

Ministry Licensing and Workshops

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Question and answer sessions at workshops show there is still some real confusion "out there" about the licensing procedure. People ask, for example, whether they can continue reading the lessons if they have no license. Answer, yes. They ask what happened to the old Chalice Bearer. Answer, it now has a new name: Eucharistic Minister.

A bit of confusion is only natural since the diocese has taken real steps forward in enabling more widespread lay ministry. Part of the effort has gone into bringing our local customs and procedures into conformity with the national canons for lay licenses. Since the program with us is still new, there are many who want specific and reliable answers to just what the changes are. This article addresses that need. Since it has been read and approved by our bishop, it can be considered authoritative as to diocesan policy on lay licenses.

Although there are six lay licenses, the procedure for any one of the six will be identical. The six licenses are: Worship Leader, Eucharistic Minister (EM), Eucharistic Visitor (EV), Catechist, Pastoral Leader and Preacher.

Earning a license

The procedure for a first license originates with the parish or mission. The person desiring a license meets with his clergy person to begin appropriate training. This is followed by interview and support from the Parish (Mission) Commission on Ministry and interview and support from the Vestry (Mission) Committee. The clergy person and Vestry (Mission) Committee, if satisfied, certify to the Bishop that the candidate is ready for licensing. The license normally will run for three years, and expire on the third December 31st. (If it is issued in the first half of a year, it will be correspondingly short of the whole three years.)

The preparation for a first license may, at the clergy person's discretion, include attendance at appropriate diocesan workshops.

The renewal procedure is different.

Although it includes certification to the bishop by the clergy person and Vestry (Mission Committee) that the licensed lay minister has faithfully carried out the ministry and should be re-licensed, there are additional requirements. The person to be re-licensed must have attended two all-day Lay Ministry Workshops within the three-year licensing period, or have participated in other equivalent activities (such as seminary, continuing education, related workshops or retreats). These must be substantive in terms of spiritual depth.

The parts of deanery workshops which focus on those who wish to renew licenses will

have a portion devoted to the BCP rubrics and procedures appropriate to each license. But, since those renewing licenses will be essentially well-versed in these, that part will be short. The greater portion of the time available will be focused on increasing the spiritual knowledge and depth of those to be relicensed. An important part of these workshops is participation.

Former bishop Jerry Lamb said, "I believe these workshops should cover the theological and practical aspects of the ministry to which the person is called. In addition, there should be time for small group work and reflection on the ministry to which one is called, and also time for personal and private prayer along with corporate worship. I believe these deanery workshops are not only to educate, but they are to help define and support the ministry to which the laity are called."

The Parish Commission on Ministry (PCOM)

An important offshoot of the new procedures impacts on the Parish (Mission) Commission on Ministry, the PCOM. The PCOM, until now, has only had to function when a person came forward for possible ordination. Now, with the PCOM involved in issuing first licenses, many more parishes will find themselves instituting PCOMs. The Commission on Ministry is preparing plans to provide training options for PCOMs. On invitation the Commission on Ministry, or the Sub-Commission, will send qualified persons to the local parish or mission.

Licensed Ministries

The Canon Governing Licensed Lay Ministries

Title III, Canon 4: Of Licensed 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, or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons, and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.
- (b) The Presiding Bishop or the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces may authorize a member of the Armed Forces to exercise one or more of these ministries in the Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of this Canon. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons shall be established by the Bishop granting the license.

Section. 2 (Terms)

- (a) The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III, 4.1 (a) and may be renewed. The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.
- (b) In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.

- (c) A person licensed in any Diocese under the provisions of this Canon may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in the same or another Diocese only at the invitation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.

