

Acolyte Handbook

Diocese of Saint Cuthbert

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us
against the snares of the evil one
And the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us
Christ above us
Christ in us
Christ before us.
May thy salvation O Lord,
Be always ours
This day and for evermore

Amen

St Patrick 373

**O God, our gracious Father:
Bless the servers of your Church
that they may so serve
before your earthly altar
in reverence and holiness,
that they may attain,
with all your saints and angels,
the joy of serving you and worshiping you
before your Heavenly Altar;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

WORSHIP

Basis of Worship

The ministry of the Acolyte has all to do with worship. In order to understand what it is to be an acolyte, then, we must have an understanding of worship. What is it that we are doing? Why are we doing these things? What is the meaning?

Our worship is rooted in God's marvelous redemption of His people – God, because of His love, not because we deserved anything, but because He loves us, rescued us from our bondage to sin and death by sending His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is in this redeeming act of God in Christ, His death and resurrection, that our worship is rooted.

In the Old Testament times, the worship of the people of God in the tabernacle and temple, was rooted in God's redeeming act as He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, through His servant Moses. Tabernacle worship was established at the time of that event, and their worship was rooted firmly in it. In the worship of that day, the entire community, all the people were involved. It was not just the priests and levites, although they did have specific responsibilities and places within the worship, but everyone was involved.

The Old Testament tabernacle worship was a shadow of things to come. Now, our worship is not rooted in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, but in our salvation in Christ. However, although the redeeming act is now Christ, his death and resurrection, and not the deliverance from Egypt, our worship still remains rooted in God's act of redemption, and all of the people of God, not just a few, are involved.

When we come together to worship, we do not come and just “see what happens”. We come and make a remembrance of, and celebrate, the incredible love, greatness, goodness, and glory of God that by His grace and mercy He has made known to us, in and through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

Liturgical Worship

We have a *liturgical* form of worship. The word *liturgy* literally means the work of the people. Our worship is typified by the involvement of all the people in worship. It is not a form in which one or two or a small group of individuals minister to the remainder of the congregation; but rather a form in which all the people minister unto the Lord, and one another in His name.

Our worship involves not only word, but action. That is, we proclaim both with our mouths and with the things that we do, the marvelous redemptive act of God in Christ Jesus. Not just hearing, but sight and smell and taste and touch are involved as we worship the Lord.

Our worship is historic. Christian worship began as liturgical worship because it had its roots in the Jewish synagogue. The first Christians were Hebrews. It was not until several years after Pentecost that the first Gentile believers were brought in. As such the Hebrew believers worshipped as they had in the synagogue with the readings of the word, the teaching of the word, and the saying of the prayers. This form was essentially retained with the addition of the agape meal and remembrance of the death and resurrection of our Lord with the bread and the cup. This liturgy of Word and Eucharist were moved to Sunday, as a remembrance of the day of the Resurrection. Here it was that Christian worship took the form which it still has today in many places – The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. During the Liturgy of the Word – the Word of God is sung and read and preached and confessed. During the Liturgy of the Eucharist (which means *thanksgiving*), we remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord, and thankfully share in the bread and the cup, feasting on His Presence, as we anticipate the joy of the time to come when we will all join in the great wedding feast of Christ and His bride.

For us, this celebration of the Eucharist is a time of awesome holiness. God is present here with us in a special and most intimate way, as He has promised. Heaven and earth become connected, and we, the people of God, join with the angels and the archangels, and all the host of heaven in the Presence of our God. The whole church on earth joins with the whole church in heaven to praise God. We are permitted a glimpse of the majesty and glory of God, and the beauty of the Church, and we are never the same again.

As an acolyte, and truly as any minister (which includes all the people of God), it is important to remember that as we celebrate the Eucharist we are in the presence of the most High God. Regardless of how small or how large our task may be, we serve at His throne.

In our worship, God himself, His Presence, is the center of our worship. It is not an anointed man of God speaking the Word of God, or an incredible chorus of voices singing the praises of God that is the center, but it is He who is the focus. It is His Real Presence here with us. In view of this, everything that we do in the course of our worship, serves to bring attention and the focus unto God, because it is He alone who is worthy of our worship. If there is something that we are doing, or a way that we are doing it which is serving to distract us from this center, we must not persist in the practice.

