

ACOLYTES

Acolytes (bearers of light) are servant ministers, assisting the clergy in services of worship. In ancient times, acolytes were the first ordained ministry before sub-deacon, deacon, priest, and bishop. At St. Christopher's our acolytes are boys and girls beginning at age 9 through their senior year in High School. Younger children may be appointed as "Junior Acolytes" on recommendation of the acolyte lead.

As servant ministers, acolytes are appointed by the acolyte lead acting on behalf of the rector. We believe it is a sacred honor to be selected as an acolyte and such service is helpful in obtaining an understanding of Christian service.

Attendance Acolytes are expected to regularly attend Sunday (weekend) services in addition to those in which they are assigned to serve.

Absences Absences should be the rare exception. If an acolyte must be absent from an assigned service, it is their responsibility to find another acolyte to serve for them.

Acolytes who repeatedly miss assigned services especially without finding a replacement may be subject to dismissal.

The Acolyte Lead is appointed by the Rector and is his/her deputy for the appointment, training, and scheduling of members of the Acolyte ministry. The acolyte lead has the authority, to appoint, promote, train, counsel and if necessary to dismiss acolytes, and to call rehearsals and other events.

During their Senior Year in High School, Senior Acolytes will receive a special gift from the parish for their continuing service as an acolyte.

New acolytes will be recognized on their first Sunday of service.

The Acolyte Lead may appoint adults to serve as assistant acolyte sponsors. The Acolyte Lead, and assistants, shall meet all diocesan policies regarding those who work with youth.

Two (but no more than 4) older youth (generally juniors or seniors in High School) may be designated as Acolyte Captains and wear a dark blue/purple cincture when serving.

The acolyte lead may designate a team of adults (generally those who have previously served as acolytes in their youth) to serve on those rare occasions when acolytes are not present.

The acolyte lead or his /her chosen assistant should be present 15-30 minutes prior to each Sunday and major feast day service to assist the acolytes to be prepared and properly vested.

The acolyte lead should make sure that albs are washed when necessary. Mothers and Dads (even grandparents) may wish to assist in this task. The albs may be machine washed and if properly removed from the dryer they may not need ironed.

Three acolytes should be assigned on each Sunday: one serving as the Crucifer (who also functions as the Server) and the other two as torch (pavement lights) bearers. If only two are present, then they should both serve as torch bearers. If only one is present then he/she should serve as the Crucifer and Server using either processional cross which is easiest for him/her to carry.

Server:

The Server should see that there are sufficient acolytes, and that all members of the procession are in line by 5 minutes prior to the service. If an acolyte is not present, the Server shall contact the Acolyte lead and recruit an acolyte from any member of the ministry who may be present at that service.

The Server's role is to be the Crucifer in the entrance procession. The Server is the celebrant's acolyte. It is their job to assist the Deacon or Priest in setting the table, and wash the presiding priest (or Bishop's) hands during the Offertory. The deacon's hands are never to be washed. The Server should also make sure that the disinfectant is available to the priest and the LEMs.

During communion the Server stands near the table holding the flagon. The Server will refill the chalices during communion.

The Server should sit on the right side of the presiding priest, and stand to the right of the priest at the Holy Table.

It is an honor to be the Server at any service of worship

Acolytes:

If we have one acolyte, he/she will serve as the Crucifer and first-server.

If we have two acolytes, one will serve as Crucifer and first-server and the other will assist.

If we have three acolytes, one will serve as Crucifer and first server, two will serve as torch bearers (pavement lights). If we have a fourth they will serve as the banner bearer.

Acolytes should vest in alb and rope cincture. Neither the alb or cincture should drag the ground.

The Crucifer and torches do not stop at the dias (entrance to the sanctuary) but go directly to the back hallway and quietly put the cross and torches on the wall.

The Acolyte Captain (who would also be the first server and most likely the Crucifer) will sit on the right of the priest. The other acolytes will sit on the first row of chairs stage left (liturgical south).

The Acolytes will receive the wine and bread at the step, turn around and present it on the west side of the Holy Table facing east.

The first server will serve the priest in this order:

BREAD (already presented)

WINE (already presented)

WATER

Then Hands: The acolyte (depending on dominant hand – this is written for right handed folks) will hold the lavabo bowl in the left hand draping the lavabo bowl towel over the left wrist and arm with the water cruet held by the handle in the right hand. The priest will hold his/her hands over the lavabo bowl while the acolyte pours a small amount of water over his/her hands. The priest will then wipe his/her hands and say prayer sentence. The acolyte will slightly bow and the priest will bow back.

After the communion prayer, the acolyte will take the wine cruet and stand in front of (west) of the Holy Table and refill Chalices as needed.

On the second or third verse of the concluding hymn, the Acolyte Captain will signal to the other acolytes that it is time to get the torches.

The Crucifer and torches will come out of the back hallway and lead the procession out of the nave. After the procession has reached the gathering space, the Crucifer will enter the nave again standing directly behind the priest during this dismissal and they carrying the cross forward pausing slightly at the step and then putting in back in the back hallway.

The Torch bearers will extinguish their candles and enter the side doors and carry their torches (again reverently) to the back hallway.

Please hang-up your vestment. If there is something wrong with the vestment like stains or missing parts, please report this to the acolyte lead.

The Gospel procession will take place with one or three acolytes.