

# Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion HANDBOOK, Post- Sacristan

## ST. TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 2023  
Updated: July 22, 2025



# INTRODUCTION

## Humble Service

'Genuine ministry is about humble service. The model of all ministries is Christ the Lord who came to serve, not to be served. His command to "love one another" (cf. John 13:43) was modeled throughout his life and ministry. The special minister must put aside personal agendas and needs, prejudices and judgments to serve the community and give faithful testimony to Christ's presence in the Eucharist.' (*Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist – Diocese of St. Petersburg*)

## Ongoing Formation

'Opportunities for reflecting on the Eucharist in their lives and this ministry should take place at least once-a-year or seasonally (i.e., Advent and/or Lent or Evening of Reflection). (*Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist – Diocese of St. Petersburg*)

## Appropriate Attire

A neat and reverential appearance is in keeping with the minister's role and belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The ministers' attire should not detract from their role. (*Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist – Diocese of St. Petersburg*)

The sanctuary is not a place for self-expression in either how one dresses or how one acts. Our dress and mannerisms should not attract attention to ourselves but instead demonstrate the reverence we show for the presence of the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, the following items of clothing are not acceptable dress for performing our obligations to distribute the Blessed Sacrament:

- a. For men:
  - i. Jeans, cargo pants, jogging pants, and other extremely casual slacks
  - ii. Tee shirts
  - iii. Bermuda shorts, jogging shorts, or other short pants of any kind
  - iv. Sneakers, flip-flops, slippers
- b. For women:
  - i. Tank tops, tee shirts, form-fitting athletic-type tops or spandex slacks and tops
  - ii. Short skirts (please use your best discretion), jeans, denim skirts, cargo pants, jogging pants and other extremely casual slacks
  - iii. Bermuda shorts, jogging shorts, or other short pants of any kind
  - i. Sneakers, flip-flops, slippers

**Please use your best discretion in keeping with the guidelines set forth by the Diocese.**

## **PREREQUISITES FOR EXERCISING THE MINISTRY**

The man or woman who desires to exercise the ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should meet the following prerequisites:

- Full initiation as a member of the Roman Catholic Church and if,
- Married, married within the Catholic Church
- Attainment of sufficient age and maturity
- Exercise of maturity in those situations, when applicable, in which he/she will bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound
- Demonstration of the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity) and cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) through his/her manner of life
- Willingness to be formed in the ministry of the Church
- Abiding reverence for the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements

## **SCHEDULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Schedules**

The Eucharistic Minister schedules will be developed for a two-month period and will be available by email around the middle of the previous month. Schedules are developed electronically through the Ministry Scheduler Pro.

Schedules are developed using the information each minister has provided relative to their Mass preference(s). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the EMHC, having once been trained to use the Ministry Scheduler Pro for helping the system make the schedule.

An email will be sent to you with updates and reminders as per your schedule.

### **Substitutes**

It is your responsibility to know when you are scheduled and to request a substitute if you are unable to serve at your assigned Mass. The Ministry Scheduler Pro can help you find a substitute when you request a substitute through the electronic scheduler.

When you request a sub, the system will automatically send an email out to all active ministers. Once your request has been accepted, you will receive notification of the acceptance. If no one has accepted the sub request by Mass time, no worries. Those who are assigned for that Mass will look for a substitute within the congregation.

### **Holy Days**

Volunteers for Holy Days will be requested via email. Please sign up early for these Masses (especially Christmas and Easter) to avoid phone calls needed to secure the appropriate number of ministers.

## Sign-in Procedures

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should arrive **at least 20** minutes before Mass. **10 minutes before Mass begins, replacements will be assigned.**

When you arrive at the church, stop at the MSP kiosk on the wall outside of the Chapel. Choose the appropriate Mass (should only be one showing) and check in. If you are substituting for someone, simply check in under their name.

Please make note of the station that you have been assigned (A-H). You can reference the chart above the kiosk as to where that position is in the Sanctuary (that same diagram is on the last page of this document). There will also be decals at the station to further give you a visual representation of where you will be distributing Holy Communion. Once you are checked in, there is no need to go into the Sacristy. You can simply proceed to the Sanctuary.