As a final note, our form of worship is not the only form. Actually, although the shape of the liturgy is essentially the same in many groups, the words and specific actions have great variability from group to group. However, liturgical worship, that holds to the basic form of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, had been essentially universal in the Church for the first 1500 years of its existence. At that time, many problems had arisen in the Church which needed to be addressed and rectified. This led to what has become known as the protestant reformation. The hearts desire of the reformers was for renewal within the Church, with return to sound doctrine. There was never a desire to tear the Church apart, or to do away with liturgical worship. Both Luther and Calvin were sacramentarians. Many of the protestant groups which have come forth out of the time of the reformation, have retained the liturgical form of worship, and its connection with historic Christianity, while rejecting the same teachings as the rest of the protestant groups. Some groups, however, rejected the whole form of worship, and over the ensuing years, particularly with the rise of rationalism as a dominant philosophical view, the Liturgy of the Word, particularly the preaching of the Word, became dominant and the Liturgy of the Eucharist was either completely dropped or stripped of all meaning except that as a tool to jog the memory of the historical event of the death and resurrection of the Lord.

The Eucharistic Celebration

We have briefly talked about the Eucharistic Celebration. Now we consider it in more detail. The Liturgy of the Word is followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These two events, along with the gathering of the people of God before the Liturgy of the Word, and the sending forth of the people of God, following the Liturgy of the Eucharist, comprise the basic shape of the Liturgy.

The Gathering of the People of God

The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Sending of the People of God

The Gathering of the People is that time when the people gather together and prepare their hearts for worship as the Church. It is a time of prayer and preparation. Often the community will join in song and those leading in worship will enter in procession as a picture of the people of God coming into the presence of God through the Cross of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Word begins with the Acclamation, often “Blessed be God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” to which the people respond “And blessed be His kingdom, now and forever.” Then follows the Collect (prayer) for Purity and song(s) of Praise and Thanksgiving. The Priest then says the Collect of the Day and the Lessons are proclaimed. There is usually an Old Testament Lesson and a New Testament Lesson with a Psalm which is either sung or said between them. Then the reading of the Gospel, sometimes including a processional, takes place. This is followed by the homily, or sermon. At the conclusion of the sermon, all the people of God join together proclaiming the belief of the people of God as expressed in the Nicene Creed. The Church then joins in the Prayers of the People for the Church, our nation, the world, the concerns of the local community, those who suffer, and those who have gone on before. The Priest or Deacon then leads the people in the confession of sin, and the Liturgy of the Word ends as we share the Peace with one another.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the Offertory as the people present their gifts of money bread and wine unto the Lord. Then the Great Thanksgiving begins as God's mighty acts in the redemption of His people, culminating in the events of Holy Week are recalled in word and action. We ask the Holy Spirit to come and take those gifts which we have offered and to sanctify them that God would come and make His Presence real and make Himself known to us, in the bread and wine, the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. We join our voices together in the Lord's Prayer. Then follows the Breaking of the Bread and then with thanksgiving the believers come and accept the Body and Blood.

The Celebration ends as we thank God for forgiving and healing and renewing us, and pray that He would send us forth to go and do the ministry in our homes and schools and workplaces.

Other Services

In addition to the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration, the Church often celebrates the Eucharist on other days including Holy Days and Feast which commemorate events in God's redemptive history or the lives of those who have lived and died for the sake of the Gospel.

There are special services which may be held as a part of the Eucharist or at times separate in which the Acolyte will serve. These include the other major sacrament of the Church, Baptism, and the sacraments of confirmation, ordination, marriage, and Christian burial.

Also, the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer are held routinely in many parishes.

THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

Orders of Ministry

The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. (BCP p. 855)

All are laity, the ordained ministers – bishops, priests, and deacons – are laity that God has set aside, ordained, for a particular servant ministry in the Church. In addition to these ordained ministries, each member of the community is a minister and there are many other specific tasks and duties in the Church.

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church. (BCP p. 855)

As a member of the laity, this then is the ministry of the Acolyte. Now we will look at the particular tasks and responsibilities of this ministry.

The Acolyte

The word *acolyte*, means “follower” or “attendant.” Remember, liturgical worship is the “work of the people”, we are all involved, not just the priests and deacons. Acolytes are needed, not to help to do things that the priest doesn't have time to do, but to do the things which the acolyte is called and gifted to do, not the priest.

As servants, acolytes function in many capacities. They may serve as candlelighters, they may assist at the Eucharist, they may be bookbearers, or bannerbearers, or carry the cross. We will cover these things in much more detail later, but first there are some things we should learn about the place in which we worship and the furnishings and articles that we use in worship.

