

**The beginnings of An
Altar Guild Procedure Manual
St. Luke’s Lutheran Church**

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Note: this manual is a guide.
It is based on procedures used in other congregations.
It will be revised as needed to meet the needs of St. Luke’s Lutheran.

Today’s Altar Guild Training
is a working session to work together
toward common procedures.

This manual is an initial pass at a written manual.

Duties of the Altar Guild

The basic duties of the altar guild revolve around total care of the furnishings used in worship. Under your care are the following items:

1. Linens and paraments
2. Candles
3. Candle lighters
4. Baptismal font
5. Eucharistic vessels
6. Offering plates
7. Cross
8. Processional cross
9. Altar area
10. Ambo
11. Paschal candle
12. Advent wreath
13. Other, as needed

Weekly Schedule of Duties

Every Sunday

- look around altar area to be sure it is orderly
- check to see that the proper paraments are up
- prepare for and clean up after baptisms
- prepare for and clean up after communion
- dust altar area
- refill candles

Last Sunday of month:

- polish untreated brass and silver with polishing creams
- refill communion candles
- refill Sanctuary Lamp
- check paschal candle

Communion Set-up and Clean-up

1. Setting the Table
 - a) Place **Corporal** on the altar. Be sure that it is centered, side to side. The cross on the corporal goes toward the side of the altar where presiding minister leads worship.
 - b) Place the **chalice** in the center of the corporal.
 - c) Place a **purificator**, folded in thirds lengthwise, across the chalice so that it runs parallel with the width of the altar. The purificator will not completely cover the chalice.
 - d) Over the top of the chalice and draped purificator, place the **chalice pall**, so that the forward edge is parallel with the **sides** of the altar.
 - e) Cover the chalice, purificator, and pall with the appropriately colored **veil**, by draping it over the pall, and folding it so that front and back sides present a flat surface. Doing this will create a trapezoidal shape on the surface toward the congregation, and on the surface away from the congregation.
 - f) In front of chalice, place bread on **paten** and cover with appropriate veil.

- i) If wafers are used, place them on the paten with a celebrant's wafer (the larger sized wafer) on top of the smaller wafers.
 - g) Place an extra **purificator** (twice folded in thirds) on corporal.
 - h) Fill individual communion cups and stack them in the trays.
 - i) Put stacked trays on the credence table, on the left end, leaving room for additional items to be placed to the right of the trays.
 - j) Place two wicker baskets, lined with paper towels, on flower stands near each end of the communion rails. These will receive used communion cups.
 - k) Trays are set up with wine. The inner circle is reserved for cups with white grape juice.
 - l) Gluten free are put in small chalices, distributed by pastors/assisting minister as needed. The chalices are kept within reach of the pastors/assisting minister, on the railing.
2. After worship
- a) Extra wine should be either consumed or discarded outside on the ground. Do not return extra wine to the bottle or pour down a drain.
 - b) Extra bread should be consumed. Do not throw it away. Offer it to people who are still around. Extra bread may also be put outside for the birds to eat.
 - c) All linens should be neatly cleaned and pressed for the next use. This should be done as soon as possible, lest oils and/or stains become permanent. Be sure to return the linens to the church. ****Note, proper care and cleaning of linens must follow guidelines for care of linen fabric. Never use bleach... Woolite is an appropriately gentle cleaner. Do not starch. Do not place in washing machines or dryers.**
 - d) Clean and polish silver. Always place silver in tarnish bags and return to storage. A napkin should be placed in the flagon to gather any residual moisture.
 - e) Wash individual glass glasses using the sinks in the kitchen.
 - f) Wipe out the silver trays and refill with clean and empty cups and put the trays in their protective wrappings.
 - g) Return prepared trays to storage
3. Notes
- a) Wine is kept in the refrigerator
 - b) Bread is made by volunteers and will bring it to church on the day of the service. It is kept in _____.
 - c) Be sure the silver has been polished, and is very clean, before setting up.
4. When communion is by intinction.
- a) Do not prepare or set up communion trays.
 - b) Set the table with the chalice, and paten.
 - c) Put the wafers on the paten, covered by a celebrant's wafer.

Care of Linens

In washing linens, please observe the following: (these notes are for linen fabric only)

1. Always launder linens by hand, do not put them in the washing machine.
2. Use a soap that is safe for fine linens, such as Woolite.
3. Never use bleach, starch, or anything that may contain such ingredients. Though bleach is a natural whitener, when used on linens it changes the linen's natural color, often making it yellow, sometimes causing it to have a blue hue. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE...
4. To remove wax from linen, place a white blotting paper over and under the spot and use a hot iron to melt the wax.
5. To remove wine stains, soak linens in cold water for ten minutes prior to washing.

6. Never dry linens, but roll in a towel. Do not wring them dry in the towel.
7. Iron linens while they are damp.
8. If there is embroidery on the linen, iron the back side.
9. When ironing and folding the linens, always know which linen you are working with. Each linen is ironed and folded in a specific way. See below for more information.

