



The Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

DEVELOPING LITURGICAL LAY LEADERS IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

Why?

By virtue of our baptism, we are all Christian ministers. The Holy Spirit authorizes and empowers every baptized person to carry on various ministries for the good of and on behalf of the congregation. For some Christians, this means being called to ordained ministry. For most of us, this means we become actively involved in lay ministry or ministries.

Discerning and Identifying

People seeking to increase their participation in the life of their local congregation may be interested in pursuing the licensing process for certain ministries. The priest-in-charge (or in churches without a priest-in-charge, the Senior Warden) may complete this discernment by conversations with members of the congregation, or a congregational discernment team may be chosen to facilitate this process. Congregations are encouraged to seek licensed ministers that 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. For ANY Licensed Minister, we look for a person who:

- Demonstrates a commitment to follow Jesus Christ.
- Approaches the Christian way as a continual opportunity for growth.
- Is a respected member of the congregation (not necessarily a long-term member).
- Is faithful in prayer and Bible study.
- Is compassionate, committed, dedicated, sensitive, open, not rigid, interpersonally approachable, a good listener, willing to hear different points of view.
- Is faithful in worship.
- Is willing to be a model of Christian living (with vulnerability and humility).
- Has interpersonal skills in stressful situations.
- Responds sensitively in pastoral situations.
- Is willing to serve as a member of a team and/or under appropriate supervision.
- A sense of being called to serve in this ministry.
- Dependability and integrity.
- Physical abilities suitable for carrying out the particular ministry.

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 and further prepare each person for licensed ministry.

SUGGESTED DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON EACH MINISTRY

PASTORAL LEADER Are you drawn to “holy listening”, listening deeply to others’ concerns and stories? Is prayer a part of your routine? Do you experience God’s presence and leading when praying with or for others? Have you felt called to spontaneously lead others in prayer? Do you feel comfortable or have a desire to pray extemporaneously? Do you share Scripture to support others in time of need? Have you served at a prayer or healing station, or participated in the laying on of hands? Are you sought out by others to listen to their spiritual struggles? Are you or have you been a Eucharistic Visitor or guided others in private liturgies and prayers, such as those found in the Book of Common Prayer?

PREACHER Do you ever hear sermons and think to yourself: “I could do that!” or “I would like to try to learn to do that!?” Do you muse on God’s word and want to share your musings with others? Do you love to talk about the things of God and transformation? Do you like to study scripture, seeking further clarification of the truths it holds? Do you find that you are able to connect scripture with daily life issues in a way that others are able to understand it better?

WORSHIP LEADER What is it about worship that is most meaningful to you? Are you comfortable leading from in front of people or do you prefer to be in the pew? Do you find that you enjoy learning about the details of the liturgy? What worship ministries have you been a part of?

EVANGELIST Do you have a heart to listen to others and help them understand how their story interacts and is embedded in God’s story? Are you passionate about the fact that scripture bears Good News to those who are searching, lost, longing for hope, seeking consolation, or in need of an understanding of where they “fit” in the flow of this life? Do you long to empower and encourage others in the expression of their faith and spiritual journey? Lay Evangelists are leaders guided by a strong spirituality that manifests in a creative and expressive love for our theological heritage. This love is borne through listening, story-sharing, and an appreciation of the beautifully diverse contours of the life we share.

Christian Formation Leader/Catechist Do you like to teach? Are you curious about guiding others to a deeper understanding of life as a disciple? Are you ready to cultivate both an understanding of our life in God and in our tradition/world? The Christian Formation Leader/CATECHIST track will equip participants to better assess the current formation offerings in their parishes (youth and adult) and guide them through a variety of spiritual practices. Participants will learn about multi-generational formation resources and how to equip others in finding their gifts for ministry and mission locally and in our diocese as a whole.

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In order for a person to be nominated to the Bishop, the vestry of the congregation shall meet at least once with the nominee and complete a brief resolution endorsing the nominee for the particular ministry to which she/he is being called. Once discernment in the congregation has been completed, the member is nominated to the Bishop by submitting to the Bishop’s office the following form and supporting documents.



The Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast
Application for Admittance into Lay Leadership Training

NOMINATION BY RECTOR OR VICAR OR LEADER EXERCISING OVERSIGHT DATE: _____

I: _____

(Rector or Vicar or Lay Leader Exercising Oversight)

_____, hereby nominate the following person for
(church, city) licensing as a Lay Leader in the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast as:

___ WORSHIP LEADER ___ PASTORAL LEADER ___ CHRISTIAN FORMATION LEADER/CATECHIST
___ PREACHER ___ EVANGELIST

[Note: select only one course track]

(Signature of Rector or Vicar or Lay Leader Exercising Oversight)

DATE OF VESTRY ENDORSEMENT: _____

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Full Name of Nominee: _____

Present Home Address: _____

Preferred Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Permanent Home Address (if different from above): _____

Birth date: _____ Gender: [] Female [] Male

ACCEPTANCE BY NOMINEE I hereby accept this nomination.

Signature of Nominee Date

Insert Photo

CHURCH AFFILIATION

Baptism (Attach evidence of Baptism) I was baptized in:

CHURCH AND LOCATION

on: _____ by The Rev. _____

DATE

CLERGY PERSON

Confirmation (Attach evidence of confirmation) I was confirmed at: _____

CHURCH AND LOCATION

on: _____ by The Rt. Rev. _____

DATE

BISHOP

EPISCOPAL MEMBERSHIP

I first became a member of: _____ in this Diocese on: _____

CHURCH AND LOCATION

DATE

and am presently a communicant of: _____

CHURCH AND LOCATION

MINISTRY In what areas and roles have you been involved on a parish, diocesan, or community level (renewal, administration, program, teaching, pastoral, etc.)

In particular, please note any participation in Education for Ministry:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

I am currently enrolled in an educational institution: No Yes

Graduate of: _____

HIGH SCHOOL

DATE

Give the following information on each college or university attended, including present course of study if currently enrolled

NAME OF SCHOOL	YRS. ENROLLED FROM/TO	MAJOR SUBJECT	DEGREE ATTAINED	AVG GRADE
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WORK HISTORY Currently employed by _____ Full time Part time

Write a brief account of your work history. Describe (a) type of work done, (b) time in each position, (c) reasons for change of job, and (d) type of work enjoyed most and least?

FAMILY HISTORY Present marital status: Single Married Divorced Separated Widowed

Number of marriages: Never married One Two or more (If more than 2 please indicate your marital history on a separate sheet)

Length of marriages: Present: _____ Previous: _____

Spouse (Please give Maiden Name where appropriate) _____

Please List Children:

Name

DOB _____

Name

DOB _____

Name

DOB _____

Name

DOB _____

Name

DOB _____

Name

DOB _____

SPIRITUAL LIFE I seek/feel called to the ministry of _____ because:
(No more than 500 words):

JOURNEY IN FAITH Describe, briefly, your journey in faith. a) What role did the church play in your growing up? b) Describe your conversion experience, if any. c) Do you have a Spiritual Director? d) What is your current spiritual discipline (rule of life)? e) What change(s) has your faith brought about in your life? (1000 words)

BAPTISMAL COVENANT Describe briefly how your call to ministry is informed and shaped by the baptismal covenant: (500 words)

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I agree to conform to the Canons, the Diocesan Guidelines, and the direction of the Bishop and the Member of the Clergy in charge of the congregation where I am to serve, in the exercise of the ministry.

Signature of Person for whom this License is requested

Date of Application

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 the Central Gulf Coast to request and receive such information.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

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With this form, please include:

- Letter of nomination by the priest in charge (or Senior Warden if no priest)
- Vestry Resolution supporting nomination of stated lay ministry(ies)
- Spiritual Life essay
- Journey of Faith essay
- Baptismal Covenant
- Certificate(s) of Degree(s)
- Transcript(s) _____

- List additional Material