

ACOLYTE GUIDE

*Central Lutheran Church
Winona, Minnesota*



Acolytes are ministers in worship. Acolytes help set the mood for worship by lighting of candles, leading processions, and gathering offerings. Other ministers and the entire congregation rely on Acolytes to carry out their ministry with confidence.

Typical Duties:

LIGHT & EXTINGUISH CANDLES

LEAD THE PROCESSIONS

HOLD THE PRESIDER BOOK

COLLECT OFFERINGS AS THEY ARE PRESENTED

ASSIST WITH COMMUNION

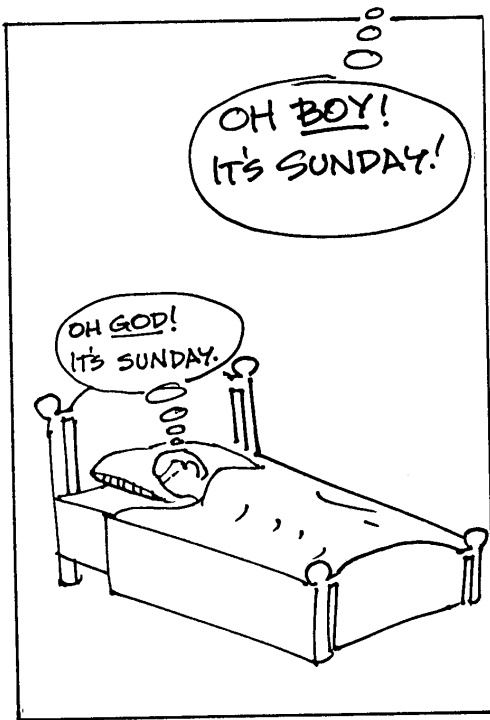
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THE CHURCH: ONE BODY, MANY PARTS

The apostle Paul said that the church is like our own bodies. Our bodies each have many parts. We have **eyes** to see and **ears** to hear. We have **mouths** to speak and **noses** to smell. We have **legs** to walk, **knees** to bend, **arms** to reach, **hands** to hold. We have **brains** to think and **hearts** to love.

The church is Christ's body, made up of many parts. Christ is the head and we are the members. Worship is something that the whole body of Christ does – head and members together. We do some things all together: like sitting, standing, bowing, singing, walking in procession. And different parts of the body do different things so that the whole body can celebrate. One person reads while all listen. Some people play musical instruments while all sing. All of these things are done so that the whole body of Christ can give God thanks and praise.



When the church gathers for worship, we call the people the **body of Christ**, the **Assembly**, or the **congregation**. These names mean that the baptized people (and the ones who want to be baptized) have come together in one place, have been called by God to gather in one place, to hear the word and share the holy meal.

The **Sacristan** is the person who sets things up before worship and cares for the things that we use to worship God together.

Ushers and Greeters help the assembly gather together. They welcome strangers and visitors and help everyone find a place to be at home in the house of the church. They collect money and sometimes other gifts for the church and for the poor. They

give people bulletins so that they can participate in worship.

Leading the assembly is the **Presiding Minister**. This person is chosen and ordained to lead the assemblies worship.

The **Assisting Minister** helps the Presiding Minister by setting the table with the gifts of bread and wine, and reading the prayers.

The **Lectors** read aloud the First and Second Readings from the Bible. Like the prophets whose words they read, like Jesus, the lectors speak God’s word.

The **Eucharistic Ministers** help share the body and blood of Christ with all the baptized.

The **Musicians** help us all to sing. Sometimes a soloist sings alone so that we may all listen and then join in the singing. Sometimes a choir leads the singing. They make the song of the assembly beautiful by singing high and low, adding “parts” to the song. Other musicians play instruments like the organ, piano, guitar, and drums.

And helping to set things up and to put things away, carrying cross and candles and plates and cups, holding the book of prayers, leading processions, and assisting at the Lord’s table with wine are the **Acolytes** – you!