About the fair linen: (Used only in the chapel)

1. This should be laundered as needed
 - a) After Communion, you should check to be sure that no wine has been spilled on the fair linen.
 - b) There is an iron and ironing board at the church to be used by the altar guild. Be sure the fair linen is clean and wrinkle-free each week.

About Purificators:

1. Purificators are made of linen. Please follow directions above for care.
2. Following communion, they should be wetted down and placed in a baggie until you get home and can care for them. This will keep wine stains from setting in.
 - a) As you iron purificators, they should be folded and ironed four times so that nine squares are seen when reopened. When folded, the center cross should be on the outside.

About the corporal:

1. The corporal is made of linen. Please observe the care instructions above.
2. Following communion, if wine/grape juice has been spilled, it should be wetted immediately and placed in a plastic bag so the stain does not set in.
3. This should be ironed and folded as a purificator, with the exception noted below.
4. Unlike purificators, when a corporal is ironed and folded, it should be done so when completely folded, the back side of the cross is visible on top, so that when it is laid on the altar and unfolded, the right side of the cross is visible without having to turn it over.

About Veils:

1. Please carefully fold veils and place in storage.

Baptisms

1. Prior to worship
 - a) Light the paschal candle.
 - i) Use a candle lighter to light the paschal candle.
 - ii) Turn off the ceiling fan above the candle.
 - b) Place the following on the font.
 - i) Baptismal candle in a candleholder.
 - ii) Baptismal napkin
 - iii) Baptismal Shell
 - iv) Baptismal towel for pastor to use
 - v) Oil for chrismation
 - a) The oil is kept in the oil stock, a small stainless-steel vessel with an oil soaked cotton ball inside.
 - c) 10-15 minutes prior to the service, fill the ewer with hot water.
 - i) The ewer should be very full.

- ii) The goal is to have lukewarm water at the time of the baptism (an hour after you place the water in the bowl), so be sure you use hot water.
2. After worship
 - a) Remove ewer, candleholder, baptismal towel, baptismal shell, and oil stock from baptismal font.
 - b) Launder, iron and fold the baptismal towel.

Funerals

When there is a funeral, the church office will notify the altar guild. The altar guild prepares the following:

1. The funeral pall
 - a) The funeral pall should be unfolded and hung over the front pew with the top of the pall toward the center aisle.
2. Lights the paschal candle and altar candles
3. Prepares Communion
 - a) Format: intinction
 - b) Place a (large) celebrant's host over the wafers on the altar.

Candles: The Candle-Keeper

The candle-keeper is one who ensures that the candles are always ready for use. He or she regularly fills the candles, keeps them clean, and cares for other candles in use.

We have different kinds of candles:

1. Altar Candles. They remain on the altar. The candle-keeper assures that they are filled and ready for worship each weekend.
2. Sanctuary Lamps. There are two of them, one in the chapel and one in the chancel of the sanctuary. The candle-keeper ensures that they are always lit.
3. The Paschal Candle. This is the candle at the baptismal font. It is used during the Easter Season, whenever there is a baptism, when there is a baptismal-related celebration in worship, and at funerals. The paschal candle is wax. It should have a candle follower on it. This candle is normally replaced on Holy Saturday.
4. Advent Candles. These are wax and are used during Advent. They should always have candle-followers on them.
5. Torches. These are candles on independent stands. They are used in processions. When in use, they normally sit on either side of the Ambo or Altar. They are wax candles and should always have followers.

The candle-keeper does the following:

- Maintains oil levels in oil-based candles.
- Keeps the candles maintained and clean.
- Orders supplies through the church office.
- Places/replaces candles as needed.

This may seem like an insignificant job, but it isn't. If oil candles are not carefully tended, they will empty quickly and become dirty. Because it takes some training to work with these candles, it is best that it not be included in the duties of all the altar guild.

Candle Lighters

The candle lighters are used by the acolytes to light and extinguish candles. The following should be noted in their care.

1. Weekly
 - a) Check the candle lighters to be sure there is an adequate length of wick available.
 - b) Replace the wick if needed.
 - i) Extra wicks are kept in the robing-room.
 - ii) Push the lever on the candle lighter all the way up to the top until the wick-holder comes out of the lighter.
 - iii) Unthread and discard the old wick.
 - iv) Replace with a new wick, allowing about ½ inch of wick to fold over the wick holder.
 - v) Pull lever back into place, until there is only a small amount of wick showing.
2. Monthly
 - a) Clean candle lighters with a damp cloth.

Polishing Brass and Silver

Brass and silver need to be polished regularly. Refer to the weekly duties sheet to see when this needs to be done. Consider the following:

1. Brass polish should be used to polish brass.
 - a) Follow the directions on the label.
2. Silver polish should be used to polish silver.
 - a) Follow the directions on the label.
3. Only polish metals that do not have protective coverings. Some liturgical items have special coatings of a lacquer to protect against tarnish. Such items should be cleaned with soap and water.
4. Regularly clean and polish offering plates.
5. Clean candle followers as often as needed.
6. Oil candles can be cleaned with window cleaner.

