

**Worship Ministry**  
**Lay Eucharistic Ministries**  
**Guidelines and Procedures**

**1. Overview:**

Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) are lay people trained and authorized to administer the consecrated wine at Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay minister authorized to take the consecrated elements to members of the congregation who were unable to be present at the Eucharist because they are ill, home-bound, in the hospital or have some other form of infirmity. Guidance for the Eucharist Visitor begins with paragraph 10 of this document. LEMs serve under the direction of St. Mark's clergy and must be licensed by the Virginian Diocesan bishop.

Licenses are issued for three years. *LEMs serve God on God's altar and are instruments of the Holy Spirit serving the people.*

For more information about Lay Leader Guidelines, Eucharistic Minister information and application, Eucharistic Visitor Information and Application, please access the Diocese of Virginia website:

<http://www.thediocese.net/resources/administration/lay-leader-guidelines/>

**2. Scheduling:**

Generally, we have one LEM at the 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist service, and two at the 10:00 a.m. service (one vested and one non-vested). The Parish Administrator sends out a quarterly worship schedule identifying the LEMs, readers, acolytes, greeters, ushers, and other members serving on the worship ministries. There is a LEM Coordinator for the 8 a.m. service and the 10 a.m. service. They schedule the LEMs on a quarterly basis. The schedule is sent out by email or phone identifying vested and secondary servers. If you are unable to serve at a time when you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a substitute by contacting another LEM directly or by sending an e-mail to the LEM e-mail distribution list. You must also let the LEM Coordinator know of any changes.

**3. LEM Procedures 8:00 AM Service**

- a. One LEM is assigned to each 8:00 am service.
- b. The LEM also serves as the acolyte. Light candles on the right side of the altar first, then light the left side.
- c. The LEM performs a head count of the congregation and reports number to the celebrant.
- d. The ushers will bring the offering plates and elements to the altar, where the LEM receives them.
- e. LEM places the alms plate on the altar, and then returns to the ushers for the elements.
- f. The LEM walks around altar to present the hosts to the priest and then places the unused (unblessed) hosts on the credence shelf on the right.
- g. The LEM then presents the wine and water to the priest and returns the unused to the credence shelf on the right.
- h. Follow steps in paragraph 6 for administering the chalice.

- i. Since there is no "recessional" at the end of the 8:00 service, the LEM gives the final dismissal at the end of the service from the altar and exits with the clergy.
- j. The LEM will immediately return to extinguish the candles.
- k. Extinguish the candles on the left side first.
- l. Reverence the altar and hang the torch on the wall hook.

**4. Vested LEM Procedures for the 10 a.m. service:**

- a. If you are the primary, or vested LEM, you should arrive at least 15 minutes before the service. Go to the sacristy to vest in an alb (long white garment) and tie the alb at the waist with a rope cincture. You may wear one of the crosses hanging on the wall near the rope cinctures. (See Worship LEM Tying Cincture for instructions). Join the clergy outside of the sacristy for prayer before the procession.
- b. The order of the procession is: acolytes, choir members, then the vested LEM (on right) and the priest associate or clergy (on left). You and the clergy will proceed side by side. If there is not a third clergy, the LEM will walk alone in the center of the aisle. When you reach the altar, bow from the waist and go inside the altar rail to the right side. Remain standing until the opening hymn, prayer, and collect are completed, then sit down at the same time the congregation sits.
- c. The vested LEM leads the Psalm, unless the Psalm is to be sung. After the lay reader steps off of the altar, stand up and move forward behind the railing but close enough to the altar that the mic on the altar will pick up your voice.
- d. Say in a loud, clear voice: *"Today we will be reading Psalm xx found on the insert of your service bulletin and also on page xx of the red Book of Common Prayer. We will read it [in unison] or [responsively or antiphonally (an-ti-pho'-nal-ly) by whole verse beginning on the choir side.] We will say the last verse in unison (BCP 582).* After the Psalm, return to your seat on the altar.
- e. After the Exchange of the Peace, clean your hands with the hand sanitizer, located on the end of the pew.
- f. When the invitation to communion is given by the celebrant, rise and stand on the right side of the altar alongside the acolytes to receive the sacraments.
- g. Follow steps in paragraph 6 for administering the chalice.
- h. The order for the recessional during the closing hymn is in the same order as the processional. The acolytes lead, followed by the choir, and then the third clergy and vested LEM bow together facing the altar. After the last choir member passes the altar, turn and follow them out. When the choir is absent, LEMs should wait for a signal from the priest for when to recess.
- i. When you reach the back of the church, say one of the four dismissals on page 366 of the Book of Common Prayer, such as: *"Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."* The congregation will respond with "Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia." During Lent, omit Alleluia, Alleluia.

**5. Second (unvested) LEM Procedures for the 10 a.m. service:**

- a. Sit in a pew with the congregation. It is sometimes easier to sit in the front left side of the church.
- b. Clean your hands with hand sanitizer after the conclusion of the Exchange of the Peace.

- c. After the Lord's Prayer, walk to the altar, bow from the waist, and go inside the altar rail to the left side.
- d. Stand alongside the clergy or acolytes and receive the sacraments from the celebrant.
- e. Follow steps in paragraph 6 "Administering the chalice".
- f. After placing the chalice and purificator on the shelf behind the altar, exit the altar, bow, and return to your pew.