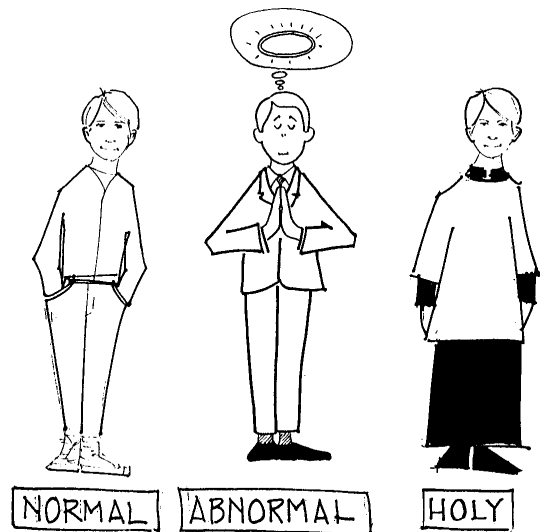
Even within the Acolytes there are different jobs to do besides light candles: The **Crucifer** carries the cross, the **Server** hold a book for the Presiding Minister, fetches the offering basket, and helps set the plates and cups on the altar.

BE REVERENT

A good acolyte knows what to do and how to do it right. But there is more to being a good acolyte than that. A good Acolyte is *reverent* and *responsible*.

What does it mean to be *reverent*? Does it mean to show reverence to God, to God’s holy people? To treat the church building and all that is in it with respect?

Have you ever stared at the stars in the sky for so long that you stop seeing the stars and start to daydream? Or maybe you’ve sat still for a long time looking at a little



baby, watching the little one scrunch up its feet and wave its arms and make funny noises – and inside you felt love for this baby. Have you ever picked up a seashell, stared at it, and said, “cool!”?

If you’ve ever done these things, felt this way, then you’ve been reverent. To be reverent means to stand in wonder before something that is beautiful and great and important and holy.

How do we practice being reverent? **First**, use your mind. Remember that God is great and good. Remember that when the baptized people gather together, God is there. **Second**, use your heart. Pay attention to what you are doing. **Third**, use your body. Wash up. Fix your hair. Dress in your good clothes. Wear your best shoes. Walk slowly. Stand up tall. Sit up straight. Fold your hands when you are not carrying something. Carry things carefully. Bow smoothly.

And not only that. *Listen* while the scriptures are being read. *Sing* when everyone sings. That’s part of being reverent, too.

To be a good basketball player, to learn to dance well, to skip rope with fancy tricks or jump curbs on a skateboard, you have to practice. Being reverent takes practice, too. Sometimes we forget. Sometimes we get the giggles. Sometimes we yawn, and realize that everyone saw it. That’s OK. *The important thing is that we grow more and more reverent as time goes on.*

BE RESPONSIBLE

A good Acolyte is not only reverent. A good acolyte is also *responsible*. Being responsible means:

- You come to Acolyte practice and learn how to be a good Acolyte.
- You know when you are scheduled to Acolyte.
- You come when you are scheduled.
- You find a sub when you cannot come.
- You come on time: 20 minutes before the service.
- You come ready to serve God with gladness.
- You know what to do and ask when you don’t.
- You help other acolytes do a good job.

- You read this book over again after you've done this a while to brush up on what you know and to practice getting better.

Being *reverent* and *responsible* is not boring or too hard. It's fun to do and it gets easier with practice! Will you try it? If so, sign your pledge (back page) to be *reverent* and *responsible*!

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ACOLYTE WORDS A-Z

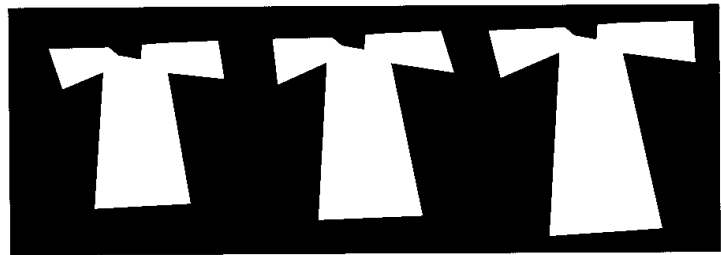
Do you know anyone who plays golf, or who fishes, or programs a computer? Do you know what a double-bogey, a tackle box, or a batch file is? Sometimes in our sports, hobbies, and jobs we use words that most other people don't use. We sometimes use unique words to describe things in our church, too. As an acolyte (there's a strange word!) you will hear these all the time, so you might as well learn them. This guide leads you through many of the most common words you will hear at worship.