EMHCs should sit at various positions throughout the church to show that they are one with the rest of the assembly. It is preferable to sit at or near the end of a row so that you can easily come to the altar following the Sign of Peace.

## ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DISTRIBUTION

The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion schedule lists the EMHCs assigned by Mass by week.

When not assigned as an EMHC for a particular Mass but still attending, please consider stopping by the Sacristy and let the Sacristan know that you are available to help.

### Low-gluten Host

If someone approaches the Sacristy wanting to receive a low-gluten host, please give them the following instructions:

- Take a pyx identified as low gluten from the refrigerator located in the closet of the Sacristy.
- Take a low-gluten host(s) from the refrigerator and place the host(s) in the pyx.
- Place the pyx with the low-gluten host(s) on the credence table in the main sanctuary.
- Then, after the sign of peace the individual(s) seeking the low-gluten host lines up with the EMHCs on the end closest to the crucifix to receive Holy Communion
- The Priest or Deacon will bring Holy Communion to them at that time.

### Station for Distributing the Precious Body and Precious Blood

The station that was assigned via MSP will dictate where you will distribute the Precious Body and Blood.

### EMHC Positions during Holy Communion

Upon completion of the Sign of Peace and **the beginning of the Lamb of God**, the EMHCs of the Precious Body are to come forward to the south side of the altar. There are two stations in front of the pews for the EMHCs to sanitize their hands. Unless you have had contact with anyone after you have received the Blessed Sacrament, you do not need to sanitize your hands again. The EMHCs of the

Precious Blood will line up on the east side of the altar.

Please line up ***in a straight line***, standing ***on the back line of the green terrazzo tile (Body and Blood ministers)***.

All EMHCs will receive Holy Communion. The Priest or Deacon will distribute the chalice to the Precious Blood Ministers. Once they received, #3 and #4 (see diagram) will immediately distribute to Precious Body ministers. #1 and #2, after receiving, will distribute to altar servers (or low gluten) and then go to their position.

Then Precious Body ministers will receive their Ciborium and head to their stations or positions. **Everyone needs to be set in their position before distribution.** Face the altar before distribution to make sure everyone is set.

1. Remember to always hold the vessel above your waist whether you are setting up, transporting, distributing the Blessed Sacrament, or cleaning up.
2. When in their position, **the EMHC should stand in green terrazzo tile.** In this way, there is enough room for those in line who may step to the side to go to another EMHC who has come to assist once they are done with their station. If you stand too close to the pews, this becomes difficult and slows the process down.

## **Distribution of the Blessed Sacrament – “The Body of Christ”**

1. For the distribution of the Blessed Sacrament, the EMHC should look at the communicant and say, “The Body of Christ.” It is improper to include the name of the communicant. You are not to alter the words. The communicant responds, “Amen.” Place the Sacred Body reverently in the person’s hands or on the tongue of the communicant. **Please make sure they consume the Precious Body.** If they do not, please ensure that they do, even if that means you need to leave your line for a moment and ask them to do so.

**NOTE:** Even if you are not on as an EMHC for a particular Mass, you too should be ensuring that the Blessed Sacrament is consumed, thus assisting your fellow EMHC. “If you see something, say something.”

Children – At times you may question whether a child is old enough to receive the Blessed Sacrament. If he/she knows what to do, minister the Blessed Sacrament. If in doubt, look for an older person with the child and ask or ask the child.

People with Disabilities – Be aware of people with disabilities who come to receive the Blessed Sacrament. The only rule is whatever seems most practical, convenient, and respectful of the person.

Those not receiving the Blessed Sacrament – When someone, whether child or adult, approaches with their arms crossed over their upper body, or the child is too young to receive the Blessed Sacrament, provide a blessing. Bless the person by a simple blessing, saying **“Jesus loves you.” This blessing is for both adults and children. No Sign of the Cross or even touching the person is allowed.** The Sign of the Cross is reserved for

clergy.

