



Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

Eucharistic Minister

Training Guide

Theological Reflection

1. What does the Eucharist mean to you personally?

2. What draws you to this ministry?

3. How do you understand the relationship between Christ's presence in the Eucharist and your role as a Eucharistic Minister?

4. How does your ministry at the altar contribute to the unity and worship of the Body of Christ?

Book of Common Prayer

The Ministry (BCP The Catechism page 855)

Q. Who are the ministers of the Church?

A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.

Q. What is the ministry of the laity?

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

Q. What is the duty of all Christians?

A. The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

The Sacraments (BCP The Catechism page 857)

Q. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.

Q. What are the two great sacraments of the Gospel?

A. The two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church are Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

The Holy Eucharist (BCP The Catechism page 859)

Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again.

Q. Why is the Eucharist called a sacrifice?

A. Because the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, is the way by which the sacrifice of Christ is made present, and in which he unites us to his one offering of himself.

Q. By what other names is this service known?

A. The Holy Eucharist is called the Lord's Supper, and Holy Communion; it is also known as the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offering.

Q. What is the outward and visible sign in the Eucharist?

A. The outward and visible sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine, given and received according to Christ's command.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace given in the Eucharist?

A. The inward and spiritual grace in the Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ given to his people, and received by faith.

Q. What are the benefits which we receive in the Lord's Supper?

A. The benefits we receive are the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is our nourishment in eternal life.

Q. What is required of us when we come to the Eucharist?

A. It is required that we should examine our lives, repent of our sins, and be in love and charity with all people.



Constitution and Canons

Adopted in General Conventions 1789–2024.
Revised by the 81st General Convention 2024

Title III: Ministry

Canon 1: Of the Ministry of All Baptized Persons

Sec. 1.

Responsibility of Diocese

Each Diocese shall make provision for the affirmation and development of the ministry of all baptized persons, including:

- a. Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve Christ's mission at all times and in all places.
- b. Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation.

Canon 4: Of Licensed Ministries

Sec. 1.

Selection and license

- 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, Evangelist, 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.

Sec. 2.

Terms

- 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.

Renewal

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

Sec. 6.

Eucharistic Minister

- a. A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Diocese of Ohio Requirements for Eucharistic Minister

A Eucharistic Minister is someone who is licensed by the Diocesan Bishop to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. They are frequently referred to as chalice bearers. Incorporation of this ministry into the worship service signifies the active involvement and presence of the laity within the worshipping life of the faith community.

Requirements:

- ✓ Confirmed or Received Communicant in good standing in The Episcopal Church
- ✓ Currently an active member of their faith community
- ✓ Approval by the parish clergy
- ✓ Have met and completed the required training as set forth by the Diocese of Ohio (renewal every three years)
- ✓ Safe Church Certified (renewal every three years)
- ✓ Received or is willing to receive Anti-Racism Training (must be completed within three years of licensure)
- ✓ A license signed by the Diocesan Bishop allowing the EM to serve only in their own congregation for which the license was granted

Did you know?

The laity has been authorized to perform this ministry since 1967 (women since 1969). Until 1985, administering the chalice was considered to be part of the Lay Reader's ministry. In 1985 the canons were changed and this ministry was separated from that of a Lay Reader. Over time the name of this ministry has changed from chalice bearer to Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) to Eucharistic Minister. This is an affirmation that through our baptismal vows we are all ministers.

While your license allows you to administer either the bread or the wine, many Episcopal congregations continue to follow the longstanding practice in which ordained ministers distribute the bread and lay ministers distribute the wine. This is not a requirement of church canon, but it is a common pattern you are likely to encounter during worship.

Administration of the Consecrated Elements

Procedures *will vary* in each faith community.

Prepare yourself before and during the service:

- ✓ Take time before the service—either at home or in the church—to prepare for this ministry. Spend a few moments in quiet reflection, considering both your role and the meaning of the Eucharist.
- ✓ Pray: *Gracious, loving God, who called Mary to be your handmaid and the bearer of the Christ to the world, empower us to serve you in the ministry of Eucharistic Minister so that we, too, may act as your faithful and willing servants, and through both Word and Sacrament be bearers of Christ in your church and to a world in need. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.*
- ✓ A Prayer Before Receiving Communion (from the BCP): *Be present, be present, O Jesus, our great High Priest, as you were present with your disciples, and be known to us in the breaking of bread; who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.*
- ✓ Dress respectfully, and ensure your hands are clean.
- ✓ Be fully present in the liturgy—participate reverently and wholeheartedly.

How do you prepare your heart and mind before serving at the altar?

Following the Invitation to Communion, the Eucharistic Minister (EM) steps into the sanctuary and stands next to the acolyte.

The priest serves the acolyte, then the EM. The deacon serves the chalice to the acolyte, then the EM. No self-communicating (do not give yourself the bread or wine).

When serving the cup:

- ✓ After receiving the wine, the EM takes the chalice and purificator and moves from the sanctuary to the communion rail or nave.
- ✓ The EM presents the chalice to the congregants with the words *“The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”* Speaking quietly and reverently.
- ✓ When presenting the chalice, hold it with your prominent hand where the stem and the cup meet. Hold it gently so that you can guide the chalice to the individual’s mouth for those who drink from the cup. You may encounter those who wish to hold the chalice themselves, typically taller individuals. It is acceptable to allow them to do so.
- ✓ Using the purificator, wipe the lip of the chalice and rotate it before presenting it to the next congregant.
- ✓ For those who intinct (in which a consecrated host is dipped into the chalice), present the chalice lower. Hold the purificator next to the cup to catch any possible drips that may fall.
- ✓ When congregants choose not to take the chalice, they will have their arms crossed over their chest. The EM is to pause and still recite the words of reception before moving on.
- ✓ At the conclusion of communion, place the chalice and purificator on the corporal on the altar, then return to your seat for the Post Communion Prayer.

