

Guidelines for Licensed Lay Persons and Lectors

History and diocesan policy place high priority on development of strong lay ministries. From colonial days when East Carolina churches functioned almost completely under the care of vestries, since clergy were rarely available, the diocese has been blessed with exceptionally strong lay leadership.

In recent years, this tradition has been fostered by the world-wide interest in the ministry of the laity, and an understanding of lay ministry have been broadened by the catechism of The Book of Common Prayer as reflected in the following statements found in the Book of Common Prayer:

“The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

“The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.”

“The ministers of the church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.”

“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.”

(Prayer Book, page 855)

“The ministries of the laity are varied and most are beyond liturgical or administrative oversight. One liturgical function that does not require a license is that of a lector.”

In the liturgy, “lay persons appointed by the celebrant will normally be assigned the reading of the Lessons which precede the Gospel, and may lead the Prayers of the People.”

(Prayer Book, page 322)

Lectors (non-licensed)

Introduction: A person may be appointed without license by the Member of the Clergy in charge of a congregation to read lessons or lead the Prayers of the People. Lessons in public worship must read from translations of the Holy Scriptures, authorized by National Canon (Canon II). The directions of the rubrics of the Prayer Book are to be followed by readers of lessons and leaders of the Prayers of the People.

Qualifications: They are to be persons who have demonstrated gifts of leadership, prayer, public speaking, teaching, and/or pastoral care.

Training: A member of the clergy or someone designated should introduce lectors to the basics of public speaking and the use of the lectionary.

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Lay persons may officiate at other services of their church within the provisions of The Book of Common Prayer, if the Bishop licenses them. (Canon III.4, of the National Canons, provides for licensing of Pastoral Leaders, Worship Leaders, Preachers, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors, and Catechists).

Clergy in charge of congregations in which such lay ministers will serve (except for Pastoral Leaders who are appointed by the Bishop) may request from the Bishop licenses for lay ministers according to the following general guidelines:

1. Licensed lay ministers must be confirmed, adult communicants in good standing, regular in their stewardship, faithful in worship, of good repute in the congregation and mature in the faith.
1. Such persons must satisfactorily complete a course of training and study appropriate to their ministries according to Canon III.4, to include (but not limited to):
 - a. The Holy Scriptures, content, background and understanding and acceptance of translations authorized by the Church as the source for readings in public worship;
 - a. The Book of Common Prayer, with special emphasis on the lectionary, and the rubrics governing lay ministries in the liturgy, and the Hymnal;
 - a. The Doctrine and Discipline of the Church;
 - a. The conduct of public worship;
 - a. Use of the voice.

The clergy who request the license determine the adequacy of the training, subject to the direction of the Bishop.

1. The provisions of the Canons governing such lay ministries must be understood and accepted by the clergy and those to be licensed as establishing, along with those guidelines and the rubrics of The Prayer Book, the guidelines for the exercise of those ministries.
1. Clergy requesting licenses should take care that lay ministers licensed in the congregation represent the diversity of the Church, and include women, men, young people (16 years or older) and older persons, as well as persons of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.
1. The member of the clergy in charge of the congregation shall determine the number of persons to be recommended for licensing, taking into account the number of qualified persons available, and the needs of the congregation.
1. Licensed lay ministers who are functioning liturgically may vest in either alb and cincture or surplice and cassock, according to parish custom. Persons who read lessons and lead prayers need not vest.
1. Licenses for these ministries are normally issued for one year, unless requested for a less period by the member of the clergy requesting the license, and subject to the revocation and renewal provisions for the Canons (Canon

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III.4 , Section 2.a). License requests shall be made on the forms provided with these guidelines, which may be reproduced.

1. Students at the accredited seminaries who are assigned to training positions in the Diocese of East Carolina, are deemed to be licensed under these guidelines, provided they conform to the standards of the Diocese of East Carolina

Additional guidelines and comments for specific licensed ministries are:

Pastoral Leaders

Introduction: Canon III.4, Section 3, states that 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. These persons shall be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Senior Warden.

