
St. John's Episcopal Church
Acolyte Instructions

Scheduling/Replacements

- The schedule for all servers, including Acolytes, is prepared on a monthly basis. If you know that you will not be able to serve on a certain date, please contact Vickie Duff (859-879-8402, 859-608-3940 or reads0202@aol.com), who prepares the schedule, before the 15th of the previous month.
- If you realize that you aren't able to serve after the schedule comes out, please find a replacement. Most people are happy to switch dates. Note the change on the calendar in Hosea Hall. Please also let Kathy Sparrow in the office (859-873-3481) know of the change so that she can update the bulletin if it hasn't already been prepared.
- If you find that you are not able to serve at the last minute, please call the church and let someone know. If you are the one who receives that call, please alert the Acolyte for that day as checking everyone in and finding last minute replacements is their responsibility.

Preparing

- As the Acolyte, you are the point person for all servers. You should be familiar with the responsibilities of all of the servers as they may look to you for their cues. They take their lead from you and your calm, confident presence will help put them at ease.

Before the service

- You should be vested at least 20 minutes before the service.
- The candles should be lit by 15 minutes before the service following the diagram in the sacristy. The small candles on the Epistle side (right side) should be lit first, from the cross out, and then the small candles on the Gospel side (left side), from the cross out. Then the Communion candles (large ones), the Epistle side and then the Gospel side. The Gospel side never burns alone. The symbolism to this sequence is that Christ, who died on the cross, is light of the world which we are to take and spread throughout the earth.
- Check that the Gospel book is on the altar and the ribbon set to the correct page.
- The crucifer, torchbearers, lector and chalice bearer should check in with you by 10 minutes before the start of the service. If they do not, you will need to try to find substitutes or rearrange the responsibilities.
- From The Book of Common Prayer, page 833
Almighty God, who pourest out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Procession

- The Acolyte and Chalice Bearer follow the choir and precede the Celebrant. The Acolyte on the right, Chalice Bearer on the left.

- Follow the choir in. Reverence the altar just behind the Crucifer. Go around the Crucifer into the sanctuary with the Acolyte going through the gate first, then the Chalice Bearer. Both should be seated on the bench to the right.

During the service

- Gospel procession:
 - When the gradual hymn begins, the Crucifer will take up the cross and the Torch Bearers their torches. The Crucifer will walk to the top of the step and turn and face the altar with the Torch Bearers slightly closer to the altar and facing each other. As they are moving, you will walk to the center of the altar, reverence it and then pick up the Gospel book with both hands, holding it in front of your chest. Turn to the right and walk to stand in front of the Torch Bearers, facing the altar. As the Celebrant reaches the gate, Crucifer and Acolyte turn to the right and Torch Bearers turn toward each other and process down the steps. As you turn, raise the Gospel book above your head.
 - The Crucifer will stop at the 6th pew on the right, even with the “Behold the Lamb of God” window, and turn to face the altar. The Torch Bearers will stop and turn and face each other. You will stand between those three and turn and face the Celebrant, opening the Gospel book to the correct page and holding it with both hands for the Celebrant to read.
 - At the end of the reading, the Celebrant will take the book and then return it to you closed. The Celebrant will step to one side, you step to the other and allow the Crucifer and Torch Bearers to pass. Follow behind them again holding the book over your head.
 - Walk through the gate and lay the Gospel book on the altar, beside the right communion candle with no edges of the book hanging off the edge of the altar. Reverence the altar and return to your seat.
- Offertory & Communion:
 - Following the peace, be back to your seat before the Celebrant begins the announcements.
 - Once the Celebrant enters the sanctuary and reverences the altar, the Chalice Bearer will cross to the other side of the altar. You then walk to the gate to receive the gifts. You may need to open your hands to either side to signal to the Gift Bearers that you are ready for them to come forward.
 - Receive the bread box and count sheet, bowing in unison with the Gift Bearers. Turn and hand these to the Celebrant.
 - Receive the wine and water vessels, bowing in unison with the Gift Bearers and walk to the credence table, placing them on the table.
 - You and the Celebrant should bow at each exchange.
 - Depending on attendance, the Celebrant may ask for the roll of wafers on the credence table and may return what is remaining to be placed back on the credence table.
 - Open the wine cruet and hand it, handle first, to the Celebrant holding the lid open.
 - Open the water cruet and hand it, handle first, to the Celebrant holding the lid open. The Celebrant will add water to the wine and return it to you. Set it on the credence table.

- As the Doxology begins, lay the lavabo towel across your left wrist with the cross facing the Celebrant. Place the lavabo bowl in your left hand. Take the water cruet in your right hand, holding the lid open. The service will flow smoother if you are ready prior to the Celebrant turning to you.
- After the Celebrant hands the offering plates back to the Chalice Bearer, the Celebrant will turn to you, holding his/her finger tips over the lavabo bowl. Pour a small amount of water in the shape of the cross over them. The Celebrant will dry their hands on the towel and place it back over your wrist. Place everything on the credence table.
- Prepare to ring the sanctus bell, kneeling at the conclusion of the preface of the day, at the words “Therefore we praise you . . .”
- At the appropriate times, strike the bell firmly on the side, allowing it to resonate. As the Celebrant continues speaking, you may gently touch the top of the bell and slowly slide the mallet down the side to the bottom edge to stop it resonating.
- Whether Rite I or Rite II, there are five points in the prayers to strike the bell.
 - Three times at the words, “Holy, holy, holy . . .” during the Sanctus (usually sung)
 - To alert the congregation to the point in the service where the Celebrant will begin laying hands on the bread and wine.
 - Rite I: “. . . and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.” Strike bell.
 - Rite II: “He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.” Strike bell.
 - At the end of the words of Jesus quoted in scripture regarding the bread.
 - Both: “Do this in remembrance of me.” Strike bell.
 - At the end of the words of Jesus quoted in scripture regarding the wine.
 - Both: “Do this in remembrance of me.” Strike bell.
 - Just before the AMEN at the close of the Prayer of Consecration.
- Stand and, once you and the Chalice Bearer have taken Communion, place the second chalice and purificator on the edge of the altar. The Celebrant will serve you Communion and hand you a chalice and purificator.
- Follow the Priest, serving the wine with the words that were said to you. Turn and wipe the cup after each person, never handing it off. As Acolyte, serve the rail to the first person just past the gate. If you run out of wine, you may carefully add wine to your chalice from the wine cruet on the altar holding your purificator to the side of the chalice. Should you need it, there will be a spare purificator on the altar.
- After all have been served, set the chalice and purificator back on the altar. You may be asked to consume any excess wine.
- Open the water cruet and hand it, handle first, to the Celebrant holding the lid open.
- As the Celebrant resets the altar, the cruets and second chalice will be handed back to you. Set them on the credence table. You may be asked to veil the wine cruet with a purificator to indicate to the Altar Guild that the wine inside has been consecrated.
- Recessional:

- As the last choir member joins the procession, exit the sanctuary, standing to the right side of the gate, facing the altar. The Chalice Bearer will exit and stand to the left. Once the Celebrant is in place between you, bow on the Celebrant's cue. Turn toward the Celebrant and walk, with the Chalice Bearer, in front of the Priest and out.

After the service

- Extinguish the candles in reverse of the order that they were lit.

Notes for services in St. Mary's Chapel:

- Healing service
 - Install the gate in for the healing portion -
 - Remove the gate -
- Eucharist portion
 - Install the gate once the Celebrant begins unveiling the chalice.
 - Remove the gate -

Thank you for agreeing to serve the body of Christ at St. John's in this very important ministry!
