

Eucharistic Visitor

Your Ministry

The Diocese of West Missouri

February 2016

Updated January, 2025

The Diocese of West Missouri's Guidelines and Requirements for **Eucharistic Visitor [EV] (Canon 4.7)**

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. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Qualifications

- Physical ability to handle the Eucharistic elements
- Access to transportation
- Prays easily with others
- Can read aloud effectively
- Understands necessity of confidentiality
- Comfortable being with people who are confined by illness, injury or childbirth and can adapt to a variety of environments
- Ability to work as a team with another Eucharistic Visitor to administer the Eucharist.

Skills:

- Ability to lead the liturgy of *Distribution of Holy Communion by Eucharistic Visitors* from the Book of Occasional Services
- Ability to administer the bread of the Eucharist in the various ways practiced in the Episcopal Church (in the hand, in the mouth, intinction)
- Ability to administer the wine of the Eucharist in the various ways practiced in the Episcopal Church (from the common cup, intinction from the common cup, use of an intinction cup)
- Awareness and sensitivity to people with special needs, such as elderly, those with disabilities, and children
- Ability to deal with unexpected occurrences related to administering the sacraments
- Ability to record visits in Register of Services
- Demonstrate proper care of Eucharistic elements and portable communion kits
- Ability to acknowledge and respond to pastoral needs of communicant
- Capable of determining when situation requires intervention by clergy member or others

Background Knowledge:

- A basic knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer
- Names of the Eucharistic vessels and linens
- A basic understanding of sacramental theology from the Catechism
- Detailed knowledge of guidelines for Eucharistic Visitors in the Book of Occasional Services
- Knowledge in Pastoral Care principles
- Basic knowledge of infection control techniques

Education and Training Possibilities:

- Training and mentoring by deacon, priest and other Eucharistic Ministers
- Recommend participation in Antiracism and Diversity Training

To be Licensed:

- Recommendation of Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-charge and Vestry/Bishop's Committee
- Recommendation by the deacon under whom the Eucharistic Visitor will function, if there be one
- Complete Criminal background check (form available here: <https://diowestmo.org/admin/background-information-release-form/>)
- Complete all Safeguarding training required for this license
Contact HR (hr-finasst@diowestmo.org) to set up online training
 - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation - Congregation
 - Diocesan Policies
 - Abuse Risk Management Occasional Volunteers
- Complete Antiracism and Diversity training

Resources:

- A Manual for Eucharistic Visitors. Beth Wickenberg Ely, Morehouse Publishing, 2005.
- The Lay Pastoral Workers Hospital Handbook: Tending the Spiritual Needs of Patients. Neville Kirkwood. Morehouse Publishing, 2005
- Liturgy for Living. Charles F. Price and Louis Weil, Harper and Row, 1979.
- Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded. Byron D. Stuhlman, Church Hymnal Corp., 1987.
- The Meaning of Ritual. Leonel Mitchell, Paulist Press, 1977.

CHAPTER 1

The History of Lay Administration of the Eucharist Prepared by: The Rev. Constance Tyndall, Deacon

The development of the Eucharistic Visitor licensed lay ministry is a testimony of the interconnectedness of the people of God. St. Paul, in his Letter to the Colossians, says this: “Jesus Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). It is the living out of this fundamental interconnectedness that makes the ministry of the Eucharistic Visitor (EV) so important in the life of the Church. We used to see the church as a community gathered around a minister. Now we understand that community as being made up of ministers gathered around the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a fundamental shift in the understanding of ministry. The shift has been underway for centuries, and we haven’t got it perfect yet ... but we believe we’re on the right track.

In the Middle Ages the Holy Eucharist was seen as worship of Jesus, rather than the way in which we all, together, share God through Jesus. The ceremony was more of a grand opera conducted by the clergy for the people to watch; it wasn’t even in a language they understood. This is why they needed a Sanctus bell...”listen-up here, something important is about to happen! Stop your small talk and exchanging of recipes and pay attention!”

