

Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church

Acolyte Manual



*But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. –
Luke 22:26-27*

Congratulations on becoming an Acolyte!

Thank you for answering a call to serve the Church. As an acolyte at Trinity on the Hill, you are an integral part of the worship of the Church and a leader in the community. You will be one of the most visible participants in the worship of the church, assisting the clergy and the laity in making sure that God is worshipped in the liturgy. You are the Light of Christ!

General Guidelines

-Arrive on Time: On the days you are scheduled, please arrive at least **15 minutes** before the start of the service so you can vest and be in position before the service starts.

-Arrive at least 30 minutes early for special services like funerals and Holy Days (examples are Easter, Christmas Eve, Epiphany).

-Wear Appropriate Attire for Easter, Christmas, and Funerals: Because what we wear can sometimes be a distraction, please do not wear bright colors under your robe. As your shoes will be visible, please wear solid black or brown shoes. Tennis shoes with bright colors or flip flops are not appropriate on these days.

-Participate in the Worship: You are a model for the congregation. Be attentive, follow the liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer, and sing the hymns.

-Be Deliberate: Move slowly and gracefully. There is no need to rush as we worship God.

-When **mistakes** happen (and they probably will), there is no need to panic. God doesn't expect perfection. Just move on from the mistake without laughing. We can laugh in the sacristy afterwards!

-**Follow the lead of the clergy:** The clergy will give you directions if they need you, or you can look to them if you are lost.

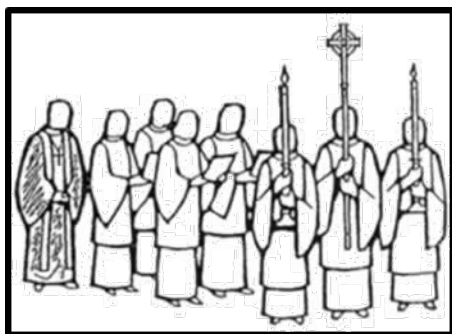
Checklist before the Liturgy

1. Arrive early. You don't want to be out of breath when heading into the church.
2. No chewing gum! Spit it out before you head into the church.
3. Put on your alb, and make sure the bottom of the alb rests on the top of your feet and isn't too short.
4. The crucifer must light the altar candles (lectern side, then pulpit side). Remember: bow to the altar before and after you light the candles.
5. Take a moment to say a simple prayer regarding your ministry. Here's an example:

Lord, Grant that I may faithfully and loyally serve you in love, and through my service proclaim "In all things, God be glorified!" Amen.

Procession Into the Church

1. Line up behind the crucifer. The order is as follows: Crucifer, Torchbearers, Choir, Server, Lay Ministers, and Clergy. Begin walking when the congregation begins singing.
2. The crucifer leads the procession at a comfortable pace. Not too slow, not too fast. Remember: This isn't a race.
3. When passing the baptismal font, all acolytes shall pass on the left side.
4. The crucifer and torchbearers approach the altar and walk towards where the cross and torches shall be placed. The acolytes shall place their items in the stands at the same time. Walk towards your seats and remain standing until all others sit.
5. The server approaches the altar and waits for the LEM's and Clergy to get in place. After all bow, the server heads to the right of the altar towards their seat. Remain standing until all others sit.



Gospel Procession

1. The crucifer and torchbearers assemble in front of the altar, outside of the altar rail, with the crucifer facing the altar and the torchbearers facing inside towards each other. The crucifer, once cued by the bowing of the priest, will direct the acolytes to turn and walk towards the baptismal font.
2. The crucifer stops behind the font in the center aisle and turns around with the cross facing the priest.
3. Torchbearers stop beside the font and face inwards towards each other without leaning on the pews.
4. When the priest has finished reading the Gospel, the crucifer proceeds towards the altar.
6. Once the crucifer has passed the torches, the torchbearers will follow the crucifer. The LEM and the priest will follow.
7. The crucifer and torchbearers approach the altar and walk towards where the cross and torches shall be placed. The acolytes shall place their items in the stands at the same time. Walk towards your seats and remain standing until all others sit.
8. The acolytes should sit only after the LEM has returned to his or her seat.

