

Guidelines and Requirements for Worship Leader

Title III, Canon 4, Section 6

Next License Renewal Due By March 1, 2026

A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

A Worship Leader may publicly and regularly lead the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer, Order of Service for Noonday, Evening Prayer, and Compline. A Worship Leader may also lead other occasional services provided in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Discernment

Candidates considering the ministry of Worship Leader should confer with sponsoring clergy, spiritual directors, their Congregational Commission on Ministry, and other vocational guides to discuss honestly how to test a call.

Discernment Questions for those discerning a call to this ministry:

- What is ministry and what are things that I do that are ministry?
- What does the Baptismal Covenant mean to me?
- Have I asked God whether God might be calling me to this ministry?
- Can I tell the story of why I feel called to this ministry?
- Am I comfortable speaking in front of a group?
- Am I willing to work as a member of a team and learn how to use appropriate resources to plan worship services?
- Am I interested in the general content of the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, the Hymnal, and Church history?
- Do I have an interest and on-going curiosity about liturgical traditions of the Church, including styles and seasonal variations of worship?
- What gifts do I have that would be an asset for this ministry? What particular gifts do I bring now, and what gifts do I hope to develop/grow?

Qualities of Call

- A personal sense of ministry. A person of prayer who seeks to develop their own spirituality.
- One who can reverently lead the community in worship.
- A strong, clear, and articulate voice.
- The ability to share responsibility for worship with other ministers of the congregation.

Background Knowledge:

- A basic understanding of Holy Scripture (Old and New Testaments), Church History, Ethics and Theology (at the level of catechism and creeds).
- A detailed knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer, especially rubrics.
- *The Book of Occasional Services, Lesser Feasts and Fasts, A Great Cloud of Witnesses.*
- Pronunciation of names and other difficult words in Scripture.
- The Calendar of the Church Year, and a basic understanding of the seasons.
- The BCP Lectionaries and the Revised Common Lectionary.
- Knowledge of the Hymnal 1982 and other music resources.
- Canons of the Episcopal Church, Title II: Worship.

Skills

- The ability to plan and lead the following liturgies:
 - The Daily Offices
 - Ante-Communion
 - The Burial of the Dead

- The ability to plan and assist at the following liturgies:
 - The Holy Eucharist
 - Holy Baptism
 - The Proper Liturgies for Special Days
 - The Pastoral Offices
- A prayerful person who reads well and/or can pray spontaneously putting into words what is on the heart of those present.
- The ability to provide pastoral support to families and congregations at time of need and/or crisis under the direction of clergy.
- The ability to obtain an authorized sermon and to deliver it.

Education and Training Possibilities

- Coursework at Bishop Kemper School of Ministry www.bishopkemperschool.org “Sacramental Theology”.
- Education For Ministry (EfM)
- Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership (CALL) Liturgy and Worship Series, CESP.edu
- Liturgics courses offered by Episcopal Seminaries.

To be licensed

- Completion of application located on diocesan website. <https://diowestmo.org/lay-licensed-ministries/>
- For initial licensure, be able to demonstrate knowledge of Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Ante-Communion, and Funerals to Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-charge and Vestry/Bishop’s Committee.
- At the time of licensure, the lay licensing committee will work with the licensee to find a mentor that can provide them with support and guidance as they begin this ministry.
- Completion of Diversity Workshop offered by Diocese. Contact Canon Shirley Bolden at shirleybolden772@gmail.com for information.
- Criminal background check. Contact the Human Resource Administrator and Finance Assistant for information (hr-finasst@diowestmo.org).
- Endorsements by Rector/Vicar/Priest/Warden-in-charge and Vestry/Bishop’s Committee.
- Safe Church, Safe Community training modules are required. Contact the Human Resource Administrator and Finance Assistant for information. (hr-finasst@diowestmo.org)
- Recommend completion of course “Sacramental Theology” at BKSM.

License Renewal

- Licenses are renewed in a set rotation every three years not based on date it was issued. This license is due for renewal by March 1, 2026.
- Completion of renewal application located on diocesan website. <https://diowestmo.org/lay-licensed-ministries/>
- Completion of Diversity Workshop if not completed previously.
- Completion of Safe Church, Safe Community modules if not completed previously.

Resources:

- The Book of Common Prayer. Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979.
- The Hymnal, 1982. Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985.
- The Book of Occasional Services (most recent edition)
- Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints (most recent edition)
- Canons of the Episcopal Church, Title II (Worship).
- *A Commentary on the American Prayer Book*. Marion J. Hatchett, Seabury Press, 1981, 1995.
- *A Guide to the Practice of Church Music*. Marion J. Hatchett, New York: Church Publishing, 1989.
- *Opening the Prayer Book* (The New Church’s Teaching Series, Volume 7). Jeffrey Lee. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1999.
- *Praying Shapes Believing*. Leonel L. Mitchell, Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985.

- Sermons That Work. Sermons for each Sunday prepared by the Episcopal Church USA; available at: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/>
- Enriching Our Worship
- *Pastoral and Occasional Liturgy: A Ceremonial Guide*. Leonel L. Mitchell. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1998
- *The Book of Common Prayer, a Biography*. Alan Jacobs. Princeton University Press, Reprint Edition, 2019
- *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*. Charles Hefling and Cynthia, Editors. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- *Back Story Preaching: Integrating Life, Spirituality, and Craft*. Lisa Cressman. Liturgical Press, 2018.
- *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith*. James White. Abingdon Press, 1999.
- *Any Body There – Worship and Being Human in the Digital Age*. Craig Mueller. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.

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