

# Altar Server Handbook



## St. Luke's Catholic Church

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Welcome and thank you for answering God’s call and your commitment to the Ministry of Altar Serving. You have a unique opportunity to participate, in a very special way at the celebration of Mass, which is the very heart of our Catholic faith.

The Mass is a re-enactment of the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told his disciples. “Do this in memory of me.” Although the Mass is a mystery, we accept that the bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus because of Jesus. (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14- 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 & John 6:53-59). The Mass is also a sacrifice, a memorial, and a sacred meal called the Eucharist (from the Greek word eucharistia, meaning “thanksgiving”).

Altar Serving is a ministry to which a person is specially assigned to assist the Deacon and priest as servers at Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and other liturgical functions. The place of the Altar Server in liturgical celebrations remains one of prominence and distinction. The Altar Server retains a genuine and vital role in the liturgical assembly. Through your actions and conduct, your role is to bring the assembly to a fuller understanding of the liturgy and a greater love for God. Your behavior, reverence, attitude, and mannerisms are signs of your faith and love for God and God’s people. The servers are the representative of the entire congregation by presenting the gifts to the Celebrant at the altar. Young people have been serving Mass from the earliest centuries. They have assisted priests with vestments, lighting candles, carrying books used at Mass, ringing bells, saying the prayer, etc. But of utmost importance are not the things they do, but the example they give and being the Prayer Leaders for all attending Mass.

This guide covers the main details of serving at Mass. This guide should help you become more comfortable and refined in your role serving at the altar.

*Disclaimer: This handbook has been prepared based on the Altar Serving requirements of St. Luke’s Catholic Church, Calgary, AB. The Content is subject to revision by the Altar Server Ministry requirement of the St. Luke’s Church. The contents are developed in the year 2022.*

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## **PRAYER BEFORE SERVING**

**Father in Heaven, Your Son. Jesus Christ,  
showed his love for You by serving His needy brothers and sisters.**

**I now ask you to give me Your help  
As I serve You and Your people.  
Open my mouth to praise You in word and song.  
Open my ears to hear Your Word  
Open my hands to do Your work well.**

**Take from my heart all evil and distracting thoughts.  
Help me know what I should do and do it well.**

**Help me to serve reverently at Your holy Altar,  
And so give You praise and glory, now and forever,  
AMEN!**

## REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME AN ALTAR SERVERS

- Have a strong desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,
- Have already made their First Confession and Communion,
- Know how to make the Sign of the Cross, genuflect and bow properly,
- Know how to receive Holy Communion properly.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALTAR SERVERS

- Always be at the church at least 20 minutes early if you are scheduled to serve. For Special Masses, 45 minutes is advisable.
- Wear the Altar Server vestments (The Alb, Cincture, and the Cross).
- Check-in at the Privacy Room and sign-in beside your name on the sheet provided.
- If you are not assigned, write your name in the space provided and let the MC know you are present.
- Prepare tasks (Candle, Cross, Bell) with your assigned role.
- **REMINDER:** Always check with the Priest or Deacon before Mass begins to see if there are any special instructions or reminders regarding the Mass you are serving at.
- Say the 'Prayer before Serving' together with the Priest (Celebrant) and other ministers at the Sacristy before the Entrance Procession.
- Line up in the Narthex, ready to Process into the Church as follows:

### PROCESSION ORDER

1. Cross bearer/Bell Ringer
  2. Candle Bearers (FIRST SERVER) – Serve in pairs
  3. Altar Servers (SECOND SERVER).
  4. Lectors – Carries the Gospel Book ONLY if no Deacon Assisting
  5. EEM's - Extra-ordinary Eucharistic Ministers
  6. Deacon – Carries the Gospel Book
  7. Celebrant
- During Mass, pay attention and act reverently and prudently at your assigned tasks.
  - After the Recession, go quietly and orderly back into the church to place the Candles and Crucifix back on their stands.
  - Bring all the Sacred Vessels from the credence table to the working Sacristy for the Sacristan to clean.
  - Return to the changing room, put back the Alb, Cincture and the Cross on the proper hangers.

## How to Serve in this Ministry with Reverence

- Be dressed appropriately with no pictures or words on your T-Shirt, no flipflops or light-up runners on your feet. Choose clothing that will not be seen through the Alb (no neon colors).
- When Altar Serving, always tie back your loose hair.
- No chewing gum or candy in your mouth.
- Keep your hands folded in a 'prayer' posture when standing or kneeling unless you are holding something.
- While sitting, sit at ease with hands-on knees paying attention, especially for any needs from the Priest or Deacon during the Mass.
- Always pay attention to the Priest and the Deacon. During Mass, you should be ready to respond to them if they indicate they need your help or assistance.
- Always walk slowly and consciously (at all times when you are serving).
- The THREE main Altar Server ROLES are:

### Cross bearer/Bell Ringer

1. **Procession:** Carries the Crucifix in the Procession at the beginning of Mass.
2. **Presentation of the Gifts:** Carries the Crucifix to go meet the Offertory Family.
3. **Rings the Bells** - at the Consecration of the Sacred Body & Precious Blood.
4. **Recession:** Carries the Crucifix at the Recession at the end of Mass.

### Candle Bearers (FIRST SERVER) – Serve in pairs.

1. **Procession:** Carries the candles in the Procession at the beginning of Mass.
2. **Gospel Reading:** Holds the Candles in front of the Ambo for the Gospel Reading.
3. **Presentation of the Gifts:** Carries the Candles to meet the Offertory Family.
4. **Recession:** Carries the Candles at the Recession at the end of Mass.

