

# **ACOLYTE MANUAL**

All Saint's Episcopal Church  
Winter Park, FL

January, 2010

A Prayer of Self Dedication:

*Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*Amen*

## Introduction

Welcome to the acolyte ministry. This manual is written to be a resource for you whether you are a new acolyte or a seasoned acolyte. It covers your duties, explains the order of the service, the items used during the service, and other valuable information.

## Leadership in the Liturgy

Liturgy is when the people of God gather together to experience, reflect on, and respond to the saving deeds of God within our cultures and tradition.

We all participate. There is no audience. Your role as an acolyte is to assist the congregation and clergy in the experience, reflection on, and response to God. Acolytes assist in service progression as well as keeping the congregation focused on the liturgy.

You should stay focused on the liturgy and avoid drawing attention to yourself.

If you are not paying attention, stumble through your duties, have an uninterested attitude or poor posture you may distract the congregation and other ministers from prayer.

**To succeed as an acolyte you also need to know your acolyte position and perform your duties in a quiet and reverent manner.** On the following pages is a set of guidelines to help you succeed in the acolyte ministry.

## Attitude

Acolytes are an important and visible part of prayer life at All Saints. It is important for you to be thoughtful, attentive, resourceful, reverent and above all sincere in all you do.

## Posture

Standing: Stand up straight. If you are holding something, hold it with reverence and strength. If you are not holding anything fold your hands in front of you.

Sitting: Sit up straight. Do not bounce your legs or tap your feet. Make sure your robe remains closed. Do not lean against the wall.

Walking: Walk at a natural slow pace. Walk with grace and dignity, holding your head up and shoulders square, but relaxed.

Kneeling: Kneel straight, with your weight on your knees, and balance with your legs and feet. Do not bounce, and never sit on your heels!

Expression: Try to have a pleasant expression. Do not let your eyes wander all over the ceiling. The best way to have the appropriate facial expression is by being attentive.

Pay attention to the service: Never sit staring off into space or covering your face in your hands. The more attention you pay to the service, the better you will perform your duties.

### **Absolute “Do Not’s”**

DO NOT:

- Chew gum, eat candy, drink bottled water, etc. ever!
- Slouch
- Sway back and forth
- Bounce your body or legs
- Rest your head in your hands
- Lean against the wall
- Stare off into space

### **Expectations**

Be on time: You should arrive in the sacristy 20-25 minutes before the start of the service. This will give you adequate time to be vested and be aware of any special instructions or changes for the service.

Participate: The congregation needs you to participate so that they can fully participate. The congregation often watches the ministers, including you, for their cues of when to respond. When other acolytes see you are participating they will know that they can depend on you and that you will not place them in an embarrassing situation by not doing your position correctly. Collaboration is the key to success; the acolyte ministry is truly a team effort.

Know your position: An acolyte warden will be present at every service to assist you before and after the service. The warden is your personal coach. They will assist you, answer questions, and review any duties you are unsure of. Wardens will be happy to train you for additional positions; they are there to answer any questions you may have.

It is always advisable to review the duties of your position when preparing to serve in a position you may not have previously done or have not done for some time.

Check-in and Clean-up: All acolytes are expected to check in with their acolyte warden when they arrive at church. This will let everyone know you are there and ready. Also, this allows for any last minute instructions, changes and answering of questions.

All acolytes are expected to clean-up after the liturgy. Each acolyte will put away their vestments, banners, torches, etc. Please let you warden know if any items are dirty, in need or repair or are broken.

Coverage: The serving schedules are submitted by the acolyte wardens to the church the 1<sup>st</sup> of the prior month (example: the September schedules are submitted the 1<sup>st</sup> of August). If you know in advance that you are unable to serve a particular month, please let your acolyte warden know **before** the schedule is created and submitted for that month.

Once the schedules have been submitted each acolyte is expected to find their own replacement if he or she is not able to be at the service as scheduled. The replacement must be a current acolyte that is trained in your scheduled position. Once you have found a replacement call or email your acolyte warden to inform them of the change. You will be provided with a roster with the names and phone numbers of all acolytes and your acolyte warden.

### **What to Wear**

Vesting:

- Alb (A)
- Cincture (B)
- Medal (C)

See diagram on page 18.