As time has gone on, the Church has come to understand that by our Baptism we are all ministers of the Gospel. And one thing which sets us apart as Anglicans is what we do together as we come together to hear God’s word and to share at His table. When you, as a lay person, are sent out from that table, bearing the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, we are incarnating the very nature of the Church itself. And, as a Eucharistic Visitor, you are a sign of the priesthood of all believers.

The first canon allowing lay people to take the Eucharist to ill and infirm members of their congregation was passed by General Convention in 1985. Eucharistic Visitors are distinctly different from Eucharistic Ministers, who serve at the altar.

Situations and needs vary widely across the Church, so guidelines are set by the Bishop of each Diocese.

There was a time in the early Church, before clerical orders came to be defined as they are today, when it apparently was the custom for the laity to take the Sacrament home and use it during the week, as well as for the communion to the sick, shut-in and dying. This was so common that Hippolytus, a bishop in Rome, wrote guidelines in about the year 200, for the proper handling of the Sacrament.

As time went on and the Church grew and became more organized, concerns began to be expressed about the handling by the laity of the holy elements. Among other things, there was a concern that people would use the availability of the Sacrament to avoid coming together for worship, which is seen as foundational to who we are as a Church. On the other hand, the Church has always felt the Sacrament should be available, on short notice, to a dying person. It came to be that people would stash the Sacrament and take it with them on long, dangerous journeys. So, there was a problem! A local council in Rouen around the year 650 cautioned the clergy to put the Sacrament in the mouth of the laity, not in their hands; this was probably an attempt to prevent the people

from taking it home. Even so, home reservation and lay communion of the sick and dying was a fact of life in the Church for the first 1000 years or so.

By the 13th century in England, however, the Church was forbidding even Deacons to carry the elements to the sick. This process probably had not so much to do with theology, but with problems of disciplining priests who were neglecting their pastoral duties to the sick and the dying.

In recent times, the Church has re-examined its theology of ministry and has moved toward an understanding that we all, by our baptism, are ministers...each with particular gifts and ministries. In the Outline of the Faith (the Catechism) in the Book of Common Prayer, the question is asked: "Who are the ministers of the Church?" The answer: "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons."

What is a Eucharistic Visitor?

The Church has, in a very real sense, completed a circle in its 2000 years. The primitive Church was, above all else, a community. In the Middle Ages the Church became primarily an institution....and now we are attempting to recover (and live back into) our identity as community, united by our belief in Jesus, the Christ. As a Eucharistic Visitor, you will be a symbol and an expression of that community, both pastorally and sacramentally.

Pastorally, you will be a living reminder to those who cannot be with us as we worship together, that they are still an integral part of our community. Sacramentally, you will bear Christ's Body and Blood, his gifts which bind us together, and thereby bind into the Church those to whom you go. You really are the Body of Christ moving out to include all its members.

The canon for Eucharistic Visitors defines this as an "extraordinary" ministry, by which is meant not usual...not the norm. What is extraordinary about it is in the handling of the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; for the last 1000 years or so, that privilege has belonged exclusively to ordained persons.

The ministry of EVs does not undermine or replace the ministry of the Diaconate. The EVs ministry of service is an extension of the Deacon's ministry, rather than a substitute for it. This is why the canon calls for the EVs to be supervised by the Deacon in the congregation, if there is one. Your ministry is not to take the place of the ministry of Priests and Deacons. Your ministry exists, and has value in its own right.....as do the ministries of your clergy. As St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good". (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

CHAPTER 2

Theology of the Eucharist

Prepared by: The Rev. Deacon Constance Tyndall

The roots of the Holy Eucharist have their foundation in two forms of Jewish worship: services in the synagogue, and family meals around the dinner table. Jesus, of course, was a Jew; and understanding some Jewish liturgical traditions will help us understand his actions at the Last Supper.

Synagogue worship consisted of readings from the Law and the Prophets (i.e., the Old Testament), prayers, a sermon, and a faith statement (the Shema) which is what Jesus called the first and great commandment: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might". Deu. 6:4-5. You will also find this in Matthew (22:37-38). These, of course, are exactly the elements in the first part of our service, what we call the Liturgy of the Word: readings, sermon, creed, and prayers. These are also elements of the service you will lead as an EV.

