

Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers

In the Diocese of Alabama

Before requesting licensing, familiarize yourself with the requirements of (2003 or later) General Canons, Title III, Canon 4. In addition to the information contained in the above mentioned canons, the following guidance is offered.

1. The norm is no more than one (1) Eucharistic Minister per 50 baptized members per parish. In the case of parishes with 150 baptized members or less, there may be five (5) EM's appointed. These numbers are subject to negotiation if such additional assistance can be justified.
2. All licenses should be considered revoked when a Eucharistic Minister changes parishes. Licenses of Eucharistic Ministers who move into the Diocese of Alabama from other diocese will not be accepted.
3. Licenses for Eucharistic Ministers will be issued for a period of three (3) years and may, on the request of the rector, be renewed for another three (3) years. ***Regardless of the specific date on which the request is made, all licenses will be dated from the First Sunday of Advent until the Last Sunday after Pentecost of the appropriate year.*** After serving for six (6) consecutive years, however, an Eucharistic Minister must relinquish that function for at least one (1) full year before being licensed again.
4. It is a violation of the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer for a Eucharistic Minister to administer the chalice at any liturgy where there are sufficient ordained persons present.
5. The Bishop, may, at his or her discretion, require Eucharistic Ministers (and such other lay persons as are licensed to perform liturgical and pastoral functions in this diocese) to attend training events sponsored by the diocese as a condition of licensing.
6. A person holding a basic Eucharistic Minister's license also may be licensed by the bishop to serve as an Eucharistic Visitor and to take the sacrament consecrated at a principal celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sundays or other major feast days—immediately following such celebration—to those members of the parish who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the celebration. Rectors seeking such authorization for Eucharistic Visitors are to write the bishop a letter which will include the following information:

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- a. A description of the teaching given to the congregation about the ministry of Eucharist Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors
- b. A justification of the need for this ministry in the particular congregation and giving specific data as to how the Eucharist Visitor is expected to be utilized.
- c. For each Eucharistic Visitor so designated, a detailed account of that person's qualifications and training with specific attention to the basics of pastoral care and behavior in a sickroom. While the ministry of the Eucharistic Minister is functional in administering the communion, those specially licensed as these Eucharistic Visitors enable the ill or infirm to be connected to the Eucharist of their parish. As this Eucharistic Visitor is often in delicate pastoral situations requiring sensitivity and preparation, each parish engaged in this particular ministry ***must develop adequate liturgical and pastoral courses of preparation.***
- d. It is the policy of the Bishop of Alabama to license no more than one such Eucharistic Visitor for every two (2) hundred communicants per parish. Under no circumstances, however, would any parish have more than five (5) Eucharistic Visitors so authorized.

Please note that this special license will be issued for the same term and may be renewed under the same conditions as the basic Eucharistic Minister's license. Such special license may be revoked before the expiration date without revoking the basic license.

7. In taking the Holy Eucharist to those unable to be present at the celebration, note the following guidelines:
 - a. Appointments for such visitation should be made in advance. Eucharistic Visitors should not be vested while on such visits. It would be a good idea, however, to wear a name tag or parish identification card.
 - b. Eucharistic Visitors will be given vessels containing the consecrated elements at the altar immediately following the communion of the people. They will depart from the church immediately and the

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celebrant may send them out with such words of commissioning as might be appropriate for the occasion. The persons to be visited should be remembered at that time (or previously in the Prayers of the People).

- c. Eucharistic Visitors and other members of the Congregation who accompany them are not to receive Holy Communion again if they have already received at the altar prior to leaving the church. Friends or relatives present at the visitation who do not make their communion in the church may receive the Eucharist with the person being visited.
- d. The Eucharist Visitors will use only that form entitled “Communion Under Special Circumstances” on page 396 of the Book of Common Prayer and must observe the appropriate limitations (and such other instructions as may be given by the rector). The Collect and Gospel of the Day should be incorporated.
- e. At the conclusion of the visitation—or of the last visit if the Eucharist Visitor makes more than one—the Visitor is to consume reverently what remains of the consecrated elements and to cleanse the vessels and return them to the church at the first convenient opportunity. Under no circumstances is a Eucharist Visitor to retain consecrated elements as a “Reserved Sacrament”.
- f. Such visits shall be properly recorded in the liturgical service register.

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Title III, Canon 4

Of Licensed Ministries

Section I.

- a. A confirmed communicant in good standing, or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.
- b. The Presiding Bishop or the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces may authorize a member of the Armed Forces to exercise one or more of these ministries in the Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of this Canon. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons shall be established by the Bishop granting the license.

Section II

- a. The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III 4.1 (a) and may be renewed. The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.
- b. In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other

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leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving.

- c. A persons licensed in any Diocese under the provisions of this Canon may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in the same 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.

Section 3

A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop.

Section 4

A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Section 5

A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Section 6

An Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. An Eucharistic Minister acts 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.

Section 7

An Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the

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Celebration. An Eucharistic Visitor 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.

Section 8

A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.