

# HANDBOOK FOR EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF TENNESSEE  
2012



**Eucharistic Ministers**  
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## **FORWARD**

Whether you are currently a Eucharistic Minister, would like to become involved in this ministry, or have responsibility to train these ministers, this Handbook for Eucharistic Ministers will prove to be a valuable resource for any congregation. At our Baptism we joined with faithful Christians over the centuries in the eternal priesthood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To bring the sacrament of his precious Body and Blood to our brothers and sisters at the altar rail is a profound spiritual privilege. We are entrusted to carry the Gifts of God to the People of God with the Love of God. The practical guidance and advice in this handbook will enable you to do this with the dignity and respect due this Blessed Sacrament.

This Handbook was prayerfully written and assembled by the Diocese of Tennessee Vocational Diaconal Class of 2012.<sup>1</sup> It reflects not only their training as deacons, educators, and professionals in their own fields, but also their years of dedicated lay ministry. It is our intent for there to be a shared vision, common practices, and a theological understanding for the special ministries of Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor.<sup>2</sup>

Starting with an overview of lay ministries in the church and its canons, the authors provide a biblical and scriptural foundation for their readers as well as “The Nuts and Bolts of Eucharistic Ministry.” Beyond the useful and practical advice offered, the emphasis throughout this Handbook is on being a committed disciple of Jesus Christ in order to effectively minister to his people.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Under the direction of The Reverend Dr. Linda A. Hutton  
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<sup>1</sup> While much of the material in this Handbook is new, we acknowledge with thanks the liberal use of materials from the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, NY, the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and the Diocese of San Joaquin.

<sup>2</sup> Materials reflect the Canons of 2009 regarding Lay Ministries

## PREFACE

The purpose of this training handbook is to provide a resource for clergy and congregations on calling, training, and setting apart lay ministers to serve in the worship of the Church.

The *Book of Common Prayer*<sup>3</sup> defines four orders of ministers in the Church: lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. Baptism into the Covenant Community of Jesus Christ is the primary prerequisite for any ministry in the Church. Ministry in the Church has usually involved some prior training, an examination of life and ability, and a setting apart, or an expression of approval, of the person by the people, the clergy, and the bishop.

Lay ministers are called in the *Book of Common Prayer* to “take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church”<sup>4</sup> This handbook will assist congregations with the training and licensing of lay ministers who are called to serve through the worship of the Church.

This particular Handbook will be dedicated to the EUCHARISTIC MINISTER or Chalice Bearer (which is sometimes still used.)

Each church has its own customs and traditions when it comes to the practicalities of serving at the altar. The purpose of this Handbook is provide a rich background in the history, tradition, theology, and spirituality of service, and we hope that it may provide a foundation upon which churches can incorporate their own traditions.

*“In all service, the entire Christian assembly participates in such a way that the members of each order within the Church, lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons, fulfill the functions proper to their respective orders, as set forth in the rubrical directions for each service.” (BCP 13)*

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<sup>3</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, Ordination, p 510.

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, Catechism. p 855.

## **WEEK ONE**

### **Being Called**

This Handbook is intended as a resource for those who are being trained to be Eucharistic Ministers and for those who are training them.

Whether you are a new or seasoned Eucharistic Minister, there are always opportunities to learn more, develop or improve skills, and become more proficient in how we serve God and His Church. It is hoped that what is written here will be useful and instructive for you at various stages along the way in your life of service as a disciple of Christ Jesus the Lord.

There are numerous ways we are called to service as a Eucharistic Minister. For some of us, there was an inner sense that “this is what I ought to do” – and we asked our Deacon or Rector about becoming involved in this ministry. Others were asked by their Priest, Deacon, or Warden to fill a need in the parish.

Regardless of how we begin our involvement in lay ministry, the reality is that we have been called by God to do so. Jesus’ words to His first disciples apply to us as well: “You did not choose me but I chose you.”<sup>5</sup> By our obedience to that call, and by our active involvement in the ministry to which He has called us, we are sharing in the ministry of the Body of Christ, the Church.

*“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

*– Hebrews 13:20-21*

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<sup>5</sup> NSRV Bible, John, 15:16

## **The Nature of the Training Course**

The EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS TRAINING will last 4 weeks and will meet for one hour each week. Sessions may take place as an Adult Sunday School Unit or maybe as an evening dinner series. In addition to the obvious “How-to’s”--the training will involve Holy Scripture, Theology, Church History/Tradition, Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics. We will also utilize roleplaying, discussions, experiential exercises, and a final “exam” at the altar. You will be receiving your own copy of this handbook to keep for future reference. In addition, there will be handouts distributed throughout the training that will add to your resources.

It is our hope that this training will enhance, support, and enlighten you, as well as deepen your walk with Christ.

## Introduction to Lay Ministries<sup>6</sup>

Lay Ministries in the Church have witnessed tremendous growth following the liturgical renewal of Vatican II in the Roman Catholic Church [1962-65] and the revision of our own *Book of Common Prayer* [1979]. What was once a new and innovative paradigm shift in the way the Church thinks about and does ministry has now become accepted and even commonplace in most American parishes and churches.

Yet the theology behind the raising up of lay ministers in the Church is actually not new because it is thoroughly Biblical and is rooted in our Christian Tradition. St. Paul's teaching concerning the Body of Christ<sup>7</sup> clearly outlines that all Baptized Christians are called to specific and mutually complementary ministries within the Church. In the Church there were to be no "spectators." We are all called to serve.

This is reflected in the teaching of the Prayer Book. The Catechism in the BCP [p.855] states: "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons." It then outlines the scope and focus of lay ministry: the ministry of laypersons 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.

From a Biblical and theological perspective, each and every baptized Christian being called and empowered for active ministry should be normative for the Church. "Lay ministry" is simply an expression of the Church's overall ministry as the Body of Christ. As such, the ministries to which we are called are not "ours" but more properly Christ's Own ministry in His Church through us.

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<sup>6</sup> Episcopal Diocese of Albany, LEM Training Guide, For a fuller overview of the history of "Eucharistic Ministers" a good resource is Beth Wickenberg Ely's, *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers*, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing (1993) p 1-8.

<sup>7</sup> NSRV Bible, Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16

## Lay Ministries in Canon Law

The ministry of laypersons in the celebration and administration of the Holy Eucharist has certainly expanded in recent years. In the American *Book of Common Prayer* (1928), a layperson was allowed to read the Epistle [New Testament Lesson] and nothing else.

Prior to the current lay ministry canons, specially licensed lay readers administered the chalice at the Eucharist and were known as "chalice bearers." No provision was made for the administration of the host by laypersons under any other circumstances.

Nothing in the 1979 Prayer Book permitted laypersons to carry elements to persons unable to be present at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The rubrics in *The Service of Communion Under Special Circumstances* indicate that communion will be brought to the sick only by a bishop, priest, or deacon.

In the 2003 revision of the National Canons, the former canon that permitted the special licensing of those already licensed as lay readers to administer the chalice was replaced by a comprehensive canon [Title III, Canon 4] dealing with the licensing of laypersons to perform a variety of ministries.

Title III, Canon 4, Section 6 & 7 clearly distinguishes Licensed Ministers who "administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist" [called Eucharistic Ministers] from those who "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 Celebration" [called Eucharistic Visitors]. Eucharistic Ministers are similar to the former Chalice Bearer.

Both Eucharistic Ministers [administering the Chalice at the Eucharist] and Eucharistic Visitors [bringing the Sacrament to shut-ins] are "extraordinary ministries," that is, they are not to take the place of the ministry of priests and deacons at Eucharist [Diocesan Canon XI.7.B].

According to the National Canons both Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors are licensed by the Diocesan Bishop to engage in their ministries locally under the supervision of their parish's Deacon or Priest (if there is no Deacon). In the Diocese of Tennessee this licensing process takes place on the diocesan level; the Diocesan office issues licenses for Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors.

