


Guidance for Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (Revised October 15, 2025)

The policies of the Diocese of Gallup about the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) are not well-articulated in one place. The following is the current guidance based on existing statements in diocesan policies and directions from Bishop James Wall:

- 1) The “office” or role of lay ministers to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion is allowed, if necessary.
- 2) The local pastor makes the determination of need.
- 3) The local pastor must submit requests for each person.
- 4) The local pastor is responsible to assure that the ministers are trained to serve properly.
- 5) The priest can deputize a lay person to assist with distribution of communion in a situation of unanticipated need but official designation for routine service comes from the Bishop.
- 6) Bishop Wall has determined that 2 years is the period of approval in this diocese. A new request is required when that time elapses.
- 7) The guidance found in the Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors provides additional requirements. Bishop Wall has confirmed the interpretation that persons serving as EMHC are “affected volunteers” under the definitions of that policy (see Appendix 1, 2nd paragraph, and Article 4, Section A, paragraph 2 & 3. The Bishop anticipates that an EMHC will be a properly vetted adult who, by his certification, is authorized to work in an environment where children are routinely found and is able to go into the community to minister on behalf of the church to vulnerable adults as required. Based on that determination, the following minimal requirements need to be verified and properly documented in parish documents to receive the Bishop’s approval:
 - a. Background check within 5 years.
 - b. Compliance with Safe Environment Training.

When requests for EMHC certificates come to the office of the Bishop, the pastor should certify that the prerequisites have been met. The chancery staff will verify the status of the background check and the records for SET on the Virtus system

Prepared by:


Dcn. Randolph Copeland
Chancellor

Initial publication: July 16, 2018