Wider accountabilities

At the same time, the exercise of a public ministry of this nature brings with it accountabilities to the wider church. It is for this reason that you will be asked, as part of your selection for authorised ministry, to meet briefly with a vocations adviser or area dean (someone external to your parish or benefice) by way of providing an independent reference with respect to your suitability for this ministry.

All authorisations (whether initial or renewals) are also dependent upon you holding a valid Basic DBS Disclosure, and upon recent completion of the Church of England's *Leadership* safeguarding training module.

After initial training

Following successful completion of your initial training requirements, the bishop's authorisation becomes renewable on a regular basis, every few years. This is conditional each time upon (i) the continued support of incumbent and PCC; and (ii) up-to-date DBS and safeguarding training (Leadership and Domestic Abuse Awareness).

What next?

First, explore things with your Incumbent. If they are happy to support you in exploring this ministry they will then need to (i) arrange a discernment conversation for you with a vocations adviser or area dean (as above), (ii) satisfy themselves that you will enjoy the support of your congregation and (iii) obtain formal approval of your PCC(s). At the same time, you should ensure that you have a current Basic DBS and are up to date with your Leadership safeguarding training.

Once all this is in place, your Incumbent will then be able to write to your area bishop, asking for you to be authorised, while also confirming PCC approval, required safeguarding checks and that a satisfactory report from an external referee has been received. We wish you God's blessing as you explore this new area of ministry.

Further information

- authorised.ministry@oxford.anglican.org 01865 208257
- An Authorised Ministry Handbook is available on the diocesan website at: https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/lay-ministry/authorised-ministry/

Version 10 – Oct 2026

DIOCESE of OXFORD
A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Is God calling you to share
in the ministry of your local church
by

Leading services of Communion by Extension



Want to learn more so you can grow
in faith, discipleship and ministry?

DIOCESE of OXFORD
A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Emerging patterns of ministry

As the Church grows and responds to needs of mission and ministry, more and more people are becoming involved in leading worship. In light of these welcome changes, the bishops are looking to respond to growing requests for greater local flexibility combined with appropriate Anglican order. This includes encouraging and supporting lay leaders of Communion by Extension, in situations where the services of an episcopally-ordained priest cannot be secured. The diocese is committed to equipping all those engaging in this important ministry.

Why 'authorised'?

The Eucharist (or 'Holy Communion', the 'Lord's Supper') has always been at the heart of the life of the church and a focus for its unity and its mission. So, with any Eucharistic ministry comes a significant level of responsibility: it is not something you do on your own, but as part of a team of ministers led by and accountable to your Incumbent.

While the 'cure of souls' is shared between your incumbent and the bishop, your incumbent will have been discerning appropriate gifts in you and encouraging you to develop these. The bishops wish to be linked with you in a real way as you begin to share this ministry in the church. They wish to offer you encouragement and support by giving you their blessing and authorising you to such ministries.

Do I actually need a *Bishop's* authorisation?

Authorisation of this nature is required only for those leading services in which consecrated bread and wine are taken from a previous Eucharist to another service of public worship in which these elements are distributed. It is not required for taking communion to the sick and housebound (Home Communion), or for assisting with the distribution of bread and wine at Holy Communion - all of which may now be undertaken by suitable persons formally approved by relevant PCCs and in possession of appropriate safeguarding clearance and training.

What will authorisation mean?

At first, you would receive a letter from your bishop giving you permission to lead services of Extended Communion in your parish or benefice – for an initial period of up to two years. This means you may lead such services while also engaging with some initial training.

During this time, you would become part of a team of ministers led by your Incumbent, to whom you would be accountable.

Is training provided?

Absolutely! Ministry matters and we owe it to each other to fan the flame of God within us and nurture the gifts with which we have been entrusted. However, the requirements for authorisation to lead public worship with Communion by Extension are consciously designed for maximum flexibility and minimal burden.

The bishop's initial authorisation releases you to begin the training you need to complete. Essentially, this amounts to:

- attendance at an approved training course
- a 1500-word (or equivalent) assignment on Communion by Extension
- evidence of your leading of two services of this kind, with constructive feedback on these from other people
- completion of the Church of England's *Awareness of Domestic Abuse* safeguarding module (diocesan or online).

Some will find it more beneficial to attend a training course first, and then lead a service; others may prefer to lead a service first, with the support and guidance of a more experienced minister, and then attend some training. Either way is fine. The important thing is to learn *from* your experience and, also, at the same time, apply your learning *to* your experience.

How does all this fit in with the Parish?

While it is the bishops who authorise you to minister in this way in your parish, they do so only at the specific request of both Incumbent and PCC(s). Your bishop will need to know that you have this level of support and that you will be part of a team with other ministers in your church.

This team may also include associate or retired clergy, for example, or Licenced Lay Ministers. These will all have undergone significant training and, often, will be licensed to minister in various ways, not only in the parish but also more widely within the diocese.