

Ministry of Healing

As Christians we are called to be whole in body, mind and spirit. Through Christ, we are enabled to minister to one another. The healing ministry recognizes the role we all have through prayer and sacramental ministry in helping to bring about that wholeness.

1. Every minister of God's word and sacraments needs to be aware of the many ways in which God's healing power may be communicated. In particular, all clergy should be aware of the provisions in the *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Book of Alternative Services* (laying-on-of-hands, anointing, confession and absolution as and when requested) for ministering to the sick. It is important that time be taken for proper preparation and counseling so that both those who are sick and those ministering to the sick are clear about the role of prayer and sacrament in encouraging healing and wholeness. It must be understood that prayer and sacrament are meant to open us to the healing power of God, and are intended to support (rather than replace) accepted medical treatment. It is recommended that parish study groups be established to learn about the role of prayer and sacrament in the ministry of healing. Clergy may wish to contact the Bishop's Committee on Healing for information and resources. The *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Book of Alternative Services* are the church's appointed means of ministering to the sick, and the Eucharist is the fullest sacramental communication of God's grace for wholeness in humanity.
2. Every Christian is called to minister to the sick, the bereaved and the troubled through intercessory prayer, and to pray as well for those who minister to the above. One of the easiest ways to support those who are sick, bereaved or troubled is to include their names (and those who minister to them) in the prayers of the people. This enables the parish to be more aware of the needs of individuals within the parish and to pray as a community for them.

Lay Anointers

1. The permission of the area bishop is required for lay people to anoint the sick with consecrated oil. For a lay person to be involved in this ministry, he/she must be licensed by his/her area bishop and must have completed a training program offered by the Bishop's Committee on Healing. The lay anointer will function under the supervision of his/her parish priest.
2. Those who become licensed lay anointers may minister to the sick through prayer and sacramental anointing with oil. They may **not** minister to the sick through sacramental laying on of hands. Sacramental 'laying on of hands' is the placing of both hands on the head of the person being prayed for in the same way you see a bishop laying hands on a candidate for confirmation. It does not refer to touching a person's hand etc. during a prayer for healing, (always with the permission of the one being prayed for.)
3. Lay persons wishing to be involved in this ministry need to be recommended by their clergy, be acceptable to the congregation, and be communicants in good standing. The role of the lay anointer is classified as 'High Risk' under the diocesan *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy. Therefore, lay persons must have completed all screening steps required for high risk ministry as described under the policy prior to their being recommended by their clergy. This includes a police records check and Sexual Misconduct Policy training.



4. The Bishop must have a preliminary interview with both the newly trained lay anointers and the incumbent if lay anointing is new to the parish or the incumbent. If there is a history of lay anointing within the parish and the incumbent has experience and training then a meeting with the Bishop will be at his/her discretion.
 5. The lay anointers' training program will include the biblical, historical and theological background of this ministry, as well as pastoral and listening skills and the practice of prayer. **Clergy are required to attend the portion of the training weekend that covers supervision, direction, and support of lay anointers each time a candidate from his/her parish takes the training program.**
 6. Lay anointers are required to attend regular refresher programs, which will be offered at least once a year to provide further education and support. **Clergy may also be required to attend those sessions focusing on supervision, direction and support of lay anointers.**
 7. It will be the incumbent's responsibility to make certain that every lay anointer has completed the necessary requirements for this ministry before presenting the candidate to the bishop for licensing.
 8. After having successfully completed their preparation and having been licensed by the bishop, it is recommended that lay anointers be commissioned in a public service. This will help the congregation to understand the role of the lay anointer within the context of the parish community. Lay anointers typically function in two ways within a parish. Lay anointers may support the priest in his/her pastoral duties by anointing those in nursing homes, hospitals or at home. They may also join the priest in a public healing service anointing those who come forward for prayer and anointing with oil. The role each lay anointer takes within the parish community is to be negotiated with the parish priest and a lay anointer must have his/her parish priest's permission before anointing anyone.
 9. It is recommended that when a parish wishes to include healing in a service, it be included as part of the regular Eucharistic liturgy, typically during the intercessions or following the confession. Although this may lengthen the service a little, it allows the congregation to support the ministry by praying for those who come forward for anointing and is therefore preferable to anointing done privately during the service. It is not recommended that people be anointed when they come forward for communion because it can detract from the eucharist which should be the primary focus during this time. The practice of anointing by proxy is not permitted. If a person is not present then specific prayer for his/her well being may certainly be offered. However anointing is intended to address the needs of those present at the service.
 10. It is strongly recommended that clergy who wish to have lay anointers ministering within their parishes educate their parishioners so that they understand the ministry of healing within the Christian Church and the role of the lay anointer within that ministry
 11. Clergy are required to provide supervision, direction and support for their lay anointers. The frequency and style of supervision will vary according to what the lay anointer is doing and the particular needs of each individual lay anointer. However supervision sessions should take place at least once a month. It is also strongly recommended that lay anointers have a support group
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within the parish that can support their ministry with prayer and with whom they can reflect on issues that may arise from their ministry.