When serving the bread:

- ✓ The EM presents the host to the congregants with the words *“The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.”* Speaking quietly and reverently.
- ✓ If someone comes with arms crossed, offer a blessing instead of bread: *“May God bless you and keep you in Christ’s love.”*

Administration of Children:

- ✓ Baptized persons of any age or size are full members of the Body of Christ and full communicants in the Church—including infants. When administering the sacraments to young children, it is often helpful to have them stand rather than kneel, so that you can better see their faces.
- ✓ If a parent wishes their infant to receive the bread, break off a small piece and place it gently in the baby’s mouth. If the parent wishes the infant to receive the wine, place a single drop on your finger and touch it to the baby’s lips. It is entirely appropriate for infants to receive Communion, including in both kinds.
- ✓ If a child asks to receive Communion but a parent declines, respect the parent’s wishes and inform the priest afterward so that they may provide appropriate sacramental instruction to the family.

Sacred Vessels and Linens

BREAD BOX: A lidded box containing the unleavened wafers for the Eucharist.

BURSE: A flat case constructed of two stiffened sides covered with cloth in the liturgical color of the season and in which are contained purificators and corporals [Medieval Latin, *bursa*, purse].

CHALICE: A cup, usually with a broad base, for the consecrated wine of the Eucharist [Latin, *calix*].

CIBORIUM: A vessel, usually shaped like a chalice with a cover, which is used to contain the wafers to be consecrated for the Eucharist; usually comes with a chalice in matching sets. Consecrated wafers may also be served from a ciborium [Latin, meaning a drinking cup; Greek, *kiborium*].

CORPORAL: A large white linen cloth on which the consecrated elements of the Eucharist are placed during the celebration; in effect, it serves as a "table cloth" to catch any crumbs or spills (in which case it is treated with the reverence due consecrated elements of the Eucharist [Latin, *corporalis*, "of the body," from *corpus*, meaning "body"]).

CRUET: A small glass or silver pitcher or bottle for holding water and wine for the Eucharist; if silver or other opaque material, some design will indicate whether it contains water or wine [Old French, *crue*, a flask].

FAIR LINEN: A white linen cloth about the width of the altar but longer so that it hangs off each side of the altar; another name for altar cloth. At the Eucharist, the corporal is placed on the fair linen. The name is from the rubrics of Cranmer's First Book of Common Prayer, which directs that "the table be covered by a fair linen..."

FLAGON: A large (and usually somewhat ornate) pitcher having a spout and handle, of silver or ceramic, used to hold the wine to be consecrated at the Eucharist [Latin, *flasco*, a flask].

HOST: The large wafer elevated by the celebrant and broken at the Fraction; usually is segmented to aid in breaking without many crumbs (which are caught by the corporal) [Latin, *hostia*, sacrifice].

PALL: As used in the Eucharist, a stiff white linen covered board used to cover the chalice to keep out flies or insects and which also provides stability for the paten, burse and veil of a vested chalice [Latin, *pallium*, cloak].

PATEN: A shallow dish, usually of gold or silver, used to hold the Eucharistic bread during the consecration and administration when it is in wafer form; may also be used to designate a position at the Eucharist, e.g., a designated person is the "paten", i.e., will serve the bread [Latin, *patina*, plate].

PURIFICATOR: Small square of white linen, usually embroidered with a cross, used as a napkin to wipe the rim of the chalice during the reception of the wine at the Eucharist and to clean the chalice during the ablutions [Latin, *purificare*, make clean].

"VARMINT SPOON": Ornate pierced spoon, sometimes called a "critter getter" used for removing foreign articles from a chalice; in reality, it is used where a communicant has dropped a wafer into the consecrated wine when communicating by intinction. The holes in the spoon allow the wine to drain back into the chalice and the wafer can then be consumed from the spoon; it sure beats sticking your fingers into the cup.

VEIL: At the Eucharist, the square of material in liturgical colors matching the altar cloths and vestments; used to cover the chalice and paten, host and pall which make up a vested chalice.

VESTED CHALICE: The "stack" consisting, from bottom to top, of the chalice, paten, host, pall, and corporal, all of which are topped with the burse, which is found on the altar prior to the celebration of the Eucharist.

Practical Awareness

1. What do you think are the most important things to remember about serving the chalice or bread?

2. What do you do if...

Wine is spilled: _____

You run out of wine: _____

Someone drops the host: _____

3. What does it mean to serve as part of a liturgical team? How do you see your ministry supporting the clergy, acolytes, and the worshipping community?

4. What would help? What would you like to hear more about?

*Be present, be present, O Jesus,
our great high priest, as you were
present with your disciples, and be
known to us in the breaking of bread;
who live and reign with the Father
and the Holy Spirit, now for ever.*

Book of Common Prayer, 834 

Next Steps

Please visit the Diocese of Ohio webpage to fill-out the online “Lay License Application”.

You will need the following materials to upload:

1. A letter of recommendation from your rector, priest, or senior warden confirming that you completed this training and that you are confirmed communicant in good standing.
2. Proof of current Safe Church training certificates for the following:
 - a. Safe Church Universal Training “Healthy Boundaries”
 - b. Safe Church Universal Training “Inclusion”
 - c. Safe Church Universal Training “Power and Relationships”
 - d. Safe Church Universal Training “Bullying”
 - e. Safe Church Universal Training “Abuse & Neglect”

Access and information relating to Safe Church should be directed to safechurch@dohio.org.

Thank you for participating in this training and your willingness to serve as an Eucharistic Minister. Please contact Canon for Leadership Development, Mr. Russ Tripi, with any questions relating to this vital ministry.