

Assisting Minister Instructions/Guidelines

(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 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 *The Duties of Servers at Liturgical Celebrations*

The Holy Communion Liturgy

- + Arrive at least 30 minutes before service time!
- + Check to make sure hosts and wine are prepared and on the credence table in the Atrium, between the sanctuary doors, and Lectionary Book if there will be a procession.
- + As soon as you arrive, select an alb from the choir room just off of Luther Hall, or from the sacristy closet. If the deaconess is not available, or is absent, please assist acolytes/crucifier, making sure they are present and vesting as appropriate (normally, acolytes and crucifers wear cassock and surplice). If necessary, help communion assistant(s) find an appropriate alb, and make sure they know how to vest properly with alb and cincture.
- + After you have vested, come to the sacristy for prayer of preparation with pastor, deaconess, acolytes/crucifier, and organist. Last minute instructions may be given at that time, as well.
- + Join procession, as appropriate. Again, assist acolytes/crucifer. On festival days we will process single file, following choir and processional cross during the opening hymn. On non-festival days or seasons, we will enter the sanctuary from the sacristy. Assisting minister and deaconess first, reverencing the altar, then going to the chairs, as instructed.
- + At most Eucharistic services, pastor and assisting minister (and perhaps deaconess) will go to front of altar at end of opening hymn. First, reverence the altar, then step up on chancel step. After the hymn, follow pastor's lead in turning to the congregation, by your right. Pastor will speak the Apostolic Greeting. Turn by the right to face altar for Kyrie and Hymn of Praise. Turn by your right to the congregation for the Salutation. Turn by your right to the altar as the pastor prays the Prayer of the Day/Collect. During the Apostolic Greeting, Kyrie, Hymn of Praise and Prayer of the Day/Collect, please hold the worship book/folder for the pastor as he presides, so that his hands may be unencumbered for the appropriate liturgical gestures. Please hold the worship book high, and in front of the pastor so that he may read easily.
- + If you will be chanting, sing the Kyrie and Hymn of Praise, as appropriate. If you will not be singing, please find a cantor and inform the pastor regarding who will be singing.
- + The deaconess will normally read the first lesson and introduce the psalm. Assisting ministers normally read the second lesson. Please be sure to read the lesson several times before the service so that you are familiar with words and meaning of the text. A lectionary pronunciation guide is available in the

sacristy cabinet to the right, taped to inside doors. Be sure to check on the pronunciation of any words with which you may be unfamiliar. At the end of the reading, say, "The Word of the Lord".

+ The deaconess will normally indicate for the congregation to kneel for the prayers of intercession. The pastor should kneel in the center of the step outside the altar rail, in front of the altar, with assistants/acolytes/crucifer on either side. Offer the prayers, using the prepared form. Pray slowly and deliberately, focusing on communication with God, not reading words. **PLEASE SPEAK LOUDLY AND CLEARLY, SO THAT YOUR VOICE WILL PROJECT TO WORSHIPERS IN THE REAR OF THE CHURCH.** Pause briefly between petitions.

+ Share the peace of the Lord. Feel free to go to the congregation and choir. Make every effort to be hospitable and inclusive. When returning to the chancel, reverence the altar. If you approach the altar at the same time as pastor, deaconess or other servers, wait for them and reverence the altar together.

+ As the ushers receive the offering, go to the altar. Move the vested chalice to the right. Remove the Corporal from inside the burse and place it on the center of the altar, closest to the edge where the pastor will be standing to preside. Lay the burse to the right, back side. Remove the chalice veil, fold it in thirds, and place it on top of the burse. Place the chalice on the center of the Corporal, with purificator, paten, host and pall still in place. Go to the credence table behind the altar, neatly remove and fold the communion veil (in thirds, according to the folds), and place it on one of the small credence tables below the tabernacle. Return to your seat, if ushers are still receiving the offering.

+ When the presiding minister goes to the altar during the offering, follow, and stand to his left. Receive the offering plates from him, and place them on the credence table behind the altar. Return to your place at his left side.

+ After the offertory, lead the congregation in the offertory prayer, as printed in the worship folder.

