

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training



Lutheran
Congregational
Services

Empowering Creative Ministries

Instructor:

Lutheran Congregational Services



Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training Objectives

After this event,

- Participants will feel confident to visit those who are not able to be at the weekly assembly with grace and confidence
- Congregations will further embody the care for those in need through lay Eucharistic visitation.

During this event,

Learning is in the doing.

- Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the ministry by writing a visitation job description in their own words.
- Participants will demonstrate an understanding of visitation dynamics through role play.
- Participants will demonstrate familiarity with the *Distribution of Communion to Those in Special Circumstances* rite by practicing the adaptation of the rite to particular pastoral care circumstances.
- Participants will create a list of “on-call” Biblical texts and prayer resources for use in their visitation ministry.
- Participants will leave with a full “tool-kit” for lay Eucharistic visitation.

Introduction

Getting to Know You:

- Identify a “found object” in the room that **symbolizes an aspect of how you care for others** and then come back to the circle of chairs.
- Share your name, your congregation and briefly about how your “found object” describes how you care for others.

Opening Worship:

- Reading: Luke 24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Overview of the Day:

The Morning:

Foundations of Lay Eucharistic Visitation

The Afternoon:

Who are we visiting?

The Art of Visitation

Eucharistic Visitation Tool Box

Equipment, the rite, reading the Bible, praying, adaptation

Congregational Matters

Closing Worship

Evaluation

Fundamentals:

The Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Church

“It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.”

- Augsburg Confession, Article VII

The church defined by Word and Sacrament.

Review: What is a sacrament?

Promise of God

+

Earthly elements

+

Command of Christ

The presence of Christ “in, with, and under” the bread and wine.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion and Scripture

What does the gospel tell us about the theology and practice of Holy Communion?

Digging into Scripture.

Each small group is assigned one set of readings. Take the time to read each reading aloud in your group. For each passage, discuss:

- How is God's grace revealed in this biblical passage?
- How does this biblical passage inform the church's understanding and practice of Holy Communion?

GROUP 1: The Last supper

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-25

Luke 22:7-23

The parallel meal in the Gospel of John
John 13:1-20

GROUP 2: Meal practice in the gospels.

Matthew 14:13-21 The feeding of the
5,000 plus women and children

Luke 14:7-24 On humility and the
parable of the great banquet

Luke 15:1-2 The Pharisees' complaint

John 2:1-12 The wedding at Cana

GROUP 3: The Post-Resurrection Meal

Luke 24:13-35 The road to Emmaus

Acts 2:37-47 The earliest gatherings of
believers

1 Corinthians 11:17-33 Corrections to
the practice of the Lord's Supper in
Corinth

GROUP 4: Old Testament Connections

Genesis 12:1-9 Covenant with Abraham

Exodus 12:22-32 The Passover

Psalms 23 A banquet

Proverbs 9:1-6 Wisdom's Feast

Isaiah 25:6-10 A promise of deliverance

Contemporary Lutheran Theological Understandings of the meal

The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly, 1997 gives a succinct description of Holy Communion:

The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 31

“At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel.”

Background 31A: “Here we receive Christ’s body and blood and God’s gifts of forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation to be received by faith for the strengthening of faith.” (Luther’s Small Catechism, and Augsburg Confession XIII.2.)

This description is a church statement of belief which is then lived into through the participation of the saints in the meal over time and in various locations. Your experience receiving the sacrament, from your earliest educational formation to your particular congregation’s piety and practice, shape your understanding. Each person will have a unique perspective of the sacramental meal based on their catechesis and experience.

Collecting the wisdom of the group:

In groups, reflect about your experience, understanding and your congregation’s practice around Holy Communion.

Ask one another:

- At what age did you first receive the sacrament? What preparation did you have?
- How and how often does your congregation receive the sacrament? If you were a visitor to the congregation, what would this practice reveal about the meaning of the meal? (Clues: music or silence during the distribution? Standing or kneeling? “Tables” dismissed regularly or ongoing distribution? Is the mood serious or joyful? Who touches the elements? Etc.)
- When you receive the bread and wine, what do you think or pray about?

The early church's practice around Holy Communion: Sending the Sacrament to Those in Need

Justin Martyr (circa 150 a.d.)

"On the day named after the sun all,...,are gathered together in unity. Then the records of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as there is time. When the reader has concluded, the presider in a discourse admonishes and invites us into the pattern of these good things. Then we all stand together and offer prayer ... When we have concluded the prayer, bread is set out to eat, together with wine and water. The presider, likewise offers up prayer and thanksgiving, as much as he can, and the people sing out their assent saying the amen. There is a distribution of the things over which thanks have been said [the bread and wine] and each person participates, and these things are sent by the deacons to those who are not present. Those who are prosperous and who desire to do so, give what they wish, according to each one's choice, and the collection is deposited with the presider. He aids the orphans and widows, those who are in want through disease or through another cause, those who are in prison, and foreigners who are sojourning here."

What surprises you about this early description of Christian worship? What challenges you?

Current Lutheran theological understandings of the meal invite us to continue this "sending out" of the sacrament today.

"Congregations provide for communion of the sick, homebound and imprisoned."

The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 46 and Application 46A

How are we to understand the extension of the Holy Communion meal beyond worship?

- The meal is the connecting point between all the saints in the presence of Christ – in community, in joy, in need – both at worship and in the extension of worship.
- The extension of the meal reveals that the boundaries of worship are permeable and highlight the understanding of the web of community.
- The extension of the meal is a time when we embody the gospel in a way that Luther called, “Mutual consolation of the brothers and sisters.”
- In our ministry that extends the table, we act toward our brothers and sisters “As unto Christ.”