### Altar Servers (SECOND SERVER)

1. **Procession:** Processes into the Church at the beginning of Mass.
2. **Altar Set-up:** Sets the Altar immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful.
3. **Collects the Gifts** - with Father at the Offertory.
4. **Wine & Water Cruets:** Brings the from the Credence table to Father at the Altar.
5. **Water Bowl / Pitcher & Towel:** Brings from the Credence table to Father at the Altar.
6. **Water cruet After Communion** - bring to Father/Deacon at the Altar to purify the Chalice.
7. **Altar Clean-up:** Assists in clearing all Sacred Vessels and Sacramentary book from the Altar.
8. **Recession:** Processes out of the Church in the Recession.

## SCHEDULING

- Altar Servers are scheduled according to their Mass preference given to us at the time of enrolment. However, if there is a particular need, the Altar Server Coordinator may contact you to serve at a Mass you do not regularly attend. Please be generous with your time and schedule if this happens!
- If you cannot serve for your scheduled Mass, please advise the MC as soon as possible, and they will try to find a replacement.
- It is helpful to come to Mass ready to serve, even if you are not scheduled. Sometimes other servers may not be present, and you may be the only Server! This means doing your best to be early, checking to see if you are needed, and wearing attire appropriate for altar serving.

## BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- Arrive **AT LEAST 20 MINUTES** before Mass begins.
- Vest in the Altar server Alb, **Cincture**, and **Cross** available in the Altar Server dressing area. Check to make sure the Alb is the correct length for you. Your parents can assist you in choosing the correct length.
- Practice tying and untying the cincture (just a plain double knot). Place the knot on your left hip.
- Go directly to the Baptismal Font to Bless yourself with the Holy Water and making the Sign of the Cross.
- Go directly to the Privacy Room to check-in on the schedule by placing a check mark beside your name and let the MC know you have arrived.
- (If you are not scheduled to serve, let the MC know that you are available to serve, write your name at the space provided) then go sit in the Second Row of Pews reserved for the Altar Servers.
- MC for the Mass will assign you to your Altar Server duties. Either **Cross Bearer/Bell Ringer**, **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS**, and/or **Altar Servers - SECOND SERVERS**, **THURIFER**, **Boat Bearer**.
- If you have been assigned to either **Cross Bearer/Bell Ringer** or **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS**, go quietly together as a group to collect the Crucifix and the 2 candles in front of the Ambo and bring them to the Privacy Room.
- You can then light the candles just before lining up to process into the church or right after the group prayer. A lighter can be found in the Privacy Room. **Never leave a lit candle unattended in the Privacy Room.**



## ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- Gather in the Narthex with Priest, Deacon, EEMs, and Lectors.
- The **Cross Bearer/Bell Ringer** is the one who leads the Procession into the Church. He/she stands closest to the Entrance Door to the Nave (Glass Doors).
- **Cross Bearer/Bell Ringer**: You will hear the Announcements being read & then the Pianist & Cantor will start to play the opening hymn. This is your cue to start processing into the church.

### **PROCESSION ORDER**

1. **Cross Bearer / Bell Ringer**
  2. **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS**
  3. **Altar Servers - SECOND SERVERS**
  4. Lector – Carries the Gospel Book ONLY if no Deacon Assisting
  5. EEM's (Extra-ordinary Eucharistic Ministers)
  6. Deacon – Carries the Gospel Book
  7. Celebrant
- **Cross Bearer / Bell Ringer**: When arriving at the foot of the Altar, the **Cross Bearer / Bell Ringer** pauses for a second and goes directly to the Chapel Side to place the Crucifix at the Stand.
  - **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS**, holding the Candles, go directly to place candles back at the Ambo.
  - **Altar Servers - SECOND SERVERS**, stop briefly and bow down to the Altar and proceed to their seats.
  - **NOTE**: **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** and **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** do not bow ONLY **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** bow as they are not holding anything. Spacing between each row should always be maintained.
  - Position reverently at your seats. Maintain a prayerful posture during all times (prayerful gesture).

## BEGINNING OF MASS + PENITENTIAL RITE/GLORIA

- (Gloria does not happen during Advent or Lent)
- Participate reverently and attentively during Mass.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

- Remain seated during Responsorial Psalm.
- **CUE**: Gospel Acclamation.
- **ACT**: **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** proceed towards the Ambo, take the candles in front of the Ambo, and stand facing each other in front of the Ambo.
- After "The Gospel of the Lord," - Place back the candles and go back to your seat.
- During the Creed - profound bow at "... by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

## **PRAVERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

- **CUE:** When Deacon OR Lector finishes reading the Prayers of the Faithful and leaves the Ambo, this is the cue to:
- **ACT:** All Servers stand and go to their assigned tasks as follows:
- **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer: Presentation of the Gifts** - get the Crucifix to go meet the Offertory Family.
- **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS: Presentation of the Gifts** - gets Candles at the Ambo & follows behind the Crucifix.
- **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS:** Set the Altar & Collect the gifts with Father.

## SETTING OF THE ALTAR & PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

**Note:** For this part of the Mass **ALL servers - Cross bearer/Bell Ringer; Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS (if available) & Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** all have a task to carry out simultaneously.

