

Congregational Lay Ministries

Introduction

The Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer* [1979] instructs all laity “to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.” *The Book of Common Prayer* emphasizes both the centrality of the Eucharistic celebration in Christian community and the active participation of all baptized persons in worship.

The Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church authorize the licensing of lay people in seven ministries: Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Catechist and Evangelist. It is important that those who may be called to these ministries be given appropriate formation and training that they may carry out their ministry to the best of their ability. This manual outlines topics to be included in the formation and training for each of the lay ministries as licensed by the Diocese of Iowa. These guidelines are offered not in a spirit of legalistic requirements but as outlines of best practices for formation and training for lay ministries. Adult learners will have a variety of life experiences and educational backgrounds, and formation should be appropriate for each learner.

The required leadership trainings as established by the Diocese of Iowa related to Safeguarding God’s Children, Safeguarding God’s People, and anti-racism are included for each of the ministries licensed by the Diocese of Iowa.

Formation and training can happen in several ways. Individual clergy and experienced, licensed lay persons may offer the training in their congregations. Classes may be offered regularly at the diocesan annual Summer Ministries School and Retreat. Several congregations may collaborate in offering trainings and classes. Those serving the diocese as Congregational Companions may be available and qualified to provide the training.

A Bibliography of helpful resources is included, along with three appendices called for in certain circumstances: “How to Conduct a Criminal Background Check in the State of Iowa”, “How to Check the Sexual Abuse Registry in the State of Iowa”, and a release form to be submitted to the diocese.

Description of licensed ministries in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (2012)

TITLE III MINISTRY

CANON 4: Of Licensed Ministries

Sec. 1 (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.

(b) The Presiding Bishop or the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces may authorize a member of the Armed Forces to exercise one or more of these ministries in the Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of this Canon. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons shall be established by the Bishop granting the license.

Sec. 2 (a) The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III.4.1(a) and may be renewed. The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

(b) In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other 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. 3. A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop.

Sec. 4. A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 5. A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 6. 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.

Sec. 7. 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.

Sec. 8. A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 9. An Evangelist is a lay person who presents the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. An Evangelist assists with the community's ministry of evangelism in partnership with the Presbyter or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or as directed by the Bishop.

Discerning and Identifying

People seeking to increase their ministry and participation in the life of their local congregation may be interested in pursuing the licensing process for certain ministries.

Congregations may hold an informational/discernment meeting for all people who might be considering serving in any of the licensed ministries. At this time, the ministry could be explained as well as the basic requirements and what kind of learning and training would happen for any of the licensed ministries. Congregational discernment teams may be chosen to facilitate this process. Congregations are encouraged to see that their roster of licensed ministers reflects the diversity of membership in the congregation.

Discernment may begin with recognition of certain basic characteristics of those suitable for being licensed ministers within a congregation. These may include:

- A sense of being called to serve in this ministry
- Dependability and integrity
- Physical abilities suitable for carrying out the particular ministry
- A measure of awareness of self and others as necessary for the office

More specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities for serving in each licensed ministry are listed in the following section of this document. The formation and training process may be designed to empower each person for licensed ministry.

Licensed Ministries: Definitions and Basic Qualifications/Competencies

Pastoral Leader

Description, role and authority

“A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop.” Canon III.4.3

By its very nature, the need for a Pastoral Leader is found in extraordinary circumstances. Each situation is unique and will require intensive assistance from the Office of the Bishop.

In keeping with the range of responsibilities associated with this ministry, it is expected that sexual abuse registry and criminal background checks will be completed for any person seeking a license as a Pastoral Leader.

Training and formation include:

Required for license as a Pastoral Leader:

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 2
- Safeguarding God’s People - Preventing Exploitation
- Anti-racism

Education in the following areas

- Holy Scriptures
- *The Book of Common Prayer*
- *The Hymnal*
- Church history
- Christian ethics and moral theology
- The Church’s doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of Faith (Catechism)
- Pastoral Care and appropriate boundaries
- Prayer, individual and corporate
- The Baptismal Covenant and its application to ministry
- Polity, governance and structure of The Episcopal Church
- Contemporary society

Training in the following responsibilities:

- Keeping (or delegating) the parochial records
- Completing (or delegating) reports required by the diocese and/or canons
- Managing (or delegating) budgeting and fiscal administration of congregation
- Coordinating maintenance and security of buildings and grounds

Worship Leader

Description, role and authority

“A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.” Canon III.4.4

Training and formation include:

Required for License as Worship Leader:

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 2
- Safe guarding God’s People – Preventing Exploitation

Education in the following areas

- Knowledge of *The Book of Common Prayer*
- An understanding of the rubrics in *The Book of Common Prayer*
- Knowledge of non-Eucharistic worship and the ability to lead these services
- Knowledge of the sacraments
- The structure of the liturgical year
- Content and use of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts; Holy Women Holy Men, The Book of Occasional Services*.
- Use of *The Hymnal* and other authorized musical sources
- An understanding of the unique liturgical roles of laity, deacons, and priests

Training in the following skills:

- Speaking/delivery skills
- Assessing the congregation during worship
- Organizational skills

Preacher

Description, role and authority

“A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.” Canon III.4.5

Training and formation include:

Required for License as Preacher:

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 2
- Safe guarding God’s People – Preventing Exploitation

Education in the following areas

- Holy Scriptures, interpretation, contents and background
- *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Hymnal*
- The conduct of public worship
- Overview of Church history including current events
- Christian ethics
- Church’s doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of Faith (Catechism)
- Homiletics, including the use of the voice
- The importance of preaching and its role in the worship experience
- In a basic knowledge of liturgy

Education and practice in sermon preparation

- Work in exegesis of the Propers
- Writing a draft and reviewing/revising with mentor
- Use of resources – commentaries, etc.
- Prayer, study, and collaboration on scripture lessons with a small group

Sermon evaluation

- With a mentor (a mentor is an experienced, capable preacher)
- Sermon delivery/public speaking
- Development of a feedback group from congregation

Diocesan Summer Ministries School and Retreat programs and workshops are supplementary to the extended work with a mentor who is an experienced, capable preacher.

