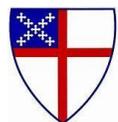




Acolyte Handbook

“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME
WILL NEVER WALK IN DARKNESS BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT
OF LIFE.”

John 8:12



HISTORY OF THE ACOLYTE

As a St. Barnabas acolyte, you are joining the ranks of those who have helped with the worship service since the early Christian church. Some say that acolytes have an even longer history – that Samuel, who assisted Eli in the Old Testament Temple was really the first acolyte. The word acolyte means “attendant” or “one who helps”. In accepting this position, you will be serving as a companion to Father Alex: performing a number of important functions before, during, and at the close of the worship service. You, therefore, are a minister of St. Barnabas bringing to each worship service a special ministry.

Please note: as you sit or stand during the worship service, you will be a reminder to the other worshippers that they should be reverent when worshipping God. Relax. Be comfortable during the service. There are many ways to conduct the service, so don't let variations bother you.

If you have questions, PLEASE ASK! We may even change the *handbook* to make it clearer.

The Role of the Acolyte

The acolyte's role is to serve – to help in the presentation of the worship service. An acolyte is a leader and a helper – *not* a slave. (Kind of like a great assistant – the job doesn't really get done without 'em.) Therefore, the acolyte must learn his/her part in the service and pay attention. If something goes amiss, the priest might ask you to do something a little different.

Like a terrific waitress or waiter, an acolyte should always be on their toes. A good acolyte also anticipates the next step in the service. Always “at the ready” when it is time for the next thing to happen in the worship service.

A couple of general notes:

- whenever crossing in front or behind of the altar, please acknowledge the altar with a bow (unless you are carrying the cross)
- if you are not holding or carrying anything, please fold your hands at elbow-level, vs. putting your hands in your pockets, or swinging them at your side.

And, please, DON'T WORRY about making a mistake. It will get corrected – and besides, there is no one *right* way to do things. Be comfortable in your role as a leader and a helper. But use the opportunity to pay attention and to learn.

GENERAL TERMS

Acolyte Roles:

Crucifer	the person who carries the cross, leading the procession into and out of the worship service
Thurifer	the person who carries the censer/thurible during special services

Parts of the Church:

Ambry/Tabernacle	cupboard in the Chancel where the Reserved Sacrament is kept
Altar	the table where bread and wine are consecrated during our Eucharistic celebration
Chancel	the elevated area at the front of the sanctuary
Font	the large basin from which water is taken during the sacrament of Baptism.
Narthex	the “lobby” at the back of the church
Nave	large main area of the church where all the pews are located
Pulpit	large elevated lectern from where the sermon is preached
Lectern	the stand from which the scripture lessons are read
Sacristy	the room where communion vessels are kept and the Altar Guild prepares for the service
Sanctuary	means “holy place”. At St. Barnabas, it is technically the area inside the altar rail, but is sometimes used as an all-encompassing term for the whole church area
Gospel Side	when sitting in the pews, this is the left side of the church where the pulpit is
Epistle Side	when sitting in the pews, this is the right side of the church where the lectern is

Things Used in the Service:

Altar Candles	the candles on the Altar - light the right candle (epistle side) first then left (gospel side) – extinguish opposite so that the gospel side candle never stands alone
Alms basin	the big brass plates for the offering
Burse/Chalice Veil	the liturgically colored pocket and covering for the chalice and paten that sits on the altar at the beginning of the service
Ciborium	the small silver “bread tin” that hold the wafers (sometimes they are in a glass jar)
Chalice	the large cup that holds the wine
Communion Kit	the box for taking communion to people at home or in hospitals
Credence table	the “server’s table”
Cruets	vessels that hold the wine and water
Lavabo bowl/towel	used to wash the Priest’s hands before communion
Pascal candle	large ornate candle – paschal means having to do with Easter
Paten	the silver bread plate

Acolyte Vestments:

Cassock	the long, black robe
Cotta/surplice	white garment that goes over the cassock

BEFORE THE SERVICE

1. Please arrive at least 20 minutes before the service. This will give you time to get vested (robed) in your assigned cassock and cotta, check equipment (candle lighters and cross) and to check on any special requirements. *For example:* Is the communion kit to be used? Is there anything else unusual about the service? You may be asked to answer questions if there is a visiting priest...
2. Check with Lysa for any special instructions.
3. Light the candle lighter (the Altar Guild are there if you need help) and then proceed to light the altar candles, **facing the altar from the front**, bowing to the altar before lighting. Light the candles from the right to the left. The two tall candles on the Votive cabinet need to be lit as well. Once they are all lit, snuff the taper, bow to the altar, and then put the candle lighter away.

