

# **Eucharistic Ministry**

**at St. Anne's Episcopal Church**



**A Handbook**

*Revised 8/7/17*

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# Introduction

Eucharistic Ministers are specially trained, licensed lay ministers who assist at worship in the distribution of the Sacrament, typically in the form of the Wine. In the past, they have been called “chalice administrators” and “lay Eucharistic ministers.”

Eucharistic Ministry is a weighty, sacred responsibility and should not be entered into lightly. More than a mere “role” on Sunday mornings, it is a form of servant ministry that brings one into close contact with our Lord as well as the people of the congregation. Those who sense a call to this ministry should speak with the Rector, who can assist them in discerning whether this ministry is right for them.

If you are training to become a Eucharistic Minister (EM) or already serve as one, thank you. This handbook is designed to guide you through the particulars and frequently asked questions that arise in the course of this ministry.

## Requirements

Eucharistic Ministry is set forth in the Canons of the Episcopal Church. As such, it requires training in the local parish or convocation, licensing by the diocesan bishop, and pursuit of an intentional manner of life.

### Eligibility

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that EMs be confirmed communicants in good standing.

### Training

#### Initial Training

Training to be an EM at St. Anne’s requires the following:

- **Meet with Rector:** Initial consultation to:
  - discuss the spiritual requirements of this ministry,
  - receive and begin study of this handbook, and
  - begin development of a Rule of Life.

- **Train with Head MC:** One or more training sessions under the Head MC to learn the mechanics of Eucharistic Ministry.
- **Shadow Services:** At least three “shadow” opportunities wherein the trainee vests, observes, and accompanies a veteran EM in the liturgy.
- **Safeguarding God’s Children:** Successful completion of Safeguarding God’s children, an online training course in the prevention of child sexual abuse in the parish. *All* leaders of the parish should complete this training, but especially EMs given their frequent interaction with acolytes before, during, and after worship.
- **Meet with Rector:** Second consultation to review training and complete license application to be submitted to the Bishop.

### **Ongoing Training**

All EMs are required to attend quarterly refresher trainings offered by the Rector and Head MC.

## **Licensing**

### **The Bishop**

The Canons of the Episcopal Church place licensure for Eucharistic Ministry in the hands of the diocesan bishop. All EMs are required at the end of their initial training to complete the licensing application (found on the diocesan website), which is submitted by the Rector to the Bishop.

### **Renewing a License**

Licenses expire every three years. EMs desiring to continue in the ministry should approach the Rector within three months of their expiration date to:

- discuss the ongoing spiritual implications of Eucharistic Ministry on their lives,
- discern whether Eucharistic Ministry continues to be the ministry to which God calls them, and
- if appropriate, complete relicensing application to be submitted to the Bishop.

## Rule of Life

Serving as a Eucharistic Minister requires more than merely showing up for your scheduled Sunday. It calls for a deep commitment to a life of faith in Jesus Christ and a constant grounding in Scripture and the Sacraments.

Once licensed, EMs are expected to make a commitment to a Rule of Life, developed in consultation with the Rector, which should include the following:

- Daily prayer, to include regular reading of Holy Scripture.
- Weekly reception of Holy Communion.
- Responsible stewardship, to include acceptance of the tithe as the Biblical standard of financial responsibility and effort toward this standard.

## Before the Service

### Arrival

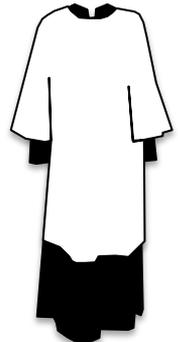
Please arrive in the vesting room **no later than 15 minutes** before the service. This allows time to vest, read over the Prayers of the People, and check with the MC about any peculiarities in the liturgy.

Arriving late works a hardship on the MC and generates unnecessary anxiety in the vesting room.

### Vesture

#### Cassock & Surplice

Customs vary from parish to parish, but the appropriate vesture for EMs at St. Anne's is a black cassock and white surplice. The cassock should be well fitted at the shoulders and extend to the ankles. The surplice should be clean, round-necked, and calf-length.



