



# Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

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## Lay Licensing Guidelines

(Title III, Canon 4 of the Constitution & Canons of the 2003 General Convention)

**LECTOR** - an active member of a congregation trained in reading of the Word and appointed **without license** by the clergy in charge of the congregation to read lessons, the Psalms, or lead the Prayers of the People. A Lector can be a lay person or an ordained person. Since there has been no requirement in the Canons for Lectors to be licensed, no licenses are issued by this office.

**WORSHIP LEADER (formerly Lay Reader)** - 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. **(Must be licensed)**

**PREACHER** - 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. **(Must be licensed)**

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER (formerly Chalice Bearer)** - 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. *(Special guidelines apply, see attached.)* **(Must be licensed)**

**EUCCHARISTIC VISITOR (formerly Eucharistic Minister)** - 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. *(Special guidelines apply, see attached.)* **(Must be licensed)**

**CATECHIST** - 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. **(Must be licensed)**

*Because of the delicate sensibilities involved in receiving communion from someone, it is and has been the practice of this diocese that licenses to administer the elements require clergy nomination and vestry approval with each and every application. Because of the function of a Catechist, clergy nomination and vestry approval will also be required with each and every application. A vestry resolution must accompany the original application for licensing for Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, and Catechist.*

**\*\*Under special circumstances, and as directed by the Bishop, the following lay ministry may be licensed.\*\***

**PASTORAL LEADER** - a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop. **(Must be licensed)**

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## **SELECTION and LICENSING GUIDELINES**

A confirmed communicant in good standing or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, or Catechist. 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 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 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.

**It is the policy of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast to use a term of three years for licensing. Regardless of the specific date on which the request is made, all licenses will be dated from January 1 until December 31 of the appropriate year.**

In renewing a 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.

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.

## Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors

1. Every congregation of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast is allowed ten (10) Eucharistic Ministers to serve in the congregation being licensed. An additional two (2) Eucharistic Ministers will be allowed for every 50 baptized members above 200. These numbers may be adjusted if additional assistance is needed, upon the consent of the Bishop.
2. All licenses should be considered revoked when a Eucharistic Minister changes congregations. Licenses of Eucharistic Ministers who move into the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast from other dioceses will not be accepted.
3. It is a violation of the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer for a Eucharistic Minister to administer the chalice at any liturgy where there are sufficient ordained persons present.
4. The Bishop, may, at his or her discretion, require Eucharistic Ministers (and such other lay persons as are licensed to perform liturgical and pastoral functions in this diocese) to attend training as a condition of licensing.
5. A person holding a basic Eucharistic Minister's license may also be licensed by the Bishop to serve as a Eucharistic Visitor, to take the sacrament consecrated at a principal celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sundays or other major feast days - immediately following such celebration - to those members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. Rectors seeking such authorization for Eucharistic Visitors are to write the Bishop with the following information:
  - a. A description of the teaching given to the congregation about the ministry of Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors.
  - b. A justification of the need for this ministry in that particular congregation and giving specific data as to how the Eucharistic Visitor is expected to be utilized.
  - c. For each Eucharistic Visitor so designated, a detailed account of that person's qualifications and training with specific attention tot the basics of pastoral care and behavior in a sickroom. While the ministry of the Eucharistic Minister is functional in administering the communion, those specially licensed as Eucharistic Visitor enable the ill or infirm to be connected to the Eucharist of their congregation. As the Eucharistic Visitor will often be in delicate pastoral situations, requiring sensitivity and preparation, each congregation **must develop adequate liturgical and pastoral courses of preparation** for this particular ministry.
  - d. Every congregation of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast is allowed six (6) Eucharistic Visitors to serve in the congregation being licensed. An additional one (1) Eucharistic Visitor will be allowed for every 100 baptized members above 200. These numbers may be adjusted if additional assistance can be justified, upon the consent of the Bishop. Under no circumstances, however, would any congregation have more than twelve (12) Eucharistic Visitors so authorized.

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

6. In taking the Holy Eucharist to the those unable to be present at the celebration, note the following guidelines:
- a. Appointments for such visitation should be made in advance. Eucharistic Visitors should not be vested while on such visits. It would be a good idea, however, to wear a name tag or congregation identification card.
  - b. Eucharistic Visitors will be given vessels containing the consecrated elements at the altar immediately following the communion of the people. They will depart from the church immediately and the celebrant may send them out with such words of commissioning as might be appropriate for the occasion.\* The persons to be visited should be remembered at that time (or previously in the Prayers of the People).
  - c. Eucharistic Visitors and other members of the congregation who accompany them are not to receive Holy Communion again if they have already received at the altar prior to leaving the church. Friends or relatives present at the visitation who do not make their communion in the church may receive the Eucharist with the person being visited.
  - d. The Eucharist Visitors will use only that form entitled “Communion Under Special Circumstances” on page 396 of the *Book of Common Prayer* and much observe the appropriate limitations (and such other instructions as may be given by the Rector). The Collect and Gospel of the Day should be incorporated.
  - e. At the conclusion of the visitation - or of the last visit if the Eucharistic Visitor makes more than one - that Visitor is to consume reverently what remains of the consecrated elements and to cleanse the vessels and return them to the church at the first convenient opportunity. Under no circumstances is a Eucharistic Visitor to retain consecrated elements as a “Reserved Sacrament”.
  - f. Such visits shall be properly recorded in the liturgical service register.

\* Suggested:

**CELEBRANT:** (N), we send you out to share Communion this week with, (N).

**PEOPLE:** May you carry the prayers of all of us as you take this sacrament of Christ’s presence.

**CELEBRANT:** May those who receive it from you be strengthened and encouraged in that community we have together I our Lord Jesus Christ.

**ALL:** Amen.