Another familiar Jewish ritual was the Shabbat meal. On the Sabbath and on occasions of special celebration (such as Passover), family and friends gathered around the table. The head of the family took bread, gave thanks, broke it and then gave it to everyone. Then at the end, he took a large cup of wine, said a blessing, gave thanks again for God's mighty acts in history and for God's love and for the special occasion being celebrated, and then everyone drank from the cup (known as the cup of thanksgiving). The Greek word for thanksgiving is eucharistia; this is the same word Paul used in 1 Cor 11:23-26, which is the earliest written biblical account of what happened at the Last Supper. All this, of course, sounds very familiar to us, too ...it is essentially what happens in the second part of our service, the Liturgy of the Table.

At the Last Supper, Jesus used elements of the traditional Passover meal, which commemorates God's bringing of his people out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and added deeper meanings and significances to familiar patterns. At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded us to do this together until his coming again.

There are many mysteries in the Christian faith. Perhaps the greatest is embodied in the Holy Eucharist. What is really happening here? We cannot answer that satisfactorily. Our finite human minds cannot comprehend the acts of God as He reaches out to bring us to Himself. The riches and the layers of meaning of the Eucharist are infinite, and they are different each time we partake. One of the greatest mysteries is that it is not only intensely corporate, but also intensely personal. We have struggled toward an understanding that in some way, when we do what Jesus commanded us to do, we are doing it with him in that Upper Room...and we are doing it with all the Christians through the centuries and with the heavenly host, as well. This is the Communion of Saints of which we speak in the Creeds.

As Episcopalians, we believe in the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, although we do not attempt to explain how this comes about. It is a mystery. But it is essential that you, as a Eucharistic Visitor, have this discernment about what you are bearing: it is the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, the Holy Eucharist is defined as “the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord’s Day and other major Feasts”. Again, during the Middle Ages things had shifted considerably. For many reasons, the Eucharist was not widely and frequently available as it is today. A time came when it was common for Christians to receive only once in their life -- on their death beds. Today, this circle has come back around to where we started; we understand the Eucharist as foundational to the life we share in the community of the Church. We are made one body with Christ and with each other. Jesus reaches across the years, touches us, and binds us together.

Herbert O’Driscoll, an Anglican priest from Canada and a great poet and prophet of our day has said this: “When we say ‘Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again’, we are including our past, our present, and our future. It is our memory (Christ has died), our experience (Christ is risen...present tense), and our expectation (Christ will come again), all rolled into one magnificent statement of faith. All becomes one at the table of the Lord.”

CHAPTER 3

Pastoral Points to Remember For the Eucharistic Visitor

Conversation Starters/Open-end Questions:

For someone who seems to be without hope and/or totally caught-up in their distress:

- “What do you believe in that gives meaning to your life?”
- “How have you made it through difficult times in the past?”
- “How are you feeling about God, given what you’re experiencing?”
- “Where do you see God at work in all this?”
- “What is life like for you right now?”
- “I’m here so that you don’t have to go through this alone.”
- “What is the worst part of this for you?”

For someone who is focused on issues of theodicy (“Why is this happening to me? Why is God doing this to our family? What did I do to deserve this?”):

- “I don’t know...what does your heart tell you?...what do **you** think?”
- “What is your hope that my response might provide?”
- “The God you are describing isn’t the one that I worship...tell me more”
- “Please tell me about how you came to believe that...”

To be used to initiate a conversation or to get someone to “open up”:

- “I’d like to understand and come alongside you...”
- “I’d like to know more about that if you’re willing to share...”
- “Tell me your story....”
- “Can you tell me a little something about your faith?”
- “If you weren’t here in the hospital, what would you be doing right now?”
- “I’m wondering if there’s anything going on in your life that is like (the metaphor you just used....e.g. “the storm”)?”
- “I’d like to help bring your anxiety to the surface and examine it with you.”
- “How can I be with you in this moment and be sensitive to your needs?”