The Canons also state that Diocesan bishops establish the qualifications, guidelines, and requirements for the selection and training of these persons, who may be licensed to perform either or both of the functions permitted by the canon. In our diocese the selection and training of Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors currently takes place on the parish level. Until now, there has been no established diocesan training regarding either Eucharistic Ministers or Eucharistic Visitors. Guidelines for training, qualifications, and requirements are outlined in this Handbook.



## Glossary of Terms

**Ablutions:** The cleansing of the chalice, paten, and other vessels after the administration of Communion. This may be done at the altar or at the credence or after the dismissal.

**Absolution:** The pronouncement of God's forgiveness, after the Confession of Sin, by bishop or priest at the Eucharist, Daily Offices, or in the Reconciliation of a Penitent (BCP, 447).

**Acolyte:** A term specifically applied to one who carries a torch or a candle in processions and at other times during the liturgy. This term is also commonly interchanged with the server.

**Acclamation:** A versicle and response of praise at the beginning of the Eucharist and other services; also in Rite II, the (memorial) response of the people during the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Advent:** The beginning of the Church Year and the four weeks leading up to and concluding with Christmas.

**Advent Wreath:** A circle of greens, with four candles, which hangs in the chancel or elsewhere in the church during Advent. The candles are lighted consecutively week by week until all four are burning on the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

**Agnus Dei:** One of the anthems at the Breaking of the Bread; also found at the conclusion of the Great Litany (BCP, 337, 407, 152).

**Alb:** A long, white, sleeved vestment worn over the cassock and amice.

**Alleluia:** An exclamation of praise and joy, used in various parts of the liturgy, except during Lent.

**Alleluia Verse:** A passage of scripture with the acclamation "alleluia" sung or said before the proclamation of the Gospel. Not used in Lent.

**Alms:** Money or other offerings of the people for the work of the church.

**Alms Basin:** A large metal plate into which the money and offerings of the people are placed before they are presented to the officiant.

**Altar:** A stone or wooden table at which the Holy Eucharist is celebrated.

**Altar Book:** The large book containing the texts from the *Book of Common Prayer* and music for the celebration at the Eucharist and other liturgies.

**Altar Cloth:** A long piece of white linen that covers the top of the altar and hangs down the sides almost to the floor. When not in use, the altar cloth is usually protected by a dust cover.

**Altar Cross:** A crucifix or cross that stands upon the altar or hangs above it.

Altar Rail: The rail or kneelers where people kneel or stand to receive Communion.

Amice: A large square or rectangular piece of white cloth with strings attached. It is worn under the alb as a hood or over the shoulders. The strings are wound around the neck before being tied around the chest and waist.

Anthem: A text from Scripture or other sources that is sung or said during the Liturgy; also called the Antiphon.

Anthem at the Fraction: The words that are said or sung at the Breaking of the Bread (BCP, 337, 364).

Ascension: The Feast commemorating the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to glory. This Feast is forty days after Easter and always occurs on a Thursday.

Ash Wednesday: The day of special devotion that marks the beginning of the Lenten observance.

Aspergillum: A branch, brush, or perforated metal globe with a handle used for sprinkling holy water.

Aumbry: A receptacle to hold the Reserved Sacrament. An aumbry may also be used as a place where chrism and oil are kept; this aumbry is separate from the one used for the Sacrament.

Baptism: The sacrament of initiation by which a person is born anew by Water and the Holy Spirit and made a member of Christ's Body ( BPC 306).

Baptismal Font: The basin or tub for the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Baptismal Water: The water blessed by a bishop or priest for use at Baptism (BPC 306).

Benediction: Any blessing by a bishop or priest or a service of our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Bier: The stand upon which a casket rests during the Burial of the dead.

Bishop: A successor of the apostles, the chief pastor of a diocese, and when present the principal celebrant at sacramental liturgies.

Bishop's Chair: A chair set apart in cathedrals and some churches reserved especially for the bishop. Also a moveable chair used when the bishop is present and sits for various parts of the liturgy (confirmations, ordinations).

Blessed Sacrament: The consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist that are the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Book of Common Prayer* (1979): The official liturgy of the Episcopal Church.

**Bread Box:** The container in which the bread or hosts for the Eucharist is kept. This is presented to the celebrant at the Offertory by the server or member of the congregation.

**Burse:** A pocket or envelope of stiff board covered with material of the same liturgical color as the vestments, in which the corporal is kept when not in use at the altar.

**Candle Lighter/Extinguisher:** A long pole with a two-pronged end. One side is a tube into which is inserted a taper; a knob is used to raise or lower the taper for lighting of candles. The other side is a bell-shaped snuffer used to extinguish the candles.

**Canticle:** A hymn, usually taken from scripture, sung or said after the lessons at Morning or Evening Prayer, or as the song of praise at the Eucharist.

**Cassock:** A long garment with sleeves, normally black, worn over street clothes when one serves at the altar. It buttons in the front, and should be long to cover the ankles.

**Cassock-Alb:** A combination of the amice and alb worn in place of cassock and surplice or amice, alb, and cincture. It is normally white and should be long enough to cover the ankles. A cincture around the waist should be worn with this vestment, although it is not essential. A surplice is not worn over the cassock-alb, but a tunic may be.

**Celebrant:** The principal officiant at the Eucharist and other Sacraments.

**Chalice:** A metal or ceramic cup into which the wine and a little water for the Eucharist is poured.

**Chancel:** The area of the church between the nave and the sanctuary.

**Chasuble:** A long, wide sleeveless vestment, worn by the celebrant at the Eucharist. It is usually oval when laid out flat, with an opening in the center to accommodate the celebrant's head. It is the liturgical color of the day or season and usually worn over all other vestments.

**Choir:** A group of singers who assist in the celebration of the liturgy. They may be either in the chancel or in some other part of the church.

**Chrism:** Oil consecrated by a bishop for use at Baptism (BCP 307).

**Chrismation:** The anointing of a person with chrism at Baptism (BCP 308).

**Christmas:** The feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The Christmas season extends through January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany.

**Ciborium:** A covered metal or ceramic vessel in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept when reserved in a tabernacle or aumbry.

**Cincture:** A rope, usually white, worn with the alb or cassock-alb, tied with a slipknot on the right side. The ends of the rope may be either knots or tassels.

**Collect:** A prayer that is sung or said on behalf of the people by the celebrant or officiant at liturgical celebrations.

**Colors, Liturgical:** By tradition, various colors are used for the vestments and altar hangings for the different seasons and feasts of the Church Year.

In Western use the tradition is:

- *Red*--on Pentecost, Feast of Martyrs, and during Holy Week
- *White*--on Feasts of our Lord, Feasts of Saints who were not Martyrs, Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in some places at the Burial of the Dead.
- *Green*—on the Sundays and Ordinary days of the Year after Epiphany and Pentecost.
- *Blue*—in some places used during Advent.
- *Purple*—for penitential occasions, during Lent, at Requiems or Burial of the Dead, and Advent.
- *Black*—in some places for Burial of the Dead and Requiems
- *Lenten Array*—in some places used during Lent in place of purple.

**Comfortable Words:** See BCP 332.

**Commendation:** The rite at the conclusion of the Burial of the Dead. (BCP, 482 or 449).

**Concelebrant:** An ordained bishop or priest who celebrates the Eucharist with the principal celebrant.

**Confession of Sin:** A public prayer of penitence at the Eucharist (BCP, 330, 360 & 393), the Daily Offices, and other times. See also the Reconciliation of a Penitent (BCP 447).

**Confirmation:** A mature public affirmation of the faith and Commitment to the responsibilities of one's Baptismal Vows and the laying on of hands by the bishop (BCP 412).

**Cope:** A long cape worn over the shoulders by the celebrant and others at various liturgies.

**Corporal:** A large square white cloth that is placed on the altar at the time of the Offertory and upon which the chalice and paten are placed.

**Credence Table:** A table usually to the right of the altar on which the vessels and other items for celebration of the Eucharist.

