

LICENSED MINISTRIES UPDATE

♦ **By Rick Govan**

Diocesan Ministry Development Facilitator

The Episcopal Church provides opportunities for certain licensed ministries that are described in Title III, Canon 4 of the Constitution and Canons. From time to time, I am contacted by both clergy and laity



seeking clarification on any number of issues pertaining to these licensed ministries. Confusion exists primarily because titles and guidelines seem to change at every General Convention. Although this reality may be frustrating and confusing, these

changes occur, I believe, as a result of our church responding to the intentional focus of emphasizing the authority and responsibility of the ministry of all the baptized. In short, change oftentimes is a good thing!

Under the direction of our bishop and the Commission on Ministry, our diocese's Shared Ministry Formation Committee has been hard at work during the past couple of years to put mechanisms and procedures in place for the appropriate training and formation of certain licensed ministries that previously have been unavailable to us. This has been no small task! However, as we continue to emphasize the role of the laity within our church, the intended outcome will be an increasing number of individuals and congregations who understand themselves as a gathering of ministry participants, as opposed to church

members gathered around an ordained minister.

Descriptions of these licensed ministries, suggestions of personal qualities for those seeking a license, formation considerations prior to licensing and training expectations are described in the Licensed Ministries Notebook that was distributed at the 2005 Diocesan Convention. This document is also available to be downloaded from our diocesan Web site, etdiocese.net.

Below is a brief overview of the education, training and formation procedures for the licensed ministries that are currently available (please note the term "lay" is no longer used):

♦ Training and formation for **Eucharistic Visitor** and **Eucharistic Minister** (formerly called Chalice Bearer) typically occurs at the parish level. Plans are under way for optional diocesan training and continuing educational opportunities for EVs.

♦ **Worship Leader** training can occur either at the parish level or via diocesan training opportunities. (Please note that a license no longer is required for lectors; these individuals are to be appointed and trained by the clergy to read lessons or lead Prayers of the People.)

Once training is complete for EVs, EMs and Worship Leaders, requests for licenses should be sent to the bishop.

♦ Training and formation for **Pastoral Leader, Preacher, Catechist** and **Parish Administrator** should occur at both the local parish and the diocesan level. Often these ministries are included within

the framework of those parishes using the Ministry Support Team approach as described in the Shared Ministry Notebook. This is not a requirement, however.

Recommendations for individuals seeking a license for these four ministries should be provided to the bishop by the member of the clergy with oversight responsibility of the congregation and with an endorsement by the vestry. Once approved for training, the Shared Ministry Formation Committee will work with these individuals and their clergy in designing appropriate courses of study and practicums as described in the Licensed Ministries Notebook.

All seven of the licensed ministries

are available to and appropriate for all congregations within our diocese. These are exciting opportunities that enable us to look at new ways — and perhaps more effective ways — in which we can all share in ministry opportunities. Certainly, there exists a multitude of gifts among us!

Please contact me if I can assist you in exploring Shared Ministry opportunities within your congregation, or offer any clarification or guidance regarding licensed ministries (rgovan@etdiocese.net or 423-698-1222).

Thank you for your continued support in emphasizing the importance and value of the ministry of all the baptized!