#### Procurement

Most EMs at St. Anne's choose to purchase their

own vestments as the parish does not own a full complement of lay vestments. Vestments should be ordered with the assistance of the Parish Administrator. Sharing or borrowing others' vestments is common but should be done only with the permission of the owner.

## Shoes

Sensible close-toed, close-heeled black shoes should be worn.

# During the Service

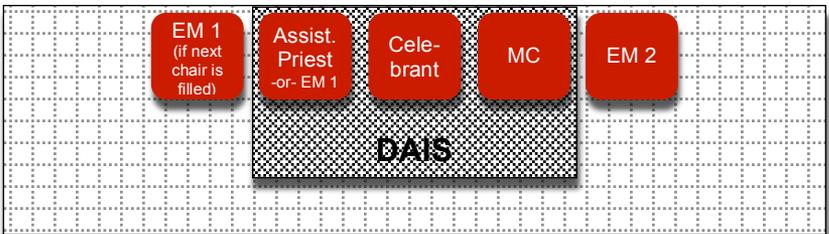
## Procession

The EM typically follows in procession behind the choir. If there are two EMs, they walk side-by-side, reverencing the Altar together once within the chancel.

## Seating

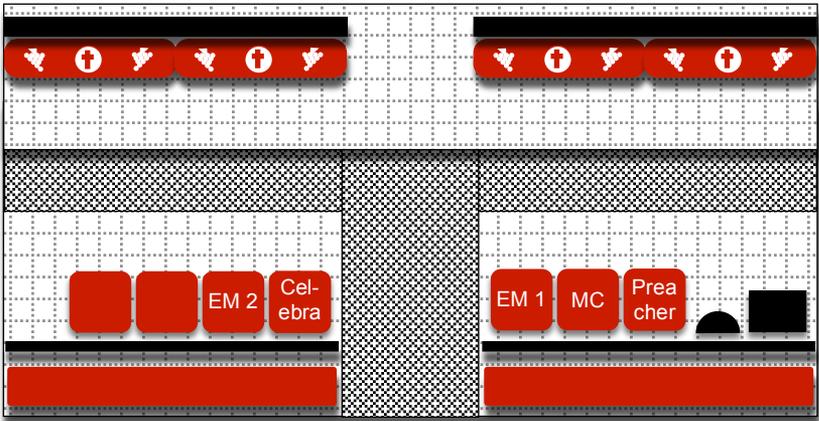
### At the Beginning of the Service

- If you are the only EM, sit to the right of the clergy.
  - If the chair to the immediate right of the Celebrant is vacant, sit *on* the dais.
  - If the dais is full, sit *to the right* of it.
- If two EMs are serving, EM1 sits to the right of the clergy, and EM2 sits to the left of the MC.



## During the Sermon

During the sermon, the EM reading the Prayers of the People should sit on the lectern side.



## At the Sequence Hymn

### Assisting Choir Members

When the sequence hymn begins, step down immediately to the side opening at the rail and extend a hand to assist choir members down the steps. After choir members have passed, the EMs move down into the transept.

### Crossing the Aisle

The EM reading the Prayers of the People should sit on the lectern side during the sermon. Wait for the Gospel procession to pass into the middle of the sanctuary before crossing the aisle.

## Prayers of the People

- Be **at** the lectern by the time the Creed has ended. You should be in place by the time we say, “We look for the resurrection of the dead.”)
- Adjust the microphone to the level of your mouth.
- Give a slight pause after the “amen” of the Nicene Creed; say, “Kneeling, let us pray”; wait for all to kneel; begin.
- Speak clearly, and be sure you understand how to pronounce all words and names beforehand.