THE THINGS OF WORSHIP

The Worship Space

The word “church” does not mean a building. It means “*the called out ones*”, the chosen people of God, redeemed by the blood of His Christ. In the early years of the Church, the Church met primarily in homes, and in times of persecution often met in caves, or tombs, or out in the countryside in hiding. It wasn’t until the fourth century that buildings specifically used for the meeting and worship of the Church came into being.

The church building is a “special” building. It is not special because it is the only place that the Church can worship. It is special because of what happens there. The people of God have set apart this building for the worship of God, and they come together there to worship Him and proclaim and remember His love for us in Christ Jesus. The church building is special not because it is the only place that can be what it is, but because every building represents what every building should become, a building - no matter what is carried on there, whether school, or factory, or hospital, or home- a building completely given over to God for His purposes.

Scarcely any two church buildings are alike. But they all have much in common, especially those in which a liturgical community assembles.

There are often many rooms and offices and closets in a church building. There are three rooms in particular that are common to most churches and directly related to the ministry of the Acolyte. These three rooms are the *narthex*, *nave*, and *sacristy*.

The *narthex* is the entryway or space which leads into the primary worship space of the building. In other types of architecture it might be called a foyer or vestibule or lobby. The narthex is a place of transition, where we move from all the activities and distractions which would keep us from turning to the Lord with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength, and direct our thoughts and our hearts to what is about to happen – the people of God are assembling to worship the Most High God.

The *nave* is the room where the people of God assemble to worship. The nave may have pews or chairs. The nave is not a theater or an auditorium where people come to listen to a speech or watch a presentation. It is a space where the people come and participate in worship. Liturgy is what we do.

The *nave* has within itself certain specific areas. We will briefly talk about two of them. The first is the *chancel*. The chancel is the area at the front of the nave. Often there is a *chancel rail* that visually sets this area off. When there is a specific person that is acting on behalf of the congregation, whether in proclaiming the Word, of preparing the table, or leading in prayer, it is usually done within this area. Within the chancel we find another area called the *sanctuary*. The *sanctuary* is the name of the most prominent portion of the building. It is prominent not because it is where a person is, but because the *altar* is located there. The Christian altar is not a place where a blood sacrifice takes place, but the place where the once for all sacrifice of Christ is “remembranced” and where He meets us and feeds us with His Presence.

It is customary for those ministering behind the chancel rail, to be vested in a white alb or surplice. This is not because they are special. Anyone, no matter what task, what age, or what function would be dressed similarly. It is not the person, it is the picture of the purity, the holiness, without which we cannot come into God’s presence. Again, it is not ours, but His righteousness, it is His blood which cleanses us and makes us whiter than the snow.

The final room to which we will refer is the *sacristy*. This is the room where the vestments, and altar ware, and linens of the Church are kept. It is here that the preparation for the service are made, and those who are leading in worship put on their vestments.

Worship Furnishings

The Altar.

The altar is the most important furnishing in the church and has been discussed above. The top of the altar is called the *mensa*. As you face the altar from the nave, the right side of the altar is called the *Epistle side*, and the left side is called the *Gospel side*. This is because it was customary at one time to read the lesson from the epistle on the right side of the altar, and the reading from the Gospel on the left side.

Altar Book (sacramentary).

The large book which the presiding elder, the bishop or the priest, use. It contains the words of the liturgy and other ceremonies of the Church.

Altar Cloths.

The *cerecloth* covers the mensa. The *fair linen* lies on top of the cerecloth and covers the ends of the altar. Also a *frontal* or other *parament* may hang from the front of the altar. The color of the frontal will vary with the season or day of the Church year.

Baptismal Font.

The large basin or pool that contains the water used in the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Baptistery

The space in the building which contains the baptismal font

Candlelighter/extinguisher.

A long-handled tool which has a wick for lighting candles and a bell shaped extinguisher for putting candles out.

Chancel Rail or Communion Rail.

The place where the people stand or kneel to receive communion. It is the boundary of the area of the nave called the chancel.

Credence Table.

A small table located near the altar that holds the vessels and linens used at the altar.

Gospel Book.

The book which contains the readings from the four Gospels. It is often carried in procession.

Incense Boat

The small vessel which contains the incense until it is used.

Lavabo.

