



Lay Eucharistic Visitor Instructions

St. James' Episcopal Church, Potomac

Equipment and Materials

Each Lay Eucharistic Visitor should have a **home communion kit**, prepared by the Altar Guild. These kits are stored in the sacristy to the left of the sink. The kit includes:

- 1 Corporal (large linen square folded inside out)
- 1 Cross
- 1 Chalice
- 1 Purificator (small linen square folded right side out, used for wiping the chalice)
- 2 plastic cruets, one with consecrated wine and one with water
- 1 ciborium (small metal box) holding at least two consecrated wafers (gluten free wafers can be provided if needed)
- 1 oil stock containing oil for anointing

Each communion kit should also have two or three copies of the service entitled *Distribution of Holy Communion by Lay Eucharistic Visitors* and at least one copy of the *Lay Eucharistic Visitor Pastoral Report*.

You may leave copies of the service with someone if they ask to keep it. Please let the parish office know if we need to print more copies of either the service or the report sheet.

First Things First

Pray before you go! Ask God to be with you and the person you are visiting, that your time together may be blessed and holy.

During the Eucharist, you may wish to hold the person(s) to whom you will be bringing communion close in your mind, as you will be providing a special connection between this person and the gathered community here at St. James'.

Getting Ready

The clergy will give you the names of one or more people to whom you will be bringing Holy Communion. All Lay Eucharistic Visitors will be sent out in teams of at least two people. The clergy can provide your team with information that may be helpful during your visit so feel free to ask questions!

Arrange a mutually convenient time to visit. The clergy can provide information about how the person prefers to communicate (call, text, email) or whether you will need to speak with a family member or caregiver to schedule a visit. Be respectful of time and give notice if you might be late.

Before going on your visit, take a moment to review the service and the pastoral report form. You may also wish to bring a copy of the previous Sunday's worship bulletin and announcements to share.

The Visit

Upon arrival, introduce yourselves if it is a first visit. Feel free to ask for any special prayer requests to include in your time together or to take back to the community at St. James'.

Some people will be interested in talking for a bit, others (due to physical limitations or personal preference) will want a shorter visit focused on the sacrament. You can also set your own parameters around time.

Observe appropriate boundaries. Listen deeply, but remember that it is not your responsibility to solve problems. Listening and praying together are meaningful in their own right. Observe confidentiality around information shared during your visit. You should note pastoral concerns on your report

form or in follow up with the clergy, but do not share information more widely without permission. You can always ask, “What would you like me to share with our community at St. James’?”

Observe appropriate physical boundaries as well. Holding someone’s hand or laying hands on their head for anointing can be powerful, comforting gestures, but it is always best to ask permission first.

When visiting a hospital, follow the procedures of that institution. *Check in at the nursing station before beginning a visit*, letting them know who you are and why you are there. You may also ask about physical limitations or restrictions on receiving communion. Observe "universal precautions", i.e. wash hands before and after. In a hospital situation do not sit on the patient's bed. Attempt to sit at eye level with the patients.

Setting Up for Communion

When it is time to share communion, ask if the person would prefer to receive the bread, wine, and anointing with oil. You may invite other family members or caregivers present to join you in the service.

Find a table or other convenient flat surface to set out the elements. Unfold the corporal and lay it flat. Place the cross, ciborium, and chalice with wine (if using) on the corporal.

Designate who will lead the service and encourage others present to respond by reading aloud the parts that are bolded in the bulletin. Even if a person has difficulty reading or hearing, they may still know parts of the service like the Confession, Lord’s Prayer, or Post-Communion prayer by heart, so proceed slowly and allow them the chance to participate.

If the person prefers not to receive healing prayers, you can omit the “Laying of Hands and Anointing” portion of the service.

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After your Visit

Please complete the *Lay Eucharistic Visitor Pastoral Report* as soon as is practical. You can place the completed report in the rector's box in the Parish Office.

Return the home communion kit to the sacristy. When returning the kit, place it to the left of the sink on the counter, open the top and place soiled linens in the basket on the window ledge. Leave the top of the kit open so the Altar Guild knows that it needs to be cleaned and restocked.

If you have a pastoral issue or concern that you feel needs immediate attention, please reach out to any member of the clergy.

Thank you for serving as a LEV. You are a blessing to the St. James' community.

