

Acolyte Instructions

On behalf of the Advent Board of Elders, we graciously thank you for your service to our congregation by serving as an acolyte. The word acolyte comes from the Greek word akolouthos meaning follower or attendant. The use of candles in the Sanctuary represent Jesus, who said "I am the Light of the World." You will play an integral part in our worship service by carrying the light of Jesus as represented in the flame that you will carry to the altar to light the candles. At the close of service you will extinguish the altar candles – but you will also carry the light of Jesus back through the nave and to the narthex during the recessional hymn. The following are instructions to help you prepare for your duties. If at any time you have any questions about your role please seek out the Elder on duty for the service.

- Please arrive to the church 15 minutes prior to the service. In the vestry, select a white Alb (white robe with hood) that is appropriate for your height and one that is not too long. The robe should be rest about an inch or so above your ankle. Remember that you will be going up the steps at the altar and do not want to trip on the bottom of the robe.
- Select a rope cincture for around your waist and follow the instructions in the vestry on how to tie a rope cincture or ask the Elder on duty to assist you.
- Proceed to the narthex and select your torch. The torch consists of two parts at the end of the wooden handle: a bell-shaped snuffer to extinguish the candle and a taper or wick which you will use to light the candles.
- Examine your torch to ensure there is enough wick or taper to carry a proper flame. Should you need a new wick please inform an Elder to have it changed. There are two torches – one should already be in the Narthex; the second should be in the Vestry.
- At the start of the service, light your torch using the torch lighter in the narthex. Follow the Crucifer and process slowly through the Nave during the processional hymn. Be sure to adjust your flame as needed by pushing up on the black lever on the neck of the torch to adjust the height of the taper so the flame does not extinguish.
- The Crucifer, when reaching the Altar will turn and face the congregation and remain stationary. Slowly proceed up the steps, around the Crucifer, then face the Altar and stop. Reverently bow in front of the Altar and proceed to light the Altar candles. Begin with the candle on the right (remember that 'light' rhymes with 'right' so 'light the right' candle first – and then the left). Should you have trouble seeing the wick, just hold the flame on top of the candle and count to three and slowly pull the torch away. You should be able to see a lighted candle at this stage. If not, repeat the lighting process until you see a visible flame.
- Once the altar candles have been lighted, extinguish the wick by pulling down on the black lever to pull the taper back into the neck of the torch. Be sure to extend the wick again immediately after extinguishing.
- Bow reverently again in front of altar, proceed to your seat and place the torch into its holder. Remain seated and follow the order of worship along with the congregation.
- During the final hymn of the service, at the start of the second to last verse or when signaled by one of the pastors, proceed to the altar. Reverently bow in front of the Altar and using the bell of the torch, extinguish the left candle. Do this by gently placing the bell on top of the candle, hold the torch stationary for a few seconds and then pull the bell away. If the candle is still burning repeat this process but hold the bell a little longer on top of the flame.
- Before extinguishing the right candle, extend your taper and light your torch. Carefully rotate your torch back to the bell and extinguish the right altar candle, ensuring your torch remains lighted. Reverently bow facing the altar and follow the Crucifer, carrying the light of Christ and proceed back through the nave during the recessional hymn. At the end of the service, extinguish your torch and place torch back in the Narthex.
- Return the Alb to the Vestry and neatly hang the Alb so that it is ready for the next acolyte to wear.

Special Instructions – The Paschal Candle

During certain services such as when there is a Baptism, a Funeral, Christmas or the Easter Season, you may see a single candle typically standing in front of or very near the Baptismal Font. This is the Paschal Candle. If present this candle should always be lit first and extinguished last. If you see the Paschal candle when on acolyte duty...

- Proceed as you normally would during the processional hymn and follow the Crucifer through the nave to the front of the altar area. Stop and light the Paschal candle first and then proceed up the steps as you normally would, reverently bow and proceed to light the altar candles.
- At the close of the service during the final hymn proceed as usual to the altar, bow, and extinguish both the altar candles. Reverently bow and then follow the Crucifer, but stop at the Paschal candle to light your torch and carefully rotate your torch back to the bell and extinguish the Paschal candle, ensuring your torch remains lighted and proceed back through the nave as you normally would at the end of the service.

Special Instructions – The Advent Wreath

(Note there is a pictorial view of this description in the Vestry for acolytes to follow)

The Advent wreath consists of 4 candles on the outside ring and the Christ Candle in the center. Advent means 'coming' in Latin and we are awaiting the coming or birth of our Savior in the Season of Advent. There are four weeks of this Church season leading up to Christmas – hence the four candles of the outer ring, each one representing a week of the season. If you are serving as an acolyte during the Advent season confirm with an Elder which week of the Advent season we are in and...

- Proceed as you normally would during the processional hymn and always light the Altar Candles first. After this is done, reverently bow and proceed to the Altar wreath with your torch still carrying a flame.
 - 1st week of Advent – light one purple candle
 - 2nd week of Advent – light two purple candles
 - 3rd week of Advent – light two purple candles and the pink candle
 - 4th week of Advent – light two purple candles, then the pink candle, then the final purple candle
 - Christmas Eve/Christmas Day – Light the Paschal Candle in the center first, then the remainder candles on the wreath following the above instruction for the 4th week of Advent.
- At the close of service DURING ADVENT you will extinguish the candles in the reverse order that you lighted them. This means that you will first process over to the Advent wreath and extinguish the Advent wreath candles in the reverse order that they were lighted and then you will return to the Altar to extinguish the Altar candles in the typical manner.
- At the close of service DURING CHRISTMAS you will extinguish the Altar candles first and then the Advent Wreath, concluding with the Paschal Candle in the middle of the wreath. It is easy to remember the order of priority for Candles: Paschal is always first, if it is present; then the Altar Candles, then any other candles.