A small basin which is used to wash the hands of the presiding minister.

Paschal Candle.

The large candle which is lit at the Easter Vigil. It stands in the chancel and is lit during the fifty days of Easter. It also is burned at baptisms and at funerals.

Processional Cross.

A cross which is carried by an acolyte in processions. It is then placed in the chancel either directly behind the altar or to the side if there is another altar cross present.

Processional Torches

Special candles on long poles which are carried in procession. They may be used in the entrance processional and also in the Gospel processional.

Pulpit

The special lectern where the lessons are read, and the sermon is preached. It is also referred to as the *ambo*.

Sacramental Vessels and Cloths

The vessels and cloths used during the celebration of the Eucharist. They include:

Chalice. The cup which holds the wine.

Ciborium. A vessel with a lid, similar in size to the chalice. It is used to hold the communion bread for distribution.

Corporal. The white cloth which is spread on the altar. The chalice and paten are placed upon the corporal as the table is set.

Cruet. A small glass pitcher, used to hold water or wine.

Host Box. A small vessel with a lid used to bring the communion bread forward at the time of the offertory.

Pall. A stiffened cloth used to cover the chalice.

Paten. A plate upon which the communion bread rests on the altar.

Purificator. The cloth which is used to wipe the chalice during distribution.

Thurible

The vessel in which the incense is burned. It holds burning coals upon which the incense is placed to be burnt. It has a long chain by which it is carried.

Vestments

Alb

The long white vestment extending from the neck to the ankles. It is the primary vestment of those who minister at the altar. It is gathered at the waist by a rope cincture.

Cincture

A rope tie worn at the waist of the alb.

Stole

The long thin garment worn over the shoulders of the ordained ministers. It is a sign of their office. The stole is colored according to the day or season of the Church Year. It is worn hanging straight over both shoulders by the priest, and draped over the left shoulder of the deacon.

The Church Calendar

Almost all Christian congregations celebrate the Birth of Christ (Christmas) and the Resurrection of Christ (Easter). Traditionally, the Church has not limited its celebration and remembrance to these two events, but has celebrated many other events in the life of Christ and the Church throughout the year.

The Church year begins with **Advent**. Advent means “coming” and the season of Advent brings to remembrance the coming of the Messiah and leads us toward the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. In the Advent season, however, we also are directed toward the hope of the return of Jesus Christ, His second Advent. Advent season is a season of preparation and examination as we anticipate the coming of the Lord. Violet is the color of the Advent season, and the vestments and décor of the Church will reflect this.

Christmas is not just a day but a season in the Church which lasts twelve days, from the **Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ** (Christmas Day) until **The Epiphany** on January 6. Often the first celebration of the Christmas Season is held at midnight of Christmas Eve as Christmas Day begins. Also included in this season are the **Feast of the Holy Innocents** (December 28), which commemorates the slaughter of the innocent children by Herod, and the **Feast of The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ** (January 1), which remembers the 8th day after the birth of Jesus, the day of His circumcision. White is the color of the Christmas Season.

As indicated above, the Christmas Season is followed by **The Feast of the Epiphany** and the **Epiphany Season**. The Day of Epiphany, epiphany means “out-shining”, celebrates the coming of the wise-men to see Jesus, even more it celebrates the fact that He is a light to the Gentiles, and the revelation of the Christ child to the wise men is seen as the first occurrence of this. For this reason, The Feast of the Epiphany is also known as the Feast of the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. The Season of Epiphany continues until the beginning of the Season of Lent. Included in the Epiphany Season are the **Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ** on the First Sunday after the Epiphany and

the **Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple**, which is also called the **Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin** which occurs on February 2nd. Green is the color of the Season of the Epiphany.

The **Season of Lent** begins with **Ash Wednesday**, the date of which varies according to the date on which Easter is celebrated. Lent is a forty day season of fasting, Sundays, however are not reckoned as a part of the fast as they are always a feast of the Resurrection of our Lord. This fast is a season of penitence, a season to examine our hearts as we approach the celebration of **Holy Week** and the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. March 25th marks the **Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Violet is the color of the Lenten Season.

At the end of the Lenten Season comes The **Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday** this begins Holy Week which remembers the events of the week of the death and resurrection of our Lord. This week includes **Maundy Thursday**, **Good Friday**, and **Holy Saturday**.

