lip of the Chalice gently (remember you are not *polishing* it!). Make sure to wipe both outside and *inside* the rim. Do a *visual check* from time to time to make sure there are no marks on the chalice lip. Normally, the Chalice is turned (either clockwise or counter-clockwise) after someone receives, so that each person drinks from a spot on the rim *next to* the last rather than from the same spot.

What should I say while administering the Chalice (cup)?

The phrase used when administering the Chalice up should “match” what is said by the Celebrant, who is distributing the Bread. If the Bread is given with the words “The Body of Christ, the Bread of Heaven,” you should say “The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Salvation” when offering the Cup. It is best to check with the Celebrant beforehand about their preference. The “default” phrase is “The Blood of Christ.”

What happens if the Wine is spilled?

If the Wine is spilled on the altar rail, wipe it up with the purificator immediately. At the end of the service clean the area with a purificator and water. If the Wine gets on the floor or carpet in front of the person receiving, blot up what you can with the purificator, get a new purificator, and continue with your duties. After the service let the Altar Guild know so to finish the clean up with water.

Some clergy prefer to place a purificator over a spilled Wine spot and to clean up at the end of the Service.

How do I know if a person does not wish to receive the Wine?

Generally a person will cross their chest with both arms indicating that they do not want Wine. Other people will sometimes just give you a little “wave off.” Be alert to people’s wishes.

What if someone has not consumed the Host but is holding it in their hands when I approach them with the Chalice (cup)?

The most common way of receiving Communion in our Church is by consuming the Bread and the Wine separately, one after the other.

Another method is called *Intinction*, which refers to dipping the Host (the Communion Wafer) into the Wine. If the communicant is holding the Host, take it gently from them, dip the edge (not the entire Host) into the Wine and place it on the tongue of the person.

Illustrated Glossary

Bishop's Chair



Chalice



Ciborium A silver container in which the bread is kept on the Credence table.



Credence Table The shelves behind and to the side of the Altar upon which vessels and other items are kept for the celebration of the Eucharist.



Another Credence table



Cruet A glass or silver container for wine and water used in the Eucharist.



Flagon A large silver pitcher used to carry wine at the Eucharist. Often the flagon of wine is brought to the Altar during the offertory by a member of the congregation.



Lavabo Bowl and Lavabo Towel The Lavabo Bowl is a silver dish used to wash the Celebrant's fingers after the Offertory. The Lavabo Towel is a linen cloth presented to the Celebrant by the acolyte to dry his/her fingers. The lavabo towel is presented hung over the acolyte's left arm.



Missal The Altar Book containing texts from The Book of Common Prayer.



Paten The silver plates that are used to contain the Bread for the Eucharist.



Purificator A white linen cloth used to wipe the Chalice during the administration of Communion.

I want to acknowledge that some of this information in this manual was used from the following sources;

The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida, The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, The Episcopal Cathedral of St. Philip, Atlanta Georgia, The Episcopal Diocese of Albany, NY

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The Reverend Gordon C. Sims, Deacon 2021

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. As is the case for Bishops, Priests and Deacons, 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. Thus it is not appropriate to recommend for licensing anyone whose lifestyle is an affront to the gospel, for instance, anyone known to be perpetrating fraud, a malicious gossip, or someone known to be engaging in sexual relations outside of holy matrimony.
5. These licenses shall be issued for a period of three years and may be revoked by the Bishop upon request of or upon notice to the Rector/Vicar or Priest-in-Charge.
6. When a deacon serves in a congregation, it may be advantageous for the deacon to supervise the work of the Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors.
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} ~~one~~ kind only.

11. Eucharistic Visitors shall not vest for the administration of Communion.

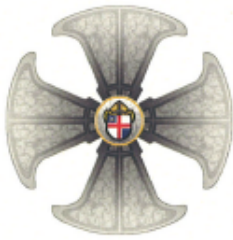
12. Eucharistic Visitors shall record their ministry in the Service Register within a week of their visit.

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.

Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors in the Diocese of Central Florida

July 2004



The Episcopal Church Diocese of Central Florida

The Right Reverend Gregory O. Brewer, Bishop

Application for license as a **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER** in the Diocese of Central Florida

"A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister 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." (Title III. 4.6)

Eucharistic Ministers must be confirmed communicants in good standing. As is the case for Bishops, Priests and Deacons, it is expected that licensed Eucharistic Ministers 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. Thus it is not appropriate to recommend for licensing anyone whose lifestyle is an affront to the gospel, for instance, anyone known to be perpetrating fraud, a malicious gossip, or someone known to be engaging in sexual relations outside of holy matrimony.

I hereby apply to the Bishop of Central Florida for licensing as a Eucharistic Minister. I am a confirmed communicant in good standing in the Episcopal Church. I subscribe to the *Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors* in the Diocese of Central Florida, and I commit myself to living by them in the exercise of this ministry.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Printed Name of Applicant

I hereby certify that the person herein applying for licensing as a Lay Eucharistic Minister in the Diocese of Central Florida has received training in accordance with the *Guidelines for Licensed Ministries*. I further certify that this person is a confirmed communicant in good standing in the Episcopal Church, and a person of exemplary character and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, as described in the Guidelines.

Signature of Rector/Vicar

Date

Name of Parish/Mission

City/Town

January 2013

*"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." - Colossians 1:28*

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