

St Peter's RC Church Edinburgh

Eucharistic Ministers

Volunteering role

No specific guidance for Eucharistic Ministers has been issued by the Archdiocese. It is for each parish to develop procedures for use at Mass and for house and hospital visits in consultation with the Parish Priest.

Role of Eucharistic Ministers

Members of the team of Eucharistic Ministers, properly termed "Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist" are appointed to:

- distribute the Blessed Sacrament under the two forms at Mass on Sundays, Holidays of Obligation and other solemn occasions; and at weekday Masses and Services of the Word;
- distribute the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and housebound at home and in hospital.

Who to report to or go to for assistance

New Eucharistic Ministers may be identified on a continuing basis to replace those who retire or leave the Ministry. Generally, the Ministry leaders will identify potential candidates but the appointment of Eucharistic Ministers is solely a matter for the Parish Priest, and potential recruits should not be approached without his consent. Similarly, any parishioner who wishes to volunteer as a Minister of the Eucharist must contact the Parish Priest.

Preparation of candidates for appointment

Approved candidates for appointment will receive appropriate instruction and training, usually in church before and after Sunday Mass, and will also be provided with *Notes for Eucharistic Ministers*. When instruction and training has been completed, the Parish Priest will formally commission candidates as Eucharistic Ministers in a short ceremony during Sunday Mass. On the day, the new Ministers distribute the Blessed Sacrament to the congregation for the first time.

Organisation of the Ministry

1. Caroline Moffat is responsible for the training and development of all Eucharistic Ministers.
2. John Wastle is responsible for organising the Eucharistic Ministers who serve in the Church, maintaining a list of current Ministers with contact details, and preparing a duty rota for Sunday Masses, Christmastide, the Easter Triduum and other special occasions. These Eucharistic Ministers are invited to sign up for duty on at least one Sunday per month over a 3-month period. At daily Masses and Services of the Word, Eucharistic Ministers are found by the Sacristans from within the congregation.
3. Janet Katamba is responsible for organising those Eucharistic Ministers who make take Holy Communion to sick and housebound parishioners in their homes, and to those in hospital.

Distribution of the Blessed Sacrament at Mass

Detailed notes on the formation of Eucharistic Ministers at the altar and distribution procedures are provided to all Eucharistic Ministers and are updated from time to time.

Eucharistic Ministers on duty should arrive at Mass in good time. If a Eucharistic Minister is unable to fulfil a scheduled duty, he/she should arrange a substitute or inform John Wastle before Sunday Mass. Off-duty Eucharistic Ministers should watch to ensure that a full complement is present on the altar, filling any gaps as necessary.

In St Peter's the following arrangements are currently in place:

- the celebrant and the permanent deacon, if present, distribute the Host from the ciborium; otherwise a Eucharistic Minister holds the second ciborium
- two other Eucharistic Ministers hold chalices at the front of church
- four Eucharistic Ministers distribute Holy Communion from positions in the middle of church to serve those seated at the rear. Two Ministers hold ciborium in the centre aisle and two hold chalices in the side aisles. These Ministers also serve elderly or infirm people who wish to receive Holy Communion in their places
- if additional priests are saying Mass, it will usually be necessary to reduce the number of Eucharistic Ministers accordingly, as Eucharistic Ministers are normally used only to supplement the priests
- the practice of intinction, dipping the Host into the chalice, is not encouraged in this Archdiocese but communicants presenting in this way should not be refused at the altar
- children who receive the Host should not be refused if they also present themselves for the Chalice
- non-communicants may present themselves for a blessing, usually signified by arms crossed over the chest. The Eucharistic Minister should place the right hand over the supplicant's head, saying simply "May God bless you".

Distribution of the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and housebound

In the first instance, those who volunteer to distribute the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and housebound should discuss this important aspect of the Eucharistic Minister's role with the parish priest. They are also required to register with the Parish Co-ordinator for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and to complete the appropriate awareness training (see also [St-Peter's-child-and-vulnerable-adult-protection-volunteer-role \(PDF\)](#)). Joyce Cullen is the current Parish Co-ordinator.

All Ministers who visit the housebound and those in hospital are issued with a pix for carrying a Host which is uplifted from the altar at the end of Mass. They are also provided with a book of suitable readings and prayers.

There is no set format for the visit. Prayers for the Mass of the Day and the Gospel of the Day are appropriate. Depending on the communicant's awareness of the world around them, some mention of the time of year - Christmas, Easter, and Lent etc. - may help to support the communicant at a difficult time in their life.

Eucharistic Ministers should remember to be sensitive to the wishes of the communicant: for example do they prefer to receive Communion on the tongue or in the hand; and perhaps a glass of water to help swallow the host.

Eucharistic Ministers should be aware of the parish Bereavement Befriending Ministry which is available in appropriate circumstances to the communicant and to the Minister should the person they have been visiting pass away.

Development of the Eucharistic Minister role

In the past we have aimed to meet for an evening of spiritual reflection during Lent and to have periodic informal gatherings to give Eucharistic Ministers the opportunity to meet and welcome new volunteers, to share experience, and discuss any matters of concern.

Contacts: Caroline Moffat 0131 441 4930 (Training and development)
 John Wastle 0131 447 3442 (Ministers who serve in Church)
 Janet Katamba 0131 441 5953 (Ministers who visit homes and hospitals)
 Joyce Cullen 0131 447 4316 (Child and vulnerable adult protection)

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