Therefore, immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful ALL Servers proceed to their assigned tasks as follows:

<b>Cross bearer/Bell Ringer</b>	
<p><b>Cross bearer/Bell Ringer: Presentation of the Gifts</b> Get the Crucifix and goes to meet the Offertory Family at the Baptismal Font. Turn to face the Altar.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> When the other servers are setting the Altar, you are getting the Crucifix &amp; processing to the Baptismal Font.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When you see Father standing at the foot of the Altar you process down the aisle towards Father with the Offertory Family following.</li> <li>2. Go place the Crucifix back on the stand &amp; go back to your seat.</li> </ol>
<b>Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS (only if available)</b>	
<p><b>Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS: Presentation of the Gifts</b> Get the Candles from the Ambo follow the Cross Bearer to meet the Offertory Family at the Baptismal Font.</p> <p>When the other servers are setting the Altar, you are getting the Candles from the Ambo &amp; processing to the Baptismal Font behind the Cross Bearer.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When you see Father standing at the foot of the Altar you process down the aisle following the Cross Bearer with the Offertory Family following.</li> <li>2. Go place the Candles back at the Ambo.</li> </ol>
<b>Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS</b>	
<p><b>Altar server 1:</b> Bring the Sacramentary Book to the Altar and place it on the left side of the Altar.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If the Deacon is present, he will do this.</p> <p><b>Altar Server 2:</b> Bring the Priest’s Chalice to the Altar. Place on the Corporal in the center of the Altar.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When Priest stands, immediately go with him to stand at the foot of the Altar.</li> <li>2. Father will be in the middle and you each stand on either side of him ready to receive the gifts. He will hand the Wine Flask to one and the Bread Paten to the other.</li> <li>3. Go back to the Altar with Father.</li> <li>4. Altar Server with the Bread Paten places it on the Altar and goes to get the Water Cruet and goes to stand beside the other Altar Server.</li> <li>5. Altar Server with Wine Flask stands beside the Altar.</li> <li>6. When Father has poured both the Wine &amp; Water you both bow together to Father and go and place the Wine Flask &amp; Water Cruet on the Credence Table.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Altar server 1:</b> Get the Water Bowl / Pitcher &amp; go stand beside the Altar (closest to the Altar). When Priest holds his fingers over the bowl, you pour the water over the Priest’s fingers</p> <p><b>Altar Server 2:</b> Get the Towel &amp; go stand beside the other Altar Servers (on his/her left side).</p> <p><b>Hold the Towel Open</b> for the Priest to dry his hands.</p>	<p><b><u>Washing of Hands by Priest</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Next, bring both the Water Bowl / Pitcher and Towel stand together side-by-side. Hold the <b>Towel OPEN</b>, for the Priest to dry his hands.</li> <li>2. Bow together to the Priest and proceed back to the Credence Table.</li> <li>3. Return to your seats &amp; remain standing</li> </ol>

## SETTING OF THE ALTAR - (NO PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS)

**Note:** If no Offertory Family is bringing up the Gifts.

Only 2 Altar Servers are required to Set the Altar.

Immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful proceed as follows:

Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS	
<p><b>Altar server 1:</b> bring the Sacramentary Book to the Altar and place it on the left side of the Altar.  <b>Note:</b> If the Deacon is present, he will do this.</p> <p><b>Altar Server 2:</b> bring the Priest’s Chalice to the Altar. Place on the Corporal in the center of the Altar.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to the credence table and bring also Covered Paten with the Hosts to be Consecrated to the Altar. Place it on the Corporal or towards the <b>Middle of the Altar.</b></li> <li>2. Do NOT bring the empty Ciboria to the Altar.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Altar server 1:</b> Get the Wine Cruet and go stand closest to the Altar.</p> <p><b>Altar Server 2:</b> Get the Water Cruet and go stand beside the other Altar server (on his/her left side).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Altar Servers</b> gets the cruets with wine and water from the Credence table – remove the lids. Go stand towards the Right side of the Altar together side by side (Choir Side).</li> <li>4. The handle of the cruet should be facing the Priest. Hold the cruets inside your palms</li> <li>5. Altar Server with Wine Flask stands beside the Altar.</li> <li>6. When Father has poured both the Wine &amp; Water you both bow to Father and go and place the Wine &amp; Water Cruets on the Credence Table and replace the lids.</li> </ol>
WASHING OF HANDS BY PRIEST	
<p><b>Altar server 1:</b> Get the Water Bowl / Pitcher &amp; go stand beside the Altar (closest to the Altar). When Priest holds his fingers over the bowl, you pour the water over the Priest’s fingers</p> <p><b>Altar Server 2:</b> Get the Towel &amp; go stand beside the other Altar Servers (on his/her left side).  <b>Hold the Towel Open</b> for the Priest to dry his hands.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Next, bring both the Water Bowl / Pitcher and Towel stand together side-by-side. Hold the <b>Towel OPEN</b>, for the Priest to dry his hands. Altar Server holding the water bowl should stand closest to the Altar.</li> <li>8. Bow together to the Priest and proceed back to the Credence Table.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">Return to your seats &amp; remain standing.</p>

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- At the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) begins, the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** goes to kneel next to the bell placed on the steps. All altar servers remain in their position, kneeling.
- When the Priest raises the Sacred Body **Bell Ringer** rings the bell continuously for about 5 seconds or until you see the Priest lowers his arms.
- When the Priest raises the Chalice / Blood of Christ, **Bell Ringer** rings the bell continuously for about 5 seconds or until the Priest lowers his arms.
- Then, the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer**, returns to his seat after the consecration prayer. \*\*\*The pattern of ringing bells: Continuous.

## RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- Servers receive Holy Communion and stand along with the congregation until the distribution of Communion is over.
  - Towards the end of Communion, **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** takes the Sacramentary book off the Altar and places it on the Credence table (either by the Deacon / Lead Minister or.
  - After Communion is finished, **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** go to the Altar.
  - **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** – bring water Cruet to Priest/Deacon to purify the Chalice at the Altar. When finished, Father will hand it back to you to bring to the Credence table.
  - **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** both stand to the Priest's right side (Choir Side).
  - Altar Servers take alternative positions next to the Altar to take Sacred Vessels from the Priest/Deacon to the Credence table until the Altar has been cleared of all Sacred Vessels.
- NOTE: Always Stand only on the right side of the Priest.**
- **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** go back to their seats and sit down when the Deacon and Priest are seated and you have finished clearing the Altar.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

- **CUE:** The Priest stands and says, “let us pray” and gives the final blessing, all servers be ready to get the Crucifix, candles and join the Priest at the foot of the Altar for the Recession. Continue to stand respectfully with a prayerful mindset during concluding prayers.

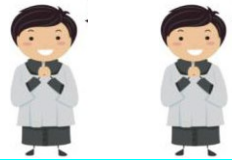
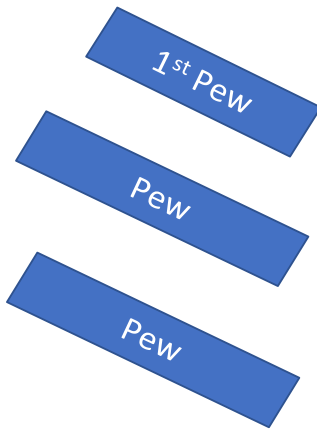
## RECESSION

- **CUE:** The Priest/Deacon stands and says, “The Mass is ended...”
- **ACT:** **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** immediately gets the processional Crucifix.
- **ACT:** **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** get candles from Ambo and stand waiting until the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** reaches Ambo, then you get in line behind **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer**.
- **ACT:** **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** get in line behind the **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** follow them and line up in the center aisle after the final blessings. **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** is standing halfway up the aisle towards the Baptismal Font. See the Recession line-up diagram on page 13.
- All stand facing the Altar (During the Recessional hymn)
- During the Recession, those who are not holding anything should hold their hands in a prayer gesture.
- The last row of servers should be standing beside the first pew. **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** faces the Altar should ensure enough spacing, allowing all servers to stand in the aisle waiting for the Celebrant to join the Recession.
- When Father bows, the **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** bow. The **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer & Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** do not bow.
- After the Priest and **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS** bow, the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** immediately turns faces the **Baptismal Font** and leads the Recession out, followed by **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS**, **Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS**, Usher with Donation Box, Deacon and Priest.

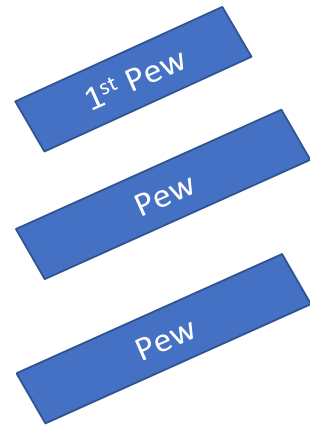
# RECESSION LINE-UP



Celebrant  
Deacon  
Usher with Donation Box



Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS



Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS



Cross Bearer / Bell Ringer

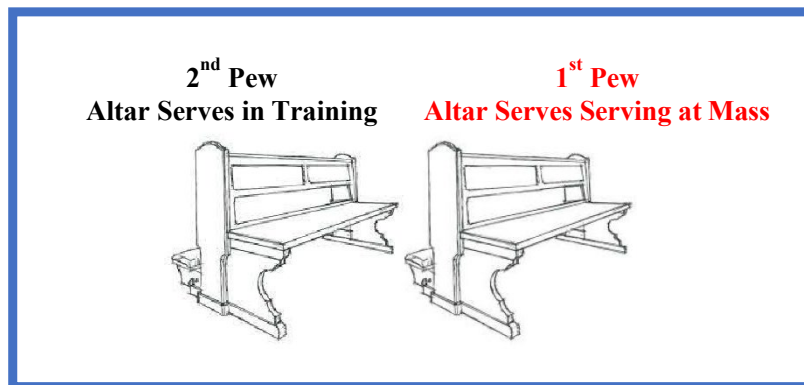


## AFTER MASS

- **CUE:** When the music stops.
- **ACT:** Cross bearer/Bell Ringer, Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS and Altar Servers – SECOND SERVERS proceed **SILENTLY** beside the stained glass window on the Choir side Aisle.
- Cross bearer/Bell Ringer - Place the Cross back on the stand.
- Cross bearer/Bell Ringer - Extinguish candles with a large snuffer from the table next to the credence table.
- Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS - Place candles back at the Ambo.
- **ALL SERVERS** help the MC/Sacristan take the Sacred Vessels from the Credence table to the working Sacristy for cleaning. The working Sacristy is located through the doors beside the Blessed Mother statue.
- When you are in front of the **Tabernacle**, stop for a second while crossing Tabernacle, **bow down and cross it** when moving to the working Sacristy. The Tabernacle is located behind the sliding glass door of the small Chapel.
- All Altar Servers proceed out of the Church through the exit next to the Confessional Closer to MPR.
- Return Alb to the closet. Place the hanger through the loop on the Alb to prevent falling on the floor. Properly hang the Cross and Cincture.

## SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

- \*\* In the order from the Tabernacle side
- **FIRST PEW** – Trained Altar Servers assigned to Serve at Mass. (Maximum 9 people)- Boat Bearer, Thurifer, Mitre Server (carries Bishop's Headdress/Hat) Crosier Server (carries Bishop's staff) & Cross Bearer, Altar Servers, Candle Bearers
- **SECOND PEW** - Altar Servers in Training.





