

Diocese of Manchester

Guidelines for Communion by Extension and Home Communion

Communion by Extension is a public service in a church building, which is offered when there is a strong pastoral need for the church community to share in communion and a priest is not available. It is intended to be used only rarely in exceptional circumstances, and needs a bishop's permission to take place.

Home Communion (also known as Sick Communion) is part of a church community's regular pattern of pastoral care in which authorised or licensed lay or ordained ministers take communion to individuals in their homes.

Communion by Extension

When and where can it happen?

- On occasional Sundays or Principal Holy Days, when a priest is not available and there is a strong pastoral reason why no other type of service is appropriate.
- It should not generally be used for regular midweek services of Holy Communion. However, this may be authorised for a period where there is good reason (e.g. during a vacancy), provided that it remains the case that the majority of such Eucharistic services have a priest as president.
- In a church building or the usual licensed place of worship of a church community – not in house groups or other church meetings.

Who can lead a Communion by Extension service?

- A deacon, Reader or Church Army officer who holds the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate.
- Exceptionally, if none of the above is available, an ALM (usually a Worship Leader) or Churchwarden who in either case is also a Eucharistic Assistant, has been appropriately trained and who is given the Bishop's specific authorisation to lead such a service. Such authorisation will not imply the granting of a licence to preach.
- Other Eucharistic Assistants can assist with the distribution of Communion but cannot lead the service.

Can the reserved sacrament be used?

- Best practice is that consecrated bread and wine should be brought from a Holy Communion service that takes place in another church on the same day, and any bread and wine remaining after distribution should be consumed and not reserved or stored.

What order of service should be used?

- Authorised services (Order 1 and Order 2) may be found here:
www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Public%20Worship%20with%20Communion%20by%20Extension.pdf

How do I get the Bishop's permission?

- The Bishop of Manchester's permission should be sought by contacting his Senior Chaplain. Permission can be requested either for a specified period or for just one service; the leader(s) of the service(s) should be specified.
- Exceptionally, if permission is needed at short notice and the Bishop of Manchester is unavailable, either of the suffragan bishops may be contacted. If it proves impossible to contact any bishop, then within seven days the Bishop of Manchester should be notified that the service has happened, by the incumbent or priest-in-charge, churchwarden or area dean.

Home Communion

When and where can it happen?

- In private homes and residential care facilities.
- When church members and other parishioners cannot attend a service in church through illness or other incapacity.

Who can lead a Home Communion service?

- A priest, deacon, Reader or Church Army officer who holds the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate.
- A Eucharistic Assistant with general authorisation (i.e. not for public worship alone) by the Bishop.
- Services of Home Communion that are advertised and open to all residents and staff of a residential care facility should be led by a priest, deacon, Reader or Church Army officer who holds the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate. An ALM (Worship Leader) with general authorisation as a Eucharistic Assistant may also lead these services, but requires the Bishop's specific authorisation to do so.

Can the reserved sacrament be used?

- Yes. Either the reserved sacrament or bread and wine previously consecrated at a Holy Communion service held on that day can be used.

What order of service should be used?

- Authorised Common Worship outlines and sample services for Home Communion (Orders 1 and 2) can be found here:
www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry-sick

The Reserved Sacrament

Where can consecrated bread and wine be reserved?

- If the church does not already have the Bishop's permission for reservation, this should be sought by contacting his Senior Chaplain. You will need to send a PCC Resolution approving the application along with details of why reservation is needed and a proposed secure location.
- The sacrament should always be reserved in the place approved by the Bishop. Normally this is a secure place but not the church safe where money and registers are kept.
- In every situation care should be taken that the sacrament is reserved and handled with reverence.

How should consecrated bread and wine be reserved?

- Consecrated wafers should be reserved in a ciborium or other appropriate vessel.
- Consecrated wine should be stored in a sealed glass vessel. For health and hygiene reasons it should not be stored in a metal container or vessel.
- The consecrated elements should be changed weekly, ideally from the main celebration of Holy Communion in your church.