Pastoral Issues to Remember:

- The human soul doesn’t necessarily want to be fixed...it often merely wants to be seen and heard. This calls for “deep listening”....listening with a third ear. Hearing more than just the words...being observant.....listening for the meaning behind the words...helping them to “go there”. Celebrate silence. People being visited may speak about issues they’ve never talked about out loud...because you are “safe”...and you are hearing...and because you are present with them.
- Being present...being a healing presence....is one of the most important aspects of a Eucharistic visit. We are not the light. We are merely a reflection of the light. We don’t do healing. We are simply the middleman or medium through which God’s healing may take place. The important thing is to be truly present, to listen, to hear...to be.
- Don’t try to fix it. Don’t advise! Don’t feel like you have to DO SOMETHING! **Being is doing!** Surrender to your faith and just be! It’s an art, not a science. A strong desire to act, to be effective, can hinder being present. We want to exert our influence upon the world, and so rather than allowing ourselves to stay with the

moment, we feel the need to swing into action. We hurry to DO something with that moment...to make something happen. Wanting our expectations to be fulfilled, we do what we can to influence the outcome. It's hard not to do....our culture rewards our being effective more than it does our being mindful, our being assertive over our being awake.

- Don't just do something...Stand there!
- Don't be an encourager/cheerleader..."It's all going to be OK"... "Don't worry about it."...you minimize the person's concerns, discount their fears and take away their power.
- There is danger in making **assumptions**. We've all done it...we all do it! We scan a person and their environment, we gauge their facial expressions, we search our memory banks for tidbits of data and then make a judgment: You visit someone you know has cancer, and assume they're distressed about and focused exclusively on their condition. Turns out that they want a prayer of thanksgiving for the birth of a grandchild. Or, vice versa. Don't assume!
- Develop and share your empathy and compassion. You can only experience someone's pain to the extent/depth that you have visited your own.
- Don't share your personal experiences...."Oh, I remember when the Dr. diagnosed me...or when I had pneumonia....when I had kidney stones....etc." It's not about you!
- Attempt to bring the person's anxiety to the surface and then help to examine it with them.
- All behavior has meaning....and all our statements have meaning. When you are listening with a "third ear", you must be aware of and attempt to process all these underlying signals.
- Always follow the person in the direction of their expressed needs. Don't lead them where you think they should go or to where you feel most qualified...or where your past personal experiences lay...let them do the leading. Help someone **scratch where they itch the most**.
- "What would you like to pray about (specifically?)" Pick-up on issues, concerns from the conversation and introduce them into the prayer. Pray with imagination...put yourself into the prayer.
- Be cautious how you address your prayer. "Father"? Could be a problem for someone who had bad relationship with their father....or for feminists. "Creator God", "Almighty God", "Holy One". "Gracious God", "Higher Power" (for AA members)....others?
- You don't DO healing presence...you ARE (or become) healing presence. You become aware of not just your surroundings, but also what is going on in those surroundings. (That's why we keep our eyes open when we pray for/with others)
- Being present isn't easy and it's not a natural thing for most people. It takes discipline and effort. You need to become clear about who you are and why you do what you do...then you'll be able to become present...to become receptive to whomever you are with/ministering to.
- To become present, you need to recognize and become clear about your own prejudices and biases, your vulnerability and brokenness....your own pain. As

you become more self-aware, you'll discover compassion for yourself and others...and be able to ground your presence in authentic humility. Remember...you can only be compassionate to another's pain to the extent you have visited your own. **Bring your authenticity and your compassion.**

