Communion from Reserve Sacrament    
in the absence of a priest

Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles   
The Rt. Rev. John Harvey Taylor, Bishop Diocesan

When a congregation anticipates the absence or unavailability of a priest, it is customary for the church to worship using the available forms for Morning Prayer or, alternatively, Ante-communion: the regular Sunday Eucharist service, stopping at the peace.

Some congregations, anticipating a season of worship without the services of a priest, may wish to arrange for reception of Communion distributed by a layperson or a deacon. These rubrics speak to this situation.

**First and foremost, the bishop’s permission is required** for any service of the distribution of Communion elements apart from the celebration of Eucharist. Congregations have a blanket permission to send licensed Lay Eucharistic Visitors to congregants who are unable to be in worship because of illness, etc.; but for elements to be distributed as part of a Sunday worship service, permission is required, as follows:

1. The vestry must record **a vote of approval**, e.g.: The vestry of St. Swithin’s votes to approve a request to the bishop diocesan for permission for the following persons to distribute the elements of Communion in a regular worship service for the following dates (or following length of time):

2. This request must include **a description** of how reserve sacrament will be obtained, e.g., “during our monthly visit from the Rev. Bob, he will consecrate enough elements for the subsequent three Sundays” or “every Sunday, our bishop’s warden will attend the early service at Trinity Redlands and bring reserve sacrament sufficient for that Sunday’s service”. The bishop’s staff is happy to help with suggestions about the most practical ways to do this.

3. Persons distributing the elements of Communion should be licensed Eucharistic Ministers.  If the congregation includes people who have undergone training for lay ministry at Bloy House, they should be considered eligible to participate. (If your congregation has a deacon who you want to take this role, the same permissions apply.) **It is important to have a rota of people who will take this role, rather than to have a single person do the distribution each week.**

4. What rite is authorized for use?

1. Morning Prayer, Rite I or Rite II, from the Book of Common Prayer, 1979

OR

1. The Service of the Word from Holy Eucharist, Rite I or Rite II, from the Book of Common Prayer, 1979 (the Communion service from the Opening Acclamation through the Peace)

Except in Easter season, both Morning Prayer and the Service of the Word should **include a Confession**. The officiant may pronounce forgiveness, using “we” instead of “you” in the absolution*.*

In the case of Morning Prayer, one amendment is recommended: in order to have ready access to study, preaching discussions, etc., and to maintain continuity with the sequence of readings being used throughout the church, it is recommended that the **lessons appointed for Holy Eucharist be used**, rather than those from the Daily Office.

5. Preparing for the service

*All page numbers refer to the 1979 book of Common Prayer.*

*Using the “Service of the Word” option (vs. Morning Prayer) is perhaps easier to prepare for if you are a congregation accustomed to a celebration of Holy Eucharist every Sunday.*

*Officiants may be vested in an alb, or cassock and surplice.*

*Before the service begins, the sacrament is placed on the altar (or a table in full view of the congregation) and covered with a white cloth.*

*When the point in the service for Communion arrives, the officiant stands in front of the altar, facing the people.*

*Following are the Morning Prayer and Service of the Word services:*

**Morning Prayer Option**

**Morning Prayer with the Administration of the Reserved**    
**Sacrament by an authorized Lay Worship Leader**

*If permission is granted, place the pre-consecrated elements on the altar or a table.*    
*Put a Corporal underneath the elements.*    
*Bread in a ciborium or on a paten, wine in a chalice with purificators on hand.*    
*You don’t have to worry as much about placement since you will not be consecrating the elements.*    
*You won’t need the lavabo to wash hands, etc.*    
*You don’t need the large host wafer, etc.*    
*Please do wash hands before service.*

*The congregation gathers with the Lay Pastoral Leader.*

The Officiant begins the service with one or more of these sentences of Scripture on BCP pgs. 75-78,    
or with the versicle “Lord, open our lips” on page 80.

**You may open with music if you’d like.**

**OPENING**

Officiant: *(choices on p. 75-78)*

**CONFESSION OF SIN**

Officiant: *(choice p. 79)*

*Silence is kept.  Kneeling — all who are able.*

**Officiant and People:**   
**Most merciful God,**   
**we confess that we have sinned against you**   
**in thought, word, and deed,**   
**by what we have done,**   
**and by what we have left undone.**   
**We have not loved you with our whole heart;**   
**we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**   
**We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**   
**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,**   
**have mercy on us and forgive us;**   
**that we may delight in your will,**   
**and walk in your ways,**   
**to the glory of your Name.  Amen.** 

Officiant:   Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

**INVITATORY AND PSALTER**  *Standing — all who are able.*

Officiant:      Lord, open our lips.

People:         **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Officiant and People:   
**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  Amen**.

Except in Lent, add “Alleluia”

**Invitatory**

Officiant: seasonal antiphon: pp. 80-82

**People: Come, let us adore him.**

**VENITE or JUBILATE pp. 82-83**

(in Easter: CHRIST OUR PASSOVER, p. 83)

Repeat antiphon

*Note about lessons: The service of Morning Prayer allows for as many as three lessons, separated by canticles. Because there is no celebration of Holy Eucharist, the Gospel is read by a lay person in the same manner as the other lessons. If a Deacon is present, it is customary for the Deacon to read the Gospel.*

***As noted: to maintain continuity with the larger church and the ongoing narrative of the Gospel, it is preferred that congregations using this option use the lessons in the Eucharistic lectionary (Years A, B, and C) appointed for the Sunday.***

**PSALM(s) of the day**

***The Psalm may be spoken or sung.***

At the conclusion of the psalm(s):

**Officiant and People:**   
**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  Amen.**

Except in Lent, add “Alleluia”

**LESSON** *Remain seated.*

A Reading from:

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**CANTICLE (number)** *Remain seated.* ***Canticles may be sung or spoken.***

The canticles are read in a regular cycle, found on pp. 144-145.