### **Dress Code**

Clothing: Avoid bulky clothing; it can be uncomfortable under your alb. Wear something that is neat and clean.

Shoes: No shoes with lights! We suggest that you do not wear athletic shoes, crocs, or Ugg boots they squeak and they look too casual. The best option is a simple dress shoes that is neat, clean and comfortable.

Hair: Must be neat and clean. Extreme hair-dos are not appropriate.

Grooming: Make-up should be light and natural. Your hands, face and teeth should be clean.

Jewelry: Keep it very simple.

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST

### Overview of the Service:

(Based on the 8:45 and 11:00 church services, other services may vary)

This section gives a step-by-step description of the service and the roles the acolytes perform in the service.

**ARRIVE:** 20-25 minutes before the service.

**VEST:** Put on alb, cincture, and medallion.

**CHECK IN WITH ACOLYTE WARDEN:** Review duties; ask for any last minute instructions.

### PRE-SERVICE:

**Crucifer:** 10 minutes prior to the service:

Light the candles on the altar:

Enter from the sacristy, with taper lit

Bow at the foot of the altar

Proceed to the center of the altar

Light the candle on the right side of altar (first)

Light the candle on the left side of altar

Return to center of the altar and facing the altar bow

Return to the sacristy and extinguish taper, move the wick until it is cool

7 minutes prior to the service:

Proceed to the bell tower to ring the bells

Ring the bell 18 times

Proceed to front entrance of the church and retrieve the cross

### PRAYER:

**All Acolytes** and clergy pray before the service.

### AFTER PRAYER:

**All Acolytes:** Gather taperers and proceed to the entrance of the church and line up

**Warden:** Gather the cross and carry it to the back of the church and place it in a stand next to the banner

### PROCESSION:

**Crucifer** leads the procession and starts line up at the last two pews.

Order of Procession:

**Crucifer**

**Second Taperer**

**First Taperer**

Choir

**Second Server**

**First Server**

**Banner Bearer/Bells**

Clergy

**Crucifer** starts the procession as the entrance hymn begins (when the actual singing starts)

All others follow

**Crucifer:** Proceed to steps  
Pause: wait for taperers to join you

**Taperers / Crucifer:** Proceed to altar rail, all three in line  
Pause at altar rail

Reminder: Both taperers should hold the tapers at the same height

**First Taperer:** Take taper to stand  
Sit on the right side of the altar

**Second Taperer:** Take taper to stand  
Sit on the left side of the altar

**Crucifer:** Take Cross to stand  
Sit in seat near choir

(Choir takes their seat.)

**Servers:** Proceed to altar rail  
Bow

**First Server:** Sit on the right side of the altar

**Second Server:** Sit on the left side of the altar

**Banner Bearer:** Proceed to altar rail  
Bow  
Sit in seat on the left side, next to the organ

(Clergy takes their places)

**All Acolytes** remain standing

See Seating Chart on page 18.

**OPENING PRAYER:**

Remember to respond appropriately along with the congregation:

*Opening Acclamation:* Celebrant

*Collect of Purity:* Celebrant

*Gloria:* remember to sing

*Collect of the Day:* Celebrant

**All Acolytes sit.**

**LITURGY OF THE WORD:**

**All Acolytes** be attentive to the lectors

*The Lesson:* First reading, respond: “Thanks be to God”

*The Psalm:* sing or speak along with the congregation

*The Epistle:* Second reading, respond: “Thanks be to God”

Hymn begins:

**GOSPEL PROCESSION:**

See diagram on page 19.