The invitation, “*The Body of Christ*” or “*The Blood of Christ*,” must not be narrowed or expanded as it weakens the communicant’s response. “*Amen*” (“*I believe*”) is an affirmation or profession of faith in three realities:

- ◆ The presence of Christ in the assembly
- ◆ The presence of Christ in the communicant
- ◆ The presence of Christ under the forms of bread and wine

Changing the invitation restricts the communicant’s affirmation of all three.

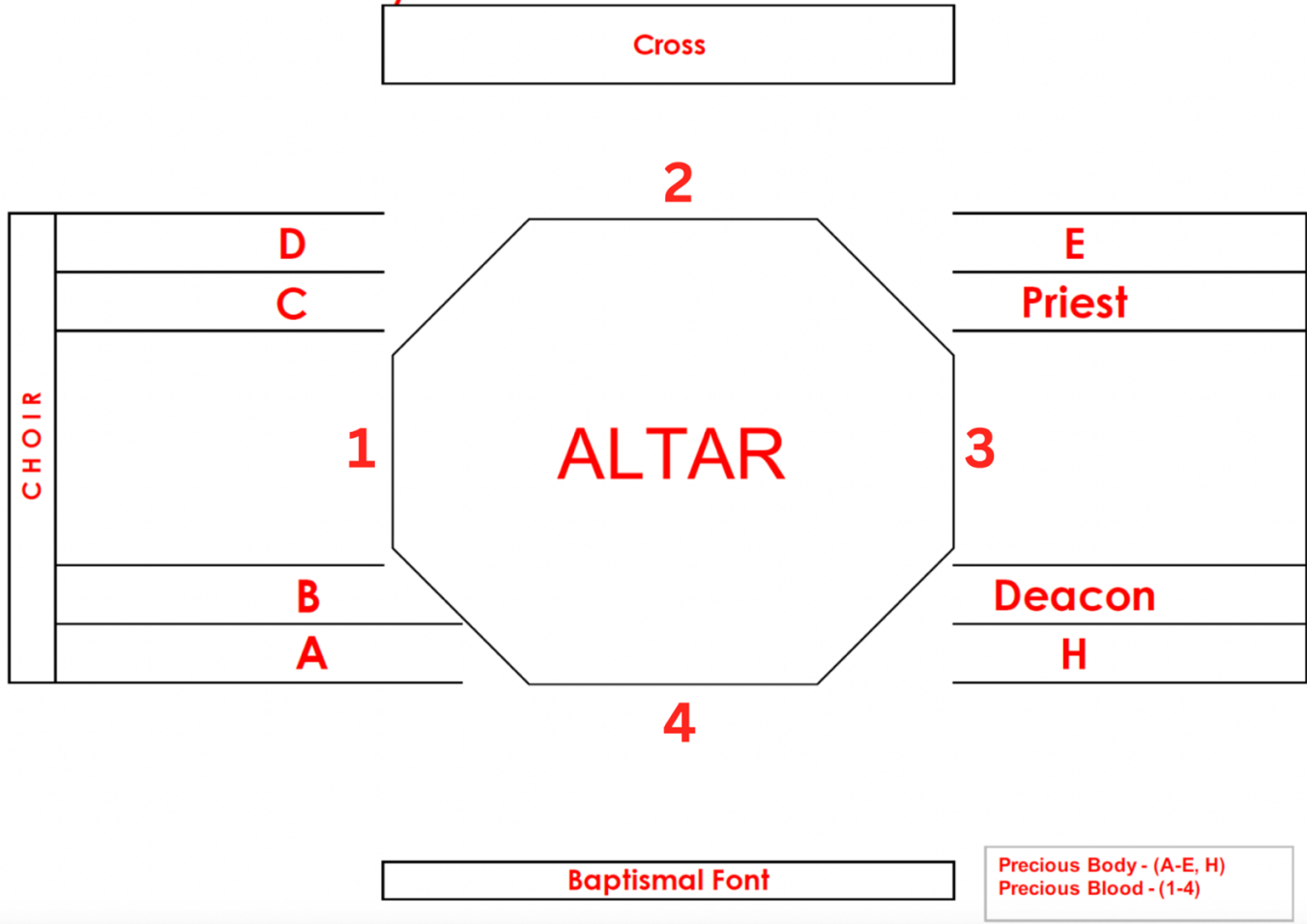
*(Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist – Diocese of St. Petersburg)*

