

St. Thomas of Canterbury
Episcopal Church

Acolyte Handbook

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You are an important part of worship.



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 you saints and angels, the joy of serving you and worshiping you before your Heavenly Altar; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers for Lay Ministries

SUNDAY PROCEDURES

These are the usual procedures,
but be prepared to make adjustments when
instructed by the Celebrant.

Before The Service:

- Arrive AT LEAST 15 minutes prior to the service
- Check in with the Vestry person.
- Get the service leaflet and bulletin and take them to the seat where you'll be sitting.
- Move the cross to the sacristy.
- Vest: Wear an alb (robe) and cincture (rope belt).
- Light the altar candles at 9:50. (See "Lighting Candles" on p.9)
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- Take the cross through the atrium to the back of the nave to prepare for the procession.

During The Service

- Lead the procession when the congregation begins singing the hymn. With a very short hymn, the Celebrant may instruct you to begin with the music. Walk in a dignified manner to the altar, pause briefly, turn and proceed to the cross holder. When there are two acolytes, the Crucifer leads with the Canterbury Cross. The second acolyte carries a hymnal or service leaflet and sings. He/she reverences the altar and proceeds to the east side.
- At the peace, turn off the microphone receiver on the shelf in the lectern, and move the lectern to the wall. During the peace, the second acolyte can move to the west side unless torches are used in the procession/recession.
- After the Celebrant says the offertory sentence, move to the credence table. Walk up to the deacon or priest and hand the 1) vested chalice, and 2) altar book and pillow.
- Wait by the credence table until the offering is brought forward.
- Take the basket with the peanut and butter and jelly, and place it under the credence table.

- Prepare to take the lavabo bowl and towel to the priest. After the deacon or priest has poured wine into the chalice, hand the pitcher of water from the credence table to the deacon or priest. When the water flagon is returned to you, the priest will come forward. Pour some over the priest's hands. The priest will dry his/her hands, and you can return the bowl and towel to the credence table.



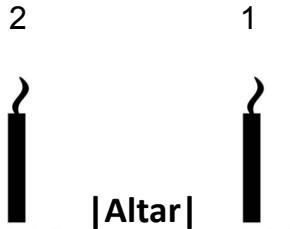
- During the Great Thanksgiving, you (or your assistant) rings the altar bells 3x. Once, before the words of institution (check with the priest for the verbal cue, as it changes seasonally). Once, after the elevation fo the bread and the words “do this for the remembrance of me.” Once, after the elevation of the wine and the words “do this for the remembrance of me.”
- Receive communion with the LEM's and musicians.
- Hand the paten and chalice still on the credence table to the clergy serving at the altar.
- Count every person present. Write the number on the sheet or post-it in the sacristy. **NEVER write in the book itself.**
- **Stay alert! Be ready to help however you are needed!**

- After all have received communion, receive the items from the priest and deacon that are handed to you.
- When the last hymn is sung, the priest or deacon will indicate the verse for you to begin leading the recession.
- After the dismissal, go back to the sacristy through the atrium.
- When the postlude is ended, extinguish the altar candles.
- Replace the cross in its stand.
- Hang your vestments in the correct size order.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

- Light the taper in the sacristy.
- Reverence the altar in the center before stepping up to the platform.
- Light the candles using the diagrams above.
- After all candles are lit, pull the lever on the lighter to extinguish the wick and **immediately push the lever up again**. This will keep the wax from clogging the tube.
- Reverence the altar at the center and return to the sacristy.

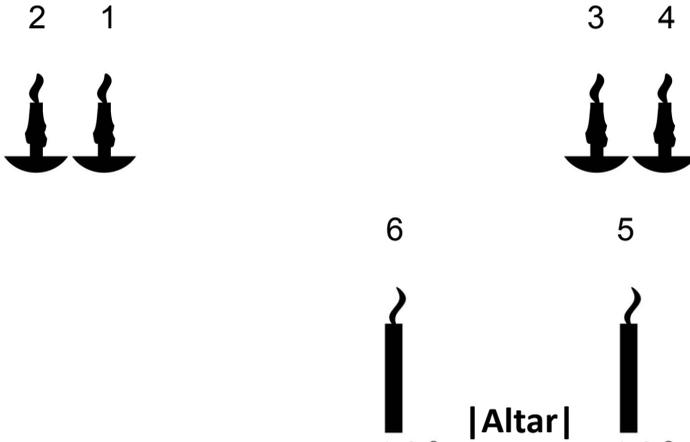
Facing the altar, light 1 and then 2:



During Eastertide, light the Pascal candle first *as soon as you vest*. At 9:50 am, light the candles on either side of the altar using the Pascal candle to light your taper.



If there are additional candles, light them first. Then light the candles on either side of the altar.



When there are six or more candles, two acolytes reverence the altar together and light them beginning at the center and working outward.

EXTINGUISHING OF CANDLES

Extinguish the Gospel candle 1st, then the candle on the right side of the altar. Other candles are then extinguished.



The Pascal candle is always extinguished last.



Two acolytes would extinguish six or more candles from the outside to the center.

SERVING AT THE TABLE



At Offertory:

1. Chalice with corporal and small cover (pall)
2. Book and 'holy' pillow
3. Water Cruet (handle toward Priest)
4. Lavabo bowl (napkin over left arm) – The priest will hand you the water. Wash the celebrant's hands.
5. After Receiving, pass extra plate (paten) and Chalice to Priest.

ORDER OF PROCESSIONAL

Bold is ordinary Sunday Service

Italic is High Holy Day Service

Notes: This processional order will be modified depending on the number of acolytes available to serve or presence of other people such as the Bishop. The positions marker with * are the ones that will be used least often.

*Thurifer with censer**

*Boat Bearer**

Crucifer

Large Processional Candles

Book Bearer

*Cross**

*Small Processional Candles**

Banner

Clergy Cross

Deacon/Assisting Priest

Priest/Celebrant

*Bishop's Chaplain**

*Bishop**

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Move with dignity, reverence, authority, and joy.
2. Reverence the altar (bow) when you come to the edge of the chancel (altar platform.) Take a moment to remember and acknowledge that you are in God's presence. You may make a slight bow or a deep bow—either way, do it with intention.
3. Remain calm, alert, and prayerful at all times.
4. Keep your heart open and eyes lifted. Use non-verbal cues to help direct the focus of the assembly towards God.
5. Share the work. Always look for opportunities to welcome and mentor younger children and newer members into the work of the liturgy. (Children can always join in processions carrying ribbons and/or candles.)
6. Be alert to the changes of the season and the changing tone of the liturgy.
7. Be flexible, because sometimes things change!

Remember that your ministry as an acolyte is in the service of God and in the service of the community gathered to pray.