Easter Season begins with the **Great Easter Vigil and the Sunday of the Resurrection (Easter Day)**. The Easter season continues until **Pentecost. Ascension Day** is celebrated on a Thursday, forty days after Easter. **The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, occurring on May 31 may either occur in the Easter Season or the Season after Pentecost, depending on the date of Easter. The color of the Easter Season is White.

The **Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday** is seven Sundays after Easter. The color of Pentecost is red. The Season after Pentecost (also called Kingdomtide) continues until the end of the Church Year and the beginning of Advent. The color of this season is green. Celebrations included in this time are **Trinity Sunday**, on the First Sunday after Pentecost, **The Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ**, August 6th; **Holy Cross Day**, September 14th, **All Saints Day**, November 1st; and **Christ the King**, the last Sunday after Pentecost.

There are many other additional days which commemorate the events of the Church and lives of the Saints.

THE DUTIES OF THE ACOLYTE

Gestures and Posture

In the course of serving many different postures and gestures are used, including the following.

Standing

Standing is a symbol of the Resurrection. One should stand straight and tall when standing. Unless being used for carrying or holding an object, the hands should be clasped and held above the waist.

Sitting

One should sit straight and tall with head raised and both feet on the floor. Legs are never to be crossed. Hands are to be folded in the lap or resting on knees.

Kneeling

Kneeling is not squatting or resting on heels. When kneeling, rest on both knees, keeping back straight and head bowed.

Walking

Walk slowly with grace and poise. Erect with head raised. If carrying a cross or candle, be sure they are carried straight. If you are not carrying anything, hands should be clasped, above the waist.

Simple Bow

The simple bow is a slow bowing of the head only. We do this when the processional cross passes, when we approach or pass in front of the altar, or receive or hand something to one another.

Profound Bow

The profound bow is a graceful bending forward from the waist.

The Sign of the Cross

The Sign of the Cross is one of the most ancient forms of devotion and signs in Christianity. It is a recollection of our Baptism, by tracing the sign of the cross on ourselves. It is a reminder of who we are and who we belong to. It is a clear signal that we are baptized and are pleased to make that known. In making the sign of the cross, the three middle fingers of our right hand are raised to touch the forehead, then lowered to touch the chest, then over to the left shoulder, and finally to the right shoulder. This should be done thoughtfully, prayerfully, and without haste.

Customary Practices in the Church

It is customary to:

- Reverence the altar with a bow before taking our seat.
- Make the sign of the cross at the opening acclamation.
- After taking seat to kneel or stand for private prayer.
- To stand at the time of the processional, and bow the head as the processional cross passes.
- To stand and face the reader during the reading of the gospel, and to make the sign of the cross with the right thumb on the forehead, lips, and breast when the gospel is announced.
- To stand for the Creed, to bow the head and the Name of Jesus, and to bow low at “By the power ... and was made man.”
- Kneel or bow low for the confession of sin, and to make the sign of the cross at the absolution.
- To stand and exchange the peace with those around.
- To reverence the sacrament with a bow before going forward to receive it.
- To make the sign of the cross before receiving the bread. Receive the bread in the palm of the right hand with the left hand supporting it, and respond “Amen” before eating the bread. To respond “Amen” before drinking of the chalice, to guide the chalice with both hands, and to make the sign of the cross after drinking of the chalice.
- After receiving communion to return to your place and kneel or stand for private prayer.
- To make the sign of the cross at the pronouncement of the blessing.
- To reverence the altar before leaving the church.

Specific Duties

Lighting of Candles

Candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. In lighting the Altar candles, remember that the candles on the Gospel side (left side as you stand in front of the altar) never burn alone. The other candles are lit first and extinguished last.

Check the taper in the candle lighter, making sure it is long enough to light all the candles. Extend the taper at least an inch, light it, and walk slowly to the altar. Pause in front of the altar, bow, walk to the epistle side (right side) and light the candle(s) there. If there are more than one, light the candle nearest the center of the altar first. Walk back to the center of the altar, bow, and then walk to the Gospel side, lighting the candle(s) there. Return to the center of the altar, make sure the candles are lit, and extinguish the taper by drawing down the taper trigger slowly. Bow again toward the altar, and return to the sacristy.

Extinguishing the Candles

Extinguish the candles in the reverse order in which they are lit. The snuffer should be held over the candle without touching it.