**Crucifer:** Get cross (on signal from clergy)  
Stand at altar rail facing the altar

**First Taperer:** Get taper (when Crucifer gets cross)  
Stand at the right side of the crucifer facing the altar

**Second Taperer:** Get taper (when Crucifer gets cross)  
Stand at the left side of the crucifer facing the altar

Reminder: Both taperers should reach the altar rail at the same time

(Deacon will take the Gospel book, bow and face the Crucifer and Taperers)

**Crucifer / Taperers:** Bow. Turn and face the congregation. Taperers must turn out (away) from Crucifer

**Crucifer:** Lead procession to the start of the chapel wall and stop and turn and face the altar

**Taperers:** Follow Crucifer  
When Crucifer stops, you stop  
Turn and face each other and position yourself between the Deacon and Sub-deacon

During the reading of the Gospel: you should remain focused and still  
At the conclusion of the Gospel respond: "Glory to you Lord Christ"

(Deacon and Sub-deacon will step aside)

**Crucifer:** Walk between Taperers and lead procession back to altar  
Proceed to choir rail  
Pause: wait for taperers to join you at steps

**Taperers / Crucifer:** Proceed to altar rail, all three in line  
Pause at altar rail

**Taperers:** Put taper back in the stand and return to seat

**Crucifer:** Put cross in stand and return to your seat

SERMON:

**All Acolytes** sit, be attentive during the sermon

AFTER THE SERMON:

**All Acolytes** be attentive and participate

*The Creed:* stand

*The Prayers of the People:* stand

*The Confession of Sin:* stand or kneeling depending on service

PEACE:

**All Acolytes** stand

**Banner Bearer:** After exchanging Peace, leave altar through the side door and walk outside the church to the church entrance  
Get Banner

OFFERTORY:

See diagram on page 19.

**First Server:** Assist Deacon in the preparation of the altar  
Present vested chalice to Deacon  
Present the wine (straight cross)  
Take wine back to Epistle credence table  
Present the water (turned cross)  
Take water back to Epistle credence table

Wash the Celebrant's hands  
Hold water in right hand and lavabo bowl in left hand  
Place lavabo towel over left arm  
Bow when finished

Once the collection is finished

**Second Server:** Immediately when the Doxology starts retrieve alms basin (offertory) from Gospel credence table  
Walk to steps and hold the basin towards the congregation, with the crown facing up, **not** the cross  
Please be conscious of timing to arrive at the steps as the doxology finishes, or as close to the steps without giving the perception of hurrying

**Banner Bearer:** Immediately when the Doxology starts proceed down the aisle with Banner  
Please be conscious of timing to arrive at the steps as the doxology finishes, or as close to the steps without giving the perception of hurrying  
Put the banner in the stand by the organ

(The ushers will follow the Banner bearer with the collection)

**Second Server:** Collect collection plates from the ushers  
Bow  
Proceed to the altar  
Bow  
Member of the clergy will remove the four collection plates  
Take the alms basin back to Gospel credence table

#### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING:

**All Acolytes** be attentive and participate

*Preface:* standing

*Sanctus:* standing and singing

*Mystery of Faith:* Kneeling

*Lord's Prayer:* Kneeling

**Bells:** Ring the bells during Great Thanksgiving  
Three times during Sanctus  
Once at the end of Sanctus  
Once after each "in remembrance of Me"  
Once after the Great Amen  
At Lord's Prayer go to altar and kneel

#### THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD:

**All Acolytes:** Kneeling, sing or say, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore, let us keep the feast"

(Clergy leaves altar to go to side chapel)

**Second Server:** Put down kneeling pad and close altar rail gate

**Crucifer:** Watch to make sure Second Server remembers to close altar rail gate. Assist if necessary.

**Acolytes** in the sanctuary will remain kneeling at their places to receive Communion  
**Crucifer** and **Banner Bearer** will kneel at Altar rail to receive communion

**All Acolytes:** After receiving Communion, return to seats, reflect or sing

AFTER COMMUNION:

**Second Server:** Open altar rail  
Put back kneeling pad  
Take the four offertory plates from the altar and place them inside the alms basin on the Gospel credence table  
Return to seat

**First Server:** Move to altar and stand ready to assist in clearing the altar  
Return all items to the Epistle credence table  
Watch to make sure Second Server remembers to remove the offertory plates from the altar. Assist if necessary.  
Return to seat after all items are cleared

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

**All Acolytes:** Kneel for *Post Communion Prayer*  
Stand and sing and prepare for recessional

RECESSIONAL:

**Crucifer:** Get Cross (on signal from clergy)  
Go to altar rail  
Face the altar

**Taperers:** Get taper (when Crucifer gets cross)  
Stand on either side of Crucifer

(Clergy will line up at the altar)