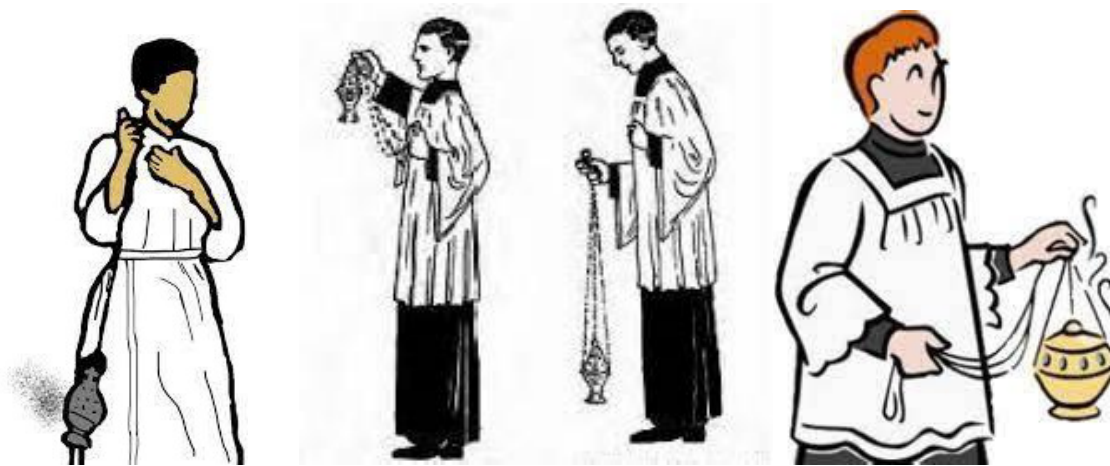
## **SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

- **\*\*If there is a BAPTISM, make sure the Paschal Candle (by the baptismal font) is lit. If it is too tall for you to light, ask the Sacristan to help.**

## **BEGINNING OF MASS + PENITENTIAL RITE/GLORIA**

- **\*\* Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** is book bearer and prepares to take the large red book (Roman Missal) to the Priest/Bishop for the Opening Prayer.
- **CUE:**(No Gloria - Advent and Lent) “May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins.....”  
Let us pray
- **ACT:** (Gloria) Conclusion of the Gloria “Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen”
- Stand in front of the Priest/Bishop, who will open the Roman Missal and adjust the height.
- Return to your seat after placing the Roman Missal at the Credence Table (GIFT TABLE).

## INCENSING



- The Thurible has a ring on the end of the chain; hold the chain just below the Ring with your left hand. When walking in a procession, let the chain hang down and swing the Thurible gently. If you are not caring about the Boat, place your right hand open on your chest.
- **THURIFER Responsibilities** -The Thurifer should arrive about 40 minutes before the service. If the Thurible has not been emptied, the Thurifer should approach the Sacristan to dispose of the ashes.
- The briquettes, incense and aluminum foil are in the beige cabinet in the working Sacristy.
- First, the Thurifer should put a new aluminum foil into the Thurible. Then the Thurifer should take a briquette and put it into the Thurible. An additional should be added for services where the beginning of the service is lengthy, such as the Easter Vigil, Christmas Eve, or when the Bishop is visiting. In addition, the Thurifer should take a second briquette and place it closer to the Thurifer Stand so the Thurifer can add briquette material during extended services.
- The Thurifer also needs to confirm there is adequate incense in the Boat. If not, Thurifer should fill it. The Boat will be given to the boat Bearer if a boat bearer is serving.
- Thurifer should light the Thurible in the Sacristy about 25 to 30minutes before the service. The matches and lighter are in the drawer so marked. Once the briquettes are lit, the Thurifer should take the Thurible and the Boat out the working Sanctuary door so that it will create the least amount of disturbance to those in the Church. It is suggested that the Thurifer also swing the Thurible after Thurifer is outside to ensure that the briquettes are holding the light.
- The above should take approximately 15 minutes and provide enough time for the Thurifer to join the Procession into the Church. **The boat bearer should always be to the left of the Thurifer.**  
**\*\*The Thurifer will raise the Thurible to approximately waist high and raise the cover. Then, the boat bearer will open the Boat.**

## ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- **THURIFER** leads the Procession. **Boat Bearer** follows along with the other Altar Servers.
- Stop when you approach the Altar, pause, and proceed to the Altar crossing the Ambo. Wait at the Altar (Closer to the Pillar at the Ambo Side) for the Priest to arrive at the Altar. Boat Bearer stands to the left-hand side of the Thurifer.

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

- **CUE:** the Kissing of the Altar
- **ACT:** Stand closer to the Altar, Open the Boat for the Priest, He will take incense from Boat.
- Hand over Thurible to the Priest, Position back. After Incensing of the Altar, Priest will get back Thurible to the Server. Step down from the Altar. Hang the Thurible at the Stand and place the Boat on the holder. Proceed back to your seat.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Remain seated during Responsorial Psalm.
- End of the Second Reading, when the Gospel Hymn starts, the Thurifer and Boat bearer will retrieve the Thurible and Boat.
- Once the singing of the gospel hymn has started, the **Thurifer** and **Boat Bearer** will walk up to the Altar and approaches Presider's Chair. First, the Thurifer will raise the Thurible to approximately waist high and raise the cover. Then, the boat bearer will open the Boat.
- The Presider will take a spoonful of incense and put it on the charcoal disk.
- Step down from the Altar and go stand beside the Ambo.
- **CUE:** The Priest or Deacon will say: the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **ACT:** The Thurifer will give Thurible to the Priest or Deacon who will incense the Gospel Book.
- The Priest or Deacon will give the Thurible back to the Thurifer. Move two steps away from the Ambo to give some space to Priest / Deacon while reading.
- After "The Gospel of the Lord," - Place the Thurible and Boat back on the stand and return to your seat.  
\*\*\*Adding charcoal- A charcoal disk "may" need to be added around the middle of the Homily (when it is a lengthy Liturgy). Simply place an additional charcoal disk on top of the existing hot charcoal.

## PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS/ LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- **CUE:** When the Preparation of The Gifts begins, the Deacon or Priest will begin setting up the Altar. The Gifts are to be placed on the Altar
- **ACT:** The **Thurifer** and **Boat bearer** will retrieve the Thurible and Boat and stand near the Gospel side Credence table. When the Celebrant comes up to the Altar and turns toward the Thurifer, the Thurifer and Boat bearer will step forward to the Celebrant.
- The **Thurifer** will raise the Thurible to approximately waist level and raise the cover.
- The boat bearer will open the Boat. The Priest will take a spoonful of incense and place it on the charcoal disk.
- Hand the Thurible to Priest.
- The **Thurifer** and **Boat bearer** will then step back to a location slightly next to the credence table. Then, the Celebrant will bless the Host and Wine with incense.
- At this time, either the Deacon in charge or the Thurifer will take from the Celebrant the Thurible and then proceed around to the front of the Altar, Incense priests by doing a double swing.
- The Celebrant or Deacon will then walk around the Altar and provide the blessing of the Altar.
- Step back. The Thurifer will then stand in front of the credence table on the lectern side of the Altar.
- The Priest will Incense the Altar; He will hand it over to Deacon, He will Incense the Presider and the Congregation and then hand over the Thurible back to you. Once the blessing of the Altar is completed, the Thurifer will step one step closer to the Altar and take the Thurible from the Celebrant and step back. Place back the Thurible and the Boat.
- Hold the Boat straight with both hands without tilting; while handing over the Thurible, you hold to the chain so that the end ring will be left free. Priest /Deacon takes the Thurible from you, holding on to the Ring.
- Proceed back to your seat. Maintain the prayerful gesture.

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- **CUE:** First Part of the Eucharistic Prayer (Preface)
- **Thurifer** goes and gets the Thurible and Boat. Proceed to the centre of the Altar. Kneel at the centre, placing Boat on the First step in front of the Thurifer.
- **\*\*Boat bearer** stands along with other Altar servers.
- After the Preface before the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), the Thurifer adds 1 ½ to 2 spoons of incense to the Thurible.
- **Epiclesis\*** - When Priest holds his hand over the Offerings. Raise your hand and Incense one strike of 3 times (\***Epiclesis** Prayer invokes the Holy Spirit for Consecration to change the bread and wine on the Altar into the Body and Blood of Jesus).
- After Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) on seeing the Priest saying Eucharistic Prayer 3” He took the bread, and giving you Thanks...” elevation of the Host. Thurifer Incenses one strike of 3 times
- Same with the elevation of the Chalice, one strike of 3 times.
- Remain on knees at the Memorial Acclamation.
- At the end of the Memorial Acclamation, stand and proceed to the Thurible stand. Replace both Thurible and Boat and proceed back to your seat.

## RECESSION

- **CUE:** The Priest/Deacon stands and says, “The Mass is ended...” at the concluding prayers.
- Immediately after the final blessings, along with the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer**, the **Thurifer** and **Boat bearer** are to retrieve the Thurible and Boat.
- Walk to the Thurible stand and get the Thurible and Boat; **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer** will follow you; proceed, and the **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** will follow **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer**; line up in the center aisle (see Recession diagram page 13).
- You should be aligned in the centre Aisle so that the last row of the altar server comes in alignment with the first pew.
- Turn to the Altar and wait for the Priest/Deacon to join the Recession. Then, after the Celebrant bow, turn back; the **Thurifer** and **Boat bearer** will proceed down the aisle to the outside of the church.

## AFTER MASS

- **Thurifer**, the **Boat Bearer**, the **Cross bearer/Bell Ringer**, **Candle Bearers - FIRST SERVERS** and ALTAR Servers proceed SILENTLY through the aisle (Between Choir Sidewall and Aisle). Place back the Thurible and Boat on the Stand.
- Hang the Thurible in its position until the briquettes have completely burned themselves out. After that, the Thurifer does not have to do anything else with the Thurible.
- All Altar Servers Proceed out of the Church through the exit next to the Confessional Closer to MPR
- Return Alb to the closet. Place the hanger through the loop on the Alb to prevent falling on the floor. Properly place Cross and Cincture.

## ALTAR SERVER'S GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Altar** - The table in the Sanctuary at which the bread and wine are prepared and transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Ambo** (Lectern/Pulpit) – The platform where the readings and the Homily is delivered.

**Baptismal Font** – A Basin or pool containing water in the area of the church where Baptism takes place.

**Bells** – Rung during the consecration of the Mass to invite the congregation's attention.

**Book of Gospels** – The book which contains the Gospel readings.

**Chalice** - The metal cup (either gold or silver) used to hold the wine that will be consecrated and distributed to the assembly at Mass.

**Ciborium** - A metal container with a lid used to store consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle and is also used to distribute Holy Communion.

**Corporeal** – The large, square white cloth which is placed on the Altar underneath the Chalice and paten.

**Credence Table** – The table located to the left of the Altar used to hold the purificators, chalices, and other items needed to celebrate Mass.