Eucharistic Minister

Description, role and authority

“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.” Canon III.4.3

Training and formation include:

Required for a license as a Eucharistic Minister

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 1, one-hour training for Parents and Congregations

Education and practice in the following areas:

- Explanation of the rubrics concerning the Eucharist in *The Book of Common Prayer*
- Explanation of the Eucharist
- An awareness of the culture of the congregation and the role of Holy Communion in its life and practices around receiving communion
- Names and uses of the altar vessels and linens
- Administration of the chalice and/or paten, use of intinction and the common cup
- Administering the elements to persons with special needs
- Service with experienced Eucharistic Minister before serving alone

Eucharistic Visitor

Description, role and authority

“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.”
Canon III.4.7

In keeping with the range of responsibilities associated with this ministry, it is expected that sexual abuse registry and criminal background checks will be completed for any person seeking a license as a Eucharistic Visitor.

Training and formation include:

Required for License as Eucharistic Visitor:

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 2
- Safe guarding God’s People – Preventing Exploitation

Discerning a personal commitment to visiting regularly

Education in the following areas:

- Understanding of Eucharistic Theology, including the Reserved Sacrament
- Basic pastoral care issues – issues related to home-bound or nursing home residents, terminally ill, death and dying
- An understanding of the Eucharist in order to know what it means to take it out to those who cannot be with the gathered community, including services and prayers for healing and anointing
- An understanding of aging and family dynamics
- The importance of confidentiality
- Training on the prevention and identification of elder abuse,

Training in the following areas:

- The mechanics of administration in various settings, including
- Setting up a call with someone
- Setting up the communion kit
- The knowledge of when to notify clergy if changes have occurred in those visited
- Making regular reports to the clergy/pastoral care commission on the visits

Serving with an experienced Eucharist Visitor for a minimum of three months or until capable of serving alone.

Catechist

Description, role and authority

“A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.” Canon III.4.8

In keeping with the range of responsibilities associated with this ministry, it is expected that sexual abuse registry and criminal background checks will be completed for any person seeking a license as a Catechist.

Training and formation include:

Required for a license as a Catechist:

- Safeguarding God’s Children – Level 2
- Safe guarding God’s People – Preventing Exploitation

Education in the following areas:

- The meaning of Baptism, the Baptismal Covenant and implication in ministry
- *The Book of Common Prayer*, especially the Creeds and An Outline of Faith (Catechism), and *The Hymnal*
- The Bible, translations, organization and its use for personal study
- Traditions and various styles of prayer
- An overview of Church history, including current events
- The resources for personal study, including authorities for the faith journey in the Anglican tradition

Training in teaching skills and abilities.

Licensed Ministries Resources

Bibliography

Introduction to Anglican Christianity

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A Theology of Worship. Louis Weil. 2002. (The New Church's Teaching Series, Vol. 12) Cowley Publications.

Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers. Patrick Malloy. 2007. Church Publishing

Eucharistic Minister

A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers Beth Wickenberg Ely. Dec. 1992

A Lay Minister's Guide to The Book of Common Prayer. Clifford W. Atkinson. May 1988

Tips for Chalice Bearers. Forward Movement Publications. www.forwardmovement.org

Sacraments of Life, Life of the Sacraments

Leonardo Boff and John Drury. Dec. 1987

Forward Movement. www.forwardmovement.org has many useful resources for worship.

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Surviving the Sermon, David Schlafer, 1992. Cowley.

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The Preaching Life, Barbara Brown Taylor, 1993. Cowley.

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Evangelism

Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism. 2nd edition. Martha Grace Reese. 2008. Chalice Press.
Tell It Like It Is: Reclaiming the Practice of Testimony. Lillian Daniel. 2006. The Alban Institute.
Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian. Thomas G. Long. 2004. Jossey-Bass.
The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West...Again. George G. Hunter III. 2000. Abingdon Press.
Fireweed Evangelism: Christian Hospitality in a Multi-Faith World. Elizabeth Rankin Geitz. 2004. Church Publishing.

Appendices

Appendix A

How to conduct a Criminal Background Check in the State of Iowa

Contact the following:
Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation
Bureau of Identification
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

Forms for conducting a criminal background check can be obtained by calling (515) 281- 4776 or downloaded from:
<http://www.dps.state.ia.us/DCI/supportoperations/crimhistory/obtainrecords.html>

Request or download both the “request form” and the “billing form”.

Be sure to have the applicant’s signature before you request the criminal record check. (see release form in Appendix C)

If the applicant has lived outside the State of Iowa in the past seven years, you will need to contact the other state(s) in which the person has lived to complete the check.

Appendix B

How to check the Sexual Abuse Registry in the State of Iowa

To check for a criminal record in the State of Iowa, go to: <http://www.iowasexoffenders.com>.

You will also need to contact your local Sheriff/Police Department as some offenders are not on the registry.

Prior to checking the sexual abuse registry, be sure you have a signed release from the individual whose background you are checking. See Appendix C for the release

If the applicant has lived outside the State of Iowa in the past seven years, you will need to contact the other state(s) in which the person has lived to complete the check.

Appendix C

Acknowledgement, Release, and Signature

I authorize any person or organization to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment or volunteering. I also authorize _____ (congregation) and the Diocese of Iowa to request and receive such information.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____