Responsibilities by Season of the Church Year

- 1) Advent
 - a) Contact Secretary to order the blue candles for the Advent wreath, and the white Christmas Candle that goes in the middle.
 - b) Set up the Advent wreath.
 - i) Using four blue candles, with candle-followers
 - c) Color of the Season: Blue
- 2) Christmas
 - a) Add the white Christ candle to the Advent wreath.
 - b) Place poinsettias in the chancel.
 - c) After Christmas, remove poinsettias.
 - d) Color: White
- 3) Epiphany
 - a) Put the Advent wreath away on or before January 6.
 - b) Colors: White and Green
- 4) Lent

- a) Place the rough-hewn cross in the sanctuary and drape it with a purple drape.
- b) Color of the Season: Purple
- c) Ash Wednesday
 - i) Color: Purple
 - ii) Drape the rough-hewn cross with black.
 - (1) After the service, drape it with purple for the rest of Lent.
 - iii) Prepare ashes and put in silver ash bowl.
 - iv) Have a damp towel in the chancel area for pastor's use.
- 5) Holy Week
 - a) Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday
 - i) Color: Scarlet or Purple
 - ii) Arrange palm branches.
 - iii) Prepare palm branches for distribution on Sunday Morning.
 - iv) Coordinate with the ushers to be sure the palms are distributed.
 - v) Prepare communion.
 - b) Maundy Thursday
 - i) Holy Communion
 - ii) Ask Pastor if there will be the washing of feet.
 - iii) Coordinate the "stripping of the altar" with Pastor.
 - (1) This may require three to four volunteers.
 - c) Good Friday
 - i) Drape the rough-hewn cross with a black drape.
 - ii) Move the rough-hewn cross to be in the aisle near the back of the church, so that all who enter must go under the cross.
 - d) Holy Saturday
 - i) Dress the altar for Easter
 - ii) Arrange Easter Lilies
 - iii) Torch Candles are placed on each side of the Ambo.
 - iv) The cross is draped with white or white and gold cloth.
 - e) Easter Sunday
 - i) Color: White and Gold
 - ii) All services have Holy Communion
- 6) Pentecost
 - a) The day of Pentecost: Color: Red
 - i) Geraniums? Or other red flowers.
 - b) Sundays after: Color Green
- 7) Other Festivals - always watch the liturgical calendar
 - a) All Saints Day: First Sunday in November
 - i) Color is White
 - ii) Always Holy Communion
 - iii) Place white (no-drip) taper candles for commemoration of those who died and were baptized in the past year.
 - (1) Find out how many candles are needed from Pastor Jordan.

Miscellaneous

- 1. Weekly, check the color of the paraments.
 - a) For weddings and funerals, the liturgical color remains the same as it was the Sunday prior.

2. Dust the altar, communion rail, chairs pulpit and lectern.
3. Other?

Definitions

Advent Wreath - A wreath which holds four candles used to mark the time of Advent.

Altar Candles - The two candles on the forward corners of the altar.

Baptismal Font - The furnishing used to hold the water during a baptism.

Chalice - One of the Eucharistic Vessels. Cup used to pour wine distributed during the Lord's supper.

Chalice pall - A white square cloth envelope, into which is inserted a stiff piece of plastic. Used to cover the chalice.

Chrismation - The anointing with oil done at a baptismal service.

Corporal - A linen used only during the Communion Service. Cut square and placed over the fair linen to receive the Eucharistic vessels. It is traditionally made of pure white linen, like the other altar linens. Should never hang over the edge of the altar.

Eucharistic Vessels - Vessels used during the Eucharist. (Holy Communion)

Fair Linen - White cloth placed on the altar. It is cut to the depth of the top of the table, and long enough to hang over the ends nearly to the floor. Symbolizes the long sheet wound around Jesus for burial.

Flagon - One of the Eucharistic vessels. A pitcher which holds a reserve of wine to be poured into the chalice during Holy Communion.

Missal - The large Lutheran Book of Worship used by Pastor during service.

Missal Stand - the brass stand which holds the Missal

Oil Stock - A cylindrical container which holds oil for anointing.

Paschal candle - The large white candle which symbolizes the resurrection of Christ. It is lit during the season of Easter, at baptisms, and at funerals. It normally remains next to the baptismal font.

Paten - A round plate used for serving the bread at the Eucharist.

Purificator - A linen used only during the Communion Service. A white linen cloth used to wipe the chalice during distribution. Usually about 12-15 inches square. It is folded into thirds twice (making nine panels).

Veil - A Eucharistic cloth used to cover the paten and chalice.

The Chalice, Purificator, Pall, and Veil

These are dressed according to the picture and placed on the Corporal.