**Cruets** – Water and wine containers.

**Finger Bowl and Towel** – Used for the rite before Eucharistic Prayer.

**Gift Table** – Table closer to the Credence Table where the bread and wine are placed before Mass begins.

**Lectionary** – The book which contains the Scripture readings.

**Pall** – A piece of cardboard or plastic covered by linen and used to cover the Chalice.

**Paschal Candle** – The tall candle is blessed and used during the Easter season, baptisms, and funerals.

**Paten** - The plate used to hold the large hosts which will become the consecrated body of Jesus

**Pews** – The bench-like seats in the main body of the Church.

**Presider's Chair (Celebrant Chair)** – The chair in which the Priest sits.

**Processional Cross/ Crucifix** – The Cross carried in and out of the Mass.

**Purificator** - A long narrow piece of folded linen cloth with a small cross sewn to it. It is used by the Priest and Eucharistic Minister to wipe the Chalice after a person takes a drink from it.

**Pyx** – The small metal container used to hold consecrated Host (s) when visiting the sick or homebound.

**Sacramentary** - The book of prayers and instructions used by the Priest during the liturgy.

**Sacristy** – The room next to the Sanctuary where the priests, altar servers, and other ministers prepare for the Mass.

**Sanctuary** - The raised area in the front of the church. It is considered a holy and special area because this is where the sacrifice of the Mass is offered and where the word of God is read. **Therefore, it should be approached with great respect.**

**Sanctuary Lamp** – The red light (or candle) that hangs beside or over the Tabernacle indicating that there are Consecrated Hosts inside.

**Tabernacle** – The gold “safe” in which the Blessed Sacrament (Consecrated Host) is stored.

**The Nave** – The main body of the church where the congregation gathers.

**Thurifer** – The person who carries the censer (Thurible) and incense Boat.

## GESTURES

**Standing** – Standing shows a unique level of respect and readiness, e.g., during the Gospel reading. It is also the normal posture when singing or when praying in common.

**Genuflection** – A genuflection is made by bending the right knee to the ground. It is given to the Blessed Sacrament when entering or leaving the church or passing in front of the Tabernacle. In addition, a genuflection is customarily made when acknowledging the Incarnation or the death of Christ.

**Kiss** – The Book of the Gospels and the Altar are customarily venerated with a kiss.

**Profound bow** – A profound bow is made to the Altar whenever one passes in front of it during Mass and during the Creed at the words that refer directly to the Incarnation: “By the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

**Bow of the head** – A bow of the head is made during Mass at the name of Jesus, of the three Divine Persons mentioned together (e.g., “Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit”), of Mary, and of the saint in whose honour the Mass is celebrated.

**Sitting** – Sitting signifies attentiveness, especially to the readings from Sacred Scripture or during the preparation of the Altar.

**Kneeling** – Kneeling signifies adoration of God and humility before him. It is the proper posture for the congregation during the Eucharistic Prayer and after the Agnus Dei before the reception of Holy Communion.

**Striking the breast** – Done during the Confiteor, acknowledging our sinfulness.

## VESTMENTS

*Vestments are what the priest and altar servers wear during Mass.*

**Alb** - A long white linen robe was worn by the priest and altar servers.

**Cincture** - A cord made of silk or cotton with tassels on the ends. It is used around the waist to secure the Alb so that it will not interfere with walking.

**Stole** - A long strip of cloth worn by the Priest around his neck and shoulders.

**Chasuble** – Colored vestment is worn only by the Priest.

## COLOR OF VESTMENTS AND ALTAR SCARF/ LITURGICAL COLORS

*The colour of vestments expresses the mysteries of our faith and is like a calendar for the church year.*

**White** - Masses of Easter, Christmas season, Feasts and Memorials of Jesus, Mary, the Angels, Saints who were not martyrs, Weddings, and Funerals, symbolize Purity, Holiness, Joy, Triumph, and the Resurrection.

**Red** - Used on Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), Good Friday, Pentecost, feasts of the Apostles, Evangelists and Martyrs. Red symbolizes the Holy Spirit and the blood of martyrs.

**Green** - Used during Ordinary times, symbolizing Life, Growth and Hope.

**Violet** - Used during Lent and Advent, symbolizing Penance, Atonement and Expiation.

**Gold** - More festive than white, which may be used on more solemn days such as Easter and Christmas, symbolizes Joy, Triumph and the Resurrection.

## THE MINISTERS AT MASS

**Priest** - Specially ordained men who consecrate and offer the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass. They forgive sins, perform baptisms, marriages, and funerals, run the parish and lead the people closer to God. Their ordination to the priesthood can be traced to the Apostles, the first priests after Jesus.

**Deacon** - A Deacon can assist in preaching, perform baptism, marriages, and help run the parish. He does not offer Mass or hear confessions.

**Altar Servers** - A young boy or girl or an adult specially trained to assist the Priest at Mass.

**Extra-ordinary Eucharistic Minister** - A person whom the Bishop specially confers to assist the Priest in distributing Holy Communion.

**Lector** - The person who reads the Epistles (first and second readings) and the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

**Sacristan** – The person whose ministry is the care of the Sacristy, Sanctuary, vestments, sacred vessels, etc.

**Bishop** - A Bishop is higher than a priest. He has the authority to ordain priests. This authority is given to him by the Pope.

**Cardinal** - A Cardinal is a high church official ranking next in line to the Pope. He assists and advises the Pope, consecrates Bishops and elects the Pope.


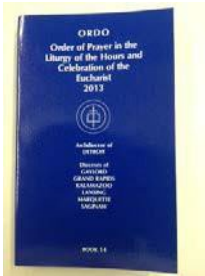








**Pope** - The Pope is the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. He is sometimes called “Pontiff” and “Holy See” and will be the leader of the church until he dies.



