

Instructions for Acolytes and Crucifers

(Updated Jan. 09)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (Romans 12:9-12)

"When serving at the altar, one is doing just this: actively assisting the celebrant in the worship of God. This is an important ministry and should be approached with dignity, humility, and care. The server (acolyte, crucifer, assisting minister) should be well acquainted with the responsibilities and perform the duties with diligence. Sloppiness is to be avoided; stiff or artificial movement is to be avoided; careless or unseemly behavior is to be avoided. In all things, the server must be aware that the purpose in assisting at the altar is "that God may be glorified". From *A Manual For Acolytes*

Thank you for your willingness to serve God, in the worship services of His Church. Your service as an acolyte or crucifer is an important ministry, and you are a valued member of our congregation. This handbook is intended to provide you with general information about posture (standing, sitting, kneeling, etc.), the role of acolyte and crucifer, and the specific responsibilities to be fulfilled when you serve. At the end, you will find a glossary explaining terms used in liturgical worship that may not be familiar to you. Please take some time to learn these terms. It will help you to understand instructions, and to be prepared to assist competently at the altar. Please remember, as quoted above, "the server must be aware that the purpose in assisting at the altar is 'that God may be glorified'!"

Posture and Deportment

- + One who serves at the altar, whether as acolyte or crucifer, must always keep in mind that the attention of the congregation is not to be on those ministering, but on the liturgy--the worship of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Therefore, always move discreetly and quietly--and above all with reverence.
- + When standing--stand up straight, and if you are carrying a candle or the processional cross, make sure that it is straight.
- + When kneeling--put all your weight on your knees and kneel upright. Do not squat or slouch. If you cannot kneel for this period of time, please remain in your seat.
- + When bowing--there are two types of bows: the solemn and the simple. The solemn bow is used when reverencing the altar, and at other times when directed. The solemn bow is from the waist, inclining the head and shoulders so that if your hands were out in front of you, they would almost touch your knees. The simple bow would be made at the name of Jesus and on other occasions of reverence, and is made with the head, inclining the shoulders slightly. The solemn bow is always used when approaching the altar, crossing the altar, or otherwise reverencing the altar.

Please note, one never bows when carrying a processional torch, the processional cross, or the Bible or Lectionary in procession.

- + When sitting--sit up straight in the chair, knees together, feet together, on the floor. Do not lean back in your chair, with feet spread out in front; do not cross your legs.

Hands

+ Unless you are carrying something, your hands should always be folded and held at the waist. They should never hang down at your sides, or be folded below the waist. When sitting, either fold your hands in your lap or place them straight out on your knees with palms down. Do not lean on your hands, put them on the back of your chair, or "fidget" with them.

Walking

+ Always walk slowly and with dignity when serving at the altar. Your movements should never appear rushed or hurried. At the same time, try to avoid seeming "stiff".

Eyes

+ When one is serving, eyes should always be focused on the action at the altar, on the assistant, or on the preacher. Wherever the altar is placed (in the center of the chancel, or against the back wall), face the altar when praying, addressing God, or participating in the liturgy.

Responses

+ One of your responsibilities is to help lead the people in prayers and responses. Therefore, make sure you know them, and say or sing them audibly and reverently; don't rush and don't lag behind--follow the pace of the pastor and the congregation. But do participate fully!

Please note:

+ Please note: All altar servers, assisting ministers, acolytes, crucifer, should follow the lead and bow whenever we say or sing the Gloria Patri (Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit), as well as at any doxological phrase in a hymn, liturgical text, or prayer, as, for example, when we sing, "The let us praise the Father and worship God the Son and sing to God the Spirit..." We will also make the sign of the cross whenever the words are said, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We will also make the sign of the cross during the Sanctus, when we say or sing, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord", as well as when the pastor says, in Eucharistic Prayers, "sanctify us also". We are modeling these reverent, pious behaviors for our congregation, and it is important for all servers to follow the same practice. This is a good time to explore/practice making the sign of the cross if you haven't before. If you are not comfortable, you may do as you choose.

Specific Instructions/Responsibilities

+ Please be sure to check the Master Server Schedule (published in the parish newsletter) each week to see if you are scheduled. If you have lost your schedule, it is normally published on our website, www.saintlukes-cs.org. If you cannot serve when scheduled, please make every effort to trade with someone, then call Deaconess Kathy Berrill (593-0665 home; 531-2099 work) and let her know you have traded. If you absolutely cannot find someone who will trade dates with you, call Deaconess Kathy and let her know.

