

ACOLYTE MANUAL
2009/2010
GENERAL INFORMATION

Serving as an Acolyte (“One who helps”) is an ancient servant ministry. Acolytes perform a number of important functions before, during and at the close of the liturgy. As servants, we show our respect for the clergy in several ways: nodding, saying “please” and “thank you”, as the communion elements are passed back and forth. As important as anything is to arrive on time, be prepared and properly dressed.

DRESS

Acolytes are requested to wear dark, low heeled shoes. Watch what you wear under the albs. Bright colors show through. Please don’t wear bulky or turtle neck sweaters during the winter months as they tend to get hot under the albs.

BEHAVIOR

You need to get involved and stay involved in the service. There are prayer books, hymnals and service leaflets at your seats so that you may participate fully.

PLEASE DON’T

Visit with each other during the service. It is very distracting!
Twirl the cinctures (the white ropes around your waist).
Wear flip-flops or tennis shoes.
Chew gum.

FEELING SICK

There should be a box of tissues under your seat to use if you have the sniffles. If you really feel bad, don’t be a hero and be sick. Slip out quietly. The other Acolytes will take over and handle the remainder of the service.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Occasionally something occurs that is not planned and is out of the ordinary. Something is forgotten, someone faints or falls, and who knows what else. As an Acolyte you must deal with the unexpected. Watch what is going on. If asked, slip out and get what was forgotten. Help if someone needs it.

If you are standing or kneeling and not holding something, hold your hands together in front of you with your forearm horizontal. Don't hang your arms down, behind your back or over your head. Please stay still without fidgeting, rocking or swaying.

When the clergy says "Let us Pray", you, as Acolytes, **stand or kneel**--- NOT SIT. To keep it simple, please stand when the clergy says "Let us Pray" except during the reading of the Prayers of the People. At that time please kneel. There are four kneeling pad (two at each end of the Altar) for you to use.

PREPARATIONS

About 10 minutes before the service starts, two Acolytes light the candles. At the 8:00AM service, only light the two Eucharistic candles on the Altar. At the 10:30 service, two Acolytes (first) light the two Eucharistic candles on the Altar then (second) the seven branch candles on the re table. When lighting the seven branch candles, start at inside (the side next to the cross), and work your way out, staying together. Then, light the two Eucharistic candles. When finished, go to the front of the altar and exit together. If there is an Advent wreath (at Christmas) or a Paschal candle (at Easter), one Acolyte will light those particular candles while the second Acolyte waits by the Altar rail. Once the candle lighting is completed, return the candle lighter/snuffers to their proper place.

THE PROCESSION

About five minutes before the 10:30AM service, the acolytes assigned for that service should be standing near the back of the church with their torches, crosses, banner and the server with the Gospel book. About a minute before the service, the head usher will light the torches. The first crucifer and two torches stand in a position even with the last row of pews ready to go. After the organ starts to play, wait until the choir begins to sing and then step off.

The procession for the 8:00AM service is much smaller and only includes two torches and one server/crucifer. There is no choir at 8:00AM so you will step off when the organ starts the processional hymn.

The order of the 10:30AM procession is as follows: First crucifer and two torches followed by the church banner, then the adult and the children's choir. After the choir is the second crucifer, then the server with the gospel book. Chalice bearers and celebrant(s) follow the server.

The crucifer is the leader. Everyone else follows. The crucifer must not walk too fast or too slow, but at a steady, stately pace down the center of the aisle, with the torches at the crucifers shoulder forming a straight line across the aisle. The torch bearers hold the torches about one foot off the floor. What we are after is to have the flame of both torches at the same height, regardless of the height of the two torch bearers. The cross is held straight up and as **high as the crucifer is comfortable**. CRUCIFERS NOTE: during Advent watch for and avoid, by detouring around to the right, the Advent wreath.

The procession dissolves as follows

The first crucifer and two torches go the altar rail, pause (don't bow) turn to your right and put up the cross and torches. The two torches sit on the bench behind the choir. The second crucifer will go to the altar rail, pause (don't bow), turn to your left and put up the cross. **Both crucifers will wait by their crosses until the celebrant finishes the initial prayers and sits down. Then the two crucifers go to the center of the altar rail, reverence the altar, step through the opening and take their places by the bench to the left (Gospel) side of the altar.**

The banner bearer puts the banner in its holder just to the left of the organ. Make sure the banner is facing out and is flat against the wall. The banner bearer will then walk behind the organ, being careful not to bump the organ or organist, and take his or her place by the bench just outside the altar rail on the left (Gospel) side.

The server stops at the altar rail, steps through the opening, puts the Gospel book on its stand and opens the book. The server steps back, reverences the Altar, and goes to the seat nearest the credence table.

All Acolytes continue to stand until the first reading.

At the 8:00AM service the torch bearers will sit on the bench to left (Gospel) side of the altar.

THE GOSPEL PROCESSION

There is no Gospel procession at the 8:00AM service. At the 10:30 service, the first crucifer and two torches leave at the end of the Psalm to light their torches, get the cross and be ready for the gospel procession. At the end of the second reading, there is either a Gospel hymn or the gradual alleluia. This is your trigger to go to the center of the altar, turn and face the altar and wait. This also triggers the server to get the gospel book, close the book, turn and face the first crucifer. The time to move is when the Gospeller moves away from the desk behind the pulpit or from the altar. The server can see this and will indicate to the first crucifer it is time to process.