**Creed:** The affirmation of the faith of the Church.

- Apostles' Creed BCP 53
- Nicene Creed BCP 326-327
- Athanasian Creed BCP 864

Crozier: The bishop's staff representing a shepherd's crook.

Crucifix: A cross upon which a figure of Christ is represented, either crucified or in Eucharistic vestments.

Cruets: Glass or metal containers for wine and water used at the Eucharist.

Daily Offices: Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. An Order of Worship for the Evening is also considered an Office.

Dalmatic: Similar to a tunic and worn by the deacon.

Deacon: Ordained persons who represent Christ and His Church, particularly as a servant to those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Dismissal: The words said or sung by the deacon or celebrant at the conclusion of the Eucharist (see BCP 339 or 366). The response to the dismissal is "Thanks be to God" (and during the Fifty Days of Easter, "Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia").

Doxology: Words said or sung in praise of the Holy Trinity (see Gloria Patri; also the conclusion of each Eucharist Prayer in BCP).

Dust Cover: A cloth placed over the altar cloth at times when the altar is not in use.

Easter: The day celebrating the Lord's Resurrection and the Fifty days following.

Elements: The bread and wine to be consecrated at the Eucharist.

Elevation: The lifting up of the Consecrated Elements after the Words of Institution at the conclusion of the Great Thanksgiving or at the Invitation to Communion.

Epiphany: The Feast of the Manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ observed on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The Epiphany Season continues until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

Epistle: The lesson at the Eucharist preceding the Gospel taken from one of the Letters of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, or the Book of Revelation.

Eucharist: The principal act of worship on Sundays and other Feasts.

Eucharist Prayer: The part of the Great Thanksgiving beginning with the salutation and preface and concluding with the doxology and Amen. In the *Book of Common Prayer* there are several Eucharist Prayers: two for Rite I (BCP 333-340) four for Rite II (BCP 361, 367, 369, 372) and two forms in An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist (BCP 402, 407).

**Eucharist Vestments:** The stole and chasuble worn by the celebrant at the Eucharist. The stole may either be worn under the chasuble or in some places, over it. The Eucharistic vestments are worn over amice, alb, and cincture or over a cassock-alb.

**Evensong:** Sung Evening Prayer (BCP 61-73).

**Exsultet:** The paean of praise that is sung or said during the first part of the Great Vigil of Easter by the deacon or other person appointed (BCP 286-287).

**Fast:** A day of special devotion (Ash Wednesday, other weekdays of Lent and of Holy Week, Good Friday and other Fridays of the year, except for Fridays in the Christmas and Easter seasons, and any Feasts of our Lord which occur on a Friday) observed by acts of discipline and self-denial.

**Feast:** A day of celebration associated with the life of Our Lord, of the saints or days of thanksgiving (BCP 15-18).

**Fifty Days of Easter:** From the Great Vigil of Easter up to and including the Day of Pentecost.

**Flagon:** A large metal or ceramic pitcher often used for wine and water to be consecrated at the Eucharist. If more than one chalice is used during the administration of Communion, the flagon is placed on the altar at the Offertory, and other chalices are brought to the altar after the Breaking of the Bread. There should be only one chalice on the altar during the Great Thanksgiving (BCP 407).

**Frontal:** A covering for the altar, usually of the same material as the vestments or of the liturgical color of the season or feast. It may cover all sides of the altar or just the front.

**Genuflection:** The bending of the right knee when reverencing of the Blessed Sacrament and at other times of solemn reverence.

**Gifts:** The offering of Bread or Wine (and alms) presented to the celebrant at the Offertory of the Eucharist.

**Gloria in Excelsis:** See Song of Praise (also BCP 52, 94, 324, 356).

**Gloria Patri:** The Doxology which concludes the recitation of a psalm at the beginning of the Eucharist; at the end of the psalms in the Daily Offices; and at other times listed in the Prayer Book.

**Good Friday:** The Friday before Easter Day on which the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ is read (BCP 276).

**Gospel:** The final lesson in the Word of God taken from one of the Four Gospels in the New Testament. It is normally read by a deacon or priest, and as a sign of reverence the people and assisting ministers stand when the Gospel is proclaimed.

**Gospel Book:** The book (usually with an ornamental cover) that contains the Gospel lessons appointed for use at the Eucharist. It is carried in procession and at the proclamation of the Gospel by the deacon or other reader. It is desirable that the lessons and Gospel be read from a book or books of appropriate size and dignity (BCP 406).

**Gospel Procession:** The movement of the deacon with torches to place of the proclamation of the Gospel (the nave, the lectern, or the pulpit).

**Gradual Psalm:** The psalm appointed to be read or sung after the lesson at the celebration of the Eucharist (BCP 326, 357, 889-931).

**Great Thanksgiving:** The major prayer of the Eucharist beginning with the salutation and preface and concluding with the Lord's Prayer (BCP 333, 361)

**Holy Communion:** The second part of the Holy Eucharist following the Word of God and beginning with the Offertory. This term may also refer to the whole service in the same way as Mass, Lord's Supper, Holy Eucharist, or Divine Liturgy.

**Holy Saturday:** See Great Vigil of Easter (BCP 283).

**Holy Water:** Water blessed by a bishop or priest for use in blessing the people, in the setting apart of objects for use in the church or for other liturgical purposes. Holy water is often used at the Burial of the Dead, at weddings, and at other times at the discretion of the priest.

**Holy Week:** The week that commemorates our Lord's Passion and Death and includes: The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday (BCP 270-283). The Great Vigil of Easter is the climax of Holy Week and the beginning of the Fifty Days of Easter celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord.

**Hymn:** Sacred poetry set to music and sung during the liturgy.

**Incense:** A mixture of perfumed spices, burned on the coals in the thurible, and used as a sign of prayer, honor, and solemnity at liturgical functions.

**Introit:** The hymn, psalm, or anthem sung or said at the entrance of the ministers at the Eucharist (BCP 323 or 355).

**Invitatory:**

- Morning Prayer: the Venite, Psalm 95, Jubilate, or Christ our Passover.
- Evening Prayer: O Gracious Light (Phos Hilaron) or other suitable hymn or psalm.

The invitatory is used at the beginning of an Office after the opening versicle and response and before the appointed psalm.

**Kneeling:** A posture signifying reverence or penitence.

Kyrie Eleison: See Song of Praise (BCP 324 356 or 389).

Lavabo: The washing of the celebrant's fingers after the Offertory at the Eucharist or at other times, such as when oil or chrism is used or after the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday.

Lavabo Bowl: The metal or ceramic dish into which water is poured by the server at the lavabo.

Lavabo Towel: A piece of cloth, usually linen, presented to the celebrant by the server at the lavabo to dry the fingers. It is presented hung over the server's left arm.

Lay Reader: A person licensed by the Bishop to read lessons at the Eucharist or at the Daily Offices and who may assist the celebrant or officiant in other ways; if specifically licensed by the Bishop, may administer the chalice at Communion.

Lectern: The bookstand or podium from which the lessons and sometimes the Gospel are read at the Eucharist and other Offices. Also called an Ambo.

Lectionary: The appointed lessons and psalms for use at the Eucharist and Daily Offices (BCP 888).

Lector: A person who reads a lesson in the liturgy.

Lent: The season of penitence and preparation for Holy Week and Easter which begins on Ash Wednesday (BCP 264-265).

Lenten Array: In some places, the use of sackcloth or similar fabric in place of purple for vestments, coverings, and hangings during Lent and Holy Week.

Lenten Cross: In some places, a plain wooden processional (painted red with black edges) used during Lent and Holy Week.

*Lesser Feast and Fasts*: A book containing the collects, lessons, psalms, and short biographical material for the minor saints' days and observances found in the calendar of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Lesson: The first reading from scripture at the Eucharist; also the scripture readings of the Daily Offices or at other liturgies.

Litany: Any form of prayer with petitions and responses; the Great Litany (BCP 148).

Liturgy: The "work of the people." In Western usage this term may apply to any public celebration of the Church.

