



24 June, 2021

Dear colleagues in ministry,

Thanks to those who have been part of the process of offering input into the current lay licensing guidelines of our Diocese, which intertwine with Safe Ministry processes. We want a system that is both robust and usable, and that can be reviewed and modified as our context changes.

So I am writing now to inform you of some changes to lay licensing that I will be introducing under the authority of Sections 4(c) and 5 of the Authorised Lay Ministry Canon 1992 of General Synod, adopted in the Diocese of the NT in 1993. These changes will be effective as of today. They involve a significant change from my earlier line that 'lay people need a licence (only) when they are doing what only ordained ministers used to do', because the lived experience of many people in our churches does not include a category of 'what only ordained ministers used to do'. The major guiding principle now is *the exercising of significant spiritual authority independently of clergy*.

1. Authority to authorise Lay Communion Assistants will devolve to the Rectors, Priests-in-charge and Deacons-in-charge of parishes.

Up till now, the bishop has licensed people to assist with Holy Communion, as heading (a) of the Licensed Lay Ministry Assistant form. Now authorisation will be local. Please find attached a template form of the application. The visual presentation of this application can be changed to fit your local visual presence (for example your church's logo, perhaps along with the Diocese's logo), but you need my approval before changing the wording. Note that a Safe Ministry screening level of 2 (b) is mandatory prior to the authorisation of any Lay Communion Assistant. Please record the authorisation locally, i.e. in the parish council minutes. I would like each parish to be able to produce a list of existing authorised Lay Communion Assistants on the request of the diocesan office. Authorisation will expire if the present rector or minister in charge leaves the parish, unless I make a temporary arrangement for its continuation (as per Sections 6 and 7 of the 1993 Guidelines Concerning Ministry Assistants). The rector, minister in charge of the parish, or myself as bishop may revoke the authorisation at any time. Current Lay Communion Assistant Licences will expire at the issuing of a new local authorisation or on the 31/12/2021.



2. *The wording of the Lay Ministry Assistant Licence will change for heading (b).*

Instead of: *to lead services of Morning and Evening Prayer*
there will now be: *to lead services of Morning and Evening Prayer where a licensed cleric is not present*

The effect of this change is that only Lay Ministry Assistants that lead a church service independently (in the absence of) a licensed cleric will need a bishop's licence, including Safe Ministry screening level of 1 (e). It is recommended that you still seek to have some of these Licensed Lay Ministers in your parish.

A lay person that leads elements of a church service in the context of a substantive presence and involvement of the relevant licensed cleric (in most cases the incumbent, and not including the situation where there just happens to be a cleric in the congregation) will no longer need a bishop's licence. A Safe Ministry screening level of 2 (f) will be mandatory for this type of ministry.

3. *Remaining unchanged*

Lay Ministry Assistant Licences: (c) to lead funeral services, (d) to preach at the church service and (e) to give leadership in the ministry of the parish, remain unchanged. Please note that heading (e) is designed for particular situations where lay people are in effect pastoring the parish such as when there is a long gap between clergy incumbents. It is not for ordinary leadership such as that offered by church wardens, parish council, lay pastoral carers, senior lay people, etc.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or the DSMO for Safe Ministry related matters.

I am very grateful for our partnership in gospel ministry in the Territory. I understand that guidelines like these can just seem like bureaucracy, but they are designed to facilitate appropriate ministry in our Anglican system, so that the people engaged in significant ministry in our churches are duly authorised, but also so as not to have unnecessary blockages that hinder lay involvement.

With every blessing,

Bishop Greg Anderson.