

MANUAL FOR THE ACOLYTES

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church LCMS
Huron, SD
www.mtcalvaryhuron.com

So, you're going to be an acolyte! Congratulations! This is a high privilege which is not extended to everyone in the congregation. Only those who are going to be confirmed are selected for this important service.

Acolyting is one of the first ways in which young people of the church serve God and His kingdom. In a church service, the **pastors** preach and lead the liturgy. The **ushers** help with distributing the bulletins, seating the people, and taking the offering. The **elders** assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The **flower committee** coordinates and then sets out the flowers. The **altar guild** helps with setting up communion and the paraments (the colored cloths on the altar, pulpit and lectern) and making sure that the candles are ready for the service. And the **acolytes** light and extinguish the candles.

The word "acolyte" comes from the Greek word *ακολουθεω* which means to "follow, accompany, or be a disciple". For instance in John 8:12 Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows (*ακολουθεω*) me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Thus an acolyte is a follower, an attendant, a helper. To serve as an acolyte is one way to serve, support, and attend to the ministry of the word (the office of the Pastor).

To serve as an acolyte requires both spiritual and physical preparation. Because you are serving the Lord and leading others in worship of Him, you must be prepared. You will have opportunity to spiritually prepare for your service by praying with the pastors in the sacristy. In addition, you ought to be prepared physically by considering the following aspects of your service.

Clothing

Because the acolyte is serving God and the congregation in the Divine Service, the acolyte's clothing should reflect respect for God and the people of the congregation. Although the acolyte wears a white gown (symbolizing the purity of Jesus' holiness that "covers" us), the clothing and shoes that the acolyte wears should be neat, clean, and reflecting respect for God. Torn jeans, T-shirts with names or logos of music groups, sports teams, or with crude writings are simply not appropriate.

The Acolyte Gown

The acolyte gown is white, symbolizing the purity of Jesus' holiness that "covers" us and our sinfulness. It is Jesus' holiness and not our own which makes the acolyte's participation in the Divine Service acceptable to God. Because of its symbolism and because the acolyte gown will be used by other acolytes, the acolyte takes special care of the acolyte gown. The gown should not be allowed to touch the floor and become soiled. The acolyte should take care when wearing the gown that it hangs straight and that the collar lays flat. After the Divine Service is complete, the acolyte should return the gown to the closet. When hanging it on the hanger, the gown should hang straight, the zipper should be zipped up, and the collar should lay flat. This way the acolyte gown is ready for the next person.

The Torch

The candle lighter is called the "torch." Please check the torch before the Divine Service. There should be enough wick to last through lighting the candles, at least 2 inches. If there is too little wick left, please replace it before the Divine Service. Occasionally the wick will jam in the torch. If this ever happens, please notify one of the pastors immediately so that the torch

may be fixed. When you carry the torch down the aisle, always use both hands, and always keep the wick end up.

The Light

The light on the candles symbolizes the presence of God during the Divine Service. During the Divine Service *without* Communion, only the candles on the candelabra (candle stands) are lit. During the Divine Service *with* Communion, the two candles on the altar (the "Christ candles" symbolizing Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper) are also lit. If there is a Baptism, the Paschal Candle sitting next to the baptismal font is also to be lit. When we extinguish the candles, we light the torch from the last lit candle before extinguishing it.

Bowing Before the Cross

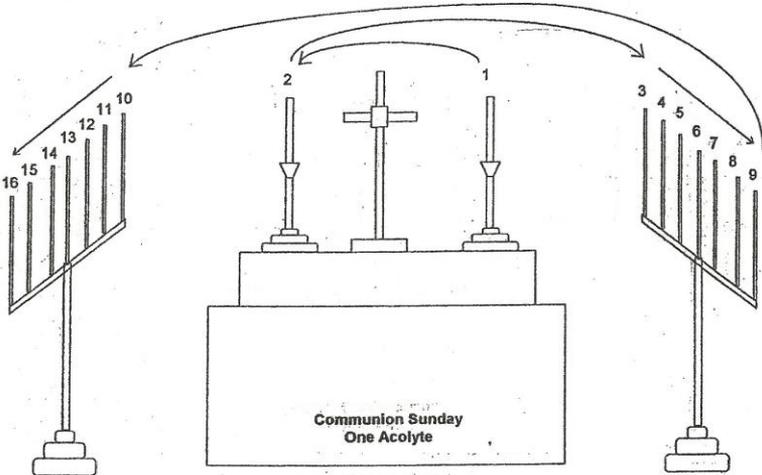
When the acolyte enters the "sanctuary" from the "chancel" through the gate in the communion rail, the acolyte should bow slightly before the cross in reverence to the Savior who died on the cross for our sins. Before leaving the "sanctuary," the acolyte should bow before the cross, then turn and exit.