Magnificat: The song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) normally used as one the canticles at Evening Prayer; also may be used as a Song of Praise on the Feast of St. Mary or at other times (BCP 65, 119).



**Maniple:** A band of cloth worn, in some places, over the left arm by the celebrant at the Eucharist. It is of the same liturgical color as the stole and chasuble.

**Mass:** The celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

**Master of Ceremonies:** A person designated to direct the ceremonial at the liturgy.

**Matins:** Morning Prayer

**Maundy:** Washing of the feet (BCP 274).

**Maundy Thursday:** Thursday in Holy Week (BCP 274).

**Ministers:** The celebrant, officiant, and others who assist in the celebration of the liturgy.

**Missal:** Altar Book

**Missal Stand:** The stand upon which the Altar Book rests when in use on the altar.

**Mitre:** The triangular-shaped head covering worn by a bishop.

**Monstrance:** A receptacle for the Blessed Sacrament used at Benediction.

**Nave:** The area of the church where the people gather for the liturgy.

**Nunc Dimitis:** The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) normally used as one of the canticles at Evening Prayer and Compline (BCP 66, 120, 135).

*Occasional Services, Book of:* A book containing optional services and prayers authorized for use by the Episcopal Church.

**Offertory:** The presentation, reception, preparation, and offering of the gifts at the beginning of Holy Communion, the second part of the Eucharist.

**Offertory Sentence:** A passage of scripture that may be said or sung at the beginning or during the Offertory (BCP 333 or 361).

**Offertory Procession:** At the Eucharist, the presentation of the bread wine and other gifts by members of the congregation.

**Officiant:** A person who officiates at the Daily Offices and other rites.

**Oil:** A liquid substance blessed by a bishop or priest for use in the Ministration to the Sick (BCP 455).

**Pall:** A stiffened square of linen white cloth that is placed over the chalice to keep objects from falling into the wine. The term may refer also to the cloth covering the casket or urn during the Burial of the Dead.

**Palm Sunday:** The Sunday of the Passion (BCP 270-271).

**Palms:** Branches blessed at the Palm Sunday Liturgy and carried by the people in procession.

**Paschal Candle:** A large white candle, which may be decorated with a cross, the year of blessing, A (alpha) and Ω (omega), grains of incense, and other symbols of the resurrection. It is lighted at the beginning of the Great Vigil of Easter and burns for all services during the Fifty Days of Easter. At other times it may be kept near the Baptismal Font and lighted for Baptisms. It may also be carried in the procession at the Burial of the Dead, and placed in its holder near the casket or urn.

**Paschal Candle Stand:** A large wooden or metal stand in which the Paschal candle is placed. The stand rests on the floor and is placed at such height that the candle is prominent.

**Passion Week:** Holy Week.

**Paten:** A metal or ceramic plate on which the bread for the Eucharist is placed after it is presented by the server or a member of the congregation.

**Penance:** See Confession of Sin (BCP 446-52).

**Pentecost, Day of:** The conclusion of the Fifty Days of Easter and the commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.

**Pentecost, Season of:** The Sundays and weekdays following the Day of Pentecost and ending on the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

**Phos Hilaron:** See Invitatory (BCP 64, 112, 118).

**Piscina:** A sink for washing the vessels used at the Eucharist and for reverently disposing of Wine that has been consecrated. The piscina does not drain into a sewer or disposal system, but directly into the ground.

**Place of Reservation:** The altar or other place apart from the main altar of the church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved for Maundy Thursday, for use on Good Friday Liturgy.

**Post Communion:** The Prayer of Thanksgiving after Holy Communion (BCP 339, 365-66). There are also proper Post Communion prayers appointed for various occasions.

**Prayers of the People:** Another term for the prayers of intercession at the Eucharist (BCP 328, 359, 383).

**Preface:** The first part of The Great Thanksgiving preceding the Sanctus. Proper Prefaces are appointed for certain Occasions (BCP 344-349 or 377-82).

**Procession:** A group moving along in a ceremonial way.

**Processional Cross:** A metal or wooden cross or crucifix affixed to a pole carried in processions.

**Psalms:** A portion from the ancient Jewish hymnbook found in Scripture (The Book of Psalms) and in *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP 385-808).

**Pulpit:** The place from which the sermon is preached and from which the Gospel may be read.

**Purificator:** A linen white cloth used for cleansing the chalice during the absolution or for wiping the chalice during the administration of Communion.

**Pyx:** A receptacle for reserving the Blessed Sacrament for use in Communion of the Sick.

**Requiem:** A celebration of the Eucharist for the commemoration of the Dead.

**Reserved Sacrament:** The consecrated Bread and Wine reserved for the administration to the sick or others who could not attend the celebration of the Eucharist.

**Reverence:** A genuflection or solemn bow.

**Rite I:** The liturgies in *The Book of Common Prayer* that are in traditional language.

**Rite II:** The liturgies in *The Book of Common Prayer* that are in modern language.

**Rubric:** The ceremonial and other directions found printed in italics in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The word comes from the Latin for “red” since the directions were traditionally printed in that color.

**Sacristy:** A room or rooms where the vessels, vestments, and other liturgical objects are kept and where the celebrant, officiants, and assistants vest before the liturgy.

**Sanctuary:** The area of the church surrounding the altar.

**Sanctus:** The acclamation “Holy, Holy, Holy...” sung or said at the conclusion of the Preface of The Great Thanksgiving (BCP 334, 341, 362).

**Sedilia:** The chair from which the celebrant presides at the Word of God. It is usually flanked by chairs for the assisting ministers and others.

**Sequence Hymn:** A hymn sung between the Epistle and Gospel that normally relates to the lessons appointed for the day.

Server: One who assists at the altar.

Shell, Baptismal: The metal or ceramic cup or dish used to pour water during the administration of Holy Baptism.

Sign of the Cross: The tracing on one's head and shoulders of the outline of the Cross.

Song of Praise: The hymn or canticle at the beginning of the Eucharist following the Acclamation (BCP 324, 356).

Station: In a solemn procession, a place where a pause is made for a versicle, response, and collect, such as at the crèche at Christmas or at the entrance to the church on Palm Sunday or at the Baptismal Font on the Day of Pentecost.

Stole: A long strip of material worn by bishops, priests, and deacons when officiating at the Eucharist or other sacramental functions. The priest wears the stole around the neck and hanging down in front over an alb or surplice. The deacon wears the stole over the left shoulder and crossed under the right arm. The stole is of the liturgical color of the day and matches the material of the other vestments.

Surplice: An ample white vestment worn over a cassock. It has full sleeves, a round or square yoke, and is at least mid-calf in length.

Stripping of the Altar: Removal of all adornments from the altar during the Maundy Thursday liturgy.

Tabernacle: A box or receptacle for the Reserved Sacrament.

Taper: A long narrow wax covered wick that is put into the candle lighter; or a small candle for use by members of the congregation at vigils or other services.

Te Deum: A canticle used at Morning Prayer as a Song of Praise at the Eucharist or added to a service on days of special Thanksgiving.

Throne: A term sometimes used for the Bishop's Chair.

Thurible: The container in which incense is burned.

Thurifer: The server whose duty is to handle the thurifer and boat.

Torch: A candle on a pole or stand that is carried by an acolyte.

Torchbearers: Acolytes who carry torches or processional candles.

Towel: A cloth used to wipe the celebrant's hands.

Tract: A sentence of scripture sung or said in place of the alleluia verse during Lent.

Tunic: A vestment with ample sleeves worn over an alb or cassock of the same liturgical color as the vestments of the celebrant or some festive color.

Urn: A receptacle containing the remains of a body that has been cremated.

Veil: A covering.

Venite: See Invitatory (BCP 44, 82, or 146).

Veneration of the Cross: On Good Friday, after the cross has been brought into the church, it may either be venerated while all kneel in place or each person may come forward individually to venerate the cross (BCP 281).

Versicle: A short sentence often taken from the Psalms sung or said at the liturgy followed by a response by the people.

