

USE OF ASSISTANT MINISTRIES IN THE LITURGY

Adopted by the Commission on Worship, February 1990. The Department of Liturgics prepared this statement to provide guidelines in situations where more than one officiant is involved in leading the service with holy communion, and to answer questions about which parts of the liturgy may be taken by a layperson.

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- 1 The following may take part in leading the service with holy communion:
 - **The presiding minister.** He is the ordained pastor who takes the leading part in the service. He is normally the pastor in charge of the congregation; when more than one pastor is called to the congregation, the pastor rostered to conduct the service for the day will preside.
 - **Assisting ministers.** They are ordained pastors who are not in charge of the service, but who assist the presiding minister.
 - **Lay assistants.** These are unordained people who assist the presiding minister. They may be male or female, children or adults, and may include lectors, acolytes or servers, cantors, choir members, organists or musicians, vergers or stewards, and cross-bearers.
- 2 The ordained ministers may lead any part of the liturgy. However, only they should preach of the word and administer the sacraments (including confession and absolution).
- 3 We recommend that the parts of the liturgy may be taken as follows when assisting ministers and lay assistants are present to assist the presiding minister.
 - **Invocation.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister.
 - **Confession and absolution.** The presiding minister, since he is charged with the office of the keys in the congregation.
 - **Introit or psalm.** An assisting minister, a cantor, the choir, or the congregation. It is most appropriate for the congregation.
 - **Lord, have mercy.** An assisting minister, a cantor, or the congregation.
 - **Glory to God in the highest.** An assisting minister or cantor to lead, the congregation to respond.
 - **Greeting and collect.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister. The exchanged greeting and the collect prepare for the word of God which follows.
 - **First and second readings.** A lector.
 - **Gospel.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister.
 - **Creed.** The congregation, led by the minister who read the gospel. If the creed is said after the sermon, the minister who preached could lead the congregation in saying the creed, if convenient.

- **Sermon.** The presiding minister, or an assisting minister if invited. The sermon provides an important opportunity for the called pastor (shepherd) to speak to his flock.
- **Offertory.** The choir, or a cantor and the congregation, or the congregation.
- **Gathering of offerings.** Stewards.
- **Receiving the offerings.** An assisting minister.
- **Prayer of the church.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister. Particular intercessions may be taken by appointed lay assistants.
- **Preface.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister.
- **Holy, holy, holy.** The congregation.
- **Lord's Prayer.** The presiding minister or an assisting minister.
- **Eucharistic prayer** (if said). The presiding minister.
- **Words of institution.** The presiding minister.
- **Peace.** The presiding minister.
- **Lamb of God.** The congregation.
- **Distribution.** Normally the presiding minister distributes the bread, and an assisting minister or an appointed lay assistant the wine. The celebrant distributing the bread can determine who should receive the sacrament and who should not. However, in practice, where this is not an issue, the assistant sometimes feels more comfortable distributing the bread rather than the wine. An assistant, ordained or lay, may commune the presiding minister in both kinds, though it is also appropriate for the presiding minister to commune himself.
- **Dismissal.** The presiding minister.
- **Song of Simeon or other post-communion song.** The congregation.
- **Greeting.** The presiding minister.
- **Thanksgiving verses.** An assisting minister.
- **Post-communion prayer.** The presiding minister.
- **Let us bless the Lord.** An assisting minister.
- **Blessing.** The presiding minister. It is historically and pastorally appropriate for the called pastor to bless his flock.

4 Where processions into the church are held, the following order may be observed:

Cross-bearer (who carries the cross and stands it on the epistle side — the right-hand side for the congregation facing the altar)

Acolytes

Choir/cantor

Verger

Lector (s)

Other lay assistants

Assisting ministers (in order of seniority from the most recently ordained to the earliest ordained)

Presiding minister.