Acolyte

From a Greek word meaning "to follow." An Acolyte lights and sometimes carries candles, helps in the preparation of communion, and assists the main ministers.

Alb

A white robe worship leaders wear, based on old Roman tunics or shirts. From the Latin word *Alba* which means "white", describing the color of a tunic or shirt.



Candelabra

Candle holder with lots of candles.

Chalice

The large cup from which the wine of communion is drunk or intincted.

Chancel

The part of the church near the altar, where the ministers stand to lead the service. Once upon a time, this space was railed off by *cancelli* or lattice work (another Latin word), which is where we get the name Chancel.

Chasuble

The Presiding Minister will often wear an outer garment over the alb and stole, called a Chasuble. The word (in Latin: *casula*) means "little house" because the chasuble looks like a tent. (It also kind of looks like a rain poncho.) The chasuble color matches each church season (*see the chart on p. 11*).

Cincture

The rope you tie around your alb. From the Latin word *Cingulum* which means, literally, “girdle.” Once upon a time, when people wore robes like this, if they needed to run fast, they bunched the alb (“girded”) under the cincture, so they wouldn’t trip. (This is what the biblical phrase “gird up your loins” refers to.)

Crucifer

The person who carries the Processional Cross.

Eucharist

A Greek word meaning “Thanksgiving”. We say we “celebrate the Eucharist” whenever we take Communion.

Intinction

Communion taken by dipping the bread/wafer into the cup/chalice.

Liturgy

From the Greek word *leitourgia*, meaning “public duty” or “work of the people.” We speak of “the liturgy” as the particular order of the things we do in worship.

**At baptism
you became a new creation,
and you were clothed in Christ.
The white garment was, and is,
the outward sign
of your Christian dignity.**

Lucifer

The official name of the brass candle-lighting-thing. From Old English and Latin words meaning “light-bearing.”

Ministers

Everyone leading worship is considered a Minister. These are the main ministers you need to know:

- *Presiding Minister*: The pastor celebrating communion.
- *Assisting Minister*: Assists the Presiding Minister; may or may not be a pastor.
- *Preaching Minister*: Preaches the sermon; may also be the Presiding Minister.
- *Eucharistic Ministers*: The people who help serve communion.

Narthex

A church word for, essentially, Lobby or Entryway. The Narthex is the gathering space right outside the main church doors. Once upon a time, this is where those who were not baptized or who for whatever reason were not allowed in the main church (maybe they didn't do their sermon notes?), while the baptized Christians worshipped in the Nave.

Nave

From the Latin word *navis* which means "Ship." The central, open space of a church, between the chancel and the narthex. Architecturally, the church ceiling resembles an upside-down ship's hull.

Paschal Candle

The tall white candle by the Font. This candle symbolizes Christ's presence among us. *Pasch* is a Jewish word for *Passover*. In Christian usage Paschal refers to the Easter events – Easter is often called the "Paschal Feast". Every spring a new Paschal Candle is made and lit at the Easter Vigil. It is lit every Sunday during the seasons of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter; on All Saints' Sunday; whenever there is a baptism; whenever there is a funeral or memorial service.

Paten

The plate on which the communion bread is placed.

Pectoral Cross

A cross on a band hung around the neck, worn on the chest, usually by a Bishop.

Presider Book

This is the three-ring binder the Presiding & Assisting Ministers use to guide them through the service – a "script" for the service. It will be your job to hold this book for them at various parts of the service.

The altar
is like Christ,
That is why
we bow to the altar
slowly and carefully
when we come
into the room.

Pulpit

From the Latin word *pulpitum*, which means a stage or step. The reading stand at the front of the church. Sometimes called a Lectern, Reading Desk, or Ambo.

Sacristy

From the Latin word *sacraestia*. The Sacristy is where we keep the sacred vessels and vestments used in worship, including candles.

Stole

Pastors wear a cloth stole around their neck when they lead worship. This is a long narrow prayer shawl, like the prayer shawl Jesus wore. The stole also resembles a towel, like the one Jesus used when he washed his disciples' feet.

Taper

The long waxed wick that fits into the lucifer.

Torch

Candles used in procession.

Torch Bearer

One who carries a torch. Duh.

Triduum

Pronounced "Trih-Doo-Uhm." Latin word meaning "Three Days." Refers to the Three Days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday.