# The Offertory & Setting of the Altar

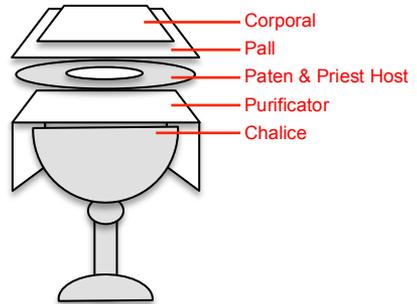
## Attention & Assistance

On occasion, acolytes may be few, inexperienced, or under-supervised. Be prepared to guide or assist with the setting of the Altar, and keep your eyes on the MC and clergy for cues.

## Order of Items Brought to the Altar

In case you need to assist with the setting of the Altar, items should be brought forth in this order:

- **Chalice Stack:** This is the chalice with full linen set—corporal, pall, paten, priest host, and purificator—stacked on top of it.
- **Water:** Always *hand* the cruet with the top off and the handle facing out. Always *receive* it by the handle.



- **[Small Ciborium and/or Wine Cruet]:** On occasion at larger services, the small ciborium of bread or cruet of wine may also be required. Ask ahead and follow the cues of the clergy person setting the Altar.
- **Washing the Celebrant's Hands:** You may need to assist with the washing of the Celebrant's hands. This typically takes place after the setting and censing of the Altar, and after healing prayer. To do so, drape the lavabo towel over your non-dominant wrist, hold the lavabo in your non-dominant hand, and pour water over the Celebrant's fingers with your dominant hand, allowing him or her to dry his or her hands on the towel.

## At the Doxology

### Receiving Gifts & Moving to the Altar

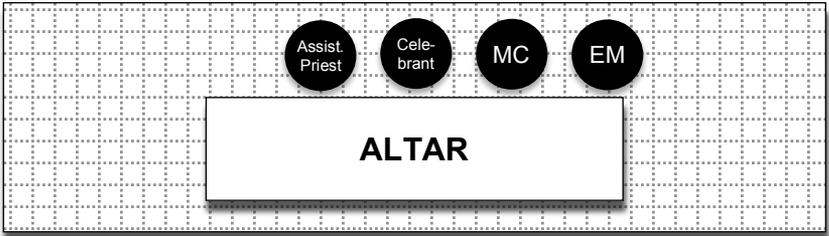
When the Doxology is sung, the MC will collect the alms basins. Stay alert and be prepared to receive any other gifts from the congregation, such as the food basket, and set them in front of the Altar. Then take your place at the Altar during the Doxology without delay.

## Standing at the Altar

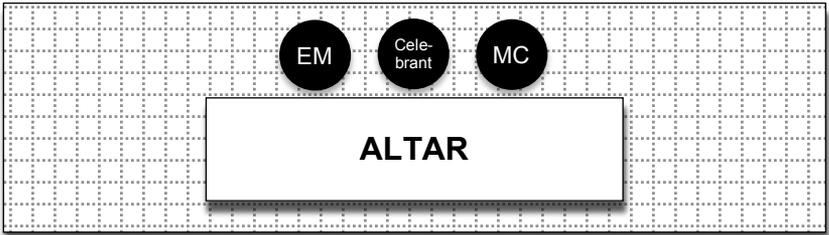
The goal is balance. Depending on the service, the number of clergy, etc., there are multiple configurations that may occur. In all cases, EMs always stand on the outermost edges.

### If Only One EM Is Serving

When two clergy persons are present, stand to your *far left*:

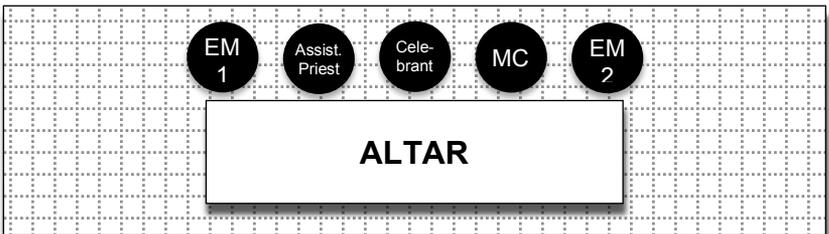


When only one clergy person is present, stand to your far right:



### If Two EMs Are Serving

One stands to the far right, the other to the far left, regardless of the number of clergy:



# Manual Actions

## Position of Hands

When in procession or standing at the Altar, empty hands are folded at the chest with palms and fingers touching, one thumb resting over the other. Do not allow your hands to swing or dangle.