12. Lay anointers are typically licensed for a three-year period. The bishop may revoke a licence at any time if a lay anointer is unable or unwilling to follow the guidelines or attend training and refresher programs. A licence may also be revoked if the incumbent is unable or unwilling to provide the necessary supervision and support. Licences may be renewed providing both lay anointers and their clergy have attended the refresher programs and have been faithful to the guidelines presented here. It is the clergy's responsibility to approach the bishop to have a licence renewed. There are two exceptions to the above: a) when the incumbent leaves the parish the lay anointer's licence ceases; b) when the lay anointer leaves the parish, his/her licence ceases.
13. A new incumbent may approach the area bishop to have the lay anointers re-licensed. If a significant amount of time has passed, it is recommended that the lay person attend another training weekend before resuming ministry as a lay anointer. If the incumbent is unfamiliar with the role and ministry of the lay anointer he/she should attend the next training weekend so that he/she can provide adequate supervision, direction and support.
14. Lay anointers who move to a new parish may (on the recommendation of the incumbent) be licensed in the new parish. If it has been some time since the lay person has functioned as a lay anointer or the incumbent is unfamiliar with the role and ministry of the lay anointer, then the procedures recommended in item 12 should be followed.
15. Those having further questions not answered in these guidelines or the training program should seek further clarification from their Bishop or from the Chair of the Bishop's Committee on Healing.



Licensing of Laity for Anointing with Oil

When a lay person has completed the training program offered by the Bishop's Committee on Healing, he/she may, with the recommendation of the incumbent, apply to the area bishop to be licensed. Both laity and their clergy will meet with the bishop (separately) and will be asked the following or similar questions.

Lay Person

- What experience have you had in the healing ministry?
- How do you feel you have been 'called out' of the congregation for this ministry?
- What was the content of the training you received?
- The healing ministry is an integral part of the ministry of the church, the Body of Christ. Tell me what that means to you?
- Do you have a support group that can help you to reflect on the issues that may arise in your ministry?
- What opportunities are being provided by your incumbent for supervision, direction and support? To whom will you be accountable?
- What plans do you and your incumbent have for commissioning this ministry? With whom have you shared these plans?

Incumbent

- What experiences have you had in the ministry of healing?
- How do you feel 'called' to this ministry?
- What education and training do you have in the ministry of healing?
- The ministry of healing is an integral part of the ministry of the church, the Body of Christ. What does this mean to you?
- Do you have a support group that can help you to reflect on issues that may arise in this ministry?
- What opportunities for supervision, direction, support and accountability have been put in place?
- What education has been/will be given in the parish before this ministry becomes fully active?
- What plans do you have for commissioning this ministry? With whom have you shared these plans?
- How will you continue to grow in your knowledge of the healing ministry? Are you willing to use professional development opportunities and to support your lay anointers by attending training sessions or refresher courses offered by the Bishop's Committee on Healing?