**LESSON** *Remain seated.*

A Reading from:

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**CANTICLE (number)**

**LESSON** *Remain seated.*

A Reading from:

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**THE HOMILY**

**APOSTLE’S CREED**  S*tanding — all who are able; read in unison.*    
*(Or you may choose the Nicene Creed)*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  Amen.

**THE PRAYERS**

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

**People:     And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

*Silence is kept.*

**SUFFRAGES** *(Choose from p. 97-98, A or B)*

And you may add here:

**“And I invite you to add your own intentions, spoken or held in the silence of your hearts.”**

(*The Lord’s Prayer, which would usually appear here in a Morning Prayer service, will come up when Communion is distributed.)*

After the suffrages:

1. read the Collect of the Day (pp. 211-236)
2. read a second collect from the collection on pp. 98-100, middle of the page
3. read a third “collect for mission” from the 3 choices beginning in the middle of p. 100 to the top of p. 101

**PEACE**

Officiant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

*Greet one another in the name of Christ.*

***An offering may be taken – either in silence or using an offertory anthem/hymn or instrumental piece.***

**ADMINISTRATION OF RESERVED SACRAMENT**

Officiant: Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

—John 6:35

Officiant: Almighty God, whose dear son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries give us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  *Amen.*

Officiant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Officiant and People:   
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,**   
**thy kingdom come, thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**   
**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,**   
**as we forgive those who trespass against us.**   
**And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**   
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,**    
**for ever and ever.  Amen.**

**INVITATION**

Officiant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*(A hymn or hymns may be added here.)*

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Officiant: Let us pray.

Officiant and People: 2 choices on p. 365, 366

*OK to add General Thanksgiving (p. 58, 101, 836-841) or Prayer of St. Chrysostom, p. 126*

**(A closing hymn or instrumental piece may be added here.)**

**DISMISSAL**

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord. (in Easter, add “alleluia, alleluia”)

**People:** **Thanks be to God. (in Easter, add “alleluia, alleluia”)**

*Officiant: concluding Sentence – 3 choices at the bottom of p. 102*

**Service of the Word Option** (“Ante-communion”)

The service of Holy Communion as it is done in your parish proceeds as usual, through the exchange of the Peace, with **one exception:**

**After the Confession, the Absolution is recited by the Officiant (still kneeling, if you kneel for Confession), substituting “we” and “our” for “you” and “your”.**

Opening Acclamation p. 355

Collect for Purity p. 355

Gloria/Hymn of Praise p. 356

Collect of the Day (from Collects beginning on p. 211)

Lessons (from Eucharistic Lectionary for appropriate year)

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed p. 358

The Prayers of the People (forms I-VI beginning on page 383, or your usual way)

Confession/absolution p. 360

The Peace p. 360

Offertory Sentence (see p. 376)

Offering may be collected.

Music is appropriate at all the usual places.

*After the Peace, the Officiant stands in front of the altar/table, facing the people.*

*The following “Prayer of Thanksgiving” may be used, or you may skip directly to the Lord’s Prayer.  (from the Episcopal Church of Scotland)*

Officiant: In fellowship with the whole Church of God, let us rejoice that we are called to be part of the Body of Christ.

**People: Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in the one bread.**

What thank you, God, for this world which you have given us; you never cease to make it new, and you call us to work with you; you accept the work of our hands.

**Glory to you forever.**

You have made humankind in your image, each one of us is fashioned in your likeness, and we are able to recognize your face in the faces of our brothers and sisters.

**Glory to you forever.**

You have never desired to live apart from us, and you have taught us to know you through the Law and the Prophets, the apostles and evangelists, who told us the marvelous story of your love.

**Glory to you forever.**

And you have come to us in your Son, Jesus Christ. In him, you have walked along our roads, looked at us with human eyes, done the kinds of things that we do, and shared with us the joy that can never be lost.

**Glory to you forever.**

Now you give us his Body and blood, and we give ourselves to you. Through the death and resurrection of your Son, and through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, we are invited to make you our eternal home.

**Glory to you forever.**

So, with all Christians who are gathered together today throughout the world; (with those at (name of church) who have shared the sacrament with us); and with the great procession of your Saints, past, present, and yet to come,

we pray to you, as our Savior Christ has taught us:

**Lord’s Prayer    p. 364**

*The Officiant pours sufficient consecrated wine into a chalice for the number of people in the congregation. Consecrated bread may be served directly from the ciborium.*

*Officiant:* The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*The ministers administer the elements of Communion as usual for your gathering.*

*After Communion:*

*Officiant:* Let us pray.

Use one of the Post-Communion prayers on pp. 365 or 366 of the Book of Common Prayer.

*Officiant:* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

**People; Thanks be to God.**

*It is reasonable to share the functions of the Officiant between two people, in addition to readers, chalice bearers, etc.*