## Simple Bow

The simple bow is made with the head, inclining the shoulders slightly. It is used:

- at the name of Jesus,
- when passing or receiving Communion vessels at the setting of the Altar, and
- on other occasions of simple reverence.

## Solemn Bow

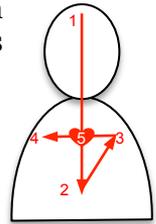
The solemn bow is made from the waist, inclining the head and shoulders more fully. It is used in reverencing:

- the Altar,
- the processional cross,
- the Blessed Sacrament, and
- other times of solemnity.

## Crossing Yourself

Crossing oneself is an outward, manual invocation of God's blessing. It is done by tracing the cross over one's body, touching the forehead, torso, left shoulder, right shoulder, and heart.

When crossing yourself while serving at the Altar, following the timing of the Celebrant. The entire altar party should cross themselves at the same time and in like manner.



Crossing oneself is most appropriate at:

- The opening sentence of the liturgy, e.g. “Blessed be God, Father Son, and Holy Spirit.”
- Any invocation of the Trinity, e.g. “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

- Absolution after the Confession, i.e. “Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins . . .”
- During the Sanctus at “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

### **Elevating the Chalice**

At the fraction anthem, the EM is often handed the chalice for presentation to the congregation. When the Celebrant raises the Bread, raise the chalice to your eye level, holding the stem in one hand and supporting the base in the other.

## **Serving the Celebrant**

Customs vary from priest to priest, but the current Rector of St. Anne’s believes it is important to receive the Sacrament from the hands of another. At times, you may be called upon to serve the Celebrant either the Bread, saying, “The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven,” or the Wine, saying, “The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”

After serving the Celebrant the Wine, wipe the chalice and place it immediately back on the Altar so your hands are free to receive the Bread from the Celebrant.

## **Serving the Congregation**

### **Minimize Distractions**

The power of this moment lies completely in the Sacrament. Christ is present with us, and the Spirit is at work. Your role is to administer the Sacrament simply and without distraction. A good mindset here is John 3:30: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

### **Avoid Personal Flourishes**

Refrain from attempts to manufacture intimacy or added meaning, such as:

- saying parishioners’ names,
- squeezing their hands,
- bending intimately toward their faces, or
- overly dramatic delivery of the words.

## **Words of Administration**

Use only the words of administration given by the *Book of Common Prayer*:

- “The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”
- *When intincting*: “The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.”

## **Keeping the Chalice Appropriately Full**

As it is difficult to receive from a nearly empty chalice, attempt to keep the chalice at least one-third full at all times. The MC typically has the flagon of extra Wine and can assist you.

## **Wiping the Chalice**

Wipe and turn the chalice as you go, being careful not to wipe *into* the area you are about to present to the next communicant. Use the full purificator, and retrieve a clean one from an acolyte when needed.

## **Pacing**

Attempt to move along quickly but carefully. If the Celebrant is following you on your immediate left, you are going too slowly.

## **Assisting Newcomers & Visitors**

If serving a visitor who seems confused, be prepared to assist them with a kind verbal cue such as:

- “Do you wish to receive?”
- “Help me guide the cup.”

## **Handling Mishaps**

### **If you drop the Bread on the floor**

- Pick it up without spilling the Wine,
- Consume it or give it to the MC,
- Make sure the Celebrant knows that person needs a new wafer, and
- Keep going.

### **If you spill Wine on the floor**

- Place your purificator over the spill,
- Alert the MC, who will clean it up,
- Retrieve a new purificator from the acolyte, and
- Keep going.