**Servers:** Join clergy at altar in line and bow when clergy bows

**Crucifer and Taperers:** Turn to face congregation when clergy bows.  
Taperers turn out (away) from the Crucifer

**Crucifer:** Lead recession  
Pause at the choir steps to allow the choir to fall in line  
Continue to lead the recession to the entrance of the church

**Taperers:** Follow directly behind the Crucifer

**Servers:** Follow behind the choir

**Banner Bearer:** Get the banner  
Follow behind the Servers

(Clergy follows. All acolytes should remain in the back of the church until the Deacon says the dismissal)

**All Acolytes:** Return to the sacristy, un-vest and put everything away

**Crucifer:** Return to the altar to extinguish the candles  
(Use same procedure as for lighting candles but reverse order, left then right)  
If you also served a Banner Bearer, carry the banner back to the entrance of the church.

**NOTE:**

**Anytime you need to cross the altar during the service, you should pause, face the altar and bow. This usually occurs when you are serving in multiple positions, such as crucifer/ banner, crucifer/server or server/bells, etc.**

**All acolytes should fully participate during the service:**

- **Reciting congregational prayers**
- **Reciting congregational responses**
- **Standing when the congregation stands**
- **Kneeling when the congregation kneels**
  - **1st and 2nd taperers – use kneelers under seat**
  - **1st and 2nd servers – use kneelers under seat**
  - **Crucifier, banner, bells – at Altar rail**
- **Singing when the congregation sings, including but not limited to:**
  - **Processional – if you are serving in a position that is not carrying something**
  - **Recessional – if you are serving in a position that is not carrying something**
  - **Gospel Procession – All acolytes until procession actually starts, 1st and 2nd server should continue singing during the procession**
- **Being attentive during the sermon**

**Thomas Center Service**

The service in the Thomas Center is very similar to the service in the church, however there are some distinct differences. There are only three acolytes in the Thomas Center: Crucifer, First Server/Taperer and Second Server/Taperer. There is no Banner or Bells. There is no choir.

The crucifer will serve as the senior acolyte for this service.

Before the service the crucifer should:

Light altar candles.

Confirm who is serving as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> server.

If there is no one to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> server, the crucifer will also serve in these positions.

After the service the crucifer should:

Extinguish altar candles.

Make sure the cross and tapers have been returned to their respective stands.

The acolyte seats will be on the far left side of the altar next to the clergy.

The processional is the same as in the main church.

The service remains the same until Holy Communion.

Changes include:

All Acolytes:

Do not kneel during Communion.

Form a semi-circle with the band to receive communion.

First Server:

Although there is less cleanup, First Server should still be prepared to clean up altar after communion.

Second Server:

Walk to the center of the altar with the alms basin (wicker basket) after the offertory hymn.

Receive the two offertory plates from the ushers.

Proceed to the altar with the alms basin and the two offertory plates, raise them to be blessed.

Place the alms basin and two offertory plates on the right side of the altar.

Does not have to close altar rail or move cushion.

The recessional is the same as in the main church.

If you have any questions about the service please consult your warden before the service or the crucifer during the service.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully you have found this manual helpful. Please use this manual to help answer questions you may have about your role in the service and in the acolyte ministry. We hope this manual has shown how truly collaborative the acolyte ministry is; the more we work together the more successful the service will be.

If problems arise feel free to contact one of the acolyte wardens. The wardens will be happy to help answer any questions or concerns you might have.

### **Contact Information**

**Acolyte Director**

Email: [Cmurphy@geico.com](mailto:Cmurphy@geico.com)

**Matthew – First Sunday**

Email: [Adunnam@msn.com](mailto:Adunnam@msn.com) or [ldunnam@pertree.com](mailto:ldunnam@pertree.com)

**Mark – Second Sunday**

Email: [Judithmccarthy@cfl.rr.com](mailto:Judithmccarthy@cfl.rr.com)

**Luke – Third Sunday**

Email: [Nicholas\\_Murphy@emerson.edu](mailto:Nicholas_Murphy@emerson.edu)

**John – Fourth Sunday**

Email: [cshaw@ymail.com](mailto:cshaw@ymail.com)

Serving Schedule is available online at <http://www.allsaintswp.com/sundayschedule.htm>

## Acolyte Duties Quick Reference Guide

Please refer to pages 6 -13 for more details.

