

Acolyte Handbook



St. Luke Lutheran Church
Ithaca, NY

Acolytes are important worship leaders. They light candles, carry the cross, serve Communion, and participate in the worship service.

This guide will help answer some of your questions about being an acolyte. You can always ask one of the pastors or another adult if you have other questions.



Learn more about being an acolyte

Who?

Anyone can be an acolyte: children, youth, or adults. Families can acolyte together. Acolytes use their gifts to help prepare, lead, and assist in worship.



What?

Acolytes lead worship by lighting the candles, carrying the cross, praying, participating, and helping during different parts of the worship service.

When?

On Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m., in person only (it's hard to acolyte online!). Acolytes should arrive by 9:40 to prepare with the rest of the worship leaders.

Where?

In several important places:

- The *nave* is the area of the church where we worship.
- The *chancel* is the where the altar is.
- The *font* is the place where baptisms occur.
 - The Paschal Candle is usually located by the font.
- The *sacristy* is the room off the chancel, where many of the items we use in worship are kept. There you will find Communion elements and supplies, and an extra candlelighter.
- *Pastor Jason's office* is where you will find albs and where worship leaders gather before worship.

And most importantly,

WHY?

Serving as an acolyte is more than simply assisting the pastor during worship or fulfilling a list of duties.

The acolyte's role is to lead the congregation in following Jesus. By serving God in this way, you help the entire congregation worship.



HOW?

Follow these step-by-step instructions

Before worship begins:

1. Arrive at St. Luke no later than 9:40 on Sunday.
2. Go to Pastor Jason's office to put on an alb that fits.
 - a. Ask for help if you need it.
 - b. Families may choose to not wear albs.
3. Check the inside of the closet door for any special instructions.
4. Light the candles **15 minutes before worship begins (at 9:45)**.
 - Return the candlelighter to its stand.
 - Return to Pastor Jason's office.

During worship:

Participate! Listen, sing, pray, and lead others. Stay alert for any duties you may be asked to do.

Gathering

Lead the worship leaders into the nave.

When there is one acolyte:

1. Carry the cross to the top of the steps.
 - a. Face the congregation during the *Confession and Forgiveness*.
 - b. At *The Peace*, place the cross in its stand and take your seat in the chancel pew.

When there are two acolytes:

1. The crucifer carries the cross as above.
2. The other acolyte follows the crucifer.
3. When the crucifer stops at the top of the steps,
 - a. carefully move around them,
 - b. bow at the altar,
 - c. and take your seat in the pew in the chancel pew.

Families may go to a pew in the nave or remain in the chancel, as you wish.

Offering

1. Sanitize your hands.
2. Take offering plates from the table.
3. At the bottom of the steps, hold offering plates for ushers to take.
4. Sit in the front pew (remove the rope; replace it when you're done).
5. When the worship leaders stand, greet the ushers at the bottom of the steps. Collect the offering plates from them.
6. Take the plates up the steps, lift them before the altar, and set them back on the table.
7. Sanitize your hands again.

Holy Communion (optional)

Serve the grape juice, if you are comfortable doing so.

1. Sanitize your hands.
2. Take the cruet from the altar.
 - The cruet's top doesn't let the juice spill or drip!
3. Stand about 3 feet away from the person with the wine.
4. When someone comes to you, pour a little juice into their cup saying, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."
5. You will receive Communion with the worship leaders after all have been served.

Sending

Lead the worship leaders out during the *final hymn*.

When there is one acolyte:

Take the cross from its stand and go to the top step.

1. Turn and bow at the altar.
2. Carry the cross to its stand in the back of the nave.

When there are two acolytes:

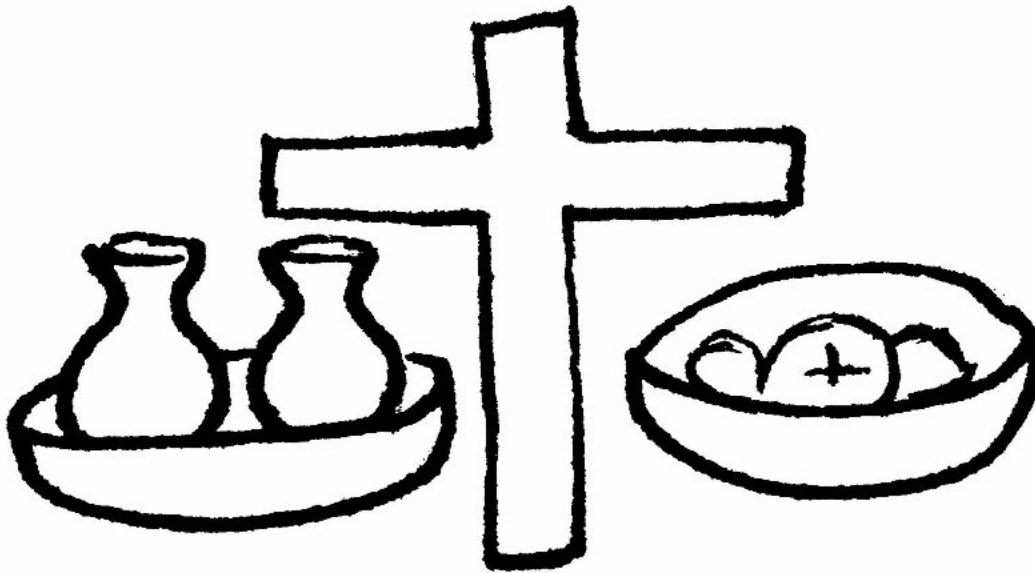
1. The crucifer carries the cross as above.
2. The other acolyte follows the crucifer.

After the Postlude ends, extinguish the candles.

- a. Return the candlelighter to its stand.
- b. Return your alb to the closet in Pastor Jason's office.

Helpful Hints

- Eat a small meal, get a drink, and use the restroom before the service.
- The Paschal Candle will be lit on certain Sundays. A pastor will remind you when to light it!
- Participate during the service: sing the hymns, pray the prayers, follow along in your bulletin and listen.
- It's OK to "fidget." Please do so in a way that doesn't distract others. Pastor Laurie can give you ideas.
- Please turn your phone off or leave it with someone else during the service.
- Remember! Adults will help if you forget what to do or have questions.
- AND REMEMBER!! Acolytes don't have to be perfect. It's all about serving God and helping God's people worship!



Words Every Acolyte Should Know

Acolyte means, “One who attends or assists.” An acolyte brings the symbolic light of Christ into the worship service.

Alb is the white robe that is worn with a cincture (rope) around the waist, symbolizing the robe of righteousness.

Candlelighter is used to light candles. It consists of a wick, from which the candles are lit, and a bell for snuffing out the flame.

Candles signify the presence of Christ among God’s people. Because God created light, and Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” candles are an important part of the Christian service.

Chancel is the area where the altar is.

Cincture is the rope tied around the waist. This is optional.

Eucharist is a Greek word meaning, “thanksgiving.” It is another word for Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper.

Narthex is the gathering area/entrance area outside of the worship space.

Nave is the area where people gather to worship. Sometimes it’s called the *sanctuary*.

The *Paschal Candle* is the large candle that is normally near the font.

Prelude is the music played before the worship service begins.

Postlude is the music played after the worship service ends.

The *Sacristy* is the small room off the chancel where we find extra candlelighters and Communion supplies.

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