

Who may assist with the distribution at Holy Communion?

Named lay people may assist with the distribution of the consecrated bread and wine within public services of Holy Communion in the church building. Locally this role may be known by different terms but for consistency, in this paper the role will be known as “**Eucharistic Assistant**”. The regulations for Eucharistic Assistants were changed by General Synod in 2015 and this paper outlines current guidance.

How are Eucharistic Assistants chosen and authorised?

Bishop Martyn has given authority to all incumbents and priests-in-charge to decide who may act as a Eucharistic Assistant and assist with the distribution of Communion within public services in church. They must be:

- in ‘good standing’ within the parish church
- a regular communicant themselves
- given local training

Children may be Eucharistic Assistants if they fulfil these criteria.

The list of Eucharistic Assistants should be reviewed by the PCC annually and the names of all those authorised submitted to the Bishop’s Office.

Can Eucharistic Assistants distribute Communion outside of services in church buildings?

Eucharistic Assistants are authorised to distribute consecrated bread and wine in public services led by a priest in a church building. The incumbent or priest-in-charge may also choose to add an additional role of assisting with the distribution of bread and wine at a service led by a priest *outside* of a church building i.e. in hospital, in a residential home or at an individual’s home. As this additional role is likely to be a pastoral one, all Eucharistic Assistants given such additional local permission must be recruited according to the Diocesan Safer Recruitment guidelines, with a minimum requirement of:

- 2 references
- A discernment conversation
- Given a role description
- Undergo the following safeguarding training
 - Basic awareness
 - Awareness of domestic abuse

Full guidance on Safer Recruitment can be found on the link below:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/>

What about Associate Ministers, Readers and Pastoral Assistants?

Associate Ministers, Readers and all those licensed as Pastoral Assistants already have Bishop Martyn's authority to act as Eucharistic Assistants at services both within and outside church buildings and so do not need further local authorisation.

What about services when a priest is *not* present?

Associate Ministers, Readers and Pastoral Assistants also have the Bishop's authority to distribute Holy Communion to the sick and housebound at home, in hospital or in residential and care homes when a priest is *not* present, using the approved forms of service from Common Worship.

Eucharistic Assistants who are not Associate Ministers, Readers or Pastoral Assistants should only be given this role locally if they have been recruited using Safer Recruitment guidance and have completed Basic & Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse safeguarding training. This is because of the much greater level of pastoral trust that is involved in this ministry.

Please also note that the Bishop's delegation of authority to decide is to incumbents and priests-in-charge only, and they may not delegate it further themselves. The Bishop reserves the right to withdraw this delegated authority to decide from individual priests whenever he deems it necessary, and will review the general delegation of authority on a regular basis.

Hospital and other chaplaincy services, as well as extra-parochial settings, are not covered by this guidance.

What about Communion by Extension?

Communion by Extension provisions allow for bread and wine, consecrated at a Sunday service in one church, to be taken that same day to another church where an authorised service called "Public Worship with Communion by Extension" is celebrated and during which the consecrated elements are shared.

Each Communion by Extension service must be led by a person authorised specifically for this role by the Bishop. The leader may be a deacon, Associate Minister, Reader or other lay person trained for this ministry. Any incumbent or priest-in-charge wishing to make provision for Communion by Extension should therefore still apply directly to the Bishop for guidance and permission to do so. Please see the additional guidance sheet 'Communion by Extension in the Diocese of Leicester'.

If you have further questions please contact the Bishop's Office or the Archdeacons.

+Martyn Leicester
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