Procedures for the Licensing/Re-licensing of all Lay Ministers

1. The person perceives a call to a particular ministry.
2. The person meets with the clergy person in charge of his/ her congregation to plan steps to enter this ministry, including:
 - a. Appropriate training
 - b. Interview and support from the Parish (or Mission) Commission on Ministry
 - c. Interview and support from the Vestry/Mission Committee.
3. The clergy person in charge and the Vestry/Mission Committee certify to the Bishop that the candidate has met all requirements for licensing and request the candidate be licensed for this ministry in their congregation
4. The Bishop issues the appropriate license for a period not to exceed three years.
5. Re-licensing for additional periods, each not to exceed three years, shall require that:
 - a. The clergy person in charge and the Vestry/Mission Committee certify to the Bishop that the licensed Lay Minister has faithfully carried out his/her ministry, and request re-licensing.
 - b. The licensed Lay Minister shall have attended two all-day Lay Ministry Workshops within the three-year licensing period or have participated in other equivalent activities (such as seminary, continuing education, related workshops, or retreats). For any renewal of license this participation must be certified by the rector or vicar to the Bishop for the Bishop's approval.
6. During periods of licensing, the clergy in charge and the Vestry/Mission Committee are encouraged to provide in their congregation opportunities for spiritual, theological and liturgical growth for those so licensed.

Annual Deanery Workshops for Lay Ministers

Future workshops will frequently be sponsored by more than one commission and offer

a number of options in a single workshop.

These workshops are fun! You meet your peers from throughout the diocese and find that they have the same hopes, problems and opportunities that you do as you work in your chosen area of lay ministry.

1. The Bishop is responsible for the conduct and content of annual workshops to be held in each deanery of the diocese. The Bishop may delegate any or all of his/her responsibility at his/her discretion. The Sub Commission on Lay Ministry is approved to hold annual Lay Ministry workshops in each deanery
2. Deanery workshops should be about four hours in length, to include:
 - (a) Presentations of about two hours for the general spiritual, theological and liturgical growth of Lay Ministers, which are carefully planned and use a variety of teaching methods.
 - (b) Smaller group meetings of about one hour, presented according to lay ministry topic, will provide for growth in that particular area of ministry, and provide opportunity for sharing and fellowship by lay ministers from different congregations.
 - (c) A closing worship service
 - (d) Meals, snacks and breaks shall be as appropriate for the time selected for the workshop.

Please Note: *If you attend two all-day workshops during the three-year licensing period, you will fulfill the workshop requirement for re-licensing. For example, if you are well-versed in the mechanics of serving as an EM, you can meet re-licensing requirements by selecting any of the offerings to fill the day's workshop schedule. You do not have to attend the EM session at each workshop. Also, all lay ministers are welcome to attend workshops, even before licensing, because we offer basic training for licensing.*

Why Attend Deanery Workshops?

To respond to our call to ministry, we had to express that sense of calling and undertake some type of preparation or training. Over the years we did what we felt we were called to do. However, without some periodic reflection on who we are and what we are about, our ministry can become routine. When this happens, we lose the sense of what we are about -we lose the joy of ministry.

We can (and should) find some time for this reflection on Sunday mornings, and also in our private devotions and study. The re-licensing requirement for licensed lay ministry is, however, more specific. This requirement has two components. The first is to broaden and deepen a lay minister's spiritual life, and to provide for general spiritual and theological growth. The second is to provide for growth in the individual's particular area

of ministry and to provide opportunities for sharing and fellowship.

The requirement to attend Deanery Workshops or their equivalent may seem arbitrary to some. Most of us recognize that informal, private reflection and study are a necessary part of our spiritual lives. Additionally, though, we are asked (in the Baptismal Covenant) "Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?" We reply that we will with God's help. We (the Church) have learned that there is power in corporate preparation and worship.

There are other options, besides the Deanery Workshops. One of them is to go on retreat, or to attend a parish quiet day. Retreats and quiet days give us the opportunity to reflect on who we are and what we are about. The focus of the time is as varied as our different interests and ministries.

There are also structured study groups and classes, such as Education for Ministry (EFM), Kerygma, Community of Hope, and groups like the Order of St. Luke. These are all ways in which we can explore and reflect on the elements of our faith. In these groups we learn and grow together.

However, a Deanery Workshop is the best place for meeting and getting to know others who also minister as we do. It may be the best place to obtain specific information on our ministry. It provides a way of uniting the Diocese and gives us a sense of the wider scope of what lay ministry is all about.

Some of the things to look for in all of these activities is a sense of exploring, deepening, growing, and reflecting on our spiritual lives, of being in community and of worship. And most of those who come look forward to coming again!