- Healing is a movement toward wholeness (same root word). We need to be present for anything that may move someone toward wholeness and completeness. We are to acknowledge it, appreciate it, encourage it and bless it. As a Eucharistic Visitor, you can do no more...and you don't NEED to do any more. Healing has a power and an intention all its own.
- To be a healing presence, you need to clear away your own agenda and expectations. Don't expect too much of yourself...if you do, you'll be concentrating so much on process that you'll miss the intimacy of the moment.
- There are three important things to do: 1) Listen, 2) Listen some more, and 3) really Listen some more. This helps you to quietly and clearly communicate that you truly care. Real listening requires concentration, focus and effort. When you listen in this way, the other will feel affirmed and validated, maybe even freed and empowered.
- Theodicy questions..."Why ME?", etc. Despite their questions others don't expect you to know the answers. Your presence itself validates their feeling, their situation, and their process. Sitting in silence can be deeply healing...you're not waiting for the next word; you're going deeply into the moment together... united by the quiet time.
- There can be both joy and pain...for you...in being a healing presence. At times you may feel completely emptied/hollowed out...feel numb...your capacity to feel deeply about anything becomes diminished. Some events/ conditions/conversations may bring back something that is uncomfortable or painful in you. Share your reactions with your clergy supervisor and with others who are involved in Eucharistic visit ministry...they'll understand.
- You're going to make mistakes...miss an important clue...say the wrong thing. You need to become expert in forgiveness for yourself as well as for others.
- What you're giving to others may not seem like much....but it's an abundance. You can't make any of this happen. You can only welcome it as it unfolds ... revealing itself and making its presence known. It is The Sacred.
- So...be present in simplicity, be present with willingness, and be present with gratitude. More than anything, just be...for indeed, this is holiness, and this is blessing.

CHAPTER 4

Boundaries and the Eucharistic Visitor

Personal boundaries are what define your identity. They're like the property lines around a home. This is my property and that is not my property. This is me --- what I value, am good at, believe, need, or feel --- and that is not me.

To know yourself and be secure that you are loved is essential to all relationships and activities. The better your boundaries of self-awareness and self-definition are, the greater will be your capacity to offer empathy and love to others. Good boundaries help you to care for others because you have a stable foundation to operate from and are not distracted or depleted by personal insecurities or blind spots.

It is especially important for clergy, ministry leaders and other care-givers to learn to set limits for their own soul care. First of all, because they have needs to be loved and respected as much as anyone else! Secondly, because a ministry leader with weak (poorly defined or insecure) boundaries will eventually become so stressed or emotionally depleted as to be ineffective or inappropriate in helping others (or they'll cross a boundary and make a mistake).

From time to time, the EV, when making a ministry visit to a person's home or hospital room may come face to face with a "boundary challenge". Consider the following scenarios:

- As you sit down with a family you are visiting, the mother tells you she is out of diapers and needs to run to the store. She asks you if you could watch her infant "for a few minutes".
- During a scheduled visit, you notice a parent with a black eye. What do you say to that person? What are some considerations for your discussion?
- You make a solo visit to a person of the opposite sex in a closed-door environment. What kinds of potential jeopardies are you facing? (Note that for safety reasons, unless a Eucharistic Visit is made in a public place (e.g. hospital or rehab facility *with doors open*), the *visit must be made by at least two visitors*)

It is important for the EV to maintain a helpful, healthy relationship with a shut-in or homebound patient, neither becoming over-involved nor under-involved. The challenge is to stay in the "zone of helpfulness". Here are some important tips and general guidelines:

- It may be tempting to talk to your patient about your personal life or problems. Doing so may cause the person to see you as something other than an EV. As a result, the patient may take on your worries as well as their own.
 - Use caution when talking about your personal life.
 - Do not share information because you need to talk, or to help you feel better.