### **If you find a foreign object in the Wine**

- A spoon is available on the credence table. Use it to remove the wafer or object, placing it in the lavabo.

### **If we run out of Wine**

- Alert the MC, who will arrange to have more Wine consecrated by the Celebrant.
- Please do not deny anyone the opportunity to receive the Wine. Instead, kindly ask the next person at the rail to wait just a moment. Please do not offer substitute measures such as telling them to “kiss the cup.”

## **Consumption of the Remaining Sacrament**

### **Delegated to the EMs**

On Sundays, the responsibility for the consumption and/or reverent disposal of the remaining Sacrament is delegated by the Celebrant to the Eucharistic Minister(s). Ushers may assist *if needed*, but only under the direction of the EMs.

### **Appropriate Reverence**

The remaining consecrated Bread and Wine is considered the Body and Blood of our Lord and should be treated and consumed with due reverence.

### **About the Piscina**

Although the preferred custom is for all remaining Sacrament to be consumed, the piscina (i.e. the sink next to the window) is designed to return the elements directly to the earth and may be used on occasion. Use the piscina when:

- the amount of Wine is too much for reverent consumption (e.g. more than half a chalice), and/or
- rinsing Communion vessels containing residue of the Sacrament.

### **Covering the Vessels**

When all vessels are emptied and rinsed, cover them with the large white linen in the sacristy and extinguish the candle behind the corporal. This signals to the Altar Guild that there is no remaining Sacrament in the vessels.

# Glossary

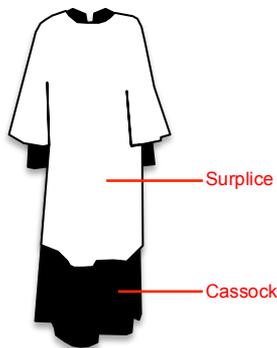
**Acolyte** /'akə,lit/ A trained lay person, typically younger, who assists the clergy and other ministers with the ministrations of Holy Eucharist.

**Altar** /'ôltər/ The table at which the Bread and Wine are consecrated during Holy Eucharist.

**Altar Guild** /'ôltər gild/ A group of lay persons who tend to the upkeep and preparation of the various vessels, linens, and supplies used in Holy Eucharist.

**Bishop** /'bishəp/ A member of the clergy elected and ordained to oversee a diocese and the congregations and clergy within it. When present, the Bishop baptizes, confirms new members, and presides at Holy Eucharist.

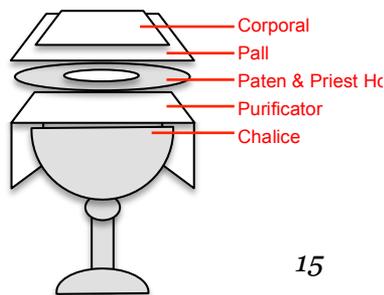
**Cassock** /'kasək/ A long, black, close-fitting garment with narrow sleeves worn by clergy and laity. It may be worn under a surplice.



