
An Invitation to Lay Eucharistic Ministry

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*
by the Rev. Canon David Boyd**

“We who are many are one body, because we are one in Jesus Christ.”

If you have been to a Sunday morning service at the Cathedral and stayed through the end of the service, you may have said these words. They are spoken by the whole congregation when Lay Eucharistic Ministers are being sent, commissioned even, to carry Christ's presence forth from the nave to a member of this community who could not be present for worship.

There are many reasons one might find Sunday morning worship at the Cathedral out of reach: the joyful disruption of a new baby; an important surgery and many slow weeks of recovery; a season of caregiving that leaves little room for anything else; a shift in mobility that makes navigating the Cathedral challenging. Some of these seasons are marked by joy, others by hardship, and many by both at once. What they all share is this: they do not diminish your place in this community, and they do not put you beyond the reach of God's grace.

Allow me to share one example of this in action.

For years, a family in this congregation shared a pew with another couple, Sunday after Sunday, singing and praying together, and before long they were friends. Then, suddenly, there was a gap in the pew; the wife had suffered a stroke, and the couple could no longer make it to church on Sundays. But the friendship didn't end. The family became Lay Eucharistic Ministers and began bringing them communion at home, worshipping with them in their living room.

One Sunday, they arrived at the house to find that the husband had died that very morning. Through their shock, they stayed; they sat with his widow, prayed with her, and gave her communion. In that moment, she was joined not only to the congregation gathered at the Cathedral earlier that morning but to her husband, and to the whole communion of saints, those who worship with us now and those who have gone before us into glory. They continued to visit her faithfully with communion until she died about a year later.

I offer this story because it provides a powerful example of the church being the church. The ministry of eucharistic visitation reminds us that the spiritual life is not a solitary pursuit; we experience the grace of God in community, in communion, through a shared life in the Body of Christ, a body which includes all of us, wherever we are, whatever season of life we are in. As Psalm 139 reminds us, there is nowhere we can go that is beyond the reach of God's presence. From the heavens to the depths, the Holy Spirit is there. When our Lay Eucharistic Ministers carry blessed bread and wine from the altar to a parishioner who cannot be with us, they carry that conviction with them out into the world.

We have a devoted group of Lay Eucharistic Ministers doing this work and perhaps you are being called to join them! If you feel called to serve in this way, I would love to talk with you. The commitment is real but manageable, and this ministry will guide you to some of the holiest moments you have experienced. And if you or someone you love would welcome visits, please reach out. Asking for a visit is not an admission of weakness or an imposition on this community. You will not be bothering anyone. You will be giving us the gift of being what we say we are.

To request visits or learn more about serving as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, contact me, the Rev. Canon David Boyd, at david.boyd@cathedralATL.org.