## CHURCH AND LITURGICAL OBJECTS AND TERMS

<p>The Chalice: The vessel which holds the wine that becomes the Precious Blood of Christ.</p>			<p>The paten: The golden "plate" that holds the bread that becomes the Sacred Body of Christ.</p>	
<p>The ciborium: A golden vessel with a lid used for the distribution and reservation of Hosts.</p>			<p>The pyx: A small, closing golden vessel is used to bring the Blessed Sacrament to those who cannot come to the church.</p>	
<p>The purificator is a small rectangular cloth used for wiping the Chalice.</p>			<p>The cruets hold the wine and the water that is used at Mass.</p>	
<p>The lavabo and pitcher: used for washing the Priest's hands.</p>			<p>The lavabo towel, which the Priest dries his hands after washing them during the Mass.</p>	
<p>The altar cloth: A rectangular white cloth that covers the Altar for the celebration of Mass.</p>			<p>The Corporal is a square cloth placed on the Altar beneath the Chalice and paten. It is folded to catch any particles of the Host that may accidentally fall</p>	
<p>The altar candles: Mass must be celebrated with natural candles (more than 51% beeswax), which signifies the Presence of Christ, our light.</p>			<p>A new Paschal candle is prepared and blessed every year at the Easter Vigil. This light stands near the Altar during the Easter Season and near the Baptismal font during the rest of the year. It may also stand near the casket during the funeral rites.</p>	

<p>Bells, rung during the calling down of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the bread and wine</p>			<p>The sanctuary lamp: A candle, often red, that burns near the Tabernacle when the Blessed Sacrament is present there.</p>	
<p>The aspersorium: The bucket used to carry holy water for sprinkling.</p>			<p>The aspergillum: The sprinkler for casting holy water on people, places, or objects.</p>	
<p>The Thurible is used for carrying and burning incense.</p>			<p>The incense boat holds the incense before it is placed in the Thurible for burning.</p>	
<p>Sacred Oils Oil of Chrism, Oil of the Sick, Oil of the Catechumens</p>			<p>The sacarium: A drain in the Sacristy that flows directly into the earth. used for respectfully disposing of holy water, blessed ashes, the water used to wash the altar cloths.</p>	
<p>The Roman Missal: The book containing the ceremonial instructions and prayers for the celebration of Mass</p>			<p>The Lectionary: The book containing the biblical readings arranged for the celebration of Mass.</p>	

<p>The Book of the Gospels: The book from which the Gospel reading is proclaimed.</p>			<p>Ordo: a liturgical aid published to foster the celebration of the liturgy. There is one on the sacristy counter</p>	
<p>The Alb is a full-length white garment worn by the Priest and Deacon.</p>			<p>The cincture is worn around the Alb if it does not fit closely to the body</p>	
<p>The stole is a long strip of fabric worn around the neck. It matches the colour of the day. Priests wear the stole around the neck and over the breast. Deacons wear the stole diagonally from the left shoulder to the right side.</p>			<p>Altar servers wear a black cassock and white surplice Or the Alb alone.</p>	
<p>The chasuble is worn by the Priest over his other vestments. It symbolizes the yoke of Christ and the priesthood.</p>			<p>The dalmatic is the distinctive vestment of the Deacon. Unlike the chasuble, the dalmatic has sleeves.</p>	
<p>The cope is a cape-like vestment that may be worn during processions and liturgical celebrations outside of Mass.</p>			<p>The processional Cross hearkens back to the days of the Roman army when the standard-bearer would carry the insignia of a particular legion into battle. The Cross is the mark of a Christian.</p>	

## **APPENDICES**



# St. Luke's Altar Server Ministry Registration Form

**Altar Servers are generally children or teenagers who assist a priest during Mass. The name comes from the Latin word “ministrare,” which means “to serve”. An altar server must be willing and interested to participate in this ministry independently and not by parental or peer pressure. Parents must actively support their child in this ministry by ensuring that the altar server arrives at their assigned Mass on time.**

**\*Please note that to receive training and be a part of St. Luke's Altar Server Ministry, you must have received First Holy Communion and whose family is registered with St. Luke's Parish.**

**\*Please leave the filled form at the parish office/drop it at the collection box or scan and email it to [info@stlukeschurch.ca](mailto:info@stlukeschurch.ca). After your completed registration form is received, you will be contacted and informed about the next Altar Server Training Session.**

**(Please Print)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ M / F

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Received First Holy Communion: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Date/Year of Reception \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate the Holy Mass your child would like to participate in.**

Saturday at 5:00 pm

Sunday at 12:30 pm

Sunday at 8:30 am

Sunday at 5:30 pm

Sunday at 10:30 am

Sunday at 7:30 pm

## Parental Consent

**Parents are requested to provide their consent for their child(ren) to serve in this ministry.**

My child \_\_\_\_\_  
may be included in the training sessions and may serve in this Ministry.

### Parent/Guardian

Father \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### To become an Altar Server

1. Have a strong desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,
2. Have already made their First Confession and First Communion,
3. Know how to make the Sign of the Cross,
4. Know how to genuflect and bow properly,
5. Know how to receive Holy Communion properly,

### When you are serving at the Holy Mass

1. Be dressed appropriately with no pictures or words on your Tees /Shirt.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass. (If it is a special Mass, 30 minutes is preferred).
3. Wear the Altar server gown (The Alb), robe (Cincture), and Cross and proceed to Sacristy.
4. Say the prayer as a group just before leaving the Sacristy.
5. If you are a cross-bearer or a candle bearer for the Procession, you need not have to bow down while approaching the Altar. Just pause for a second and proceed.
6. Maintain a prayerful posture during Mass at all times (prayerful gesture)
7. Familiarize to do all the different roles of an altar server.

\*\*\*\*\*