- Remember that your visit is ministerial, not social.
- Referring to a patient as “Sweetie” or “Honey” may be comforting to that person, or it might suggest a more personal interest than you intend. Some patients may find the use of nicknames or endearments offensive.
 - Avoid using endearments.
 - Ask your patient how they would like to be addressed.
 - Remember that the way you address a patient can color the meaning and outcome of your visit.
- Touch is a powerful tool. It can be healing and comforting, or it can be confusing or simply unwelcome. Touch should be used sparingly and thoughtfully.
 - Use touch only when it will serve a good purpose for the patient.
 - Ask your patient if he/she is comfortable with your touch.
 - Be aware that the patient may react differently to touch than you intend.
 - When using touch, be sure it is serving the patient’s needs and not your own.
- Demeanor includes appearance, tone and volume of voice, speech patterns, body language, etc. Your demeanor as an EV affects how your shut-in may perceive you.
 - Patients may be frightened or confused by loud voices or fast talk.
 - Good personal hygiene is a top priority due to close proximity to patients.
 - Off-color jokes or profane statements are never appropriate.
 - Body language and facial expressions speak volumes to patients.
- Giving or receiving gifts or doing special favors can blur the lines of the EV’s relationship with a patient.
 - Accepting a gift from a patient might be taken as fraud or theft by another person or family member.
 - Practice saying no graciously to a person who offers a gift that is outside your boundaries.
 - To protect yourself, report offers of unusual or large gifts to your clergy supervisor.
- Signs of over-involvement may include spending inappropriate amounts of time with a particular patient, or thinking that you are the only EV who can meet that patient’s needs. Under-involvement, of course, is the opposite of over-involvement and may suggest disinterest and neglect.
 - Focus on the needs of those to whom you are ministering, rather than on their personalities.

- Don't confuse the needs of the client with your own needs.
- Maintain a helpful relationship, regardless of your emotional reaction to the patient.
- As yourself if you are becoming overly involved with the patient's personal life. If so, discuss the matter with your clergy supervisor.
- Romantic or sexual relationships:
 - While it may be normal to be attracted to someone in your care, know that it is never appropriate to act on that attraction.
 - Do not tell sexually oriented jokes or stories, as they may send the wrong message to the patient.
 - Discourage flirting or suggestive behavior by your patient.
- Secrets and confidentiality: Secrets between you and a patient are different than patient confidentiality. Confidential information is shared with your clergy supervisor. Personal secrets compromise role boundaries and can result in abuse or neglect of a patient.
 - Do not keep personal or health-related secrets with a patient.
 - Your role is to accurately report any changes in your patient's condition.
- For each party's safety, it is the policy of the Diocese of West Missouri that Eucharistic visits not be made on a "solo" basis, but rather that two visitors make the visit together as a team. If the visit is to be made in a public venue (e.g. hospital room with door open), a single EV may make the call alone. When in doubt, consult with your clergy on this safety precaution.
- Be sensitive to health and cleanliness issues. It is recommended that you only make a Eucharistic visit if you are healthy. Be certain to use a hand disinfectant before the visit, and immediately as you leave. Also be sure to ensure that the Eucharistic kit is appropriately cleaned after your visit.

CHAPTER 5

Practical Aspects of Eucharistic Visitor Ministry

Your ministry as a Eucharistic Visitor is one of presence, healing and hope. You are a visible, tangible, audible reminder of God's love and presence, and you carry with you a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Here are some practical pointers to ensure that your Eucharistic visit will be successful and in accordance with standards and expectations established in the Diocese of West Missouri.

- The single most important part of your preparation as an EV is your faithfulness in your own relationship with God. This faithfulness can be expressed and built through personal and corporate prayer and study, and through your own participation in the life of the Church. To be truly effective as an EV, you must be intentional in your spiritual life, both in the parish and in the world.
- During the week before you make your Eucharistic visit, use the coming Sunday's collect and the readings in your private devotions. This will assist you in sharing the main points of the sermon with the person/people you will be visiting. Pray for those you will be visiting.
- Your congregation should have a traveling communion kit that you can use when you go out for a visit. The EV is not expected to purchase a kit...both the communion kit and the ministry belong to the church!
- The Altar Guild (or, in some cases, the Deacon or the EV themselves) can prepare the traveling communion kit before the service, filling it with appropriate amounts of communion wafers and consecrated wine. Your clergy supervisor will have instructions for you in the handling of the kit, in cleansing and returning it.
- Any unused elements should be consumed at the end of your Eucharistic visit. If, for some reason, you are sent out with consecrated elements and are unable to make the visit, you should consume the elements before returning the traveling kit to the church.
- It is recommended that the EV not make the visit alone, but rather that another person(s) should accompany. The accompanying person(s) need not be a trained EV. This team approach gives the person being visited a true sense that they are being remembered by their entire church family...and that they remain a member of the community even in their absence.
- You should receive your (already prepared) traveling communion kit during the regular worship service when, after the congregation has received the Eucharist and the altar has been cleared (but before the post-communion prayer), the Deacon or celebrant states: "In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood." To these words, the entire congregation replies: "We who are many are one body, because we all share one bread, one cup." This visible sending-off provides a link and increases the awareness of the congregation of the EV ministry and its recipients.
- Your Eucharistic visit should be scheduled to take place immediately after your worship service. Your visits should be scheduled in advance so you will be