**Celebrant** /'seləbrənt/ The priest who presides at the Holy Eucharist, typically distinguished by wearing a chasuble.

**Chalice** /'chaləs/ The footed cup for the Wine consecrated and administered at Holy Eucharist.

**Chalice Stack** The primary chalice with a purificator, paten, priest host, pall, and corporal.



Chancel	/ˈchansəl/ The raised area of the church beyond the Communion rail, set apart for the Altar, credence table, organ, choir, and seats for clergy and other ministers.
Chasuble	/ˈchazəb(ə)l/ A sleeveless outer vestment worn by a priest when celebrating Holy Eucharist, typically ornate and matching the color of the liturgical season.
Ciborium	/səˈbôrēəm/ A chalice-like receptacle with an arched lid, used to contain the consecrated Bread.
Communion	/kəˈmyoŋnyən/ See “ <i>Holy Eucharist</i> .”
Communicant	/kəˈmyoŋəkənt/ A person receiving Communion.
Corporal	/ˈkôrpərəl/ A square linen cloth on which the Eucharistic elements are placed. Traditionally, only those elements placed on the corporal are intended for consecration.
Credence Table	/ˈkrədəns ˈtābəl/ A small table on which the vessels for Communion are laid out before the service. St. Anne’s credence table is located next to the piano.
Cruet	/ˈkroʊət/ A small glass pitcher used for wine or water.
Dais	/ˈdāəs / A low platform on which the seats for the Celebrant and assisting ministers are located.
Diocese	/ˈdiəsəs/ A geographical jurisdiction of churches overseen by a bishop. St. Anne’s belongs to the Diocese of Georgia, which covers the southern and coastal regions of the state of Georgia.
Doxology	/dəkˈsäləjē/ Generally, words of glory or praise to God (from the Greek <i>doxa logos</i> ). Specifically at St. Anne’s, the hymn verse,

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,”  
sung at the presentation of offerings.

EM	Eucharistic Minister. A trained lay person licensed by the Bishop to assist in the distribution of the Sacrament at Communion.
Flagon	/ˈflægən/ A large silver pitcher containing additional wine to be consecrated for Communion.
Fraction	/ˈfrækʃən/ The moment at which the Celebrant breaks the Bread (typically the priest host), pauses, and says, “Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”
Holy Eucharist	/ˈhōlē ˈyoŋkərəst/ The service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated and shared as the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Synonymous with Communion, Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper.
Intinction	/ɪn ˈtɪŋkʃən/ The act of dipping the Bread in the Wine so that a communicant receives both together.
Lavabo	/ləˈvəbō/ A small bowl used to catch the water as the Celebrant’s hands are washed just before Communion.
Lavabo Towel	/ləˈvəbō ˈtoʊəl/ A linen cloth with a cross embroidered on the bottom, typically folded in half and used to dry the Celebrant’s hands just before Communion.
Lectern	/ˈlektərən/ The brass stand from which the Word is read and sermons are preached. May also be called an “ambo.”
MC	Master of Ceremonies. At St. Anne’s, the lay minister charged with the logistical preparations and executions of the liturgy.
Narthex	/ˈnərθeks/ The entry space or vestibule of the church building, leading into the nave.

Nave	/nāv/ The main section of the church building where the congregation sits. From the Latin <i>navis</i> meaning “ship” because the pitched ceiling looks like the bottom of a wooden ship.
Pall	/pôl/ A square, stiffened white linen cloth used to cover the chalice at the Eucharist. (The term “pall” also applies to the large covering draped over a casket at the Burial of the Dead.)
Paten	/'patn/ A small plate used to hold the priest host, typically placed on top of the primary chalice as part of the chalice stack.
Piscina	/pə'sēnə/ A small sink that empties directly into the earth instead of a sewer. It may be used for the reverent disposal of consecrated Wine from the Eucharist, blessed water from baptism, and water used in washing vessels that have been used for a sacred purpose. The piscina at St. Anne's is the sink next to the window in the sacristy.
Priest Host	The large wafer that is held up and broken by the Celebrant during the fraction.
Purificator	/'pyoŕəfə,kādər/ A linen cloth with a cross embroidered on the center, typically folded in thirds and draped over the chalice, used to wipe the chalice during administration of Wine during Communion.
Rule of Life	A set of guidelines and commitments directing one's life. A rule usually includes set times of daily prayer and meditation, study (such as reading the Bible), and acts of charity. It can also include regular attendance at Holy Eucharist, making retreats, placing oneself under a spiritual director or confessor, and fasting or other acts of self-denial.

- Sacrament /'sɑkrəmənt/ Generally, an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace. Specifically at Holy Eucharist, the consecrated Bread and Wine.
- Sacristy /'sɑkrəstē/ The room where the Altar Guild prepares the elements for Holy Eucharist and where vestments and other accoutrements used in worship are kept.
- Surplice /'sərples/ A loose, white, round-necked, calf-length linen vestment worn over a cassock by clergy, acolytes, and lay ministers. *See illustration under "cassock."*