Paschal Candle

The Paschal candle is the largest and most decorated candle in the church. It is a symbol of the pillar of fire that led the Children of Israel from their captivity in Egypt to the promised land. For us, it is a symbol of our Baptism and our escape from the slavery of sin to the new life in Christ. The Paschal Candle is first lit by the presiding minister and carried by a deacon at the Great Vigil of Easter. It burns at services throughout the Easter season and is lit before worshipers arrive and extinguished after they leave. It is also used at Holy Baptism. On these days it is lighted after the other candles have been lit. The candle is also used at the burial of the dead. The candle may be carried in procession and placed in its stand at the head of the coffin. It is not carried outside the church when the coffin is taken away for burial.

Crucifer

The acolyte who carries the processional cross is called the crucifer. The cross is carried straight and tall with both hands. At the altar the crucifer stops. Without bowing he then proceeds and places the cross in its stand and then returns to his place. At times the cross may be carried in a gospel procession. After the second lesson, the crucifer carries the cross before the altar and waits for the others to form in procession. The crucifer then proceeds to the place where the Gospel will be read and turns to face the altar. After the reading is completed, the others stand aside to allow the crucifer to pass and then follow in procession. The crucifer pauses at the altar and then without bowing proceeds to the stand and replaces the cross in the stand. He then returns to his place. At the end of the service, if there is a recessional, the cross again goes before the altar, waiting for the others to form in procession behind, and then leads the procession out of the nave.

Torchbearers

The torchbearers carry the processional candles straight and tall with both hands and at the same height. They walk on each side of the crucifer in processions as above. They, along with the crucifer, do not bow at the altar. In the gospel procession, when the crucifer stops to mark the place of the reading and faces the altar; the torchbearers turn to face each other and the person holding the Gospel Book stands in between them.

Bookbearer

The acolyte who carries the Gospel Book, Altar Book, or other book is called the book bearer. The book is carried by grasping near the bottom corners, with the spine of the book in the left hand, with the book in a raised position. Walk about two yards behind the person in front. When you arrive before the altar do not reverence it, but carry the book to its place. There may be times when the book bearer will be used to hold the altar book during parts of the liturgy. Stand before the presiding minister, place hands at the very bottom of the open book, and angle the book and adjust the height for the minister who is reading. The book bearer may also carry the gospel book in the Gospel procession. If there is a recessional, the book bearer retrieves the book after the crucifer and torchbearers reach their places before the altar, and gets in formation in the same order as the procession in.

Bannerbearer

Carry the banner with both hands, usually angled a bit forward. The banner bearer usually follows the crucifer and torches and precedes the book bearer. Leave plenty of room between the torchbearers and the banner. At the altar, do not bow, proceed to the stand, place the banner, and return to your place. At time of the recessional, as the crucifer and torchbearers go to retrieve the cross and torches, retrieve the banner, walk to the center of the altar, bow and join the procession in the order assigned.

Thurifer

The acolyte who carries the thurible of incense is called the thurifer. The thurible is carried on the thurifer's right by its chain, with the ring closest to the thurible in the right hand, and the other in the left. The incense boat is held in the left hand. Prior to the processional, or other use, the thurifer stands before the presiding minister. The incense may be blessed. After this the minister takes the incense boat from the thurifer. The thurifer raises the lid of the thurible with the left hand while the minister spoons the incense onto the charcoal. The lid is then replaced and the incense boat is returned to the left hand. In carrying the thurible, it is kept in constant motion by a slow swinging motion of the right hand.

Service at the Altar.

The acolyte who serves at the altar is an Altar Server. The duties of this acolyte may vary depending upon the other ministers who are present. They may include the following.

- In the absence of a deacon may prepare the altar vessels.
- Bring the vessels to the altar.
- Spread the corporal and place the chalice and paten on it, with the chalice to the right of the paten.
- Remove the purificator and place it on the altar to the right of the corporal. Place the pall to the right of the purificator.
- Stand to the right of the altar. Receive the money offerings from the deacon or priest.
- Brings the water cruet, without the stopper, to the deacon or priest. Returns the cruet to the credence. Takes other cruets or vessels not needed at the altar to the credence.
- Takes the lavabo bowl, water cruet (without stopper) and towel to the priest for the washing of the hands. Returns to the credence.
- Reverence the sacrament with a low bow at the AMEN at the end of the doxology.
- Receive communion standing.
- If licensed to do so, may assist in administering the sacrament. Always allowing them to say “Amen” before receiving.
- Return vessels to the altar.
- If vessels are to be cleansed, ministers the water.