Questions, responses or lingering concerns?

Synthesis of learning:

- Take a few minutes to write your own job description that best describes the ministry of “Lay-Eucharistic Visitor” as you are called to understand it.

As a lay Eucharistic visitor of my congregation, I believe that I am called to . . .

Lay Eucharistic Ministry Skills and Support

✕ Pastoral Care Skills

✕ Equipment

✕ Worship Service

✕ Bible

✕ Prayer

✕ Congregational Support

Who are we visiting?

Lay Eucharistic ministry reaches people who are not able to gather with the congregation on Sunday morning.

In most instances, lay Eucharistic ministers visit the elderly and infirm.

Myths and Realities of Aging:

1. T F All people become senile when they get old.
2. T F In older people, the senses of touch, pain, taste, sight and smell are reduced.
3. T F Malnutrition is common in older people.
4. T F As one grows older, one gets shorter.
5. T F As people age, they become more irritable, suspicious, demanding and complaining.
6. T F The majority of older people retain their basic health throughout their seventies.
7. T F The most common problem in old age is depression.
8. T F There are three women for every two men over 65.
9. T F Older people spend most of their income on food, shelter, and medical expenses leaving little or no money left over for clothing, entertainment or education.
10. T F Creativity declines with age.
11. T F One out of every 20 people over 65 are institutionalized.
12. T F In general, most older people are pretty much alike.

Group Discussion:

Which myths or realities surprised you?

How do our expectations of older people shape our ministry?

Seasons of Losses

People experience losses at any moment in life. For those whom we visit in lay Eucharistic ministry, loss is a common experience. These losses fall into 5 general areas:

Physical Loss

Social Loss

Emotional Loss

Mental Loss

Love Loss

All People Have Needs

Pastoral Care often meets people where these needs are not being met. How can you as a lay Eucharistic visitor support these needs?

Food, clothing, health care, mobility

Safe, stable environment

Affection, inclusion, community

Adequacy, competence, contribution, to give

Development of one's fullest capacity

Visitation Best Practices

Do's	Don'ts

Synthesis of Learning:

- Gather in groups of 3. One visitor, one “visit-ee” and one observer (roles rotate in the exercise so that all will get a chance to embody each role.)
- Each person will be given a pastoral care situation that only you as the “visitee” will know. (Neither the visitor nor the observer should know this situation.)
- In each of 3, 8 minute rounds, role play a 3 minute visit and then discuss for 5 minutes. To begin 5 minutes of conversation, the observer makes observations about the visit including what was awkward, things said that exemplify the values of the mission statements of visitation and things to work on. Both the visitor and visit-ee should have the opportunity to share reflections of their experience.

Large Group Reflection:

How was that experience?

What did you find easy or difficult?

What learning will you carry to your visits?

Equipment

Travel Communion Kit:

Paten and/or pyx

Cup or cups

Sealed container for wine

Linen Purificator (OR white handkerchiefs, cloth napkins or paper towels)

Bible

Ritual or Ritual Book

Oil Stock

Where do you get the bread and wine?

(Websites for where to buy travel communion kits can be found in the Resources page at the end of the binder.)

The Worship Service

Gathering

Word

Meal

Sending

(See appendices for the ELW service for “Sending of Holy Communion” and “Healing”)

The Bible

Reading the Bible together is a uniquely Christian and faith-forming practice. In lay Eucharistic visits, choosing what passage to read is often the most difficult part. Options:

Bring a Sunday worship folder and read the lessons from worship.

Use a daily text reading resource from your own devotional life (see Resource page.)

Your favorite passages or the favorite passages of the person you are visiting.

Create a go-to list of Bible passages for a variety of situations.

Sick	Afraid	Lonely
Angry	Grieving	Hopeless
Thankful	Hopeful	At Peace

Praying

What is the style of prayer with which you are most comfortable?

Off the top of the head

Pre-written prayer



What is the style of prayer with which the person you are visiting is most comfortable?

What is your prayer strategy?

Trick for adapting the Prayer of the Day!

Know the structure and add to #3:

- 1 – Salutation
- 2 - Statement of God's grace
- 3 – the “ask” – ADAPT HERE adding the person's name and specific need.
- 4 – standardized closing doxology.

The final tool: Adaptation

Synthesis of Learning:

You will receive a vignette of a particular lay Eucharistic visit. In small groups, work together to decide how you would shape the worship part of the visit including the shape of the worship service, scripture choice, and prayers.

Group Discussion:

What did you notice?

What surprised you, delighted you or troubled you in the choices made by the groups?

What learning will you carry into your visits?

Congregational Considerations:

This is a ministry of the whole congregation, not of individuals.

Congregations provide:

- Guidelines for the frequency of visits and Record Keeping
- The match between visitor/visitee
- Regular support and review
- Training
- Communication to the congregation
- Graceful Endings

Recognition:

See:

“Sending Holy Communion” prayer for Sunday worship (Appendix II)

“Recognizing Ministries in the Congregation” which includes language for beginning, continuing and concluding this ministry (Appendix V)

Lingering Questions?

Evaluation as a group:

What is your biggest “take-away” from this training?

What did you most appreciate about this training?

What can be improved upon for the next group?

BEFORE YOU LEAVE TODAY, PLEASE FILL OUT THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM AT THE END OF THE BINDER. THANK YOU!

Lutheran Congregational Services

Is pleased to award this

Certificate of Training

to

upon the completion of training as a

LAY EUCHARIST VISITOR

on

