



Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

Eucharistic Visitor

Training Guide

Theological Reflection

1. What does the Eucharist mean to you personally?

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

3. In what ways does sharing Holy Communion outside the church building extend the Body of Christ?

4. How does this ministry embody Jesus' command to "feed my sheep"?

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. 7.

Eucharistic Visitor

- a. A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Diocese of Ohio Vision Statement

Connected in Beloved Community, we seek to be faithful, healthy, effective, and sustainable sharers of the transformative love of Jesus.

How does the ministry of a Eucharistic Visitor help embody and extend our diocesan vision?

Diocese of Ohio Requirements for Eucharistic Visitor

- ✓ Confirmed or Received Communicant in good standing in The Episcopal Church
- ✓ Currently an active member of their faith community (parish)
- ✓ Approval by the faith community 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 Anti-Racism Training (if available)
- ✓ Criminal Background check (can be done through Diocesan Praesidium Account)
- ✓ A license signed by the Diocesan Bishop allowing the EV to serve only in their own congregation for which the license was granted.

Are You Being Called to be a Eucharistic Visitor?

A Eucharistic Visitor is a member of the faith community (parish) who has been licensed by the Diocesan Bishop to bring Holy Eucharist to those members who are unable to attend worship due to illness, or infirmity, or physical limitations. The ministry of a Eucharistic Visitor is pastoral and sacramental in nature. In a symbolic way, Eucharistic Visitors carry the community with them as a sign of its care, support, and concern for its absent members. Because the community is bound together and strengthened through the common Eucharist meal, it is vital for members who cannot be there physically to be “re-membered” into the oneness of the Body of Christ.

At the core of serving as a Eucharistic Visitor is **your own relationship with God** and how you live out that relationship on a daily basis, and how this relationship is made evident through your interactions with other people with whom you come into contact. Below are some important points to consider while discerning a call to this ministry.

- Spiritual disciplines that feed your life
- Participation in weekly worship
- Personal prayer routine
- Seeing Christ in others

1. What draws you to this ministry?

2. What are the gifts you bring to this ministry? What might challenge you?

GIFTS

CHALLENGES

3. How might you prepare your heart and mind before each visit?

I was sick[†] and you visited me... 
MATTHEW 25:36

Logistics

THE SCHEDULE

Typically, EVs are scheduled to make visits. Prepare your day accordingly. IF you cannot serve on the assigned day, ***please*** secure a substitute to do the visit(s) for you AND notify the clergy of this change. Failure to do so may impact the individual to be visited.

When do you make your visit? This is a common and fair question. And the answer may vary between individuals and faith communities. At best, Eucharistic Visit *should ideally* be done following Sunday worship. However, circumstances frequently dictate that other times must be taken into consideration. Work with the person being visited and members of the clergy to determine when is best to carry out a visit. Strive to do this ministry to the fullest of your ability. You are a Christ-bearer, representing the faith community and you serve as a conduit between the worshipping community and those whom you are visiting.

DURING WORSHIP

Listen closely to the sermon. Take notes if necessary to remember specific points. Share this with the person(s) you visit during the appointed time in the liturgy.

SENDING FORTH

After Communion the Eucharistic Visitor(s) are sent forth by the following words:

Deacon/Priest:

In the name of this congregation (can say in the name of X faith community) we send you (can say names) forth (can say to...XYZ person) bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the Communion of Christ's body and blood.

We, who are many, are one body, because we share one bread, one cup. Amen.

Sending the EVs out of the nave before the final dismissal symbolically carries the service with them and doesn't conclude it until the people they visit are dismissed from the service. (Some congregations send some altar flowers out, as well.)

CHECK IN WITH CLERGY

You and the clergy are a vital team working in partnership to care for the congregation. Typically, the clergy will already be aware of those needing a visit and will collaborate with you in determining whom you are to visit. Please be sure to check in with the clergy on the Sunday you are being sent out, AND again after the visit to share how it went and to report any new pastoral concerns. Refer to the church directory to obtain the person's phone number and address.

CALL BEFORE YOU LEAVE

When making a home visit, please call the person to be visited ahead of your visit. Be sensitive to their timing and needs. Also, inquire if others from the home may be joining in the visit—ensure your kit is adequately stocked. Inform the person if you are being joined by another member.

For hospital or nursing facilities, always check in at the Visitor's Desk or Information Desk, you may be required to sign in. Also, verify the room number of the person you are visiting.

PREPARE YOUR HEART AND MIND

Spend a few minutes in quiet reflection and prayer:

Reflect on John 15:1-17; Luke 24:13-35; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; or Psalm 121.