Qualifications: A Pastoral Leader must be a person of exceptional spiritual and personal maturity with demonstrated gifts of administration, discernment, pastoral care, teaching and proclamation.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. A course of training and study in the basics of parish administration.
- a. A supervised course in the basics of Pastoral Care.
- a. An overview course in Church History.
- a. The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism.
- a. Normally, a Pastoral Leader will have served as a licensed Lay Eucharistic Minister.

Worship Leaders

Introduction: Canon III.4, Section 4 states that a worship leader is a person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of a member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. (e.g., nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, etc.).

Qualifications: They are to be persons of maturity in the faith and of good repute who have demonstrated their ability to lead public worship as a lector. Reliability and punctuality are extremely important personal disciplines as well as clear diction when speaking.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. Anyone wishing to be a worship leader will have served for a period of six months as a lector before being licensed as a worship leader.

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- a. A course of training and study as outlined in the general guidelines of this section shall have been satisfactorily completed.

Preachers

Introduction: Canon III.4, Section 5, states that licensed Preacher is a lay person who authorized to preach in congregations under the supervision of a member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Qualifications: Persons who have demonstrated a maturity of faith and spirituality and who have earned the respect for the congregation are appropriate candidates for the licensed minister. Complementary gifts of clarity of thought and speech, proclamation, teaching, and public speaking are desired.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. Courses of training and study in areas of Church History, Christian Ethics and Moral Theology; Church's Doctrine, as set forth in the Creeds and the Catechism; Pastoral Care; and appropriate Canons.
- a. Instruction in forms of exegesis and an overview of forms of Biblical criticism.
- a. An introduction in the use of various types of commentaries and other aids for sermon preparation.

Eucharistic Ministers

Introduction: Canon III.4, Section 6, states that a Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer consecrated elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. Eucharistic Ministers should normally act under direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, a member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Qualifications: Eucharistic Ministers must be persons of wisdom in the faith and of good repute who have received the respect of the local congregation and who demonstrate spiritual maturity. They exercise pastoral care and of the stewardship of time.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. An introduction to the various theological understanding of the Holy Eucharist in the Anglican tradition, with appropriate assigned readings.
- a. An explanation and practice in Administration of the elements. (Use of the purificator after each communicant with simultaneous rotation of the chalice, use of intinction, no dilution of consecrated wine with unconsecrated wine or water, consumption of remaining elements).

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Eucharistic Visitors

Introduction: Canon III.4.7 states that 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. The Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under direction of a Deacon, if any, or other leader exercising oversight over the congregation or other community of faith.

Qualifications: Eucharistic Ministers must be persons of wisdom in the faith and of good repute who have received the respect of the local congregation and who demonstrate spiritual maturity. They exercise pastoral care and of the stewardship of time.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. An introduction to the various theological understanding of the Holy Eucharist in the Anglican tradition, with appropriate assigned readings.
- b. An explanation and practice in Administration of the elements. (Use of the purificator after each communicant with simultaneous rotation of the chalice, use of intinction, no dilution of consecrated wine with unconsecrated wine or water, consumption of remaining elements).
- c. Use of the Book of Common Prayer and approved rites for visitation;
- d. Biblical studies sufficient to enable the Lay Eucharistic Minister to comment wisely on the readings for the day;
- e. An introductory course on pastoral visiting.

Catechists

Introduction: Canon III.4, Section 8, states that a Catechist is a lay person licensed 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.

Qualifications: Persons who understand and can articulate the doctrines and teachings of the church as found in the Creeds and an Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism, are desired. Demonstrated gifts of teaching, discernment, knowledge of scripture and stewardship are important.

Additional Guidelines:

- a. Courses of training and study in methods of Catechesis (teaching) for people of all ages.
- b. Normally, a Catechist will have served as a Licensed Eucharistic Minister.