The Gospel procession stops at the line of pews just beyond the indented pew. The crucifer stops and turns to face the altar. The two torches turn and step forward one pew, turn and face the Gospel book with their backs to the pews and facing each other. The Gospeller will take the book from the server, open it to the proper reading and return the book to the server to hold while he reads the Gospel. When finished, he will return the book to the server. The Gospeller will then step to the side as will the server with the Gospel book. The first crucifer and the two torches will process together, followed by the server and then the Gospeller. The first crucifer and two torches return the cross and torches just as they did at the beginning of the service. The three of them return to their respective seats. The server puts the Gospel book back on its stand, opens it up and returns to the seat next to the credence table.

THE OFFERTORY

After the sermon and the prayers of the people, the celebrant will pronounce the “Peace”, then make some announcements and then a offertory sentence (“ascribe to the Lord...” or one of the other offertory sentences). After the peace is exchanged, announcements made and the offertory sentence completed, the celebrant and clergy walk to the Altar rail, step through the gate and take their positions at the Altar. At that time, the two Crucifers come to the center of the altar rail to receive the bread and wine. After receiving the bread and wine, turn and step up to the Altar and place the bread and wine on the Altar. The torch bearers receive the bread and wine at the 8:00AM service

THE PREPARATION

The server steps up to altar while the priest or deacon uncovers the chalice and removes the small, round silver paten and hands it to the server. The server returns the small paten to the credence table and then takes the large, footed paten that is on the credence table and hands it to the priest or deacon. The priest or deacon then takes the bread box and puts the wafers on the footed paten. The priest or deacon then gives the bread box to the server. Be sure, as a server, to be on the first step of the altar to receive the bread box. After placing the bread box on the credence table, take the water cruet, remove the stopper, step up to the altar and hand the priest or deacon the water cruet, with the handle toward the priest or deacon. The priest or deacon takes the water cruet and puts water in the wine flagon and chalice. When finished, he will return the water cruet to the server.

The server will put the water cruet on the credence table. Then, put the silver water basin, that is located on the small shelf under the credence table, in your left hand with the mundatory (small, white linen towel) over your left arm, embroidery out, and the water cruet in you right hand. Either go to the celebrant or the celebrant will come to you to have his hands washed. Hold the basin low and pour the water over his fingers. The celebrant will dry his hands with the mundatory and place it on your left arm. The server then returns the water cruet to the credence table and puts the water basin on the lower shelf with the mundatory over the basin.

At the end of the offertory hymn, the ushers will start down the center aisle. This is the trigger for one of the Crucifers to very carefully get the large brass alms basin and come to the center of the Altar rail to receive the offering from the ushers. Bow to the ushers, turn and place the alms basin to the left of center on the Altar. **At this point in the service, both crucifers will switch from the Gospel side of the altar and sit or stand on the Epistle side of the altar (next to the credence table).** Prior to leaving, the ushers close the gate.

There are times when a basket of food stuffs for the pantry accompany the offering. The other Crucifer will receive the basket and place it on the floor under the Altar. If the basket is particularly full (heavy) the second Crucifer will help.

At the 8:00AM service one torch bearer will very carefully get the large brass alms basin and come to the center of the altar rail to receive the offering from the ushers.

After the offering is on the Altar and the basket of food is under the Altar, the Acolytes that are behind the Altar rail will, along with the chalice bearers, go to each end of the altar and remain standing during the prayers of consecration.

AT THE COMMUNION

While the clergy share communion, the Acolytes and chalice bearers form a line in front of the Altar and wait to receive communion. The server will put the second chalice, intinction cup and the small, round paten on the Altar and then join the others in line for communion.

If there is wine in the flagon, the server will stand to the Epistle side of the Altar with the flagon, ready to refill the chalices. If not, the server will take the empty flagon and place it on the credence table. There is a silver cruet of wine on the credence table, if more wine is required.

As soon as the last communicant is served, the two torch bearers leave to get their torches and light them. Both crucifers get their respective crosses and the banner bearer goes behind the organ and gets the banner.

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The chalice bearers, celebrant and clergy put up their chalices, intinction cup and paten with the assistance of the server. The server has the water cruet ready to pour a small amount of water in the chalices and paten. When that is completed, the server will return all the vessels to the credence table. The credence table is small and will take some arranging to get everything back.

The clergy return to the back of the Altar for the post communion prayer. At the end of the prayer, the server and chalice bearers go to the front of the Altar, bow together, and turn and face the congregation.

THE RECESSIONAL

When the organ starts to play, the first crucifer and two torches go to the center of the Altar rail, pause (don't bow) turn and face the congregation. Step off as soon as the choir starts to sing. As the first crucifer gets to the steps, the banner bearer falls in behind, followed by the choir, the second cross, then the server (without the Gospel book) followed by the chalice bearers and clergy.

The procession continues to the back of the church. All crucifers, torch and banner bearers and server stand to the left of the door, facing the Altar. Wait there until the recessional hymn is finished and the congregation has been dismissed.

Return all crosses, banners and torches to their proper place. The two torch bearers need to extinguish all the candles starting with the seven branch (outside to inside) and then the Eucharistic candles on the Altar (and finally, the Advent candles during Advent or the Paschal candle during Easter). Extinguishing the candles should be performed together, as a team, with the same reverence as the rest of the service.

When you have completed all of your duties, return to the Acolyte room to put away your albs and cinctures. Please fasten the snaps at the neck after the alb is on the hanger so it won't fall off the floor.