+ *It would be ideal if you could be at the church 30 minutes before the beginning of service. Come directly to the sacristy. We are asking you to come earlier to make pre-service preparations more reverent and calm. We would also like acolytes and crucifers to be prepared and able to participate in our pre-service sacristy prayer. Please be aware, if you are not here 15 minutes prior to the service beginning, you may be replaced. It is extremely important that you arrive at least 15 minutes before service begins! We need time for you to vest, receive instructions, and either light altar candles or join in the procession on festival Sundays. There is nothing that destroys a spirit of reverence and worship more than being rushed.*

- + If you are in Sunday School and you are serving at late worship, please leave class promptly at 10:15 a.m.

- + If necessary, use the rest room. Acolytes and crucifers are not to leave the chancel or sanctuary during the service unless you are ill. If you are unable to make it through a worship service without needing to use the rest room, it would be best for you to find an area of service (nursery, greeter, etc.) that is less visible.

- + As soon as you get to the sacristy, find the appropriate robes and put them on. Please be sure they are not too long or too short. Normally we will be using the black cassocks and white surplices. The deaconess or assisting minister will be glad to help you.

- + If there is no procession, light the altar candles approximately 5 minutes before the service begins. Take the candle lighter and have the assisting minister, deaconess or pastor light it for you. Take the lighter and go from the sacristy to the center of the chancel, reverence the altar with a solemn bow, and then light the candles. The order of lighting should be (as you stand facing the altar from the congregational side) back right, front right, reverence the altar in the center with a solemn bow, then back left, front left, then reverence the altar in the center, leave the chancel by the center break in the communion rail, then return your lighter to the sacristy holder, and be seated in one of the chairs on the left, when facing the altar from the congregation. If it is the Season of Easter, you may be asked to light the paschal candle after lighting the altar candles.

- + If there is a procession, five minutes prior to the service, join the procession as instructed. If there are two acolytes, each will take one of the two front processional candles (nearest the congregation). If there are four acolytes, take the processional candle assigned to you. When the service begins, follow the crucifer until you arrive in the front of the chancel, being careful to keep your candles at the same level without tilting them. Normally, the flame of the candle should be at your eye-level, however, if there is a great height difference between acolytes, you will need to adjust. Place your candle in the appropriate holder. If there are four acolytes and you have one of the back candles, go around the pulpit (and paschal candle or advent wreath if either is in the chancel). **DO NOT EVER WALK BETWEEN THE ALTAR AND PULPIT OR THE ALTAR AND PASCHAL CANDLE OR ADVENT WREATH!** *After all acolytes (two or four) have placed your candles in their holders, go to stand in the center of the chancel below the top step, and when all are standing together, reverence the altar with a solemn bow, then go to your assigned seats. If there are only two acolytes, one of you will at this time get a candle lighter from the holder in the sacristy, and light the two back processional candles. After lighting the candles, reverence the altar at the center, then return the candle lighter, by exiting the center of the chancel. Reverence the altar before stepping into the chancel, then go to your assigned seat.*

- + If there is no procession, during the order for confession and forgiveness, kneel with the pastor, deaconess, and assisting minister on the step outside the communion rail. During the prayers of intercession, and during the singing of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), kneel with others outside the communion rail. After the Fraction (the breaking of the bread and following silence), *remain kneeling to receive the Sacred Elements.* After all have communed, return to your seat and sing along with the congregation.

- + Acolytes and/or crucifers may be asked to go to the front of the chancel after the offering to receive the offering plates and bread and wine from the ushers. After receiving them, turn to your right, together, and walk up the two steps to the height of the altar, and hand first the offering plates to the pastor, then the bread and wine. Bow together to the altar, then return to your seats.

- + If there is no recession, after the pastor has left the chancel, go to the sacristy hallway and get the candle lighter. Go to the front of the altar, through the center of the chancel, reverence the altar with a solemn bow, and extinguish the candles. The order is the reverse of when they were lighted; left front, left back, solemn bow in the center of the altar, right front, right rear, solemn bow in the center of the altar. *Replace your lighter to the sacristy hallway.* You may then disrobe.