Vessle, Sacred: Chalice, Paten, Ciborium, Flagon.

Vestment: Any article of clothing worn over street clothes by those officiating or assisting at liturgical celebrations.

Vigil: A period or service of preparation before major festivals or celebrations (BCP 284, 227).

Washing of Feet: The rite performed on Maundy Thursday commemorating Our Lord's washing the feet of the apostles at the last Supper (BCP 274).

Watch: The vigil kept at the Place of Reservation after the Maundy Thursday liturgy.

Way of the Cross: A Procession with stations commemorating the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Word of God: The first part of the Holy Eucharist ending with the Peace. The focus of this part of the Eucharist is on the reading of Scripture and prayers of praise and petition.

Words of Institution: That part of the Eucharist Prayer recalling the words and actions of Our Lord at the Last Supper.

## WEEK 2—Open with Prayer

**(It is important to note here that, while edited, most of this entire section was borrowed from the Diocese of San Joaquin. We believe it to be the most complete, thorough, and detailed document on the Theology, Spirituality, and History of Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor ministries that we have seen thus far. Many thanks to Bishop Daniel Martins)**

### **Historical and Theological Background**

Over the past two or three decades, a major shift has taken place in what is considered the normative Sunday morning experience for Anglicans. Before that time, and extending back into the colonial era, the service of Morning Prayer—with sermon and hymns—constituted the core of Sunday worship. Since the Catholic Revival of Anglicanism beginning in the mid-1800s, most American congregations had begun to offer an early celebration of the Holy Communion, without music and often without a sermon, but at the main service, the sacrament was only offered once or twice a month, or even once a quarter.

With the adoption of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, there could no longer be any doubt as to the official teaching of the Episcopal Church: “The Holy Eucharist, the *principal act of Christian worship on the Lord’s Day* and other major Feasts.”

These changes, however, produced a need that had not previously been sensed as acute. With more frequent celebrations, as a purely practical matter, the celebrant needed help in the distribution of the sacrament. In most congregations, there is only one priest and no deacons. Hence, the use of licensed laypersons for this important function spread very rapidly and is now nearly universal. At first, assisting the Celebrant by administering the chalice at the Eucharist was just added to the range of duties performed by those licensed as Lay Readers. (A Lay Reader was originally simply someone licensed to officiate at public worship—i.e. Morning or Evening Prayer—in the absence of a priest. It remains the highest level of licensed lay ministry.) In time however, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church created the category of Licensed Chalice Bearer, later renamed Lay Eucharistic Minister. More recently still, those who are so licensed have been permitted in certain circumstances, to administer both species of the sacrament—the consecrated bread as well as the chalice.

This was originally conceived as purely liturgical ministry, but as the church matured in its understanding of some of the theological implications of the Eucharist—namely, that it is a sacrament not only of *vertical* communion with God, but also *horizontal* communion between the members of the Body of Christ—the desirability of including those who, for reasons of health, are chronically unable to attend the liturgy became evident. Hence, the designation *Pastoral* Lay Eucharistic Minister was created to designate persons who are specially trained and licensed to deliver the sacrament to the chronically homebound directly following the celebration of the liturgy. Then at the 2003 General Convention of The Episcopal Church, the canons on ministry were thoroughly revised. In the process, those formerly known as Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEM) were named simply *Eucharistic Ministers*. Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV) were named *Eucharistic Visitors*

It is critically important to understand that all levels of license—Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor—are *extraordinary* ministries. The administration of Holy Communion is inherently clerical in nature; it is properly the province of the ordained—bishops, priests, and deacons. Sacramental ministry is one of the key distinguishing marks of the exercise of Holy Orders. Hence, licensed lay ministers are paradoxically not really performing lay ministry at all! They are, in fact, deputized in a restricted sense to share in the functions of the clergy. It is a purely practical concession. In congregations that are blessed with a number of priests and/or deacons, and maybe even a retired bishop, there is probably no need for Eucharistic Ministers or Eucharistic Visitors. Those who serve routinely in these categories need to bear in mind the conditional nature of their work and be ready to cheerfully step aside on those special occasions (e.g. the Bishop’s visit, ordinations, institutions, etc.) when there is an ample number of clergy.

### **The Nature of the Liturgy**

Eucharistic ministry is, to state the obvious, inherently liturgical in character. The word “liturgy” comes from the Greek *leitourgia*, which is a compound of the word meaning “people” (*laos*—from which we get “laity”) and the word for “work” (*ergos*, from which we get words like “ergonomic.”) Hence, liturgy is “the work of the people.” “People” is a singular noun. The liturgical assembly is not a mere aggregation of individuals who come together to do the same thing at the same time. It is one united chorus of praise and thanksgiving. **The only one in the audience is God!**

The priest (or bishop) who officiates is referred to in the Prayer Book rubrics<sup>8</sup> as the “Celebrant,” and represents Christ himself as the host of the banquet, the one who gathers the family and presides at the meal. Assisting priests signify the “college of presbyters” of the diocese, all in union with the Bishop, who is the chief priest and pastor. (“Presbyter” comes from the Greek word for “elder” and is the root of the English word “priest.”) When one or more deacons are present, they signify the vocation of all Christians to servant ministry—serving the Lord and one another in the community of the Church and serving the cause of the gospel of Christ in the world. For this reason, it is the deacon who “sets the table” and “does the dishes.” Similarly, it is the deacon who reads the gospel (often in the midst of the congregation, signifying the taking of the gospel into the world), and leads the Prayers of the People. (In the absence of a deacon, a priest reads the gospel and a layperson leads the prayers). It is the distinct role of the laity to represent the *laos*—the holy people of God, assembled to offer its holy sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, in union with the sacrifice of Christ “once offered” for the sins of the world, and to be nourished by the sacred Body and Blood. The members of the congregation are actors, not spectators.

In traditional Anglican discipline, if there is no congregation, a priest may proceed with the liturgy up to the Offertory, but if there is no one to respond to “Lift up your hearts” with “We lift them to the Lord,” the service comes to an end—the elements are not consecrated and there is no communion.

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<sup>8</sup> Rubrics are the “fine print” of the Prayer Book. They give “stage directions” for the performance of the Eucharistic drama. Unless the word “may” is used, their observance is mandatory, not optional; they have the force of canon law.

## Sacramental Theology—“Real Presence” and Its Implications

The Eucharist is a sacrament. The classic catechism definition of a sacrament is that it is an “outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” The outward sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine; the inward grace is *koinonia*—a New Testament word denoting a particularly intimate bond of fellowship and communion—“vertically” with the Lord, and “horizontally” among the gathered communicants. It is our means of participating in the very life of the Blessed Trinity, through the self-offering of Christ in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and continued advocacy on our behalf at the right hand of the Father.

Historic Christian teaching is that the Eucharist is the principal means by which the Church knows the risen Christ to be present in her midst. Broadly speaking, of course, Jesus is spiritually present in the midst of any “two or three” who are gathered to worship him. But, more specifically and concretely, he is also present in the consecrated Eucharistic elements. There are many different ways of defining and explaining the nature of this Eucharistic “presence,” and this has been a source of division among Christian bodies over the last several centuries. In classic Anglican terminology, we use the expression “real presence.” We do not specify *how* Christ is present in the sacrament, but we affirm that he *is*.

Moreover, this “real presence” is objective, which is to say that its reality is independent of anyone’s ability to comprehend it or the state of anyone’s faith. A communicant’s level of faith may be relevant to the spiritual *effect* that the sacrament has on him or her, but it has no impact on the presence itself. Once they are consecrated, the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine are permanently changed. They are no longer signs merely of the ordinary stuff of human experience—food and drink—but they mediate the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and the power of his risen life.

