

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS LICENSED LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

In the program presently functioning in the parishes of this diocese, a Lay Eucharistic Visitor is issued a license separate from that of a Lay Eucharistic Minister who serves at the parish altar during a Celebration of the Eucharist.

Persons applying for a license as Lay Eucharistic Visitor shall be recommended by the rector, the vicar, or the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation. Their selection is to be based on their demonstrated gifts of pastoral sensitivity to others and their abilities in reading, speaking and praying with others. Their faithfulness to Christ and his Church shall have been evidenced by participation in the worship of the parish and active involvement in the life of the parish community during a period of at least one year. Persons called to this ministry may or may not have served as Lay Eucharistic Ministers or as Pastoral Visitors.

An application for licensing must be approved by the vestry or executive committee of the parish and the applicant should attend a Diocesan Orientation Workshop for Lay Eucharistic Visitors. Workshops are scheduled twice each year, usually in April and October. Appropriate applications for licensing, signed by the workshop coordinator, are made available at the workshops. Completed applications should be returned to the diocesan office. Before beginning a ministry in this diocese, persons previously licensed in other dioceses should attend a workshop in order to become familiar with the way in which the ministry is carried out in Western Massachusetts. Prior licenses are not transferable.

As provided for in the Canons of the Episcopal Church, Lay Eucharistic Visitors may administer the Sacrament that was consecrated at a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sunday or at any other regularly scheduled Eucharistic Celebration. Licensed visitors may carry the Sacrament to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were not able to be present at the Celebration.

The program is intended to connect homebound parishioners with the congregation attending the service in the church. Therefore Communion administered by a Lay Eucharistic Visitor should consist of the elements that were consecrated that same day in the presence of the visitor. If that timing is impossible due to the scheduling of an evening service or for other valid reasons, the visit should take place during the 24 hours immediately following the Celebration. Lay Eucharistic Visitors do not carry reserved Sacraments. If it is not possible for the Lay Eucharistic Visitor to administer Holy Communion within 24 hours, the priest or deacon should make the visit. Visits by Lay Eucharistic Visitors are not meant to substitute for visits by the clergy of the parish.

A licensed Lay Eucharistic Visitor should always take at least one other person along when making a Communion visit. Accompanying persons are not required to be licensed.

The only order of service that is authorized to be used by LEVs is the "Distribution of Holy Communion by Lay Eucharistic Ministers to Persons who are Ill or Infirm". It may be found in the Book of Occasional Services. It provides for the visitor to use the Propers of the day and to summarize the sermon that was preached that day. It is important to follow the rubrics.

Guidance in the handling of consecrated elements and direction regarding the recording of the Communion is the responsibility of the parish clergy.

For information regarding the LEV Program or the Orientation Workshops please contact The Rev. Pauline T. Perry at (508) 829-3296 or spd@aol.com .
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