

Eucharistic Assistance.



The Eucharistic Assistants in a Parish or Benefice are authorised and trained by the incumbent in consultation with the PCCs. Anyone who is a full member of the church and regular communicant may serve God and their church family within this ministry.

A record of those authorised will be maintained within the benefice by PCC Secretaries and presented to the APCMs each year.

A Eucharistic Assistant is appointed to assist a priest at Holy Communion, they are NOT authorised to take communion to the sick or to lead Communion by Extension on their own. They may distribute either bread or wine although usually it will be the wine chalice they take.

Eucharistic Assistants should aim to be at church in good time and prepared to fulfil their ministry. They may find it helpful to know how to lay up the communion table and help to do so as they can be reflecting and praying as part of that preparation.

They should ensure their hands are clean and recently washed and may make use of the hand gel that should be kept in each church when they come to the sanctuary.

So what are we doing as we share in this ministry?

Our function is to offer bread and wine but our action is one of prayer as each person comes before us we allow our prayer to touch them, that this bread and this wine might be for them a moment of communion with God for the recipient, a reaching beyond the veil into the presence of the Divine. For this reason we come with prayerfulness to the task, we stand first before the judgement seat and receive the grace of God again ourselves before we serve our brothers and sisters. Our task is to serve and therefore we seek to minister to the unseen need of the person before us.

(A copy of this information may be found within the members section of the Thameshead Benefice website – thamesheadchurches.org.uk)

Additional detail for the distribution to Communicants:

- 1) To administer the chalice the Eucharistic minister holds the chalice by the stem and offers it to the communicant saying the appropriate words:

The body of Christ and the communicant responds *Amen*

MOST people will take the chalice (and this is our expectation) but you are in control of it so watch the body language and if in doubt keep a hand on it so it does not slip or spill. The communicant will take the chalice, sip and return it.

Wipe the lip of the cup firmly and clearly and turn the chalice a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn as you do so. Adjust your hold on the chalice and offer to the next communicant. Etc. etc.

- 2) Occasionally someone does not take the chalice, ensure you hold it low enough and carefully tip so they can sip. Wipe as above.
- 3) Intincture: this is the practice of dipping the wafer in the wine. Keep the chalice low enough so they can see the wine. (this is not a practice to encourage as 'normal' but many of us will do so if we think we have a cold or infection)
- 4) Children: where children have been received into Holy Communion we share the bread and wine with the children. If you don't know, quietly ask the child if they receive or look to a parent but if you are keeping an eye on the minister you should take your guide from them.
- 5) If there is a spill deal with it sensibly and quietly (unobtrusively)
- 6) If you run out of wine – when you notice you are getting low take opportunity to draw the attention of the President/Priest. At an appropriate moment they will ask you for the chalice and carafe of wine and will consecrate some more for you.
- 7) If there is someone in the congregation unable to come to the rail we will take communion to them at the end. Follow the Priest who will give the bread and then move out of the way so you can share the chalice as above.
- 8) In a large service we will use two chalices. Everything is as above but the chalices alternate with one taking the odd numbers and the other even along the altar rail.

This may sound complicated but the most important thing to do is follow your priest. If you keep half an eye on them you will note if someone takes a blessing instead of communion or if children receive.

Assistants do not give the blessing at the communion rail as this is a priestly role even if they were to have the patten.

PROCESS for the Eucharistic Prayer:

1 After the offertory hymn has been introduced follow the priest up to the altar and go to the credence table (the place where the elements for Holy Communion are – wine, bread, water).

2 Immediately collect the wafer box or tray and take to the priest who will put wafers on to the paten. Note. The priest will appreciate it if you can tell them how many are in the congregation and if the priest is a visitor tell them how many wafers are in each section of the box (usually 5).

(In some churches members of the congregation may bring up the wafers, wine and water from the back of church, if so receive them from the bearers and pass them to the minister.)



Return to credence table and replace wafers.

Remove stoppers from wine and water carafes.

Making sure handle is pointing to priest take wine in your right hand and water in your left. Return to the priest who will take the wine from you and pour into chalice.



Move water from left to right hand. Take wine from priest in your left hand and pass him/her the water.

Water will be added to the wine in the chalice and the water returned to you. Replace both carafes on credence table.

Pick up water bowl in your left hand. Place lavabo towel (just a large purificator) over your left arm and pick up water in your right hand, holding the handle,. (note there may be a separate jug of water or you may have to use the water carafe). Take to priest who will hold fingers over the bowl while you pour water over them.