This presence does not evaporate at the conclusion of the liturgical act. If there are “leftovers,” we do not simply return them to their original containers for use at the next celebration. Rather, according to Prayer Book rubrics, they are either “reverently consumed,” or reserved in a place of honor—a stylized “cupboard” known either as a tabernacle (if it is free standing) or an aumbry (if it is mounted in a wall) or—in rare cases—a pyx (if it is suspended from a beam or the ceiling). This place of reservation is usually near the main altar, but may be in a side chapel or a special place designated for devotion to our Lord, as he is present in the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Generally, there is a candle lit next to the reserved sacrament—indicating the presence of consecrated elements. The primary use of the Reserved Sacrament is for the communion of the sick—when a priest or deacon brings Holy Communion to the hospitalized or homebound in the course of ordinary weekday ministry. A derivative—but nonetheless wholesome—use for the Reserved Sacrament is as a focus for prayer and devotion, either individual or corporate, at times other than the celebration of the liturgy.

One of the implications of the real presence of our Lord in the sacrament is the appropriateness of honoring him with posture and bodily gesture. In the Anglican Church, customs vary widely between congregations, and those who serve at the altar should conform to the example and direction of the rector, vicar, or other ordained leader.

In general, the classic gesture of reverence for Christ as he is present in the Blessed Sacrament is the *genuflexion* (from the Latin for “bend the knee.”) A *profound bow*—that is, from the waist,



not merely from the shoulders—is also appropriate. Those serving at the altar should consult their supervising priest for instructions on exactly when to make what sort of reverence.

### **The Spirituality of Ministry at the Altar**

*“...that I may go to the altar of God, to the God of my joy and gladness.”*  
—from Psalm 43

Serving at the Altar of God—whether as Celebrant, deacon, acolyte, or Eucharist Minister—is an act of what the New Testament calls *doulia*. (*Diakonia* is also a scriptural word for servanthood, but *doulia* is the stronger of the two—implying something on the order of “slavery,” actually—and is therefore appropriate for us who are “not [our] own, but have been bought with a price.”—I Cor. 7:23) It is an immense privilege, and can be a great joy; but it is an act of sacrifice, and there are certain attendant spiritual hazards. A Eucharistic Minister is “up front” and on display. He or she is vested, sits up with the priest, and is probably listed by name in the bulletin. Most people are aware that it is a ministry requiring a special license from the bishop. Such a person obviously has “status,” at least within the congregation, and, by implication, within the diocese as well.

There is ample territory here for the (deadly!) sin of pride to take root and grow if one is not vigilant. It is vital to remember—and this may serve as a first line of defense against the potential incitement to pride—that Eucharistic Ministers and acolytes are part of the ministry team in the drama. The better they do their job, the less attention they will call to themselves. The mentality of everyone at the altar must be to point away from himself or herself and toward Christ. The biblical model for this attitude is that of St John the Baptist, who said of Jesus, “He must increase, and I must decrease.” The theological model is none other than the Holy Spirit, whose eternal role in the life of the Blessed Trinity is to direct attention toward the Father and the Son.

It is a challenge either to work while praying or to pray while working. Clergy discover this fact very quickly after they are ordained, and Eucharistic Ministers inevitably encounter it as well. As a Eucharistic Minister, you make a gift of yourself to the Lord on behalf of God’s people.

At a more profound level, Eucharistic Ministers participate in a shared stewardship of the liturgy for the sake of the *laos* gathered for worship. You are not your own; you are not “number one” when you are scheduled to serve. It is your job to be attentive to several mechanical details; there is less freedom to simply lose yourself in “wonder, love, and praise.” Rather, your role is to help make sure that the people in the congregation have that freedom, even while you do not. So there is the possibility that you will emerge from the celebration not feeling as “fed” as you have been accustomed to feeling, and this may become a source of spiritual irritation to you. Even so, such irritation can also be a tool in the perfection of your own holiness if you will offer that tool and make it available to the Holy Spirit. If you will embrace the spiritual hunger and irritation that result from service at the altar, and foster the attitude of *doulia*, you will, in time, be refreshed and rewarded. It comes to different people in different ways, but it comes.

### **The Shape of the Liturgy**

If you have worshipped in different congregations—just within our own diocese—you have noticed that there is a tremendous amount of variety in the way the liturgy is “performed.” While

being faithful to the text and rubrics of the same Prayer Book, it is possible to construct two services which bear more resemblance to the worship of other church bodies—from Roman Catholic to Eastern Orthodox to non-denominational charismatic—than they do to one another!

Think of the liturgy as a human body—with a skeletal frame, covered by muscle tissues and skin. While human skeletons vary in size, the essential form and the basic scale are constant. There is relatively little variety between them. The features that actually make one person visibly distinguishable from another are found in the form and distribution of muscle tissue (and fat!), as well as in the color and texture of the skin. The same applies to the liturgy of the Eucharist. Outwardly, there is tremendous variation, so much so that it is difficult to identify contrasting styles as even members of the same “species.” Inwardly, however, at the level of the skeleton, there is an essential uniformity. To extend the metaphor, there are two major “bones” in the “skeleton” of the Eucharistic liturgy. These are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Altar. In the latter case, the words “Table” or “Sacrifice” are sometimes substituted for “Altar.” Alternatively, the Liturgy of the Word may be referred to as the “Mass of the Catechumens” and the Liturgy of the Altar styled the “Mass of the Faithful.” (This harkens to the ancient era in which the unbaptized were dismissed after the sermon, and allowed to witness the entire liturgy only after they had received the sacraments of Christian initiation.) In the Prayer Book, these sections are entitled “The Word of God” (p.323, p.355) and “The Holy Communion” (p.333, p.361).

To switch metaphors now, another way of understanding the structure of the liturgy is to think of it as a two-act drama, with a brief prologue before Act One, an interlude between the acts, and a short epilogue following Act Two.

Act One is the Liturgy of the Word. At its heart, of course, is the reading of Holy Scripture. On Sundays and Principal Feasts<sup>9</sup>, the norm is to read three lessons plus a section of the Psalms. The first reading is usually from the Old Testament, though during the season of Easter it is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. The second reading is usually from one of the epistles, though it may also be from Acts or Revelation. The final reading is always from the gospels.

After the Word is *read*, it is then *proclaimed*—this is the function of the sermon. The preacher’s task is to shine a light on some significant aspect of the appointed scriptural texts in such a way as reveals its relevance and application to the lives of those in the congregation. We then *respond* to the Word that has just been read and proclaimed—this is the function of the Creed. The Creed means more than it says; it serves as a symbol of the entire mystery of Christian faith and practice.

Act Two, then, is the Liturgy of the Altar. The focus of attention shifts from the lectern and/or pulpit to the Holy Table on which the sacrifice is offered. The heart of this section of the rite is the consecration of the bread and wine to be the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ. There is a simple sequence of action here, which is summarized by four one-syllable verbs: *take*, *bless*, *break*, and *give*. This sequence is plainly visible in two New Testament passages that have

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<sup>9</sup> There are 7 principal feasts in our calendar. They take precedence over all the other days, including Sundays. See page 15 of the BCP.

obvious Eucharistic overtones: the feeding miracles (see Luke 9:16) and the post-Resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:30).

First, we *take* the elements of bread and wine and place them on the altar. It is significant that we are commanded to use bread and wine, not mere wheat and grapes. Wheat and grapes occur in nature, and are pure gifts from God. But to make bread from wheat and wine from grapes requires human skill and labor. As we say in one of the offertory sentences, “Let us with gladness present the offering *of our life and labor* unto the Lord.” The elements that we “take” represent us; we are, in effect, offering ourselves on the altar.

Next, the Celebrant, on behalf of the gathered community, *blesses* the elements. This is accomplished by means of the Eucharistic Prayer (sometimes referred to as the “canon”). In the Eucharistic Prayer, we remember the saving acts of God in history, we invoke the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and we offer ourselves in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

Then, the Celebrant *breaks* the bread. The vocation of bread is to be broken. If bread is not broken, it cannot be eaten, and cannot give life. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread symbolizes the fact that the body of our Lord Jesus had to be “broken” in death before it could become the means of eternal life for those who are united with him.

