

The Ministry of Healing (2018)

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 Doctrine and Worship Committee 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
3. It is recommended that when a parish wishes to include healing in a service, it be included as part of the regular Eucharistic liturgy, primarily 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.

Deacons Licensed to Anoint and Lay Anointers

1. The permission of the bishop is required for deacons or lay persons to anoint the sick with consecrated oil. For a deacon or lay person to be involved in this ministry, he/she must be licensed by the bishop and must have completed a training program approved by the Doctrine and Worship Committee. The deacon or lay anointer will function under the close supervision of his/her parish priest.
2. Those who become deacons licensed to anoint or 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



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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.)

4. Deacons or lay persons wishing to be involved in this ministry need to be recommended by their cleric, be acceptable to the congregation, and be communicants in good standing. Because of its contact with vulnerable persons, the role of the anointer is classified as 'High Risk' as far as the 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 a knowledge of the Diocesan Safe Church policies. The ministry of a deacon is already classified as 'High Risk', and as a cleric must adhere to all Safe Church policies.
5. The 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.
Rectors/Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge are required to attend the training program each time a candidate from his/her parish takes the training.
6. Anointers are required to attend regular refresher programs at the call of the bishop. **Priests will also be required to attend those sessions.**
7. It will be the Rector/Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge's responsibility to make certain that every 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 the anointers be commissioned in a public service. This will help the congregation to understand the role of the anointer within the context of the parish community. 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. Deacons who anoint as a regular part of their pastoral ministry must report regularly (monthly) to the priest who they have anointed.
9. It is strongly recommended that clergy who wish to have 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 anointer within that ministry
10. Rectors are required to provide supervision, direction and support for their deacons and lay anointers. The frequency and style of supervision will vary according to the ministry and the particular needs of each individual anointer. However supervision sessions should take place at least quarterly. It is also strongly recommended that anointers have a support group within the parish that can support their ministry with prayer and with whom they can reflect on issues that may arise from their ministry.



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11. Anointers are typically licensed for a three-year period. The bishop may revoke a licence at any time if the anointer is unable or unwilling to follow the guidelines or attend training and refresher programs. A licence may also be revoked if the Rector/Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge is unable or unwilling to provide the necessary supervision and support. Licences may be renewed providing both anointers and their priest have attended the refresher programs and have been faithful to the guidelines presented here. It is the incumbent's responsibility to approach the bishop to have a licence renewed. When an incumbent leaves a parish, the licences to anoint automatically terminate. When a deacon or lay anointer moves to another parish, his/her licence also terminates.
12. A new Rector/Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge may approach the bishop to have the anointers re-licensed. The incumbent, deacon and/or lay anointer must first attend a training session together. If a significant amount of time has passed, or the incumbent has not previously attended a training session, this will be the initial training. If the period of time is less than one year or all have previously attended a training session, they may attend either an initial training session or a refresher session.
13. Deacons or lay anointers who move to a new parish may (on the recommendation of the Rector/Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge) be apply to be licensed in the new parish after a period of no less than six months of regular attendance in the parish. The procedures as in paragraph 12 are to be followed in determining
14. Those having further questions not answered in these guidelines or the training program should seek further clarification from the Bishop or from the Chair of the Doctrine and Worship Committee.



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Licensing of Deacons and Laity for Anointing with Oil

When a deacon or lay person has completed the training program offered by the Doctrine and Worship Committee, he/she may, with the recommendation of the Rector/Priest-in-Charge, apply to the bishop to be licensed. A letter requesting licensure should reflect upon the following questions and also contain assurances of the proper Safe Church screening including the date of the most recent Police Records Check processed through XpresChek.

Deacon or 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?
- 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 Rector/Priest-in-Charge for supervision, direction and support? To whom will you be accountable?

Rector/Priest-in-Charge

- 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?