expected. Be aware of such matters as hospital and nursing home meal times, rehabilitation or treatment times, etc.

- Be particularly aware of health and cleanliness issues. Do not go on a visit if you are not well. Be certain to use hand disinfectant before and after your visit, and ensure that the Eucharistic kit is cleansed appropriately.
- Items to take with you on your Eucharistic visit (in addition to the Communion kit):
 - A Bible (for the Scripture reading)
 - A Book of Common Prayer (for the collect)
 - A Sunday bulletin from your worship service
 - The intercessory prayer list from your church
- When you arrive at the place of your visit, find an appropriate place to spread the kit. Treat the elements with care and respect. Spread the corporal and set the bread box and the chalice on it; do not uncover the bread or pour the wine until ready to distribute.
- Your clergy supervisor will instruct you as to preferred custom for offering the elements to the person(s) you are visiting.
- You, as EV, will also receive the Eucharist. You will receive last and will consume all remaining elements. Your clergy supervisor will advise you as to the cleaning of the vessels and how/where they should be returned to church.
- Accidents will happen. Spilled wine should be soaked-up with the purificator; use the corporal also, if necessary. A dropped wafer should be picked-up and you should consume it right then. Wafers can be broken and shared, if necessary.
- After your Eucharistic visit, record the service into the service register as “Reserved Sacrament”, note the date and number of people present (including yourself). You will sign the book and put the letters “EV” after your signature. Put the name of the person(s) communed in the last column of the register.
- Continue in your prayers to remember the one(s) you visited, and any concerns which emerged during the visit.

Jesus' incarnation means that God himself took our human flesh and became one of us in every way. The disciples could touch skin when they touched him. He ascended and gave the gift of the Holy Spirit, and God himself now resides in our hearts --- and he has now only our hands to do the work that must be done. We find Jesus today in one another; when we want to touch him, we touch each other. This is absolutely foundational to our understanding of our faith and our God. This ministry of Eucharistic Visitor stands at the heart of that understanding. It may be the finest gift of ministry you can offer to your church. And, it may be the greatest blessing you will ever receive. May God bless you in this ministry!

CHAPTER 6

An Order for Eucharistic Ministry to the Sick

Eucharistic Visitor (EV) Minister: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

Response: And also with you.

- Collect of the Day
- Gospel of the Day (or some other passage of Scripture appropriate to the occasion).
- Comments may be made about the Sermon of that day.
- Suitable prayers may be offered, concluding with the following Collect:

EV Minister: Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

EV Minister: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Silence may be kept.)

EV Minister and People, together: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. *Amen.*

EV Minister: May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

EV Minister: Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us.

EV Minister and People, together: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

- The Sacrament is administered with these or other authorized words: The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. (*Amen*)

Closing prayer, EV Minister and People, together:

O gracious God, your son Jesus Christ stretched out his arms of love upon the hard wood of the cross to embrace all the peoples of the earth: We give you thanks for feeding *N.* our *brother/sister* with the Sacrament of Christ's precious Body and Blood, which is the sign and instrument of our common life, and also for enriching our parish family by *N.*'s sharing with us the food of our pilgrimage, the foretaste of that heavenly banquet of which we shall partake with all your saints, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. *Amen.*

EV Minister: Let us bless the Lord. (*Alleluia, Alleluia*)

Response: Thanks be to God. (*Alleluia, Alleluia*)