Vestment

A special item of clothing worn by people who lead worship, such as choir robes, acolyte albs, and pastor's stoles.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Our worship consists of four main parts: Gathering, Word, Meal, & Sending. Our order of worship will include most of the following (a cross next to each piece indicates where Acolytes may be needed):

GATHERING

- + Confession & Forgiveness OR Thanksgiving for Baptism
- + Hymn, Song, Psalm AND/OR
 Kyrie AND/OR
 Canticle of Praise
- + Greeting

WORD

- + Prayer of the Day
 First Reading
 Psalm
 Second Reading
- + Gospel Acclamation
 Gospel
 Sermon
 Hymn of the Day
 Creed
- + Prayers of Intercession

MEAL

- Peace
- + Gathering of Gifts/Presentation of Gifts
- + Setting the Table
 Great Thanksgiving
 Dialogue & Thanksgiving
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 Thanksgiving & Words of Institution
 Lord's Prayer
- + Communion

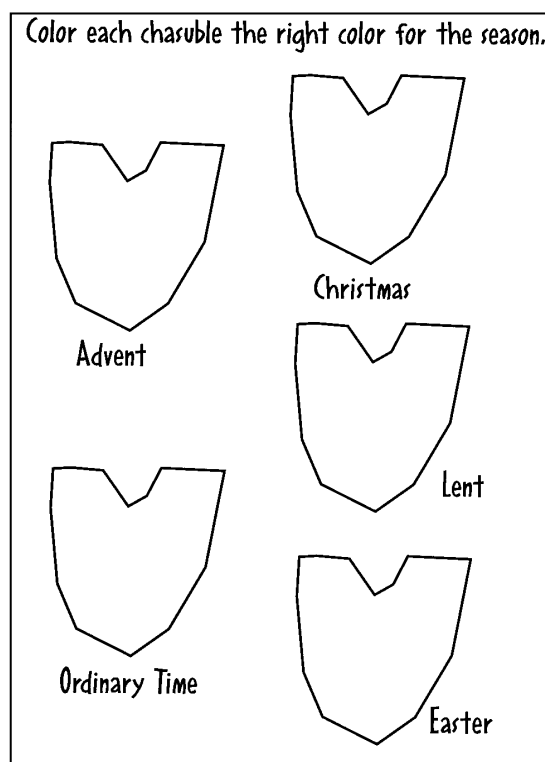
SENDING

- + Communion Prayer
 Sending of Communion Ministers to the Homebound
- + Blessing
- + Sending Song
- + Dismissal

THE CHURCH YEAR

The church follows a calendar that is a little different than the regular calendar. The church calendar begins with the First Sunday in Advent and runs through Christ the King Sunday. The church also uses special colors to mark different days and seasons of the church year:

- ADVENT SEASON
Blue
- CHRISTMAS SEASON
White
- DAY OF EPIPHANY (JAN. 6)
White
- EPIPHANY SEASON
Green
- ASH WEDNESDAY
Black
- SEASON OF LENT
Purple
- PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK
Scarlet
- MAUNDY THURSDAY
Scarlet
- GOOD FRIDAY
Black
- HOLY SATURDAY/EASTER VIGIL
Gold or White
- EASTER SEASON
White
- THE DAY OF PENTECOST
Red
- SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST/
ORDINARY TIME
Green
- FESTIVAL OF CHRIST THE KING
White



OTHER RANDOM STUFF YOU SHOULD PROBABLY KNOW

Age of Acolytes

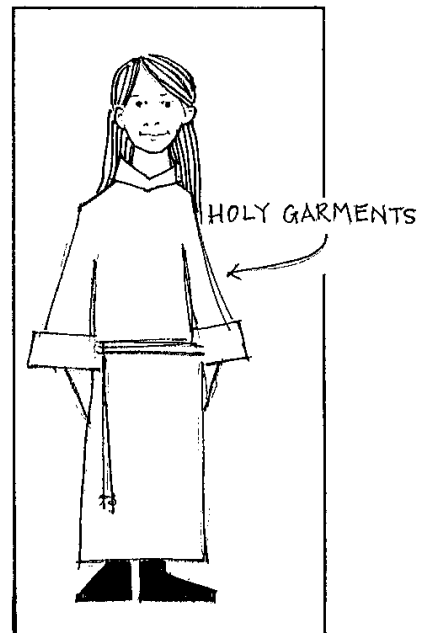
Acolyte ministry is open to anyone grades 3-12, but primarily grades 7-9.