**6. Administering the chalice (for all LEMs):**

- a. When the chalice and purificator (square or rectangular linen with an embroidered cross) are handed to you, turn the purificator over so the embroidered cross is inside (this keeps the wine stains off the embroidery.)
- b. Allow the celebrant to move about three people in front of you before you begin administering the wine.
- c. The cup is distributed to communicants with one of two phrases (BCP, p. 365):
  - i. *The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.* or
  - ii. *The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.*
- d. The communicants will receive the wine either by intinction (dipping the host into the wine) or by you guiding the chalice to their lips. Do not let them take the chalice out of your hand—keep control of it.
- e. After serving the chalice, wipe the rim of the cup with the purificator and rotate the cup a few degrees before serving the next person. One way of holding the purificator is to drape it over your index finger or index and middle finger, so that the purificator covers the palm of your hand. Another way is to keep it folded and turn it to an unused area each time you wipe the rim.
- f. If you start to run out of wine, try to finish the row of people currently at the altar. Then go to the pitcher on the altar to refill the chalice.
- g. After all communicants have been served, return the chalice to the credence shelf on the wall behind the altar on the left side (blessed goes on the left and unblessed on the right).
- h. Drape the purificator over the top of the chalice you have used. The priest will put the platen over the other chalice.

**7. Aumbry:**

The aumbry (tabernacle) is the fixed, locked box set into the wall behind the altar. It contains consecrated elements from the Eucharist. It is lit with a red sanctuary lamp. The priest may obtain additional sacraments from the aumbry if the consecrated bread or wine is used up.

**8. Accidents:**

1. If a host is dropped, pick it up and consume it or set it aside to be consumed later.
2. If wine is spilled on the altar rail, wipe it up with the purificator immediately.
3. At the end of the service bring the spill to the attention of a member of the altar guild.

**9. Anointing Oil:**

1. The vested LEM may be asked to carry the anointing oil for the priest at healing services. The anointing oil used during healing services is called "unction". The Healing Service is held on the 1st Sunday of each month at both services.

2. The vested LEM may be asked to carry the anointing oil for the priest at baptisms. The holy oil used at baptisms is called "chrism".

#### **10. Lay Eucharistic Visitors:**

1. The Eucharistic Visitor attends the regular church service and sits with the congregation.
2. When the post-communion prayer has been said, the priest will step down from the altar and ask you to come forward to be commissioned.
3. The priest will hand you the portable communion kit and say a prayer similar to:  
*"In the name of this congregation, I send you forth 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 all share on bread, one cup."*

#### **11. You will then leave the church to go visit the parishioner.**

1. You should leave as close to the end of the service as possible.
2. Take a copy of the church bulletin, inserts, and announcements to share with the parishioner.
3. Upon arrival, introduce yourself and explain that you are there to bring communion from the Holy Eucharist at St. Mark's Church.
4. If the person you are visiting is bed-bound or sitting in a low chair, don't continue standing - sit down to get on their eye level.
5. Inquire about any physical limitations, swallowing difficulties or special needs.
6. You may invite others present to join in the service. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive.
7. Hosts may be broken to accommodate the additional people.

#### **12. Set the wine, chalice, and host platen or pyx on a table near you.**

1. If the person desires, you may read the lectionary readings from the morning church service or one of the readings from the BCP pgs. 396-397. (Sometimes the very sick or elderly cannot focus for a long period and are more interested in receiving the sacraments than hearing the readings.)
2. Follow the "Communion under Special Circumstances" in the BCP pgs. 396-399).
3. See Worship LEM Visitor's Bulletin for a printable program to take with you when visiting parishioners. A copy of this service program is to be kept in the portable communion kit.
4. It is helpful to have extra copies to share with the person's relatives or friends who might participate in the service.
5. Consume any the remaining hosts and wine.

NOTE: If a person is unable to swallow, you can explain in simple words that even though they cannot eat and drink the body and blood that it is the same as if they are receiving the benefits. The following note from the Book of Common Prayer [p. 457] may be read: *"If a person desires to receive the Sacrament, but, by reason of extreme sickness or physical disability, is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the Deacon is to assure that person that all the benefits of Communion are received, even though the Sacrament is not received with the mouth."*

#### **13. Prayers**

1. Depending on the circumstances, you may also wish to say one of the Prayers for the Sick found on pgs. 458-459 in the BCP.
2. See Worship LEM Prayers for the Sick with the parish Eucharistic Ministries standard procedures for a printable copy.
3. Allow enough time to visit and share what is going on at church.
4. Remind them that we are praying for them during our services each week.
5. "Be there" with the person. Our attention and loving ministry to the people we visit should show how much God loves them and continues to be present in their lives through the Holy Spirit.

### **14. After returning to your home**

1. Wash the decanter and allow it to dry without the cork inserted, and wash and iron the purificator.
2. Return the Portable Communion Set box to the Sacristy.
3. Report your visits and any needs or pastoral concerns that came to your attention to the rector.
4. Do not discuss the details of the person's health with others.