2. If you start to run out of the Blessed Sacrament and there are still several communicants in your line waiting to receive, **start fracturing (breaking) the hosts in half** and continue distributing. **If you run out of hosts entirely, ask the next communicant to wait a moment and then place your Ciborium on the altar and grab a new one with hosts in it. If they aren’t any ciboria with the Precious Body, the other minister will distribute to both lines until assistance arrives.** Since our goal is to use only the hosts consecrated at the Mass for consumption at that same Mass, there may be times when it will be necessary to break the hosts so that there is enough for distribution; this is perfectly acceptable since even a minute piece of the host still contains the Precious Body of Christ.
3. **The usher, who is usually the last in line to receive the Blessed Sacrament, may ask you to serve a person not able to walk through the Communion line. Administer the Blessed Sacrament and then return to the altar and place the ciborium in the trays on the altar. **It is not necessary to wait and hand off the ciborium to the Priest or Deacon.**** The Deacon or the Priest will consolidate the Blessed Sacrament for the tabernacle.
4. If the Blessed Sacrament is dropped on the floor, you will:
  - a) Stop, pick it up, and place it in your hand under the Ciborium.
  - b) When distribution of the Blessed Sacrament is complete and the minister returns the Ciborium to the altar, either consume the Blessed Sacrament at that time or place it in the ablution cup on the credence table to be dissolved. Following Mass, please make sure the Sacristan is aware that a whole host was placed in the ablution cup so that they can immediately take care of it by disposing the water into the Sacarium in the Sacristy.
5. If you finish distributing the Blessed Sacrament at your position/station, consider going to another station to help in distributing the Blessed Sacrament.
6. When finished distributing the Blessed Sacrament, and you have returned the Ciborium to the altar, you may **go to the credence table and rinse your fingers in the ablution cup so that no fragments of the Blessed Sacrament remain on your fingertips.**

## Distribution of the Blessed Sacrament – “The Blood of Christ”

1. For the distribution of the Blessed Sacrament, the EMHC should look at the communicant and say, “The Blood of Christ.” It is improper to include the name of the communicant. You are not to alter the words. The communicant responds, “Amen.”
2. Give the Chalice with the Precious Blood to the communicant ensuring that the handoff is clean. Please make sure that it is returned securely and once you have received it back, wipe the rim of the chalice with the Purificator and rotate the vessel for the next communicant. Continue to do this until there is no more Precious Blood in the vessel or, the line has ended. **Please note, there is to be no intinction (dipping the host into the Precious Blood before consuming).**
3. If you run out of Precious Blood and there is still a line, simply move from your position, indicating that there is no Precious Blood left in your chalice. Once you move away, return the chalice to the tray on the altar, placing the Purificator on either side of the chalice on the tray.
4. If there is Precious Blood remaining after distribution, consume the remaining Precious Blood then place the chalice on the tray on the altar with the Purificator on either side of the chalice on the tray. If you cannot consume the remaining Precious Blood, please hand off to another minister or the clergy to consume the remaining Precious Blood.
5. If Precious Blood accidentally spills on the floor, please do the following:
  - a. Immediately use your Purificator to place it over the spill. Excuse yourself and retrieve another clean Purificator from the Credence table and then continue ministering the remaining Precious Blood. After Mass, advise the clergy so that they can bring water in a small basin and a Purificator and wash the area. The water is then poured into the Sacramentarium.