SERVICE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST (Eucharist means Thanksgiving)

Responsibilities:

- Lights candles before the Service – right to left (epistle side, then gospel side)
- Carries cross during Entrance Procession – leads the procession... slowly, with dignity
- Serves in the removal of the communion vessels (***if needed***)
- Distributes alms basin at the Offertory; collect during Doxology (Praise God from whom all blessings flow...)
- Carries the cross during the Exit Procession – again... Not Too Fast!!
- Puts out the altar candles at the end of the Service – left to right (reverse of how they were lit.)

DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

The Entrance Processional

***Acknowledge altar (if carrying the cross: simply pause, do NOT bow; if not carrying anything, bow), then put cross away – make sure it is securely fastened

Offertory

Handing out the Alms Basin(s) – ***When the Offertory music begins***
Collect offering from the Ushers during the Doxology, present for blessing
Place the Offering under the credence table

Communion

Receive communion at the altar rail with Choir, Organist, and Verger

After Communion (IF NEEDED)

Be ready with water to add to the chalice.
Bread plates (paten) handed from Fr. Alex to credence table
Chalice handed from Fr. Alex to credence table
C corporal (white cloth that catches bread crumbs) moved to table, then wait for dismissal

Exit Processional

When to move – on signal from Father Alex

Be relaxed; move with dignity

Put the cross back in its holder

Put out the altar and Votive cabinet candles (not the actual Votives)

Vestments returned to closet and hung up -- *Neatly*

FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

*****During Advent**

Light the wreath candles before the altar candles. Check in with the Verger before the service to confirm which ones to light.

*****During the Easter season**

The Paschal Candle is the largest and most decorated candle in the church. It is placed in front of the altar near the Gospel side during the weeks of the Easter season. It is lighted before the worshippers arrive and is extinguished after the worshippers leave. The Paschal Candle should always be the first candle lit and last one extinguished.

*****For Baptism, Renewal of Baptismal Vows or other Holy Days**

Light the Paschal candle at the beginning of the service. Be on hand for assistance with holding books, candles, etc.

THURIFER NOTES

Processional Hymn

- Meet Fr. Alex in the narthex (vestibule at the back of the church) like normal, but have thurible with the coal hot and ready to go.
- Have the incense boat in hand, but do not add the incense.
- Fr. Alex will add incense, bless the incense, and we'll process as usual.
- The Thurifer always leads the procession.
- When you reach the front, stand to the side by the acolyte seats and wait for Fr. Alex.
- Fr. Alex will take the thurible from you and cense the altar.
- While he is censuring the altar, place the incense boat on the shelf of his prayer desk. It will remain there for the remainder of the service.
- After censuring the altar, Fr. Alex will hand you the thurible – return it to the sacristy and come back to your seat.

Gospel Procession (During COVID, there is no Gospel Procession)

- During the psalm, go to the sacristy to light another bit of charcoal.
- At the beginning of the gospel sequence hymn, bring the thurible to Fr. Alex who will add and bless the incense.
- You lead the gospel procession down the center aisle.
- Step to the side to let the book bearer and Deacon pass – stand behind the Deacon in the middle of the aisle.
- The Deacon will introduce the gospel, turn to you and take the thurible. She'll cense the gospel book, then hand the thurible back to you.
- Stand in place behind the deacon while the gospel is read.
- You'll lead the gospel procession back up, as normal.
- Return the thurible to the sacristy and take your seat.

Offertory

- Fr. Alex and the other acolyte will set the table, as normal. While this is happening, you head to the sacristy to charge another charcoal.
- Come out with the thurible and stand by your seat.
- When the table is set (but before the lavabo/handwashing) Fr. Alex will come to you, add incense, and take the thurible from you to cense the altar.
- Take the thurible back from Fr. Alex and go to the front of the altar.
- Cense Fr. Alex (short chain). Bow to him before and after.
- Step down toward the steps and cense the congregation (long chain, as normal). Bow to them before and after.
- Head back to the sacristy to return the thurible and you're done for the day.

Closing Hymn

You carry the gospel book out, as normal.

That's it!

After the service, go into the world to serve the Lord... Sounds a little corny, but one way you can do this is when someone asks you about being an acolyte, you can explain it to them. Or, if you know a person who wants to be an acolyte, you can encourage and help them to learn. That's just one more way to serve our congregation.