+ Turn pages in the missal for the presiding minister, carefully following the liturgy. Turn the pages just after the last words are sung, but well before the pastor must speak the first words from the following page. You must be sure you are turning to the correct next page. Check these pages prior to the service. If you are not sure, have the pastor turn the pages so that he can turn to the correct pages the first time, without confusion.

+ During the singing of the Sanctus, go, with other servers, to kneel on the step of the chancel outside the communion rail.

+ After the fraction, receive the elements with other servers. After communing, take the chalice or communion tray. Distribute the Lord's sacred blood with the words, "The blood of Christ, shed for you." Using other words may be confusing to recipients.

+ After the distribution, return trays to the credence table, or the chalice to the presiding minister. Return to his left behind the altar. You may be asked to ablate the chalice, if you are comfortable doing that. When ablating the chalice, please come and stand at the altar, so that this action is clear and reverent. Do not ablate the chalice while walking, or with your back to the congregation. The pastor will clean and wipe the chalice, and vest the chalice appropriately.

+ The presiding minister will hand you the paten and flagon to be returned to the credence table.

+ After the blessing and post-communion canticle (if there is one), pray the post-communion prayer as printed in the worship folder. Please be sure to wait for the pastor to speak the post-communion blessing, "The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

+ After the benediction, move the missal stand and missal to the credence table behind the altar, and return to your seat.

- + Recess as appropriate, carrying the Lectionary Book out if this is a festival service.
- + At the rear of the nave, send the congregation with the prepared sending, as printed in the worship folder. Send them joyfully, forcefully, confidently!
- + Greet the congregation with the presiding minister. Please help us greet visitors, encouraging first-time visitors to sign the guest register, and pick up a "Visitor Newsletter".
- + Please be sure to return alb to the sacristy or choir room, carefully hanging it up so as to be neat and tidy for the next person using it. Please make sure acolytes/crucifiers do as well, returning their robes to the sacristy closet.

The SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

- + During the singing of the last verse of the Hymn of the Day, take the black binder with liturgy for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and go with pastor to the font, in the rear of the sanctuary.
- + Hold book up and out, clearly visible to him, while pastor begins the liturgy. The pastor will turn the pages.
- + At the appropriate time, read/speak parts indicated for the assisting minister.
- + the pastor will light the baptismal candle and present it to the appropriate person, as you say, "Let your light so shine..."
- + After the baptismal party has turned to face the congregation, say, "Through baptism, God has made...)"
- + Share the peace. After the peace, go to altar to prepare for the Sacrament of the Altar.

NOTES:

- + 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 may be a good time for you to explore/practice making the sign of the cross. However, if you are uncomfortable, you may do as you choose.
- + At some time during the week before you are scheduled to serve, please take a few moments to read through these instructions and to familiarize yourself again with your appointed responsibilities. Please refrain from showing up and hoping to "wing it", hoping you will remember what you are supposed to do. Please read through the assisting minister's instruction booklet each time you serve. This will prevent you from being embarrassed, and will allow the congregation to remain focused on worship of our Triune God, not distracted by your mistakes or miscues.
- + Please arrive 30 minutes before the beginning of the service. If you are not at church 30 minutes before the start of the service, a substitute will be found. Realizing schedule conflicts occur at the last minute, still it is necessary to have a minimum of 30 minutes to prepare. It is difficult for all worship leaders to relax and organize our thoughts for worship when feeling rushed and tense.

- + Be prepared for anything! You may be called upon for many unexpected tasks, to assure the service flows smoothly. Be relaxed, reverent, and focused on worship of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- + If the service changes in any way, be aware and ready to follow. When there are baptisms, reception of new members, etc., assist as instructed. Always check bulletin for the order of service...as you know, it is not always the same!
- + Keep in mind that together with the pastor, you are leading the congregation in divine worship. Your attitude/disposition/focus may effect the congregation.
- + Thank you for your willingness to serve in this important capacity. Should you ever have questions, please call the pastor or deaconess BEFORE worship, if possible. It is always simpler to deal with questions then, rather than at the time of worship. If you are unable to serve when scheduled, please make every effort to trade with someone, or otherwise arrange for a substitute. Call Deaconess Kathy Berrill (531-2099, work; 593-0665, home) to inform her of the change. If you have misplaced your Server Schedule, you can access the schedule at www.saintlukes-cs.org.

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.