Attitude, Attention & Participation

You are a minister in this service. Your ministry is important. Other ministers and the entire congregation are relying on you to carry out your role on time and with confidence. Pay attention to the order of service, look ahead, and know what's coming. Future acolytes look to you to be good role models.

Attire

Acolytes wear albs during worship. What clothes you wear under the alb is up to you, with this exception: No shirts with lettering or graphics that show through the alb—that looks bad. Your job is to be a minister, not a billboard. You want to look Holy, not Holey!



Be Aware

At the day of the service, familiarize yourself with the physical setting: Notice where you will sit. Check the bulletin. Is there a Gospel Procession? Is there a chair for you to sit on? Does the Assisting Minister know you are here? Does the Assisting Minister have any additional instructions for you?

Be On Time

Actually, be early: be at church at least 20 minutes before the service begins.

Bewilderment

The Assisting Minister is the primary organizer of all processions. If you become confused, look to the Assisting Minister for guidance.

Bowing

Bow when you approach and depart the altar from the main aisle, unless you are carrying the cross, a book, or candle—then *don't* bow.

Carrying Crosses, Lucifers, Torches, Etc.

When carrying a cross, torch, book, or other object, carry it in a natural looking way, but also in a way that indicates the object is important. Carry a cross or torch high, but with elbows relaxed – not rigid as one might carry a military flag or rifle.

Hands

When you are not holding or carrying anything, fold your hands.

Helpful Hint

Use the bathroom before the service.

Number of Acolytes

We typically make use of two acolytes per service, but sometimes more.

Pace

There are no medals for running in church. There is no need to rush to get anywhere. There is also no need to take baby steps. Choose a slow, deliberate pace.

Posture

Yeah, yeah, yeah... you know: sit up tall, don't slouch, yawn, or pick at your skin.

Processions & Seating

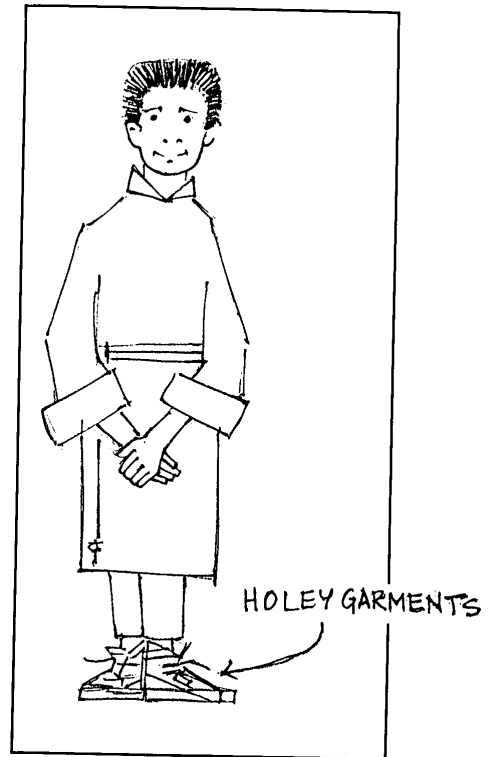
Acolytes will participate in Entrance and Closing procession, and be seated with the other ministers.

Schedule

Know your schedule! At home mark it on your calendar. Hang the schedule on your closet or refrigerator door. Check the online calendar. Tell a parent.

Substitutes

If you cannot be at service you are scheduled for, it is your responsibility to find your own substitute.



I WILL SERVE GOD WITH GLADNESS

With God's help, I promise to be a *reverent* and *responsible* acolyte at Central Lutheran Church.

I promise to come to practice, know when I'm scheduled to serve, come when I'm scheduled (or find a substitute), and come early. I will come prepared.

I promise to pay attention to the service, sing the songs, say the prayers, and join in whatever the assembly does.

I promise to know my duties and do them the best I can. I will ask questions when I don't know something.

I promise to treat the people of the church, the house of the church and all the things in it with love and respect.

I want to serve God and the church!

Sign your name: _____

Worship Director: _____

Date: _____