The priest will then take the towel, dry his/her fingers and replace the towel over your arm.



Return all items to credence table and replace stoppers in carafes, if you have not already done so.

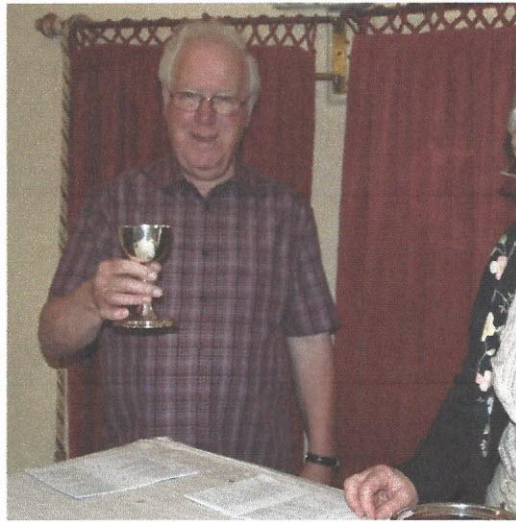
3 Collect collection plate from the person who has taken the collection. They may be waiting at the step for you or you may have to wait for them (depends how long the hymn is etc.!).

Offer the collection plate to the priest. They will usually take it from you and offer it up. They may then return it to you or place it themselves on the altar. If you are given it put it somewhere on the credence table, if that is large enough, or in some other out of the way place.



Having done this stand at right hand side of priest.

4 The priest will "thank" God for the bread while lifting the paten., He will then do the same with the chalice (some priests may ask you to lift the chalice).



5 When it comes to the giving /receiving of communion some priests may communicate themselves. Others may give you the bread, then pass you the paten so you can communicate them. After which they will do the same with the chalice. The words used may vary. Listen to the priest and **use the form of words he/she has used as you serve others.**

Words used at the Giving of Communion

The body of Christ.
The blood of Christ.

OR

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life.
The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life.

OR

The body of Christ, broken for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

OR

The bread of heaven in Christ Jesus.
The cup of life in Christ Jesus.

OR from the Book of Common Prayer

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life. [*Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.*]

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life.
[*Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.*]

Usually if this is used we omit the italicised section and will only be used within a BCP service.

You will then follow the priest to the communion rail and offer the wine to the people praying for them as you do so.

When all have received replace the chalice on the altar (PLEASE PUT THEM ON THE CORPORAL (to avoid staining the fine cloth of the altar cover from any runs or drips), together with the purificator.

6 The priest may clear up straight away or may do so during the final hymn you will need to take your cue from him/her. Collect the carafe of water, stopper removed, holding the handle. The priest will hold out the paten and chalice - pour water into it/them. The priest may or may not want to do this again. Take your cue from them. The Priest may ask you to help consume anything that is left. Anyone who has shared in the feast of Holy Communion may help with this.



Return carafe to credence table, insert stopper and you can then return to your place in the congregation.

THANK YOU!

(My thanks to Rev Pepita Walker for the pictures and outline which I have borrowed in this section)

How to set up the table for Communion

The elements needed for preparation are:

1. **Chalice** – Cup or goblet
2. **Paten** - The small plate
3. **Priest's Host** - Host used in the Celebration of the Holy Communion by the Priest, or Celebrant – usually breaks into 4 but may be larger in which case individual wafers *may* not be used.
4. **Purificator** - A clean cloth used for wiping the chalice. One per cup plus one on credence table
5. **Pall** - A hard (often plastic) cover that is laid over the priest's wafer on the paten.
6. **Burse** - The "liturgical" purse. The veil and corporal are traditionally kept in the Burse.
7. **Veil** - Used to cover, or veil, the elements until it is used by the Priest.
8. **Corporal** - A relatively large square cloth meant to capture crumbs or droplets of wine.

Chalice and Paten



Purificator and Pall



Corporal, Veil and Burse





1) Corporal



2) add Chalice



3) Add Purificator



4) add Paten



5) Add Wafer



6) Add Pall



7) Add Veil



8) Stand Burse

If you follow these pictures it will be fine and the other items – carafe of wine and water, box of wafers, bowl and purificator go on the small credence table ready for use.

In addition it is helpful if a copy of the service booklet and list of hymns (or just last hymn) is also with the table lectern.