### All Positions:

1. Arrive and vest 20-25 minutes before the service.
2. Check in with your acolyte warden.
3. Participate in pre-service prayer.

### Crucifer:

1. Light the candles on the altar 10-15 minutes before the service. (Light the right side first, then the left)
2. Ring church bell 7 minutes before the service.
3. Lead procession carrying the cross.
4. Lead gospel procession, stopping at the chapel wall.
5. Make sure the 2<sup>nd</sup> server has closed the altar rail at communion.
6. Lead recession carrying the cross.
7. Extinguish the candles on the altar. (Left side first, then right)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Server:

1. Follow in procession.
2. Assist the deacon in preparing the altar for communion.
3. Wash the celebrant hands with water, using the lavabo bowl and towel.
4. After communion assist in clearing the altar, returning all items to the epistle credence table.
5. Make sure the 2<sup>nd</sup> server has removed the offertory plate from the altar after communion.
6. Follow in recession.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Server:

1. Follow in procession.
2. Carry alms (offertory) basin to the choir steps during offertory procession.
3. Receive the collection plates from the ushers.
4. Take alms basin and collection plates to the altar rail.
5. The sub-deacon will take the four offertory plates.
6. Place the alms basin on the gospel credence table.
7. After the bread and wine have been taken to the chapel, close the altar rail.
8. After communion open the altar rail and remove the four offertory plates from the altar and place on gospel credence table inside the alms basin.
9. Follow in recession.

### Banner Bearer:

1. Prior to the service verify that the banner is at the entrance to the church.
2. Follow in procession.
3. After you exchange the sign of peace, proceed to the entrance of the church to get banner (walking outside the church)
4. Lead offertory procession.

5. Follow in recession carrying the banner.

Taperer:

1. Follow in procession.
2. Walk on the left (1<sup>st</sup> taperer) or right (2<sup>nd</sup> taperer) directly behind the crucifer.
3. Follow in the Gospel procession walking directly behind the crucifer.
4. Turn in towards the center of the aisle standing between the deacon and sub-deacon.
5. Anytime the taperer leaves the altar they should meet the crucifer at the altar rail facing the altar.
6. When turning for Gospel and recession turn out/away from the crucifer.
7. Follow in recession walking directly behind the crucifer.

Bells:

1. Check service bulletin for the Eucharistic Prayer (A, B, or C).
2. Follow in procession.
3. During communion ring bells (7 times) based on the appropriate Eucharistic Prayer (A, B or C).
4. Follow in recession.

## Glossary

Acolyte: A term applied to one who carries a torch or candle in processions and assist during the service. The term is commonly interchanged with server.

Alb: A long, white, sleeved vestment worn by acolytes.

Alms Basin: A large metal plate into which the money offerings of the congregation are placed before they are presented at the altar.

Altar Rail: The rail or kneeler where people kneel or stand to receive Communion.

Blessed Sacrament: The consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist which are the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Boat: A small container, with a lid and spoon, in which incense is kept before it is placed in the thurible.

Bread Box: The container in which the bread or hosts for the Eucharist are kept. This is presented to the Celebrant at the Offertory by a member of the congregation.

Candle Lighter/Extinguisher: A long pole with a two-pronged end. One side is a taper and the other is a snuffer to extinguish the candles.

Celebrant: The principal officiate at the Eucharist and other Sacraments.

Chalice: A metal cup into which the wine and a little water for the Eucharist is poured.

Cincture: A rope, worn with the alb, tied with a slip knot at the left side of the waist.

Epistle Credence Table: A table to the right of the altar, on which the vessels and other items for the Eucharist are kept.

Gospel Credence Table: A table to the left of the altar, on which the collection plate is kept.

Cruets: Glass or metal containers for wine and water used at the Eucharist.

Elements: The bread and wine to be consecrated at the Eucharist.

Lavabo: The washing of the celebrant's hands during the Offertory, with Lavabo bowl and towel.

Server: One who assists at the altar.

Taper: A candlestick that is carried during the service to light the word of God.