Almighty and everliving God, grant to your servant [Name] grace to bear this sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood with reverence and joy. May I go forth not as myself alone, but as your messenger of hope, healing, and love. May your presence be known in word and sacrament, and may I serve with compassion and humility, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-or-

Lord Jesus, as I bring your holy gifts to your beloved child, help me to listen with your ears, to see with your eyes, to speak with your voice, and to love with your heart. Let my hands be your hands. Let my presence be your peace. In your holy name, I go. Amen.

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

1. BCP
2. The Communion Kit

The Eucharistic Visitor's kit should contain the following:

Cruet: a vessel with a cap, for carrying consecrated wine

Pyx: a small box for carrying consecrated wafers

Paten: a plate for serving the wafers (optional)

Chalice: a cup from which to administer the wine

Corporal: a linen cloth used beneath the vessels when setting the communion

Purificators: smaller linens used to wipe the chalice after each person has drunk

3. Sunday worship bulletins/leaflets
4. Copies of the Order of service
5. Current newsletter, if available
6. Optional: altar flowers

How will you ensure you carry and handle the consecrated elements with reverence and care?

THE “PASTORAL” VISIT

Arrive at the designated time, and introduce yourself to anyone you do not already know.

Take time to visit and share conversation with the person. Listen with intention and compassion. Ask if there is anything they would like you to pass along to the clergy. Remember that what is shared during this visit should be held in confidence within the pastoral care team. While clergy will be informed, any personal information (including medical details) will not be shared with others in the congregation unless the individual specifically requests it.

Often, those you visit will enjoy hearing news and updates from the faith community. Share information about upcoming services, ministry events, or other parish life—but only if the news is already public knowledge. Avoid gossip, speculation, or anything that could be considered hearsay.

Keep in mind that your primary purpose is to connect them with the wider community and to share Holy Communion. Be sure to allow adequate time for the sacramental portion of the visit. At the same time, be attentive to the individual's energy and stamina. Sometimes, the pastoral portion of the visit may need to be brief so that the Eucharistic meal can be shared with the reverence and presence it deserves.

How might you respond if the person you are visiting shares something deeply troubling or upsetting?

THE “SACRAMENTAL” VISIT

Invite others who may be in the house or room to join in sharing the Eucharistic meal. Set up the communion set in a central place that is in the person's line of sight. Pass out worship service bulletins/leaflets with the Order of Service to those present.

Conduct the service as prescribed in the Order of Service. **For your convenience a copy has been provided at the end of this guide.** Feel free to copy and laminate as you see fit.

Clean up after communion and collect the Order of Service copies. Leave the worship bulletins for them to look through at their leisure, along with a newsletter if it is available.

Return the kit to the church and place it in the sacristy. Clean kit supplies. Typically, kits are prepared by Altar Guild or the clergy. Record the visit in the Register of Services book.

Follow up with clergy. Remember to pray for the person you've visited throughout the week.

Your Questions

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

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 a completed background check.
3. 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"
 - f. Safe Church Universal Training "Mandated Reporter"

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 Visitor. Please contact Canon for Leadership Development, Mr. Russ Tripi, with any questions relating to this vital ministry.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION
BY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS TO PERSONS WHO ARE ILL OR INFIRM
Adopted from *The Book of Occasional Services*, 2022, pages 278-280

The Eucharistic Visitor(s) greets the people

Eucharistic Visitor: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

Response: And also with you.

Eucharistic Visitor: Let us pray:

(The Collect of the Day is read from Sunday's bulletin)

Response: Amen.

Eucharistic Visitor: A Reading from the Gospel according to...

(The Gospel of the Day, or some other passage of Scripture appropriate to the occasion, is read from Sunday's bulletin)

Eucharistic Visitor: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Reflections may be offered from the sermon/liturgy of that day.

Suitable prayers may be offered.

A Confession of Sin may be said:

Eucharistic Visitor: Please join me in reading the Confession of Sin.

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

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

Response: Amen.

Eucharistic Visitor: Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us:

Response: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Administration of the Holy Communion
(using one of the authorized forms of the words of administration)*

Eucharistic Visitor: The gifts of God for the People of God.

The EV may take the Eucharist at the congregational service and then again at the visit, reinforcing the link to the community. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants, with these words (even if someone does not receive, these words should be said):

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

Closing Prayer said immediately after Communion is shared by all present.

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

Response: Amen.

Eucharistic Visitor: Let us bless the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.