+ *If there is a recession, if there are only two acolytes, one of you should go to the hallway, get the candle lighter, reverence the center of the altar, extinguish the left rear candle, reverence the center of the altar, then extinguish the right rear candle, reverence the altar, leave the chancel by the center and place your lighter in the sacristy holder. The two acolytes go together to the center of the altar, reverence the altar with a solemn bow, then take your assigned candles. If there are four acolytes, the four of you should go to the center of the chancel, below the top step, reverence the altar with a solemn bow, then each of you go to your assigned candle. Again, DO NOT GO BETWEEN THE ALTAR AND THE PULPIT/PASCHAL CANDLE OR ADVENT WREATH. Follow the crucifer down the center aisle. When you reach the rear of the sanctuary, position yourselves on either side of the crucifer, facing the congregation. Return your processional candles to their holders after the service has ended, and worshipers have begun to leave.*

+ Keep in mind, you are ministering at the altar of God--please conduct yourself accordingly. Follow along with the service. Be worship-ful and attentive--everyone in the congregation can see you. Do not talk unnecessarily, chew gum, laugh, or draw pictures. Sit erectly and quietly. Do not slouch, lean forward, or otherwise draw attention to yourself. Keep your robe straight and orderly.

+ When scheduled to serve, please dress appropriately--nice Sunday church clothes. It is preferred, when you are serving at the altar, that you not wear sneakers or running shoes. No excessive make-up or jewelry should be worn.

+ Again, thank you for serving in this important ministry!

Instructions Specific to Crucifers

+ The same instructions apply with regard to arriving at church early, vesting, etc.

+ Five minutes before the service begins, join the procession as instructed. As the pastor begins the announcements, you should be at the head of the procession, at the open double doors to the sanctuary. Participate in the order for confession and forgiveness. When the congregation begins to sing the opening hymn, begin the procession, being careful not to hit the cross on the doors, door frame, ceiling, light fixtures, or rear archway. Process slowly to the altar, carrying the cross in an appropriate manner (straight, and as high as is comfortable). *When you reach the chancel steps, join acolytes in front of the altar--when you are all together in front of the altar, reverence the altar together, and then go to your assigned seat..*

+ During the prayers of intercession, and during the singing of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), kneel with others outside the communion rail. After the Fraction (the breaking of the bread and following silence), *remain kneeling to receive the Sacred Elements.* After all have communed, return to your seat and sing along with the congregation.

+ At the end of the service, as the congregation begins singing the last hymn, join the acolytes at the front of the altar, reverencing the altar together. Take the cross from the holder and stand, facing the congregation. When the acolytes are standing behind you, process slowly down the center aisle toward the rear of the sanctuary. When you arrive at the rear of the sanctuary, turn and face the congregation. After the service is concluded, as worshipers are leaving, return the cross to its holder, and you may disrobe.

+ On certain Sundays or Seasons, our liturgy may change, adding a Gospel Procession, procession around the sanctuary, etc. You will be instructed on these changes as necessary.

+ *Again, it would be ideal if you would be at the church 30 minutes prior to the beginning of services. If you are not at church 15 minutes before beginning of service, you may be replaced.*

+ Remember: you are ministering at the altar of God--what is done here has eternal significance! Please conduct yourself accordingly. Please assist acolytes, and set an example for these younger servers, and the whole congregation. As a crucifer and confirmed member of the congregation, be prepared to assist with other tasks on the spur of the moment, as needed.

GLOSSARY

ACOLYTE--A term specifically applied to one who carries a processional candle, lights candles, assists with the liturgies of the Church.

ADVENT--The beginning of the Church Year, and the four weeks leading up to the celebration of Christ-mass.

ADVENT WREATH--A circle of brass, gold, silver, perhaps adorned with greens, with four candles, which is placed in the chancel during Advent. The candles are lighted consecutively week by week until all four are burning on the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Candles may be all purple, all blue, or all white, or may be of three colors, with one candle rose. The rose candle is lighted the Third Sunday in Advent (Gaudete (Joy) Sunday).

ALB--A long, white, sleeved vestment normally worn by ministers for a celebration of Holy Communion

ALTAR--table from which the Eucharistic meal is celebrated and served.

ALLELUIA--An exclamation of praise and joy, used in various parts of the liturgy, except during Lent.

AGNUS DEI--One of the hymns at the Fraction, or the beginning of the distribution of the Lord's Body and Blood. "Agnus Dei" is Latin for "Lamb of God".

ANTEPENDIUM--square or rectangular paraments that do not extend the entire width of the altar or pulpit.

AUMBRY--A receptacle or shelf to hold the Reserved Sacrament.

BAPTISM--The sacrament of initiation by which a person is born anew by Water and the Holy Spirit, and made a member of Christ's body, the Church.

