



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Lay Leadership in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

In the Episcopal tradition, **baptism** is the foundational call to ministry. Every baptized person is called to serve and participate in the life of the Church. The Diocese of Maryland, under the leadership of **Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent**, enthusiastically invites individuals to discern and embrace various roles in ministry.

According to the catechism in the Book of Common Prayer, “the ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons”; the ministry of the laity is “to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.” (BCP 855). This calling is extended to all the baptized and is not limited simply to those pursuing ordination.

Areas of Lay Leadership

1. Licensed Lay Leadership

Lay leaders who have been specifically licensed by the Diocese serve in various essential roles, working alongside ordained clergy in parishes to carry out the work of the Church. These positions include:

- a. **Lay Worship Leaders:** Lay leaders who assist in worship services, reading Scripture, leading prayers, and helping with liturgical elements.
- b. **Lay Preachers:** Trained lay leaders who preach the homily or sermon during worship services, under the supervision of the clergy.
- c. **Lay Eucharistic Ministers:** Individuals who assist with the administration of the Holy Communion during Eucharistic services.
- d. **Lay Eucharistic Visitors:** Laypeople who bring the Eucharist to those who are unable to attend church services due to illness or other reasons.
- e. **Lay Catechists:** Lay teachers who help to educate others in the faith, particularly in preparation for baptism, confirmation, and other sacraments.
- f. **Lay Evangelists:** Lay leaders who take on the specific role of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, whether through direct proclamation, outreach, or supporting the evangelistic efforts of the church. Evangelists are instrumental in fostering a spirit of outreach, helping the Church connect with those outside the faith community, and spreading the message of hope, reconciliation, and transformation that lies at the heart of the Gospel.

Note: All licensed lay leaders serve under the guidance and oversight of ordained clergy in their respective parishes. Licenses are granted by the bishop's office and require specific training or formation. While not all ministry requires licensing and further training, this is a great opportunity for Episcopalians to grow in our faith, to develop our skills, and connect more broadly in the wider church.



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2. **Committees and Commissions**

Lay leadership is vital at all levels of the Church, from the parish level to regional, diocesan, and even church-wide structures. Laypersons serve on various committees and commissions which may focus on topics such as stewardship, outreach, mission, discernment, education, youth ministry, and many more. These groups provide important support to the broader mission and governance of the Church.

Forming and Equipping Lay Leaders

For laypersons seeking to serve in leadership roles, it is important to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and spiritual grounding necessary to serve effectively. The Diocese of Maryland provides a range of formation opportunities to help individuals grow in their understanding of the faith and their capacity for service. These may include:

- **Training programs** for specific leadership roles (e.g., Worship Leaders, Eucharistic Ministers, Evangelists)
- **Clergy-led retreats and workshops** that focus on the spiritual and theological foundations of ministry
- **Bible study groups** and educational opportunities to deepen one's knowledge of Scripture and the traditions of the Church
- **Leadership development programs** that enhance skills in pastoral care, conflict resolution, congregational development, community building, and evangelism

Being Equipped for Ministry

A healthy, well-formed lay leader is someone who seeks to develop and manifest their talents in ways that glorify God and serve the Church. Whether through formal training or ongoing personal study, lay leaders are called to continually grow in their faith and to serve others with humility, compassion, and wisdom. By embracing both the practical and spiritual aspects of leadership, laypersons can make meaningful contributions to the life of the Church and the wider community.

If someone is considering a role in lay leadership within the Diocese of Maryland, they are encouraged to explore the formation programs available on our website and begin discerning how God is calling them to serve—whether through worship leadership, teaching, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or sharing the Gospel as an evangelist. They can do this by first contacting the clergy in their parish and reviewing more of the information provided on the Commission on Ministry webpage for the diocese. After conferring with parish clergy, they can contact the bishop's office for licensing and more information about specific training requirements. Inquiries can be directed to [Jess Pandolfino](#). As many ministries involve working with vulnerable populations and serving as a community leader, strict compliance with mandated training and background checks is expected.