

Acolyte Handbook

What is an Acolyte?

The acolyte is an assistant to the pastor in the public worship services of the church. One of the duties of an acolyte is to light and extinguish the altar candles. Another duty is to help gathering individual cups after Holy Communion.

Acolyte Schedules

Acolytes will be scheduled for services. You may indicate any preference for service times. The schedule is published in the monthly newsletter and the weekly bulletin. If you cannot serve on the date scheduled, it is the responsibility of the acolyte to find a substitute. **Notify the church early of any substitutions or if one cannot be found.** 701-293-7979.

What should the Acolyte do at Worship Services?

1. Arrive at church fifteen (15) minutes before the service.
2. Puts on a robe found in the closet of the north sacristy.
3. Check candlelighter to make sure there is enough wick.
4. Light the candles seven (7) minutes before the service. Bow before entering the altar areas. Light the candles from your right to your left, just as you open a book from right to left.
5. Extinguish your candlelighters by pulling the wick down just enough to extinguish the flame. If you pull it too far down the wax will cool and lock the wick inside the candle lighter.
6. Sit in the first pew on the pulpit side.
7. Extinguishes the candles after the service using the Candle Snuffer. Extinguish the candles from your left to your right, just as you close a book from left to right. Do not press down on the candle to extinguish it. Otherwise the candle wick becomes damaged. You hold the bell over the candle to suffocate the fire. Hold it for a few seconds.
8. Bow as you exit the altar area.
9. Hang up your robe in the closet of the north sacristy. Be sure the robe is still on the hanger in the closet. Sometimes they fall down.
10. During Advent, an adult will lower the Advent wreath. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday in Advent.
11. The Christ Candle is lit from Christmas Eve December 24th until Ascension Day, usually on a Thursday in May.

What about services with Holy Communion?

During services with Holy Communion, the Acolytes gathers the individual cups from members as they leave the communion rail.

- Make sure the trays are present before the service begins.
- Go into the sacristy during the singing of the canticle before communion (usually the Agnus Dei – The Lamb of God)
- Opens the door of the sacristy and stands in the doorway on either the pulpit or lectern side and holds out the tray as the communicants leave the rail. **Then close the door and wait for the next table to be served.** When they are dismissed by the pastor, open the door again and collect the individual cups.
- When communion is ended, leave the trays in the sacristy and returns to your pew.

What about a processional into the church?

At special services, there is a processional when the pastors and others may enter the sanctuary from the back of the church. Acolytes may be part of this processional. They will serve as Crucifer (the one who carries the cross) or Torch Bearer (the one who carries the Christ Candle). The pastor will let the Acolyte know before the service if there will be a processional.



Clothing of the Acolyte

Robe – Long, white garment with a hood

Cincture – Rope belt used for tying Alb at waist

The Lights in the Church

Lights serve a practical purpose as candles did before the age of electricity. We do want to see and hear God's Word! But we have kept the candles to remind us of the light of Christ. The fire reminds us of the abiding presence of God as God went before the children of Israel in the desert as a pillar of fire by night. (Ex 13:21)

1. **Office Lights** – the two candles on the altar.
2. **Candlelighter** – the long-handled tool with a taper and a candlesnuffer that is used for the lighting and extinguishing of candles.
3. **Candle Snuffer** – the end of the Candlelighter that is used to put the candles out.
4. **Taper** – the wax-covered wick inside the Candlelighter.
5. **Christ Candle** – the candle by the lectern. Symbolizes our Lord's visible presence here on earth beginning with Christmas and on into His ascension. The Christ candle is also lit for a baptism as those who are baptized are joined to the death and resurrection of Christ.

Architecture of the Church

1. **Altar** – A focal point of our worship. It is a monument. Altars in the Old Testament were for sacrifice and a reminder of God's gracious presence among his people. They now point us to the sacrifice of Christ on his cross for the forgiveness of our sins. It also signifies our sacrifice of self, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and possessions to God through Christ, our Mediator and High Priest. The Altar is also the Lord's Table for the preparation, consecration, and distribution of Christ's body and blood in Holy Communion.
2. **Sanctuary** – the place where the altar sits; sometimes used to describe the entire church.
3. **Nave** – The main part of the church where the people sit. From the Latin word for ship – origin of word "navy."
4. **Chancel** – the front area of the pulpit, lectern, communion rail, and altar.
5. **Narthex** – the area from where people enter the nave, a fellowship area where people gather before or after the service.

ACOLYTES



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