BAPTISMAL FONT--The bowl, basin or tub holding water for the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

CASKET--A long wooden or metal box holding the body of the deceased.

CASSOCK--A long garment with sleeves, normally black, worn over street clothes when one serves at the altar. It should be long enough to cover the ankles, but not reach the floor.

CHALICE--A metal or ceramic cup into which the wine for the Eucharist is poured.

CHANCEL--the part of the nave that traditionally included the pulpit, font, and altar.

CHASUBLE--A long, wide sleeveless garment worn by the presiding minister at the Holy Communion. It is of the liturgical color of the day or season, and is worn over all other vestments.

CHURCH YEAR--The order of Sundays and Seasons by which the Church celebrates the Life of Christ (Advent through Ascension) and the Life of the Church (Ascension through Christ the King Sunday)

CINCTURE--A rope, usually white, worn with the alb, tied with a knot at the right side of the waist, allowed to hang down the right side. The ends of the rope may have knots or tassels. This rope is sometimes called a girdle.

CORPORAL--square or rectangular piece of linen on which the eucharistic elements are placed on the altar.

CREDENCE SHELF--shelf attached to front wall of sanctuary, behind altar, usually to hold flowers, cross, or candles.

CREDENCE TABLE--small tables used in nave or sanctuary to hold appointments, vessels, elements or other items to be used in worship.

CRUCIFER--A server who carries the processional cross. Also referred to as a Crossbearer.

ELEMENTS--The bread and wine to be consecrated at the Eucharist.

EUCHARIST--The principal act of worship on Sundays and other Festivals; the Holy Communion; the Lord's Supper. The word comes from the Latin for "thanksgiving".

EWER--pitcher used to hold and pour baptismal water.

FAIR LINEN--linen used to cover altar

FLAGON--pitcher used to hold and pour wine for Holy Communion.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS--The most common hymn of praise during the Sunday liturgy, from the song of the angels at Christ's birth, "Glory to God in the Highest".

GLORIA PATRI--The words of praise added at the end of psalms, and at other times in the liturgy, beginning with the words, "Glory be to the Father..."

GOSPEL PROCESSION--The movement of the crucifer, acolytes with processional candles, and presiding minister to the center of the congregation for the reading of the Gospel, emphasizing the Word made flesh, Christ among us.

KYRIE ELEISON--The litany sung between the Apostolic Greeting and the Hymn of Praise, from the Latin, "Lord, have mercy."

MENSA--top of altar.

MISSAL--altar book containing liturgical material for worship leaders.

MISSAL STAND--stand used to hold missal during worship.

NAVE--part of church building where worshipers sit/stand during worship.

PALL--a stiffened piece of cloth used cover the chalice prior to the celebration of Holy Communion; also the cloth used to cover the casket during the Burial of the Dead.

PASCHAL CANDLE--A large white candle which may be decorated with symbols of the resurrection. It is lighted at Easter and burns for all services throughout the Fifty Days of Easter. At other times, it is kept near the Baptismal Font and is lighted for Baptisms. It may also be placed at the head of a casket or urn for the Burial of the Dead, calling to mind the promise of Resurrection.

PARAMENTS--cloths, usually of liturgical colors which adorn altar and pulpit.

PULPIT--reading desk, lectern or other furnishing from which lessons are read and sermon preached.

PURIFICATOR--a linen napkin used to wipe the rim of the chalice during administration of Holy Communion.

SANCTUARY--area of the church building within the communion rail.

SANCTUS--From the Latin, the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy", sung at the conclusion of the Preface of the Great Thanksgiving.

SIGN OF THE CROSS--The tracing of one's forehead, chest and both shoulders in the outline of the Cross, in remembrance of Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

STOLE--A long strip of material worn by bishops, pastors and deacons/deaconesses, indicating office. Bishop or pastor wears the stole around the neck hanging down in front; deacon wears the stole over the left shoulder and crossed under the right arm. The stole is normally the color of the day or season. The stole represents the yoke of Christ.

SURPLICE--An ample white vestment worn over a cassock. As the black cassock represents our sinful nature, the surplice represents "putting on Christ", taking on His purity and forgiveness.

TORCH--Another name for a processional cross.

URN--A receptacle containing the remains (cremains--cremated remains) of a body that has been cremated.

VESTMENTS--garb worn by the clergy, i.e., clerical shirt, alb, stole, cassock, surplice, cincture, chasuble.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION--That part of the Eucharistic Prayer recalling the words and actions of our Lord, instituting the Lord's Supper.