During the Divine Service

During the Divine Service, the acolyte should participate in all parts of the service through the responsive readings, singing of the hymns, and listening to the Bible readings and sermon. A hymnal with a bulletin is available for the acolyte. The acolyte should check the first page on the inside of the bulletin to see which Order of Service to follow and which hymns to sing.

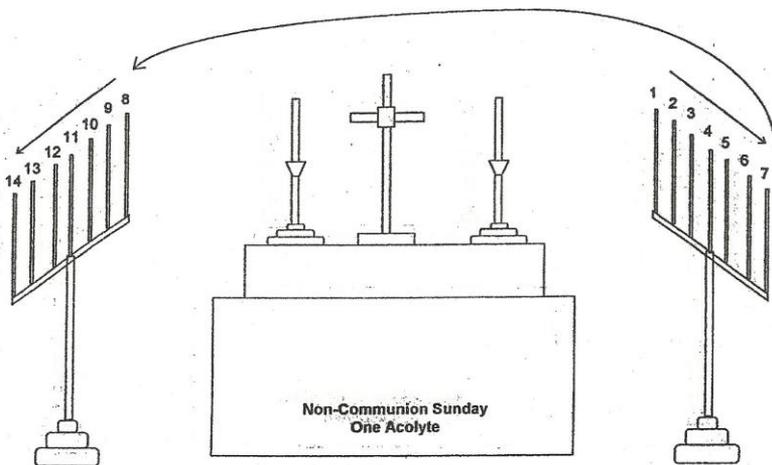
On the following page are diagrams explaining the order of candles to be lit. Please pay close attention to the how you light the candles and extinguish the candles. In extinguishing the candles, please remember that you "kill" the light by "suffocating it" and not by "crushing it to death"! This protects

the wick of the candles so that they will be easier to light for the next time.



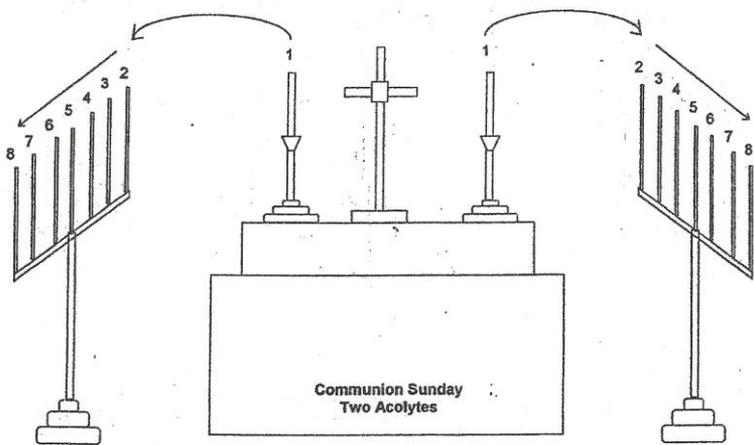
**Communion Sunday
One Acolyte**

Light candles 1, 2, 3, ...
Extinguish candles 16, 15, 14, ...



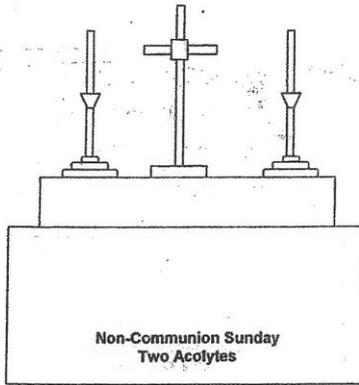
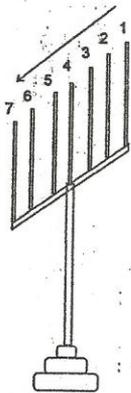
**Non-Communion Sunday
One Acolyte**

**Light candles 1, 2, 3, ...
Extinguish candles 14, 13, 12, ...**



**Communion Sunday
Two Acolytes**

**Light candles 1, 2, 3, ...
Extinguish candles 8, 7, 6, ...**



**Light candles 1, 2, 3, ...
Extinguish candles 7, 6, 5, ...**