During the Eucharist

1. Bow to the altar when you walk in front of it.
2. When the priest finishes the announcements, the crucifer should get the offering plates and hand them to the ushers. The server should walk and stand next to the crucifer. Then, the server receives the Bread and Wine and takes them to the credence table.
3. The server then assists the priest with setting the altar and fetching things from the credence table. The pattern is as follows:
 - Once the priest turns to you, present the silver round box of wafers, handing it to the priest. Bow, and inform the priest of how many people are in the congregation. Return to the credence table and get the flagon of wine. The priest will hand you the silver round box and you will hand the priest the wine. Bow. Return to the credence table and bring the flagon of water. The priest will hand you the wine and you will hand the priest the water. Bow.
4. Once the priest has finished setting the table, take the lavabo bowl and towel off the credence table. Carry the bowl in your weak hand and drape the towel over the same arm, like a waiter. The priest will hand the water flagon back to your dominant hand.

5. When the priest is ready for the lavabo, the server pours water from the flagon over the priest's fingers into the bowl. Don't be shy about pouring water on the priest's hands! Stop pouring when the priest shakes his or her hands. The priest will dry his or her hands and you can return the lavabo, water, and towel to the credence table. Make sure the credence table does not appear messy.

6. Once the priest is in place behind the altar, he or she will indicate that the congregation should stand and the ushers should bring forth the offering plates. When the ushers begin walking, the crucifer moves to stand in front of the altar to receive the plates from the ushers. Taking one plate in each hand, the crucifer turns, approaches the altar, and hands the offering plates to the priest. The crucifer should step back, bow, and then return to his or her place.



Recessional

1. When the music for the closing hymn starts, the server gets the candle lighter. Snuff the candles out (pulpit side then lectern side) and bow to the altar before you leave.
2. Retrieve the cross and torches then get in position, facing the congregation.
3. The crucifer will wait until he or she sees the choir begin moving from the loft. The crucifer will lead the acolytes down the stairs. The crucifer should pause at the first pew, count silently to 10, then slowly proceed down the center aisle.
4. The server waits until the clergy and the LEM's line up in front of the altar, joining them for a bow. The server then begins walking down the stairs.
4. Recess into the back of the Nave, then return to the Sacristy by way of the side aisle closest to the double doors. Return your items to the Sanctuary only after the final hymn is finished.

After the Service

1. The server should lead the acolytes in the following prayer.

Lord, Grant that as I have served in your presence, so may I witness faithfully to your love in the world.

2. Neatly hang up your robe, cinctures, and put away your cross.

Glossary

Alb: A long, white garment that covers from the neck to the feet and is tied at the waist with a cincture.

Celebrant: The priest officiating at or in charge of a Eucharist

Chalice: A large, stemmed cup that holds the wine during communion

Cincture: A long rope with knots in the ends that is tied around the waist.

Credence Table: The small table, usually on the lectern side of the altar, that holds vessels and items for the Eucharist.

Crucifer: The acolyte that carries the cross and leads the procession.

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

Elements: The bread and wine used for Holy Communion.

Glossary

Flagon: A large, covered pitcher used to hold wine or water.

Lavabo Bowl: A small bowl used to wash the hands of the celebrant.

Liturgy: Public worship services of the church.

Nave: The large part of the church where the congregation sits.

Reverence the Altar: Stopping and bowing from the waist towards the altar as a sign of reverence.

Sanctuary: The area inside the communion rail surrounding the altar.

Server: The acolyte that is dedicated to assisting the priest or deacon with setting the altar for the Eucharist.

Torch Bearer: One or two acolytes who carry a torch and accompany the crucifer.

Vestment: Any of the garments worn by those participating in a liturgy.



St. Vincent, Deacon and Martyr
Patron of Acolytes



“The patron of those who serve at the altar is Vincent, Deacon and Martyr. He lived in the late third century, was martyred in the year 304, and is commemorated in our calendar on January 22. Vincent is remembered for his love of God, his faithfulness to his bishop, and his unswerving loyalty to his responsibilities. These traits--love, faithfulness, and loyalty—are virtues that all who are privileged to serve at the altar should cultivate.

Remember: our purpose is rooted in our love of God, our faithfulness is seen in our willingness to serve responsibly, and our loyalty is demonstrated in how carefully we carry out our duties. Love, faithfulness, and loyalty are the virtues we seek to perfect. The server’s aim is to be as steadfast as St. Vincent.” –Dennis Michno, *A Manual For Acolytes*

