

CbE Policy:

THE DIOCESE OF TRURO

Public Worship with Communion by Extension

What it is:

- ‘Communion by Extension’ is a provision that allows a congregation to be nourished with the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion by taking part in a prior celebration of the Eucharist, joining together in spirit both with the members of that congregation, and as part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
- It is a provision for which the Diocesan Bishop’s explicit permission is required. The permission will be granted on the assumption that when additional priestly ministry is available it will be so used.
- Communion by Extension allows for bread and wine, consecrated at a service in one church to be taken to another church (usually in the same or a neighbouring benefice, and on the same day) where an authorised service called ‘*Public Worship with Communion by Extension*’ is celebrated. This service is led by a lay minister authorised by the Diocesan Bishop, and during which the consecrated elements are shared, as an ‘extension’ of that prior celebration.
- It is intended that this provision be used only on Sundays and Principal Holy Days. It is an alternative to a celebration of the service of Holy Communion, rather than a substitute for it. For this reason, the circumstances in which it should be used are limited (for example a limited number of churches within a benefice on any given Sunday, and a limited number of Sundays per month).
- Where Communion by Extension is used in the Diocese of Truro, it should always be advertised as ‘*Public Worship with Communion by Extension*.’

What it is not:

- It is not a provision for taking communion to the sick or housebound in their homes using reserved sacrament (which any Reader may do without further licensing, and for which other lay people may be authorised by the parish priest).
- It is not a means of introducing a sacramental element into the life of home groups, or other parish groups, whether on an occasional or regular basis. The House of Bishops recognises the value of an occasional celebration of Holy Communion in such circumstances, when a priest must preside.
- It is not ‘Holy Communion’: whilst it is sharing ‘by extension’ in a celebration of the Eucharist, that term is deliberately not used so as to make clear that this service should not be confused with a ‘regular’ celebration of Holy Communion.

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- It is not a convenient way of ‘covering’ mid-week services of Holy Communion. The guidelines envisage its use only on Sundays and Principal Holy Days, as a sharing in the wider worship of the people of God.
- It is not intended as a means to avoid some hard thinking about service provision in a particular locality, nor to avoid the need to develop new patterns which may provide a better match between parish needs and available resources.

Guidelines

The guidelines for this provision, together with the forms of service to be used, are clearly set out in ‘*Public Worship with Communion by Extension*’, Church House Publishing, 2001. Any parishes wishing to make use of the provision needs to have studied this booklet. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Public%20Worship%20with%20Communion%20by%20Extension.pdf>

Authorisation for the use of Communion by Extension is dependent on prior teaching, training and preparation in the parish. It is not therefore designed to meet a short term emergency.

It is important that Communion by Extension never becomes the *normal* setting in which people receive the consecrated elements. In a multi parish benefice or cluster, the use of Communion by Extension must be fairly rotated so that no single congregation is deprived of a regular service of Holy Communion.

Procedure

The procedure to be followed in introducing Communion by Extension in this particular case, is as follows:

1. The PCC discusses ‘*Public Worship with Communion by Extension*’, and consider whether to agree to its use, in the broader context of a discussion about the nature of worship. Any PCC resolutions should be recorded, including the name(s) of any lay ministers agreed to be trained and authorised to lead such services.
2. Training will be given to those who will minister at such services. It will include study of the House of Bishops’ Notes and Guidelines, and the texts for Orders of Service, and a session from the Pilgrim course on ‘The Eucharist’.
3. All those ministering in this way will be expected to have an appropriate level of safeguarding training.

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4. Teaching about Communion by Extension is to be given in the parishes, in sermons, articles and any other feasible methods.
5. Sufficient copies of the authorised forms of service will be produced locally for the congregations, having been tailored to the context as appropriate.
6. The Diocesan Bishop to receive confirmation that all the necessary preparation has been completed, and be asked to approve the names of those to exercise this ministry. The Archdeacon will approve the pattern of services within which Communion by Extension is to be a part.
7. The Diocesan Bishop issues the necessary authorisation whereby Communion by Extension becomes part of the worship provision in the parishes/benefice.
8. Permission will be given for a specific period, normally one year. This will be reviewed with the Archdeacon, the lay ministers and parishes after the first year.
9. Following the review, the Bishop can either extend his permission for this practice, or decide to withdraw it. Part of the review will involve assessing the extent to which the pattern of worship has blessed the life of the churches of the benefice, and also the extent to which the guidelines have been followed.
10. Readers who are authorised to lead ‘Public Worship with Communion by Extension’ will include a list of the number of such services they have led in their annual Return to the Warden of Readers.

Services of Public Worship with Communion by Extension

‘Public Worship with Communion by Extension’ is published by Church House Publishing and contains orders of service appropriate to this provision. It is envisaged that the Eucharistic elements and ministers where possible will be ‘sent out’ from an earlier service of Holy Communion, so that the service in the ‘receiving church’ is truly ‘by extension’.

The services from which ministers could be sent out are:

- a mid-week service the previous week in the benefice
- an earlier service the same Sunday in the same or (in the case of benefice in transition) a neighbouring benefice.

+Philip June 2021