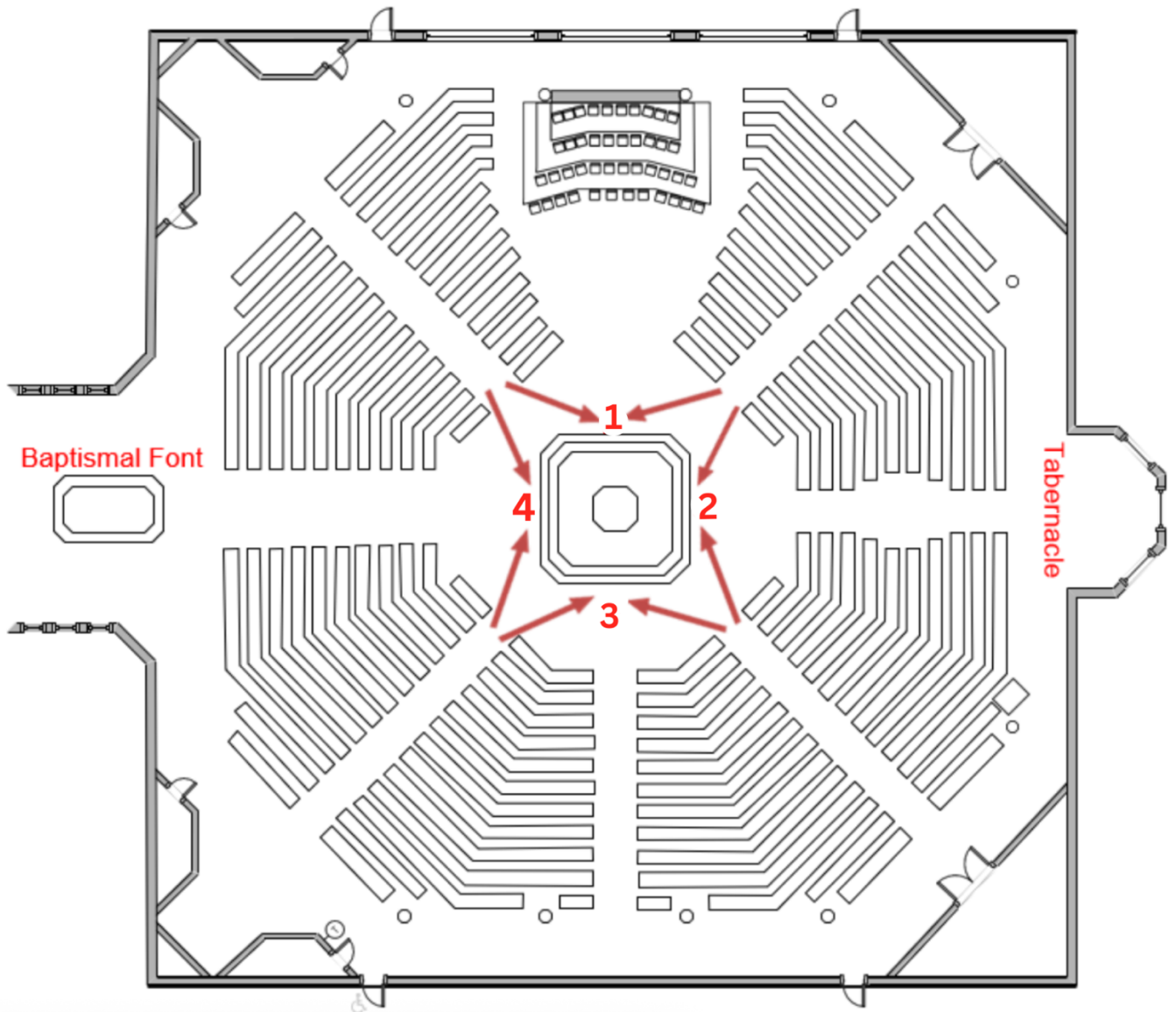
## Holy Communion Distribution Stations



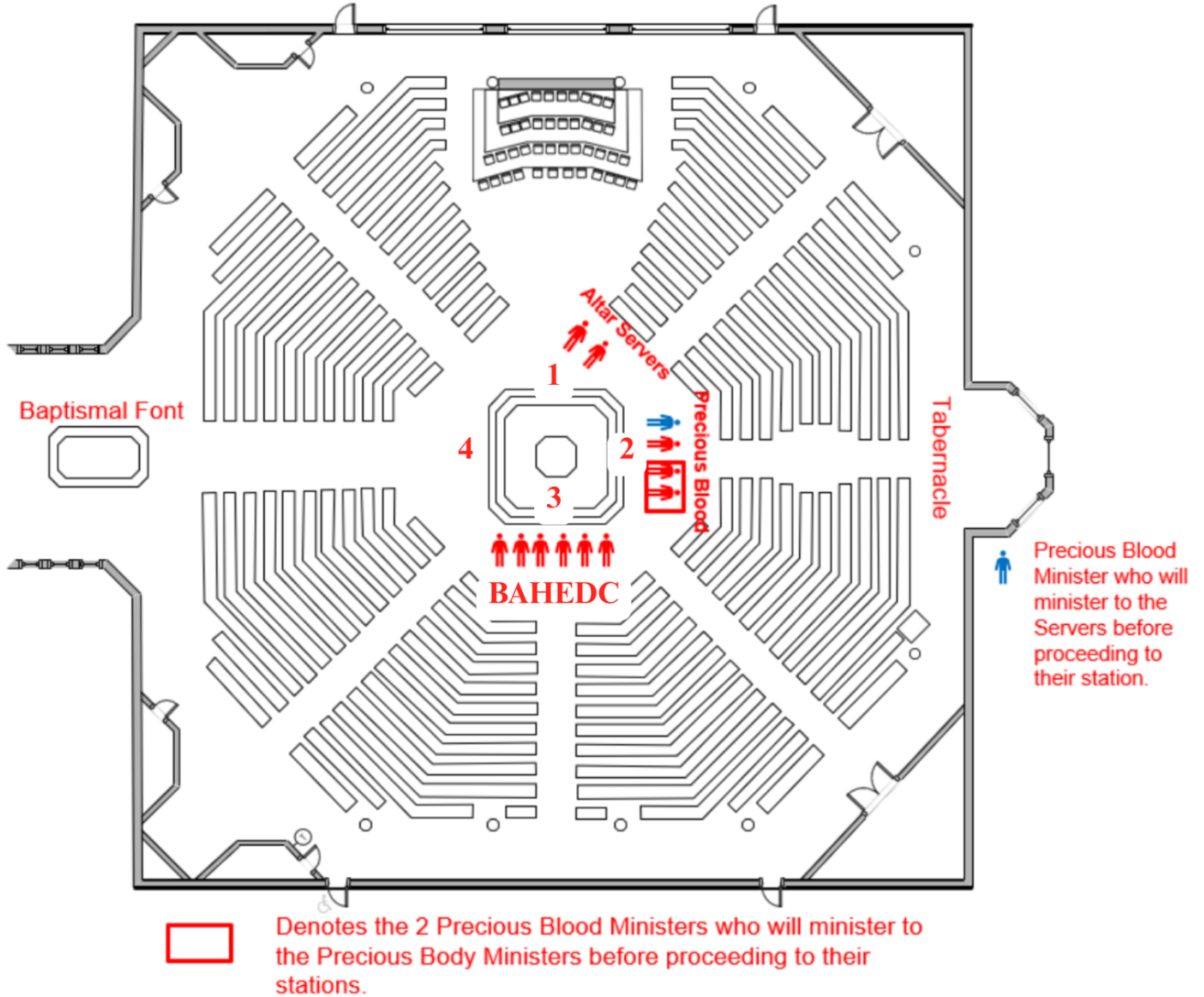
Precious Blood Stations 1 & 2 will distribute to Altar Servers.

Precious Blood Stations 3 & 4 will distribute to EM's.

# Congregation Flow to Receive the Precious Blood



**EMHC/Altar Server Placement to Receive Holy Communion**



**Stations 1 & 2 for Altar Servers**  
**Stations 3 & 4 for Precious Body**