

The Bishop of Blackburn
The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson

To all clergy and churchwardens of vacant parishes

February 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters

In the past, the authorisation of Holy Communion Assistants has been given by the Bishop and the certificates produced from Bishop's House.

After some consultation, it has been decided that in the future this shall be delegated by the Bishop to the local incumbent or priest in charge in the parish (Area Dean for vacant parishes). The local priest knows his or her congregation in a way that the Bishop does not and can therefore make a wise decision after seeing the views of the Parochial Church Council regarding suitably mature Christians to undertake this important task.

The criteria for a Holy Communion Assistant are reflected using words from Vision 2026 – that they would need to be a mature disciple, and confident witness to Jesus Christ. They may not be a leader but they ought to hold the respect of the congregation for their evident faith in Christ.

The present permission and authorisation for current Chalice Assistants runs out in 2020 for those under 75 and at the end of June for those who are older. I would therefore like to ask you to put this matter to your PCC so you can gain their view before you make your decision on any individual. I do not need to hold a record of Chalice Assistants at Bishop's House any longer but would expect each incumbent or priest in charge to keep an up to date list of those he or she has clearly authorised to serve in this way.

With all best wishes and in the hope that this will reduce some bureaucracy and simplify our procedures.

Yours sincerely in Christ



+ Julian