

Lay Licensing Diocese of the Rio Grande

Title III, Canon 4 of the *Canons* of The Episcopal Church provides for the following licensed lay ministries:

Section 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 the licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

The following information is important for all laypersons in the Diocese of the Rio Grande who want to be licensed for one or more of these ministries and for their clergy (or other leader exercising oversight) who endorse communicants for licensure in these ministries.

Current Licensed Ministries

Currently, in the Diocese of the Rio Grande confirmed communicants in good standing who are 16 years of age or older may be licensed to serve as ***Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors,*** and ***Worship Leaders***.

Eucharistic Ministers (formerly called Lay Eucharistic Ministers or Chalice Bearers) [Canon III.4 (6)] are lay persons authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist in their congregation.

Eucharistic Visitors (formerly called Lay Eucharistic Visitors) [Canon III.4 (7)] are lay persons authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration.

Worship Leaders (formerly called Lay Readers) [Canon III.4 (4)] are lay persons who regularly lead non-Eucharistic public worship (for example, Morning Prayer) under the direction of the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation. Only persons leading services on Sunday need apply; those who regularly lead non-Eucharistic public worship during the week are not required to have a license.

Licensed Ministries to be Developed

At this time, the COMB is not engaged in planning education and formation for the ministries of ***Pastoral Leader, Preacher, Evangelist or Catechist***.

Differentiation from Other Lay Positions

A ***Worship Leader*** is not a lector. Lectors are unlicensed parishioners appointed by the clergy to read the Lessons, lead the Psalm, or lead the Prayers of the People. Similarly, although acolytes serve at the altar, as do ***Worship Leaders*** and ***Eucharistic Ministers***, acolytes are not licensed. Nor are members of the altar guild, greeters, organists/other musicians, or ushers licensed.

Selection of Applicants

Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharist Visitors and Worship Leaders are selected by the Member of the Clergy responsible for the congregation. Clergy will choose applicants on the basis of their perceived faithfulness to Christ as evidenced by participation in the worship of the congregation and active involvement in leadership and the life of the congregation.

Those selected also need the gift of pastoral sensitivity to others, especially those who seek to be licensed to administer the Consecrated Elements to the sick and infirm. In addition, applicants for Eucharistic Visitor and Worship Leader need skill in reading, speaking, and praying with others.

All applicants are urged to follow a rule of life that includes study of the Bible and prayer with regular intercession for those who are sick and infirm.

Training of Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors

Those who wish to be licensed as Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors must be trained by ordained clergy in the congregation and/or in a training program at the Deanery level under the umbrella of the Bishop's School for Ministries.

Deanery-level training will be available for congregations currently without a priest or deacon. Clergy and already licensed Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors who would like to gain more knowledge concerning the administration and care of the Consecrated Elements may choose to attend Deanery-level training.

On the Diocesan website descriptions and guidelines for these two vital ministries are found under the section "Lay Resources." These documents are entitled "Eucharistic Minister Guidelines" and "Eucharistic Visitor Handbook." The Rev. Deacon Patricia Soukup, Canon Liturgist for the Diocese of the Rio Grande, wrote these materials for use in Deanery-level training, but the documents should prove a useful addition for congregational training.

Eucharistic Visitors should receive additional instruction in pastoral calling, using the *Book of Common Prayer* for visits, and employing service leaflets for the administration of the Eucharist. Such a leaflet, entitled "Lay Eucharistic Visitor Service Leaflet", can be found on the Diocesan website.

Training of Worship Leaders

Those who wish to be licensed as Worship Leaders must be trained through a program offered through a Deanery or through one sponsored by a congregation(s). Such training is done by a "Trainer of Worship Leaders." Currently those authorized to lead such training are:

Marty Buchsbaum (NE Deanery) bbaums@cybermesa.com

The Rev. Alan Brockmeier (SE Deanery) stjamesrector@plateautel.net

The Rev. Suzanne Brockmeier (SE Deanery) stjamesrector@plateautel.net

Tim Kruse (SW Deanery) tkruse56@yahoo.com

Bruce A. Truesdale (SW Deanery) celticcoyote@gmail.com

Alice McSweeney (NE Deanery) alice@lospinosranch.com

Joe Cox (NE Deanery) coxhowardj@msn.com

The Rev. Canon Patricia Soukup (NW Deanery) psoukup@dioceserg.org

They may be contacted to provide the necessary training.

Duration of License

Licenses will be in effect for three years.

Process of Obtaining a License

Clergy in charge of congregations will send license requests to the attention of Mrs. Toyé Robertson at Diocesan House.

Forms for licensing can be found in this Handbook under the tab entitled “Lay Forms” on the Diocesan website.