Finally, the Celebrant (assisted, usually, by Eucharistic Ministers!) *gives* the sacred Body and Blood to the people. In this act—indeed, in the very act of presiding at the liturgy—the Celebrant acts as *alter Christus*—“another Christ”—standing in as the gatherer and host of the banquet, who feeds his guests with the bread of eternal life.

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Altar are the essential elements in the Eucharistic drama. The initial liturgical action—that which gathers the people and forms them into a Eucharistic community—is commonly referred to as the Entrance Rite. This can be very simple and brief, or it can be fairly elaborate. In the Prayer Book, the Entrance Rite consists of everything up to the Collect<sup>10</sup>: the music which accompanies the actual entrance of the ministers, the Opening Acclamation, the Collect for Purity, and the Hymn of Praise (*Kyrie* and/or *Gloria*, or something else).

The material between the Creed (which concludes the Liturgy of the Word) and the Offertory (which begins the Liturgy of the Altar) is a sort of interlude. It consists of the Prayers of the People, the Confession of Sin, and the Peace. Then, after the Communion, there is what might be called an Epilogue: the Prayer of Thanksgiving, the Blessing, and the Dismissal. For an excellent summary of this essential liturgical action—the skeleton of the Eucharist—see *An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist* in the Prayer Book, pp.400-401.

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<sup>10</sup> A Collect is a particular form of prayer. In its origins, it occurred at the end of a long litany, and served as a summation of the people’s offering of petition and intercession. It now usually stands on its own. In the Eucharist, it serves as a sort of hinge between the Entrance Rite and the Liturgy of the Word. The classic collect form consists of an Address (“Blessed Lord...”), an Ascription (“who caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning...”), a Petition (“Grant us so to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them...”), a Result (“that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ...”), and, when it occurs in this position in the Eucharist, a Doxology (“who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”)

## **Broad Practical Issues**

The practical side of your preparation for Eucharistic Minister licensing is being handled by your supervising priest. However, a few brief comments may be in order here.

### ***On Liturgical Decorum***

Those who serve at the altar perform an invaluable service, but insofar as they call attention to themselves, by their appearance or behavior, that value is compromised. Certain conventions have evolved which may at first seem forced or affected to those who are not used to them, but which have the effect of moderating the distinctive impact of those who have a visible role in the liturgy. The cardinal rule here is that one's hands should never dangle. Whether you are sitting or standing or walking, but especially if you are walking, fold your hands in front of you. (Your priest may have a more specific preference as to how you do so.) If you are holding an object—a chalice, a hymnal, the Bishop's crozier, whatever—with one hand, place your other hand on your chest. When you are seated (which usually means someone else is reading or preaching), be reticent about too much looking around the church or other gratuitous bodily shuffling; this can be very distracting to others.

### ***On Reverence toward the Blessed Sacrament***

The objective real presence of our Lord's Body and Blood in the consecrated bread and wine demands some form of bodily reverence. As mentioned previously, this is either a genuflection or a profound bow (consult your priest). It can become awkward, however, for those who work habitually around a place when the sacrament is reserved. A good working analogy is that of military personnel saluting superior officers. If a sailor reports for duty to the bridge of a ship, he snaps to attention and salutes the skipper. Then he goes about his work. He does not stop to salute every single time his path and the captain's happen to cross. Then, when it is time to leave the bridge, he salutes once again before he departs. In most cases, the same pattern can be appropriately applied to reverencing the Blessed Sacrament.

## **WEEK THREE—Open with Prayer**

Eucharistic Ministers serve at the Altar during Holy Eucharist by administering the Chalice “in the absence of sufficient deacons and priests” (BCP 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 assist the Deacon or Priest in preparing the Table for the Eucharist. The specifics vary according to the needs and traditions of your parish. Normally, Eucharistic Ministers serve under the direction of the Deacon of the parish; or in the absence of a Deacon, the Rector or Vicar. Training and instruction should be provided by the Deacon or designee for new Eucharistic Ministers prior to the first time they serve. Any questions or concerns should be addressed prior to the actual Liturgy in which you are serving. Know what is expected of you and you can be confident as you begin this new and exciting ministry.

### **The “Nuts & Bolts” of Being a Eucharistic Minister**

#### **Before the Sunday Service**

Check the Church calendar/servers schedule for Eucharistic Ministers regularly to make sure when you are scheduled to serve at the Altar. Your parish will have its own procedure for finding a substitute if you are unable to serve as scheduled. Make sure you contact the appropriate person as soon as possible.

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. Go to bed early enough the night before so you will be at your best for the service of God and His Church.

#### **At Church on the Lord’s Day**

Arrive early: no later than fifteen to twenty minutes prior to the beginning of the Liturgy (half an hour would be even better!) This allows time for you to get vested, give and receive communications, and to take some time to meditate and pray. Check text for Prayers of the People, see that the Lectionary is opened to the propers for the day, etc. Be sure your hands (and nails) are not soiled. Be ready to assist as needed for other duties that may arise.

In an ideal world, a Eucharistic Minister could focus on his or her specific duties and not worry about anyone else’s. However, this often proves to be difficult. Consequently, it would behoove you to be able to step in to the role of acolyte, particularly those whose job it is to serve the priest or deacon in setting up the altar during the Offertory and cleaning up after Communion. The same applies to the Altar Guild: sometimes they may overlook a setup detail, and if the Celebrant suddenly needs a corporal or purificator or extra bread or wine, you should know how to find them quickly.

**Pray.** Nothing is more deadening to true worship than doing the mechanics of the Liturgy without our hearts and minds engaged in what we are doing. 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.

Before the service:

*Oh God our Father, you have invited us to serve at your altar. Give us reverence and respect for all that is holy. Make us faithful and helpful to all whom we serve that we may be like your son, Jesus Christ, who came to serve in your Name. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **During the Liturgy**

Follow the directions and actions of the Celebrant. When the Procession arrives before the Altar, bow or genuflect *with* the Celebrant (not *before*). If you make a mistake (and you will – everyone does) do not draw attention to it: merely begin to do it correctly. In speaking, do not say “excuse me”; simply repeat the text correctly. Whatever you do as a Eucharistic Minister, offer it to God in prayer as your “spiritual worship” [Romans 12:1].

### **On Intinction**

Many communicants prefer not to drink directly from the chalice, but to consume a communion wafer that has been dipped in the consecrated wine. This practice is called intinction. There are variations in how this is done. The most appropriate practice is for the communicant who wishes to intinct to simply leave the host flat in the hand. Then the minister bearing the chalice takes it and dips it and places it on the communicant's extended tongue. Some communicants have been trained to indicate their desire to intinct by holding the host up between thumb and forefinger. Still others will want to perform the act of intinction themselves. Check with your Rector's preference regarding Intinction, whether communicants may dip the Communion Wafer into the Wine themselves, or if the Eucharistic Minister is expected to do this for them (so that folks don't immerse their fingers in the Chalice). Your priest is the final authority on what method of intinction—if any-- is allowable.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What do I wear when serving at the Altar?**

Parish “traditions” may vary, but generally speaking, a white alb 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*. Some churches have Eucharistic Ministers vested in cassock and surplice, or just plain street clothing. The Rector’s directive or the usual practice of the parish rather than your own preference determines what is worn.

### **2. 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.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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, viz., 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.”

### **5. 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 and return after the

service 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. It is always smart to have an extra purificator at the credence table for such situations. This is a situation to ask about during your training.

**6. 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. Rather than simply ignore them and pass them by—you may wish to elevate the chalice in front of them and say, “The Blood of Christ.”



## WEEK 4

### FINAL EXAM AT ALTAR—Holy Eucharist

We all will adjourn to the Narthex and the Chancel to practice what we have learned with our Rector guiding and directing us and sharing Holy Eucharist.

### RESOURCES:

Below are examples for Eucharistic Ministers Customaries: Each Customary should be tailored to the needs of the particular Parish or Mission.

## Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee Notes & Special Instructions for: **Eucharistic Ministers (Chalice Bearers)**

- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled Service
- Please CHECK-IN with Verger or Rector
- Be robed and ready 5 minutes prior to service
  - Gather in Narthex (back of the nave) for Prayer
  - Check for special instructions and situations—including substitute reading
- Remember that you are in view of the full congregation while in the Chancel
  - Do not cross legs at knee while sitting
  - Participate, & respond in all congregational responses and hymns
  - Know what you are doing, and be aware of what is coming next
  - After opening words, collect and Hymn of worship—all chancel party remains standing until celebrant sits down
- At the Psalm—Epistle-side Eucharistic Ministers
  - Stand up at your seat after first reading
  - Announce Psalm and how to respond (your choice):
    - Antiphonally by Half Verse - Antiphonally by Full Verse - In Unison
  - After the first Verse, sit for the remainder of the Psalm
- At the Gospel—one or the other is appropriate
  - (A). Celebrant will get Gospel book, turn and read to congregation. There will be no crucifer, Eucharistic Minister or verger helping
  - (B). Walk to center of first level in front of Altar at the same time as Rector
  - Bow or genuflect as does Rector
  - Hold GOSPEL BOOK steady and high, so Rector is not reading down but up and out.
  - When Gospel is completed, Rector will hand Book to you
  - Close Book - Hold it High - Stand aside for Verger and Crucifer to pass by
  - Replace Gospel Book on the Pillow, on the Gospel Side of Altar. Reverence the altar, return to your seat

- At the Peace & Offertory  
 Gospel Side Eucharistic Minister- Assist Celebrant with Chausible - straighten and adjust  
 Epistle Side Eucharistic Minister - Assist Server (or be Server, if no Acolyte available)
- At the Eucharist (Serving the Chalice)  
 Eucharistic Minister follows behind celebrant. Allow enough time for communicant to consume wafer and, perhaps, spend a moment in prayer. Do not rush communicants  
 If needed, fill & refill CHALICE *only 1/3 to 1/2 full* . (Generally, a half full chalice is enough for up to 40 communicants.)  
 We do not encourage INTINCTORS to "*dip*" their wafer themselves, if possible. You take it and dip for them—then place it on their tongue. However, many prefer to do it themselves.  
**Hold Chalice steadily and firmly**  
 Turn and Wipe Chalice Lip after each use with Purificator, and turn chalice ¼ turn.  
 \*\*\* For communicants who consume wine out of the chalice, say, **“The Blood of Christ. The cup of Salvation.”**  
 \*\*\* For communicants who INTINCT, say, **“The Body and Blood of Christ bring Eternal Life.”**  
 \*\*\* For communicants who do NOT take the Chalice---they should remain at the rail and you elevate the chalice over them. And just say, **“The Blood of Christ”**. You just don’t want to simply ignore them!!

## Instructions for CHALICE BEARERS (EM's)

1. If you will be unable to serve during your scheduled time, please contact the Parish Administrator so that alternative arrangements can be made. Please also contact the Parish Administrator if you have arranged for a substitute so that the service bulletin may be updated before it is published.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the worship service.
3. Put on the chalice bearer vestments (white alb (robe) and cincture (rope-like belt)).  
The chalice bearer vestments are found in the closet located near Founder's Hall.
4. Ensure that there is a crucifer and two acolytes to serve during the service. If it appears that the assigned crucifer and torchbearers will not be able to serve during the service, try to find substitutes. Take the lead on ensuring other participants are present and are ready to fill in as needed.
5. Make sure the acolytes are prepared for the service (e.g. have put on their vestments, lit their candles, etc.).
6. Ensure there are hymnals and prayer books at the seats where the torchbearers sit and at the altar where the crucifer sits so that they can participate during the service.
7. Light the altar candles five minutes prior to the start of the service if it appears that no youth member will be able to serve as a crucifer.
8. Follow the choir and proceed ahead of the clergy toward the sanctuary at the beginning of the service. Stand on the right side of the clergy at the altar and kneel with the clergy. Use the chair closest to the choir during the service.
9. If the first reader is not present, be prepared to read the first lesson.
10. Introduce the psalm. For example, you might say "We will now read Psalm 118, verses 1 through 2 and 14 through 24, found on page 760 in your prayer book, or within your bulletin insert." Read the first verse and then alternate reading the remaining verses with the congregation. Speak slowly, clearly and loudly so that the people sitting in the back of the church can hear you.
11. If the second reader is not present, be prepared to read the second lesson.
12. At the Offertory (following the Peace and Announcements), follow the clergy to the altar and bow. Then stand on the right side of the sanctuary behind the altar railing.
13. Receive the alms basins from the ushers and place the alms basins on the altar table.
14. If the crucifer is not present, be prepared to help the clergy with the preparing for Holy Eucharist.
15. Receive the Holy Eucharist from the clergy.
16. Serve the wine to the congregation members kneeling at the altar. If the congregation member has already placed the bread in his/her mouth, then say "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation." If the congregation member is holding the bread, then take the bread, dip it in the wine and say "The body and blood of Christ. Keep you in everlasting life." Alternatively, a congregation member may dip the bread into the wine himself. In this case, simply say "The body and blood of Christ. Keep you in everlasting life." If a congregation member forms an X with her arms, this may indicate that she prefers not to drink any wine.
17. When serving the wine, serve every other person kneeling at the altar (i.e. alternate serving with the other person who is serving the wine.) You might wish to serve the first two people sitting on the far left and the two people sitting on the far right in order to maintain a comfortable "serving pace" with your partner.

18. Wipe the chalice lip after each person is served.
19. Fill the chalice with additional wine as needed. Be sure to leave enough wine for your partner in case she needs additional wine.
20. Be careful not to serve wine to a person who has not yet received bread.
21. If a crucifer is not present, extinguish the candles during the closing hymn.
22. At the end of the worship service, and upon notification from the clergy, go to the altar table and kneel with the clergy. Then proceed down the altar steps behind the choir and in front of the clergy.
23. Help the acolytes as needed and hang your vestments in the closet.

**ASSIGNMENT—**

Develop Eucharistic Minister customary for your parish.

**NOTES:**

## Appendix A

### APPLICATION FOR EUCHARISTIC MINISTER

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE TENNESSEE  
50 VANTAGE WAY SUITE 107  
NASHVILLE, TN 37228

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptism Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Received From: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Training Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Endorsement of Rector/Vicar

As Priest-in-Charge of this congregation, I have examined the above named applicant and have found him/her to be proficient in the duties of a Eucharistic Minister. I thereby recommend him/her to minister to this congregation in that capacity.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Endorsement of Vestry:

As Senior Warden of (church and city):

I hereby certify that (name) \_\_\_\_\_ has the approval and endorsement of the vestry to be a Eucharistic Minister for this Parish/Mission.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Suggested Reading

Atkinson, C. W. (1988). *A Lay Minister's Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Constitution & Canons as revised and adopted by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (2009)

Ely, B. W. (1991). *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers in the Episcopal Church*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Ely, B. W. (2005). *A Manual for Eucharistic Ministers*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Ely, B. W. (2012). *The Cup of Salvation: A Manual for Eucharistic Visitors*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Enriching Our Worship 1: Morning and Evening Prayer, The Great Litany, and The Holy Eucharist. (2000). New York, NY: Episcopal Church.

Enriching Our Worship 2: Ministry with the Sick or Dying, Burial of a Child. (2000). New York, NY: Episcopal Church.

Heller, C. (1996). *The New Complete Server*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Kirkwood, N. A. (2005). *A Hospital Visitor's Handbook: The Do's and Don'ts of Hospital Visitation*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Kirkwood, N. A. (2005). *Lay Pastoral Worker's Hospital Handbook: Teaching the Spiritual Needs of Patients*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Malloy, P. (2008). *Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Ceremonials Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Marcuson, M. J. (2009). *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Ministry with the Sick. (2005). New York, NY: Episcopal Church.

Reimer, L. D. & Wagner, J. T. (1984). *The Hospital Handbook: A Practical Guide to Hospital Visitation*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing